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THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY, PH.D., 1979

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THE AMERICAN YIDDISH DAILY PRESS REACTION TO
THE RISE OF NAZISM, 1930-1933

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

by


The Ohio State University
1979
I am deeply indebted to many individuals who have helped me during the course of my work. First and foremost, I must thank Professors Robert Chazan and Marc L. Raphael who have guided this study since its inception. My thanks also go to Dr. Nathan Kaganoff of the American Jewish Historical Society, whose critical comments on both substance and style are incorporated throughout this dissertation. I also acknowledge with thanks the financial assistance that I received from the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture. Finally, in dedicating this study to my wife Rachel, and to my children Rahel, Kovi, Yosef, and Azl, I wish to make public, if only in this small way, the enormous private debt I owe them for their helpfulness, encouragement, patience, and perseverance.
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The Jewish world was shocked by Hitler's appointment as chancellor on January 3, 1933. It found it hard to comprehend how a nation as cultured as the Germans could embrace Nazism and elevate a demagogue like Hitler to the helm of government. I will not attempt in this study to summarize world Jewish reaction to the events which led to Hitler's appointment and the effect it had, particularly on the German Jewish community. Rather, I will limit the study to an analysis of the reaction of the Yiddish speaking segment of the American Jewish community to the events in Germany and an assessment of the situation as it was mirrored in the Yiddish daily press of the period.

To better understand why I chose to study American Yiddish press reaction, it is necessary to discuss this segment of the American Jewish community and the Yiddish language press.

Beginning with the eighties of the past century, east European Jews began to flock to the shores of the United States in ever growing numbers. Some immigrants sought political freedom and escape from persecution. Others came to the Goldine Amerike in search of better economic opportunities. Over two million east European Jews had arrived in the United States prior to the enactment of the Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1924. These immigrants constituted a majority of the Jewish
community and imprinted on it the powerful stamp of eastern Europe's Yiddish language and culture. They founded the "Jewish" labor unions and were active in various Jewish cultural, benevolent, and political organizations. With the passage of time, they became active in various secular organizations as well.¹

The Yiddish newspapers, as Mordecai Soltes pointed out in his study, occupied an important position as molders of Jewish public opinion. Their news columns, feature articles, and editorials contained a wealth of information concerning current Jewish events, Jewish life, and culture. They mirrored and gave expression to Jewish public opinion on matters of concern to American and world Jewry.² The importance of the Yiddish newspaper to its readers can be gleaned from the following recollection of a Jewish immigrant about the Yiddish press. He states: "Everyone reads a Yiddish paper, even those who knew little more than alef-bet. There were seldom many books in the average immigrant's home, but the Yiddish paper came in every day. After dinner our family would read some interesting items aloud. Not to take a paper was to confess you were a barbarian. For ordinary Jews who worked in the shops or ran little stores, the Yiddish paper was their tie, perhaps only tie, with the outside world."³

The New York City daily press was chosen for analysis because New York City was the major center of the American Yiddish press and of Yiddish culture in the United States. In addition, here the press was born at the end of the nineteenth century and here it continued to develop and mature in the twentieth century. Jews throughout the United States subscribed to at least one New York City Yiddish newspaper or to one of
its local editions. The Forward, for instance, published nine local and regional editions in 1932. The New York City Yiddish press also set the tone for the various local Yiddish language papers. The Yiddish press began to suffer from a decline in circulation in the period following World War I. This decline may be attributed in part to the drastic reduction in the number of Yiddish speaking immigrants who arrived in the United States after 1921. Nevertheless, if one takes into consideration the fact that the actual number of readers of newspapers is considerably greater than the total number of copies which are sold, one must conclude that a considerable number of individuals continued to read the Yiddish press in the thirties. "The circulation figures of the Yiddish dailies," as Soltes noted in his study a decade earlier, "would have to be augmented by about seventy-five percent to obtain the actual number of readers. Thus, in 1933, based on a combined circulation of 381,242 copies of the Jewish Day (Tog), the Jewish Morning Journal (Morgen Zhornal), the Jewish Daily Forward (Forverts), and the Morning Freiheit, one can conclude that approximately two-thirds of a million individuals read Yiddish newspapers."

I have consulted the four newspapers for this study. They represent the broad spectrum of the Yiddish speaking community in the United States and present a wide range of opinion on any given issue.

The Jewish Daily Forward was established in 1897. For nearly half a century Ab. Cahan, the noted journalist and active socialist leader, served as its editor. The Forward closely identified with the Jewish labor movement and championed the rights of the workers. It demonstrated a partisan commitment to democratic socialism but was never an official
party newspaper. By contrast, the *Morning Freiheit*, which was founded in 1922, became a full-fledged Communist Party organ by 1925. Its founders included members of the Jewish section of the American Communist Party as well as former members of the Jewish Socialist Freiheit. The latter group consisted of such former noted *Forward* staffers as Olgin, Zivion, Lilliput, Buchwald, Novick, and Yuditz. They joined the Freiheit staff in 1922, following their opposition to the *Forward*'s anti-bolshevik stand. The Freiheit had a preoccupation with the class struggle and its concern with Jewish matters was limited. Therefore, the Freiheit did not provide me with much insight into the issues that are dealt with in this study. The *Jewish Day* and the *Jewish Morning Journal* were read largely by the Jewish bourgeois and intelligentsia. The *Jewish Day* was established in 1914 by a group of New York City Jewish businessmen led by Judah Magnes and Morris Weinberg and intellectuals. It aspired to be a non-partisan liberal newspaper and was read widely by the Yiddish speaking intelligentsia. In the 1930's feuding between a conservative faction led by Samuel Kargoshes, its editor, and a left pro-Stalinist element led by the assistant editor Ben Zion Goldberg considerably weakened the paper. The *Jewish Morning Journal* was founded in 1901 by Jacob Sapirstein. Its orientation was that of its founder - religiously orthodox and politically conservative. However, under the editorship of Jacob Fishman (1916-1938), the paper assumed a more liberal tone.5
Footnotes to the Introduction


4 For 1930, based on a combined circulation of 412,398 copies, the readership can be approximated to be 721,696 individuals; for 1931, based on a combined circulation of 410,085 copies, the readership can be approximated to be 717,648; for 1932, based on a combined circulation of 399,984 copies, the readership can be approximated to be 699,972. For circulation statistics of a given year see the appropriate year of Ayer Directory (of) Newspapers, Magazines, and Trade Publications (Philadelphia: Ayer Press [etc.] 1880- ); Soltes, The Yiddish Press, pp. 191-192.

The German people felt frustrated and humiliated by the defeat they suffered at the hands of the Allies in World War I. The imposition of a peace treaty upon the Germans, which they considered to be harsh and unjust, aroused indignation. The severity of the territorial and disarmament provisions acerbated this feeling. Even more so, Germans found the so-called "war guilt" clause (Article 231) very humiliating. It formally placed the responsibility for the war on Germany and its allies and imposed on Germany the burden of paying reparations. As a result, the Germans sensed they were "pariahs in a hostile world."1

The German Workers Party was one of a number of extremist political groups which sprang up in Germany as a result of the discontent in Germany following the war. In 1920, Adolf Hitler assumed the leadership of the party and reorganized, reoriented, and renamed it. The party platform issued that year was purportedly designed to ameliorate post war conditions.2 It appealed to the insecure, displaced, and power hungry elements of German society. The ground was ripe in Germany for the introduction of Nazi theories and proposals. Germans did not wish to accept the blame for the war. They rather chose to accept the contention that the war had not been lost on the battlefield but rather on the home front as a result of the treachery of non-German elements,
particularly the Jews. Some Germans shared the Nazi contempt for the democratic process and felt Germany needed a leader who would raise Germany to her rightful place of world dominance. The Nazis succeeded in attracting people from all walks of life to their camp by demagogic appeals to latent hatreds and antisemitic feelings, anticommunist diatribes, and attacks on the Versailles Treaty.

Adolf Hitler, one of the founding fathers of the Nazi party, was a rabid antisemite. His hatred of the Jew was boundless. The Jews, in his view, were the only enemy of the German people. No compromises could be made with them. Hitler clearly indicated in his work Mein Kampf that he would be fulfilling God's will if he would eliminate the Jews from German life. His antisemitic philosophy permeated the National Socialist movement, and it became one of the most virulent components of the movement's ideology. Antisemitism, in a sense, became the "emotional foundation of the National Socialist movement."

The Nazis used antisemitism as one vehicle to attract people to their ranks. They portrayed the Jew as the enemy of the German people and advanced themselves as the saviour of the Germans from this enemy. The Jew thus became a scapegoat upon whom the blame for all evil and abuses was poured. The Nazis succeeded in portraying the Jew as the sole enemy of the German people because of the universality of the Jew. He was represented in every phase of German life and in almost all groups of German society. Therefore, he could be easily singled out and made conspicuous by invective. The Jews thus bore the blame for all the excesses and evils perpetrated by the German political, military, and industrial leaders who pushed the country into the war. It was they
who wanted the war and not the German people and leaders. The invincible
German army had been stabbed in the back by the Jews. The German people,
therefore, should not feel frustrated and humiliated by the defeat they
suffered at the hands of the Allies. The Nazis also blamed the Jews
for causing the post-war economic and political chaos in Germany. They
proposed to wage battle against the Jews and exterminate them.\(^5\)

The Nazi program adopted on the 25th of February 1920 was super­
ficial, having been deliberately designed to attract diverse elements of
the population to its ranks, e.g. antisemites, the lower middle class,
pan-Germans, etc. Its planks won the approval of antisemites because
they stipulated that Jews by virtue of the fact that they lacked German
blood could not become members of the German nation and citizens of the
Reich. As non-citizens they could live in Germany only as guests and be
subject to the "alien laws." As a result, the Jews would be disenfran­
chised and would be barred from holding public office. Also, as non­
citizens they would be excluded from the Reich at times when it became
impossible to "nourish the entire population of the state," in order to
"promote the industry and livelihood of the citizens of the state." The
program also proposed the expulsion of all Jews who entered Germany after
August 2, 1914. This proposal was directed primarily at the east
European Jews residing in Germany. Not only did the Nazi party aim to
isolate the Jews politically, but it also sought to sever their ties with
all aspects of German culture and particularly the press.

The lower middle class elements and wage earners also found the
Nazi program attractive because it committed the party to create and
preserve a healthy middle class. Also, the Nazi party was cognizant of
the wishes of the petty shopkeepers and small businessmen when it called for the "communalization of the big stores and their transfer, at moderate prices, to small entrepeneurs." It hoped to whet the appetite of the wage earner by demanding that "workers be permitted to share the profits of industry."

More than any other political party, the Nazi Party in its program beat the nationalistic drum. It called for the abrogation of the Versailles Treaty. Moreover, it demanded the union of all Germans in a Greater Germany on the basis of the right of all peoples to self-determination.

By the mid-twenties the German people's interest in the Nazi party began to wane, and a noticeable decline in support of the party became evident. It was banned following the abortive beer-hall putsch of November 8, 1923, and disintegrated into rival factions during Hitler's imprisonment. In 1925, shortly after his release, Hitler was given permission to refound the Nazi Party. However, the period of 1924-1928 was one of relative political and economic stability. Therefore, the Nazi Party grew slowly and made little electoral progress. It remained a fringe group and did not pose a threat to the Republic. Internal developments, however, prepared the Nazi Party for the role it would play during the next decade and a half. The Nazi leadership set about establishing a nationwide cadre organization. Hitler emerged as the unchallenged leader of the Party.

A period of economic distress and mass unemployment, however, began in Germany in 1929. The German electorate, as in 1920-1923 under
similar circumstances, turned to the radical parties for leadership. The Nazi Party reaped the greatest benefit from this development. It drew its greatest support from the disillusioned youth and the frightened peasantry and middle class because it was widely believed in these circles that only the Nazi Party could offer a cure for Germany's ills. As a result, Nazi membership rose from 100,000 to 210,000 between October, 1928 and March, 1933. In addition, the Nazi Party made strong gains in the municipal and state elections that were held in 1929 and 1930. In Coburg they won a majority in the municipal government. On January 14, 1930 Wilhelm Frick, a participant in the 1923 putsch, became Minister of Education and Interior in Thuringia as a result of the Nazi victory in that province. The results of these elections left little doubt that the Nazi Party had become a potential threat to the German Republic.

The acid test of this trend towards an ever increasing number of votes cast for the Nazi Party came in the national election that was held on September 14, 1930. This election took place following a bitter pre-election campaign, during which much violence occurred. In the numerous clashes between the Communists and the Nazis many people were killed or wounded. Many Communist and Fascist supporters were arrested for acts of violence. Antisemitism played a dominant role in the Nazi campaign. Hugenberg's Nationalist Party, like the Nazi Party, included antisemitic planks in its platform. Many other political parties were covertly or overtly antisemitic. They had no qualms in resorting to antisemitic tactics to attract the masses. Some political parties tried to prove that they were "Judenrein" and that they had no ties with Jews. Even the democratic press, which was sympathetic to the Jews,
did not speak out in their defense. The press feared that they would cause the loss of votes for the democratic parties if they took a pro-Jewish stance. The Yiddish press reported that political observers had no doubt that extreme groups at both ends of the political spectrum would gain ground as a result of the elections.\textsuperscript{10} It shared this view. The \textit{Morning Journal}, for example, predicted that the "fascists" would occupy fifty seats in the newly elected Reichstag as compared to the twelve seats they had occupied previously. It predicted a smaller gain for the Communist Party. No major change was foreseen in the strength of either the Social Democratic Party or the Catholic Centre Party. However, it predicted a loss for Hugenberg's Nationalist Party.\textsuperscript{11} The predictions underestimated the pro-Nazi sentiment in Germany. The Nazis achieved a greater victory than had been forecast. They received 18.3 percent of the total vote and seated 107 out of the 577 delegates. The election returns stunned the world. The Nazis, too, were surprised by the overwhelming support they received. A mood of gloom settled over the progressive elements in Germany. This election was of major significance because it confirmed the fact that the German electorate was becoming radicalized. The swelling of the ranks of the Reichstag with deputies opposed to parliamentary government dealt a death blow to an already weakened system. These developments opened the door to dictatorship in Germany.\textsuperscript{12}

No national elections were held in 1931. However, the results of the various state and municipal elections held in the course of the year clearly indicated that the trend toward radicalism, which was evident from the election returns in 1930, was continuing. Both the Communist
and Nazi parties made substantial gains in the local and state elections which were held in 1931. The Nazis received on the average 34.1 percent of the votes cast in the diet elections held in the course of the year in the States of Schaumberg-Lippe, Oldenburg, Hamburg, Anhalt, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and Hesse. The Nazi victories took on added significance in light of the fact that there were only 156,000 declared Nazi voters. The election returns clearly were indicative of the great ground swell of support for the Nazis. The number of Nazi sympathizers reportedly grew 60-70 percent in the course of the year. The Social Democrats still remained the largest political party. Lestschinsky, a reporter for the Forward, in commenting on the election returns in Oldenburg pointed out that the Social Democrats suffered heavy losses in rural areas where the tendency toward radicalism had become pronounced among the peasants. The Social Democrats continued to draw support from the labor class in the urban centers. The Nazi Party, on the other hand, began to draw heavy support from the peasant and other middle class groups. Many people from these classes abandoned their old political parties and lent their support to the Nazi Party because they believed that only the Nazi Party could save Germany. The Communist Party primarily gained additional support from elements in the labor ranks who had become disaffected with the Social Democratic Party.

Prussia, the largest of the German states, held the key to the survival of democracy and freedom in Germany. There was no doubt that for democracy to survive there, the Social Democratic - Centre Party coalition led by Otto Braun had to retain its control over the government. Indeed, precisely because of the fact that Prussia was a
bulwark of German democracy, extremists of the right and left, capitalizing on the detrimental effects of the financial crises on Germany and bolstered by their victories in the various elections, joined forces and attempted to topple this democratic stronghold through a plebiscite calling for the dissolution of the Prussian Landtag. The plebiscite was scheduled to be held on August 4th, 1931. The extremists suffered a defeat in the plebiscite. Only 37 percent of the votes cast favored the dissolution of the Braun regime in Prussia.  

The political developments in 1931 clearly indicated that the extremists of the right and of the left continued their attempts to gain a foothold in German politics. They succeeded despite occasional setbacks. This was particularly true with regard to the Nazi Party. In spite of the various setbacks which the Nazi Party suffered in the course of the year, e.g. the Stennes revolt which culminated in the expulsion of this faction from the party, the discovery of the Boxheim documents which set down elaborate plans for a terrorist regime after a Nazi coup, and the defeat of the Nazi sponsored plebiscite in Prussia, the Nazis remained a force in German political life. They continued to strive to overthrow the Brüning regime and take over the reins of government. To this end Hitler and Hugenberg, the leader of the Nationalists, met in the summer of 1931 to revive the cooperation between their respective parties which had begun with the Young Plan campaign of 1929. Subsequently, on October 11, 1931, a united front of all right wing parties was established at Bad-Harzburg. They passed a resolution which states, in effect, that "the parties of the Right were ready to take over the responsibility of governing the Reich and Prussia and the
other federal states." Hitler also courted the military, the large land holders and industrialists to gain their support for this movement, as well as to obtain financial and political support for his party. The alliance forged at Bad-Harzburg undoubtedly played a major role in Hitler's appointment to the chancellorship in 1933. What remained to be done was to convince President Hindenburg to remove Brüning from office. Indeed, Hindenburg did meet with Hitler in October. Hitler outlined the aims and goals of the Nazi Party to the President at this meeting. The meeting, however, was not a success.19

The year 1932 proved to be a year of great political instability in Germany. The governments headed respectively by Brüning, von Papen, and von Schleicher fell. Two Reichstag elections were held in the course of the year. In addition, Hindenburg's term as president expired and a new election had to be held. Hitler suffered a setback when he was defeated in his bid for the presidency. The growth of the Nazi Party in the closing days of the year seemed to be at a standstill. Pro-Nazi sentiment in Germany seemed to be waning. All of these events left their mark on German life and had a profound effect on the German Jewish community.

One of the major political events of the year was the presidential election. Hindenburg's seven year term expired on May 5th. Various political factions that considered themselves friendly to the Republic, e.g. Social Democrats and Centrists, deemed it essential that Hindenburg continue in office. They dreaded the thought of an election at this time. The Reich could not afford an election. Also, and more important, political extremism was rampant throughout Germany. Hitler, for example, continued to mount an intensive campaign against the Weimar government
The outcome of the election, if held, could be disastrous. Therefore, Chancellor Brüning proposed, in light of Hindenburg’s advanced age, that the Reichstag be asked to approve a temporary extension of Hindenburg’s term of office. The proposal required legislation in the form of an amendment to the constitution. A two-thirds majority vote of approval by the Reichstag was necessary for passage. Therefore, Brüning had to seek the support of the Nationalists and National Socialists. Early in January Brüning approached Alfred Hugenberg and Adolf Hitler and sought their support. Both rejected his proposal. The Day reported that Hugenberg rejected Brüning’s proposal because he believed an endorsement implied a vote of confidence for the Brüning regime. He felt that he could not support the present regime because it no longer represented the German people. Hitler, too, rejected the proposal for similar reasons. He believed that an extension of the President’s term was a violation of the constitution. The present Reichstag, in his opinion, did not give voice to the will of the people it purportedly represented. Hitler charged that the present regime was anxious to postpone the election in order not to jeopardize its political position. Brüning tried to persuade Hitler to change his position. He pleaded that it was ill advised to hold an election now because negotiations regarding reparations might fail. Hitler remained intransigent. Elections were set for the 13th of March.

Five people threw their hats into the ring and declared their candidacy for the presidency. They were: the incumbent, President Paul von Hindenburg; Ernst Thälmann, leader of the Communist Party; Theodor Duesterberg, representing the Stalhelm and the Nationalists; Adolf Hitler of the Nazi Party; Adolf Gustav Winter, representing a small splinter
group. Hitler had recently become a citizen of the Reich due to his becoming an official of the government of Thuringia. As a citizen of the Reich he was eligible to be a presidential candidate.²³

The Nazis used the campaign to agitate against the Jews and their supporters. The Wölkischer Beobachter, for example, expressed the view that only Germans who would vote for candidates not supported by Jews would demonstrate that they possessed pure German blood. Therefore, Hindenburg was not a true German because he did not reject Jewish support.²⁴ In the Reichstag, Josef Goebbels mocked the Jewish sympathy for Hindenburg and chided: "Tell me who your friends are and then I know who you are."²⁵ It is interesting to note in this connection that, precisely because of the desire to deny the Hitlerists an opportunity to claim that the movement supportive of Hindenburg's candidacy was Jewish, the non-partisan committee in Berlin to nominate Hindenburg had few Jewish members on it.²⁶ The campaign material distributed by the Nazis included frightful antisemitic literature and caricatures of well known German Jewish bankers. Their platform reiterated the antisemitic planks in the official program.²⁷ The Nazis, in effect, sought to choke the Jews economically and force them out of Germany. Just prior to the elections the Nazis toned down their anti-Jewish agitation in the major urban centers. They did not take advantage of the lifting of the ban on street demonstrations to raise the Jewish question. However, the Nazis did intensify their anti-Jewish campaign in the provincial cities.²⁸ The Yiddish press reported that Jews fled from the provincial cities en masse because they feared outbreaks of violence on election day. Some Jews, and even non-Jews, left the country for a week because they feared bloody
riots following the election. In Berlin, the Chief of Police issued a statement in which he indicated that the Nazis planned to riot following Sunday's election, should they be defeated. He indicated that the police would be ready and would suppress any Nazi attempt to disrupt order in the city. 29

Hindenburg failed by four-tenths of one percent to secure an absolute majority, as required by the constitution, in order for him to be declared President. Therefore, run-off elections were set for April 10th. The Nazis were not disheartened by Hitler's failure to win the election. The Party had gained almost five million new supporters since the Reichstag election of 1930. They looked forward to an even greater victory in the forthcoming election and, therefore, attached great importance to it. 30

Only Hindenburg, Hitler, and Thälmann were candidates in the run-off election. Political analysts, according to reports in the press, again predicted that Hindenburg would win. The question which remained to be answered by the election, in their view, was whether Hitler would be able to garner more votes. Specifically, would Germans who had voted for Duesterberg now vote for Hitler? These analysts attached great importance to the run-off election since it could serve as a barometer of pro-Nazi sentiment. Hindenburg won the election as predicted. However, Hitler and the Nazi Party, in defeat, emerged victorious. Whereas Hindenburg gained 698,000 votes, the Nazis showed a growth of two million supporters in less than a month. The result of the presidential run-off election confirmed the strong pro-Nazi sentiment in Germany. It bolstered the Nazi spirit for the impending elections in Prussia and other states.
of the Reich. 31

The state diet elections scheduled to take place on April 24th would again place Nazi strength and support to the test. In their campaign the Nazis, as usual, made no definite commitments. They led each of their prospective supporters to believe he would get what he wanted if the Nazi candidates won. When the votes were tallied, the Nazis emerged as the largest political party in Prussia, Hamburg, Anhalt, and Württemberg. In Bavaria, the Nazis scored a great victory too. They were second only to the Bavarian Volks Partei. The tremendous success that the Nazis scored can best be understood if we bear in mind that the five aforementioned states comprised four-fifths of the Reich. The state elections clearly established the Nazi Party as a political force. 32

The predilection of the German people for right wing political parties, the desire to come to terms with the Nazis, and the growing political isolation of the Jews became more evident to readers of the Yiddish press as the political events in the latter half of the year began to unfold.

Chancellor Brüning did not enjoy success at home or abroad. He failed on the international scene in his attempts to resolve the reparation payment question. He also did not succeed in bringing about a resolution of Germany's demand for parity in armaments. The situation on the home front was also bleak. Close to six million people were unemployed. The budget deficit was astronomical. Although a no confidence motion offered by the opposition parties was defeated in the Reichstag on May 12th 1932, opposition to Brüning and his policies
continued to mount. Schleicher, Head of the Reichswehr, plotted against the Chancellor. He warned President Hindenburg that the Chancellor's policies were socialistic. Noted Ruhr industrialists raised similar objections to Brüning's economic and social policies. Schleicher also warned the President that Brüning could not control and contain the Nazis. In light of the mounting pressure, the President asked Brüning to resign. On May 30th Brüning complied with the President's request. He thus became the first Chancellor in Germany to resign because he had lost the President's confidence. His resignation set the stage for presidential absolutism as a basic feature of German political life.33

According to the reports in the Day, President Hindenburg in his official announcement pertaining to Brüning's resignation declared that the Chancellor resigned because his regime no longer represented the German electorate. The results of recent German elections pointed to the fact that a growing number of German voters had a predilection for right wing political parties and supported their policies and candidates.34

Hindenburg chose Franz von Papen, Schleicher's new protegé, to succeed Brüning. Von Papen was of aristocratic stock and a member of the ultra-conservative wing of the Centre Party. He did not favor the Republic and condemned his party comrades' practice of collaborating with socialists and liberals. Schleicher laid the ground for von Papen's appointment. He met with the Nazis prior to Brüning's resignation and discussed with them his plans to bring about the Chancellor's resignation. Schleicher promised the Nazis that the new cabinet would be comprised of individuals who would be loyal to Hindenburg. Schleicher also promised the Nazis that
the ban on the S.A. would be lifted, the Reichstag would be dissolved, and new elections would be held. He assured the Nazis that they would be allowed to run their pre-election campaign without restrictions. In turn, the Nazis promised Schleicher that they would tolerate Brüning's successor. The Nazis hoped that they would gain the upper hand as a result of the new election. Schleicher understood the Nazi motivation in accepting his plan. He was bent on foiling their attempt to control the government. Schleicher was so confident of success that he assured the President that the government which would succeed Brüning would either control the Nazis or destroy them.35

Von Papen filled his cabinet with titled reactionaries from the Berlin Herrenklub, militarists, and industrialists. Many members of the new cabinet had been active nationalists under Hugenberg. The new cabinet was dubbed the "cabinet of aristocrats" in Berlin political circles. The reaction to the new cabinet was generally not favorable. The Centre, Social Democratic, and Communist parties voiced opposition to the new regime. They were not represented in the cabinet. The Nazis, too, were absent from the cabinet. However, it was expected that they would support von Papen. Many members of the cabinet were friendly to Hitler and sympathetic to his party. Hitler was, therefore, expected to have an influence on the policies of the new regime.36 Hindenburg approved of the new cabinet. His action clearly violated the mandate to protect the Republic given to him by democratic elements in Germany when they supported his candidacy for President. There was now no doubt that Hindenburg was completely under the thumb of the Junkers and militarists. He clung, like them, to the old Prussian ideals of authority, hierarchy,
and discipline. The President's action vis-à-vis von Papen and his
cabinet was politically acceptable and could be justified on the ground
that vast numbers of Germans now supported right wing parties and their
political philosophies.

The question that remained unanswered was whether the Papen
regime would succeed in controlling the Nazis and perhaps even destroying
their movement. The political situation remained fluid. A Nazi triumph
was not inevitable. The Centre Party publicly disavowed von Papen, and
his cabinet generally lacked partisan support. The Day reported that
according to some political analysts, the only way that von Papen could
succeed in his struggle with the Nazis would be if he would join forces
with Hugenberg and the Nationalists and pursue a conservative policy.
Such a policy would take the wind out of the Nazi sails. Conservatism
would then flourish in Germany at the expense of Nazism. 37

Von Papen immediately set about to win Hitler's support and cooper­
atlon by fulfilling the promises made by Schleicher to the Nazis. Toward
this end the new cabinet requested that the Reichstag be dissolved and
new elections be held. The cabinet justified their request on the ground
that the present Reichstag, in light of the recent Landtag elections, no
longer represented the people. Hindenburg dissolved the Reichstag on
June 4, 1932. Elections were set for July 31. 38 In addition, von Papen
lifted the ban on the S.A. and S.S., albeit after some delay. The Nazis
were given a free hand to conduct their pre-election campaign without many
restrictions. The government also rescinded the ban against the use of
the radio for campaigning purposes. The latter concession, in particular,
disturbed the Jews because it enabled the Nazis to disseminate their antisemitic invective widely and rapidly.\textsuperscript{39}

The concessions to the Nazis raised fears in liberal political circles that von Papen would eradicate all vestiges of democracy and replace the present system of government with an authoritarian dictatorship. These fears were realized when von Papen deposed the Braun-Svering coalition government in Prussia and placed Prussia under the control of the central government. Von Papen hoped by so doing to bolster his political position, but did not succeed. Rather, he dealt a fatal blow to the Republic and paved the way for the Nazi take over of power in 1933.\textsuperscript{40}

A report in the \textit{Day} prior to the \textit{coup d'état} in Prussia indicated that German public opinion had begun to cool toward the von Papen regime on account of von Papen's concessions to the Nazis. His removal of the popular regime in Prussia undoubtedly only helped intensify animosities towards his regime. This accounts, at least in part, for the reported intensification of the campaign for elections to the Reichstag then in full swing. Political murder and assault on an unprecedented scale were reported from every part of the country. These disturbances were, as in the past campaign, highlighted by clashes between Nazis and Communists. The Nazis' antisemitic campaign was as virulent as ever. Nazi hooligans beat Jews in the streets and continued to desecrate Jewish cemeteries. Rumors abounded that the Nazis planned to establish a quota for Jewish students. The Nazi platform included planks which called for the confiscation of Jewish property and the arrest and detainment in concentration camps of "useless citizens." However, Gregor Strasser, a leading figure
in the Nazi Party, in a campaign address on June 14th said: "... We Hitlerists do not advocate civil or class hatred. We will not persecute the Jews, but we will not allow the Jews and Jewish capitalists to pull strings behind the scenes." Some political observers, according to the Yiddish press, interpreted this remark as an indication that there would be a change in the Nazi policy toward the Jews. Subsequent Nazi deeds and pronouncements vis-à-vis the Jews proved that these observers erred in their assessment.41

On July 31, 1932, the German people went to the polls and handed the von Papen regime a colossal defeat. The parties that supported the government, namely the Nationalists and the People's Party, held only forty-four seats out of six hundred and eight. The Nazi Party now more than doubled the number of seats they held in the Reichstag since 1930: two hundred thirty as compared to one hundred seven. It was the largest party represented in the Reichstag, but it did not have a majority to rule without a coalition.

Hitler demanded that he be appointed Chancellor, but von Papen did not wish to turn over the reins of government to him. He hoped to bring Hitler into a government of his design. By so doing he expected to control Hitler and capitalize on the popularity of his party. Therefore, both he and Schleicher attempted in August to persuade Hitler to accept the post of Vice-Chancellor. Hindenburg supported von Papen's position.

The Centrists at this time entertained a proposal that they join in a coalition government to be formed by the Nazis. They felt that if they supported Hitler they would be in a position to dictate conditions
concerning the formation of a new cabinet and be able to preserve the parliamentary character of the Reichstag. Nothing materialized from these negotiations.42

The Nazis were dissatisfied with the government's position. Joseph Goebbels paper Angriff gave voice to the great dissatisfaction within the Nazi Party regarding the government's position and pledged that the party would fight to the bitter end in order to achieve its goal. It stated: "If the government would not be given over to us, we would have but one reply; a battle to the bitter end. There is no doubt who would emerge victorious from this battle."43 Those within the Nazi Party who espoused this view argued that, if Hitler would not take over the government by force now, he would lose the opportunity to govern forever. They pointed out that the efforts by the von Papen regime to secure for Germany the right to arm herself like other nations and the government's success regarding voiding reparation payments had already stolen much of Hitler's thunder. Economic conditions in Germany were bound to improve slowly but steadily. The likelihood of Hitler breaking the Catholic and labor fronts was slim. Therefore, Hitler must not tarry. He must act decisively and seize control of the government. More moderate elements within the party, including Gregor Strasser, urged Hitler to reach an agreement with von Papen in order to save the Nazi movement. Hitler on the one hand did not heed the advice of Strasser and others who urged him to compromise. Rather, he insisted during his meeting with President Hindenburg on August 13, 1932 that he could accept nothing less than the "full and complete leadership of government and state for himself and his party." Yet, on the other hand, he rejected the suggestion to seize
control of the government by force. Thus, the only course left open to the Nazi Party was to remain outside of the government and to seek to come to power legally. 44

On August 30th, the newly elected Reichstag convened. Hermann Göring, Hitler's right hand man and a rabid antisemite, was elected its president. The Centre Party supported his candidacy for the Reichstag post. The Social Democrats and Communists opposed him. The Social Democrats based their opposition on moral grounds. In their opinion, any individual who opposed the parliamentary form of government and advocated its overthrow had no right to demand for himself parliamentary rights and privileges, e.g. the presidency. 45

The Reichstag held its first working session on September 12th, but remained in session only one day. It was dissolved by presidential decree following a futile attempt by von Papen to prevent a vote of no confidence against his government. New elections were set for November 6th.

The debate in the course of the session that day clearly demonstrated that the von Papen regime had no partisan support. The Nazi Party too, in spite of earlier pledges to support the regime, now was hostile. 46 The Jews, as in the past, became a vehicle through which the Nazis attacked the government. The Nazis tried to give the impression that the von Papen government was controlled and run by Jews. They charged that von Papen consulted daily with Jakob Goldschmidt, a noted Jewish banker who had been the president of the defunct Darmstadter und Nationalbank (Danat). It was he who advised von Papen to dissolve the Reichstag and cut workers' wages. These charges were published in the Angriff and were voiced by Joseph
Goebbels on several occasions. The Nazi Party included these accusations in their campaign proclamation. It read in part as follows: "Down with Papen, Hugenberg, and their Jewish helpers who have caused hunger, have made Calician speculators rich, and have put out the Jewish bastard Duesterberg as a German presidential candidate." The Nazis also charged in this proclamation that the Jewish press supported von Papen because he had given them great power. 

According to reports in the Yiddish press, in the closing months of 1932 some political observers began to claim that the Nazi movement was nearing the end of its line. They based their observation, in part, on the results of the various elections which had been held recently in Germany. The Nazi Party showed little growth since the Presidential election. Also, the party showed a gain of only one percent in some of the local elections held during May and August. The Nazis even lost handily in some municipal elections that took place during the month of October. These observers had no doubts that this trend would continue. Some even predicted that the Nazi losses in the forthcoming Reichstag election would be as high as fifty percent. Even Göring conceded that the Nazi Party expected to receive fewer votes in the November election. Political observers also believed that the financial crises, which the party faced as a result of the withdrawal of financial support from the party by noted German industrialists, was bound to have a dire effect on the party and its further growth. Further, in their view, the divisiveness in the party, which stemmed primarily from Hitler's refusal to seize control of the Federal government by force and led to defections from the Nazi ranks, would have a detrimental effect on the Party. The Nazi
Party found the policies pursued by the von Papen regime to be a formidable challenge. Von Papen succeeded in drawing support from the Nazi camp by usurping some of Hitler's proposed programs and by assuming a nationalistic and, to a degree, an anti-Jewish posture. His regime addressed itself to such international issues as rearmament and reparations, with a measure of success. These issues were keystones in the Nazi platform. Thus, von Papen succeeded in taking the wind out of the Nazi sails.  

The pre-election campaign had strong antisemitic undertones. There was evidence of growing antisemitism even among the leftist parties, which in the past had been supportive of the Jews. They now agitated against the Jews under the pretext that the Jewish bourgeois approved of the von Papen regime and the steps it had taken to cut workers' wages.

The Nazi campaign, too, was virulently antisemitic. It sought to tarnish the prestige of the Nationalists and that of the von Papen regime by portraying them as pro-Jewish. In an attempt to discredit the Nationalists, the Nazis distributed a forged circular in which the Central Verein purportedly appealed to the Jews to vote for the Nationalists. The Nationalists denied the Nazi allegation pertaining to their ties with the Jews. The von Papen regime was portrayed as being under the thumb of the Jews. The Nazi Party distributed posters which portrayed von Papen sitting in the company of noted German Jewish bankers. Hitler and other Nazis continued to charge that Jakob Goldschmidt controlled the von Papen government and was therefore in a position to do with Germany and its people as he desired. The Day reported that the Wölkischer Beobachter appealed to the German people to overthrow the Papen regime.
because it let itself be dominated by Jakob Goldschmidt and other Jews. According to this report, the Völkscher Beobachter compared present day Germany to medieval Germany and noted the change that had taken place. In the past each court had its court Jews. Now the opposite was true. The Jews had control of the court. In the course of the campaign, the Nazis also called for pogroms on the Jews in order to save Germany from their hands. The leaders of the Nazi campaign also tried to draw people into their camp by organizing an anti-Jewish boycott. They threatened patrons of Jewish businesses and tried to discourage them further by preparing lists of such patrons. The lists would be used later, presumably for retaliatory purposes. Also, the Nazis intensified the campaign to abolish ritual slaughter in Germany. Numerous anti-ritual slaughter bills were introduced in local legislative bodies, and some measures even won approval.

As predicted, Nazi strength continued to wane. Close to two million Germans withdrew their support from the Nazi Party. As a result, the Nazis lost thirty-four seats. The hope to take power via a parliamentary majority was dashed. Von Papen had succeeded in turning back the Nazi tide. The Communist Party continued to gain support. Hugenberg's Nationalists, who supported von Papen, gained eleven seats. Von Papen's position was strengthened by the election, but it was clear that the majority of German voters disapproved of the presidential dictatorship. Von Papen controlled only ten percent of the seats in the Reichstag. He could remain in power only if he were to continue to govern by presidential decree. Should he opt to pursue this course of action, parliamentary government in Germany would be doomed. On the other hand, he could try
to form a national coalition and attempt to reach agreement with the Nazis. Von Papen opted to pursue the former course of action. The incumbent ministers and von Schleicher opposed von Papen's decision. Schleicher began to plot against his protégé. He blamed the Papen-Hugenberg clique for the growth of the Communist Party in Germany during the past few months.

Von Papen was forced to resign as chancellor on November 17th. Hindenburg met with the leaders of the major political parties in order to explore with each leader his plans to form a government should he ask them to do so. Hitler, as head of the largest political party, was among those who were invited by Hindenburg. The press reported that Hindenburg offered the chancellorship to Hitler on the following conditions:

1. He would have to obtain pledges of support from various political factions in order to demonstrate that he commanded the support of a majority in the Reichstag.

2. He would have to pledge to continue von Papen's economic and foreign policies.

3. He would agree to allow the President to have the final say regarding the composition of the new cabinet. These conditions would clearly limit Hitler's power as chancellor and make him dependent on the President. Hitler remained as intransigent as ever and insisted on full control of the government. Hindenburg sensed that Hitler was bent on establishing a National Socialist dictatorship and rejected Hitler's candidacy. On December 2, 1932, Hindenburg invited Kurt von Schleicher to form a government. He reluctantly accepted the President's invitation.
Schleicher, unlike Papen, had no organized political following of his own. He, therefore, opened negotiations with the major political and economic groups in Germany in order to establish a broad social foundation for his cabinet. He offered the Vice-Chancellorship to Gregor Strasser, in hopes he would succeed in bringing the Nazis into his camp. Strasser lobbied within the Nazi camp for cooperation with the new regime and acceptance of Schleicher's offer. This was the only way, in his view, that the Nazi Party could hope to salvage anything before it was too late.  

The Yiddish press advanced several arguments in support of Strasser's position. Firstly, there was divisiveness within the party. Reportedly, some leaders had resigned. Gottfried Feder, the leading theoretician of the Nazi Party and one of its founders who headed its economic department, tendered his resignation following its closing. Secondly, some former socialists and communists who had joined the Nazi Party concluded, on the basis of recent pronouncements by Hitler that he and the Nazi Party had not been serious about the "socialist" planks which were part of the official party program. Hitler would have to alienate the Junkers and industrialists upon whom he depended for financial support if he were to implement these proposals. The nobility certainly would not acquiesce, for example, to the division of their estates among the peasants and urban poor. Therefore, many of these people began to defect from the party, and they withdrew their support.  

Thirdly, the Nazi Party continued to be plagued by financial difficulties. Many S.A. troopers who were dependent on the party for sustenance grew restive when the party failed to meet its commitment to them. Numerous
local rebellions occurred as a result and desertions from the S.A. were reported. Fourthly, the Nazi Party also continued to lose support at the polls. It suffered setbacks in elections that were held in Bremen, Hamburg, and Thuringia. The setback in Thuringia was particularly sobering because the Nazis had been in control of the government for a relatively long period.

The Nazi Party rejected Schleicher's offer. Hitler refused to cooperate with the government. Therefore, Schleicher now attempted to bring about a split in the Nazi Party by wooing Strasser into his camp. He hoped that if Strasser and his supporters within the Nazi camp would defect, the Nazi Party would be considerably weakened. Strasser did indeed resign from the party, but his resignation did not have the desired effect. Schleicher also failed to gain the support of the industrialists and Junkers. The industrialists opposed his wage and anti-inflationary policies. They believed his programs would place a heavy burden on their shoulders. The Junkers opposed his agrarian policies. Pressure was brought on the President to remove Schleicher from office.

Von Papen capitalized on the opposition to Schleicher. He turned the tables on his mentor and plotted against him in the hopes of returning to power. The former chancellor believed that the formation of a government of national concentration was necessary. He was also convinced that he could control the Nazis within the framework of such a government. Von Papen, therefore, arranged to meet secretly with Hitler. The meeting took place on January 4th, 1933, in the home of the Cologne banker, Kurt von Schroder. The Harzburg front was reconstituted.
Von Papen also succeeded in eliciting a pledge from Hitler to support a government of national concentration. Hitler did not demand the chancellorship as a condition for joining the proposed coalition. However, following the Nazi victory in the elections held in Lippe on January 15th, Hitler changed his mind. He informed von Papen that he would oppose any government that he did not head. Hindenburg and Hugenberg objected vigorously to Hitler's designs. Therefore, when Schleicher was forced to resign on January 28th, 1933, they proposed that von Papen be appointed chancellor. Von Papen, on the other hand, supported Hitler's candidacy. He worked out a compromise proposal that would remove the objections raised by Hindenburg and Hugenberg. It was designed to neutralize Nazi power. As proposed, the Nazis would be given three posts in the cabinet. Hitler would become chancellor. Wilhelm Frick, the Nazi Party chairman, would assume the post of Minister of Interior. Herman Göring would become Minister without portfolio. In addition, Hitler would agree to govern in a parliamentary fashion and recognize the supremacy of presidential authority. Hugenberg became Minister of Agriculture and Economics. Von Papen agreed to assume the vice chancellorship because he hoped to elevate this position to one of great importance. He, therefore, reserved the right to be present at all conferences between the Chancellor and the President. Von Papen drew on old line conservatives to fill the remaining cabinet posts. The former chancellor hoped that he would thus be able to restrain Hitler and prevent his one-sided use of power. Hindenburg agreed, albeit reluctantly, to this arrangement and appointed Hitler Chancellor on January 30th, 1933.66
Immediately upon taking office Hitler urged the President to dissolve the Reichstag and call for new elections in order for the government to achieve a broad majority in parliament. The German Nationalists at first objected to the calling of a new election at this time because the party was torn internally by strife and could hardly hope to profit from new elections. Hugenberg withdrew his objections after Hitler assured him that the outcome of the election would not affect the composition of the government. The Nationalists would retain their ministries. Hindenburg acceded to the request of the government and an election was arranged for March 5th. The government's decision strengthened the fears of the opponents of the regime that Hitler would not act within the framework of the constitution and on the basis of legality. According to a report in the Day, the German liberal Vossiche Zeitung voiced these fears. Commenting on the government's decision to call a new election, the Vossiche Zeitung stated: "The People's opposition can be reduced to silence ... Poverty, need, and hunger cannot be abolished." ... However, "freedom can be abolished, the press can be suppressed" ... and "the Jews can be expelled." 67

The Nazis used the five weeks prior to the election to set plans into motion to ensure that the election results would enable them to assume complete control of the Reich. On February 4th, 1933, the government issued the "decree for the protection of the German people." 68 While purporting to prevent a violent electoral campaign, the decree in fact granted the government widespread powers to restrict the freedom of the press and of public assembly. Under the protective umbrella of this decree, the Nazis proceeded to prevent their opponents from waging an
effective campaign. The government arrested many political leaders, particularly from the Social Democratic and Communist parties. It took steps to suppress the non-Nazi press and warned the remaining free press not to print news based on reports in the foreign press which "could harm the interest of the land." The Nazi regime prohibited public meetings. It also revoked the passports of many prominent people. The Nazi regime succeeded through these methods to create a mood of terror throughout Germany. As a result, according to reports in the Yiddish press, some Germans left Germany or began to make preparations to leave. Some individuals, for instance, rented homes near the German border. Others, particularly political leaders, reportedly made inquiries at embassies of various countries about the possibility of obtaining passports from them. Even foreign embassies began to stock up on provisions in order to be ready for every possible situation. Rumors were once more rampant that Hitler planned to become a dictator. Workers in southern Germany expressed the belief that the only deterrent now to the establishment of a dictatorship would be to reestablish a monarchy. Some foreign diplomats informed their respective governments that they were convinced by recent events that Hitler was bent on establishing a dictatorship. This feeling was shared by Germans as well.

The campaign of terror paid off. Although the Nazi Party failed to gain the necessary majority to govern independently, it nevertheless recouped its losses in the previous election. Whereas in the November 6, 1932 Reichstag election the Nazis won only 196 seats, they now won 288 seats. This was the largest number of seats held by the Nazi Party to date. There was little doubt now that a reactionary anti-republican
Following the election the Nazis proceeded with haste to establish their dictatorship. On March 6th the police forces of states with democratic governments were nazified. State parliaments were replaced by Reichskomissare, Nazi administrators, on March 10th. Shortly thereafter, on March 23rd, the Reichstag passed the Enabling Act. It granted the government the right, for four years, to enact legislation, even that which ran contrary to the Constitution, without obtaining the approval of the Reichstag. With dictatorial power now in their hands, the Nazis incorporated all public bodies and organizations into the Nazi state. They dissolved political parties and abolished all trade unions. By the end of February, 1934, all formal parliamentary and bureaucratic opposition to the Nazi Party had been abolished. Upon Hindenburg's death on August 2nd, 1934, Hitler became Führer and Reichskanzler. Hitler's dream of becoming Führer had been realized.
Footnotes to Chapter T


9. The Reichstag rejected Chancellor Brüning's attempts to implement his economic program under the emergency powers granted to the President by the Constitution (Article 48). In retaliation, Brüning dissolved the Reichstag and fixed elections for September 14th. Brüning had no qualms about governing without the consent of the Reichstag on the basis of Paragraph 48. His actions weakened the parliamentary system of government. Golo Mann, The History of Germany Since 1739 (London: Chatto and Windus, 1968), p. 399; Noakes, Documents, pp. 130-161; Bracher, The German Dictatorship, pp. 171-172.


17. Bracher, The German Dictatorship, p. 187; Morning Journal, 10 August 1931; Forward, 12 August 1931.

18. Walter Stennes, the commander of the S.A. in eastern Germany, led a revolt when Hitler remained adamant in his position not to seek control of the government by force. Noakes, Documents, pp. 119-121.


23. Ibid.


27. Forward, 1 March 1932; Day, 1 March 1932.


34. Day, 31 May 1932.


43. Quoted from the *Morning Journal*, 9 August 1932.


47. Quoted from the *Forward*, 29 September 1932.


49. *Forward*, 6 September 1932; *Forward*, 21 September 1932; *Forward*, 24 September 1932; *Forward*, 26 September 1932; *Forward*, 11 October 1932; *Day*, 13 October 1932; Noakes, *Documents*, p. 139.

50. *Forward*, 4 October 1932.


52. *Day*, 3 November 1932.


55 Halperin, Germany Tried Democracy, p. 511.

56 Day, 20 November 1932; Forward, 22 November 1932.


58 Halperin, Germany Tried Democracy, p. 518.


60 Morning Journal, 16 December 1932.

61 Morning Journal, 20 December 1932; Forward, 20 December 1932.


63 Halperin, Germany Tried Democracy, pp. 517-519.

64 Halperin, Germany Tried Democracy, p. 522; see also Noakes, Documents, pp. 141-146.

65 Göring later also assumed the post of Minister of Interior in Prussia. In this capacity, he controlled the Prussian police which was responsible for maintaining law and order in an area covering two-thirds of the Reich.

66 Halperin, Germany Tried Democracy, pp. 523-526.

67 Day, 1 February 1933.

68 The decree signed by Hindenburg on February 4th, 1933, prohibited:
1- public rallies and demonstrations which endangered public safety;
2- any type of publication whose content endangered public security and good order;
3- strikes in any vital field.
Following the Reichstag fire on the 27th of February, Hindenburg signed another decree against treason in which he suspended constitutional freedom from arrest, freedom of speech and press, assembly and association and secrecy of mail. The decree also permitted house searches without court issued warrants.

69 Noakes, Documents, pp. 175-176.
CHAPTER II
Evaluation of Hitler and Nazism, 1930-1933

The upsurge of Nazism in the early thirties and the subsequent appointment of Adolf Hitler as Chancellor in 1933 were of concern to the American Yiddish press. A close look at specific press reactions to some turning points discussed in the previous chapter, particularly to the elections held in Germany during 1930-1933, and to Hitler's rise to power, will reveal an awareness in the press that Nazism threatened the continued existence of the German Jewish community. There were, however, a wide range of opinions as to whether Nazism would succeed in taking root in Germany and if indeed Hitler would carry out his program vis-à-vis the Jews. During the period under discussion, we find that some journalists remained optimistic, while others predicted doom. Still others, depending on the fortunes of the Nazi movement at a particular juncture, vacillated between these extremes.

The correspondents of the American Yiddish press, some of whom had lived or were presently living in Germany, were familiar with Hitler's racial philosophy and the Nazi program. This is evident from the numerous articles that were published in the press about Hitler and the Nazi movement. This awareness predated the events of the thirties. Yet, when the Nazi Party scored a victory in Thuringia in 1930, the press, judging from the lack of coverage it gave to the election, seemed not to be
concerned with the turn to the right by the German people in Thuringia. I. Klinov of the Morning Journal, who witnessed the election, cautioned his readers not to conclude from these developments that Germans were generally anti-republican. The Nazi victory, in his view, could be attributed to coincidental circumstances, e.g., post-war economic conditions. 1

However, the lack of interest in Nazi inroads into German political life turned to concern following a Nazi success in Saxony and in other municipal elections; so much so, that prior to the 1930 Reichstag election, two basic questions reflecting this concern were raised and discussed in the press. The correspondents asked:

A) What effect would the continued growth of the Nazi Party have on German parliamentarianism and, more specifically, was the ground ripe for dictatorship?

B) Would the Nazi victory have an adverse effect on the German Jewish community?

In response to the first question, the political analysts in the Yiddish press generally shared the concern of German political circles that the growth of pro-Nazi sentiment posed a serious threat to the German Republic. S. Sachs, for example, pointed out that continued German disillusionment with democracy would eventually open the door to either a fascist or communist dictatorship. Despite this concern, however, the general consensus of the Yiddish press was that the outcome of the forthcoming election would not provide a clear indication of the future course of German politics; hence, these analysts declined to give concrete predictions of its ultimate consequences. Other correspondents
were more explicit. I. Klinov, for example, recognized the inherent threat that Nazism posed to the republic, but, in keeping with his view that the political situation in Germany would not change radically, expressed the opinion that Nazism did not presently pose a threat to German parliamentarianism. This contention was based on Klinov's conviction that under present circumstances it would not be possible for radical parties to influence the course of German politics.

The press's general view regarding the latter question was that a Nazi victory in the election would not pose an immediate threat to the Jewish community in Germany. Because it was generally believed that the Centrists would hold the key to power, the press did not foresee the possibility of the formation of an antisemitic conservative cabinet following the election. In view of Hitler's anti-Catholic stand, most Yiddish journalists doubted that the Centrists would join a coalition in which the Nazis would be a major partner. However, they recognized the threat that Nazism in its pre-election form posed to German Jewry in general. A. Zeldin stated in the <i>Day</i> that "Hitlerism can lead to a series of minor atrocities which can be very painful for German Jewry and which can have a very harmful effect on the Jewish situation in other lands." Some analysts contended that the Nazi Party might become more radical should it score a major victory. They were optimistic, however, that Nazi antisemitism would diminish if the party would emerge victorious in the election.

The Nazi victory in the election stunned Germany and the world. Clearly, a new star had risen on the German political horizon. The correspondents of the Yiddish press attributed the Nazi victory to several
factors. Primary among these was the widespread disappointment with German democracy and its inability to cope effectively with the post-war problems which plagued that country. The Reichstag seemed not to be functioning. The endless debates and quarrels among the numerous factions in parliament had made it impossible for the government to work effectively. As a result, an ever growing number of Germans concluded that only a dictatorship could cope more effectively with the situation. This is evidenced by the increase in the number of votes cast for both right and left wing extremist parties. It is interesting to note that S. Sachs, who was affiliated with the Jewish socialist movement, interpreted the Nazi victory as an expression of dissatisfaction with capitalism and not as dissatisfaction with republicanism.

The journalists believed that various other social, economic, political, and personal considerations also contributed to the Nazi success. They pointed out, for example, that individuals concerned with the increasingly intolerable tax and unemployment situation found Nazi pledges to ease the tax burden and provide employment to be attractive. Middle class citizens believed Nazi proposals for social legislation would be beneficial to them. In addition, the Nazis spearheaded the protest against the payment of reparations. Indeed, some analysts viewed the large vote that the Nazis received as a protest vote by the German people against reparations. Moreover, many of the two million new voters who grew up in post-war Germany and felt the pangs of reconstruction hoped that the Nazi Party, if elected, would be able to solve Germany's vexing problems. Since this bloc for the most part lacked a commitment to the older established parties, they cast their ballots in
favor of the Nazi Party. Undoubtedly, Hitler's charisma also attracted many voters to his camp.\(^5\)

Antisemitism may also have been a factor in the Nazi victory. However, in spite of the fact that the Nazi platform included antisemitic planks and the party's pre-election campaign was markedly antisemitic, not all correspondents agreed with the view expressed in the Day that these planks aided the Nazis in achieving a victory. I. Magidov, for example, stated in the *Morning Journal* that "... to attribute the victory to antisemitism is senseless."\(^6\)

Although the analysts writing for the Yiddish press recognized that the Nazi victory dealt a major blow to the ideas and ideals of democracy in Germany and certainly posed a serious threat to the Brüning regime, in general they did not view the results of the 1930 Reichstag election as catastrophic. The Nazis had received only about a fifth of the votes in the election. As a result, they remained a minority party. It was doubtful that they would have a voice in the new government. The Social Democrats, on the other hand, did not lose much ground and remained the largest political party. The working class, be they socialist or communist oriented, still remained a bulwark against fascism. Therefore, in the view of many correspondents, the Nazi victory threatened neither the internal security of Germany nor world freedom. The *Morning Journal* even discounted the possibility of a Nazi coup because the Nazi Party lacked sufficient political support. Furthermore, the paper believed that Germany was too developed culturally for this to occur.\(^7\)
Some correspondents, reacting to the election, viewed Nazism as merely a passing phenomenon. Abraham Goldberg attributed Hitler's victory to "coincidental circumstances." According to him, it did not reflect the actual political situation and sentiment in Germany. Goldberg reached this conclusion after he compared the election returns of the May, 1924 Reichstag election to the election returns of the 1928 Reichstag election. He believed that the current upsurge of Nazism would be followed, as in the past, by a decline of support for the party. The underlying assumption of Goldberg's optimism was his firm conviction that the German middle class would strenuously resist Nazi attempts to force it to relinquish its control over the government because such a move on its part would be suicidal.

There is no doubt that the election served to intensify a feeling of concern in the press vis-à-vis the fate of the Jews in Germany. The German voters had displayed increased support for the Nazi Party and its antisemitic policies. It was also becoming clearer that political parties acquiesced to the opinions and feelings of the citizenry. No party, with the exception of the Social Democrats, dared to come out with a platform which could be interpreted as being partial to or favoring German Jewry. Yet, even the Social Democrats required that the "Jewish" candidates on their ballot declare themselves confessionless prior to having their names placed on the ballot. No Jews were elected to the Reichstag from the moderate parties. Noted Jews like Dr. George Karoski, head of the Berlin Gemeindevorstand, a candidate on the Centre Party ticket, and Dr. Bruno Weil, vice-president of the Central Verein, a candidate on the State Party ticket, were defeated.
The political analysts of the Yiddish press not only remained divided in their assessment of the impact of Nazi election gains on the German political scene, but they also disagreed regarding the ultimate impact the elections would have on German Jewry. Those who believed that Nazism should be viewed as a politically threatening force also expressed the view that the shift to the right would have a dire effect on the German Jewish community. They felt that, even if Hitler had any desire to moderate his views, he would be forced to satisfy his supporters by fulfilling his campaign promises through concrete action. The antisemitic aspects of the program would be the most feasible and most easily implemented. Therefore, it stood to reason that the Nazis would undoubtedly intensify their Jew-baiting and move to have their antisemitic planks adopted as the law of the land. These correspondents did not doubt that a new era had dawned over Germany which would be characterized by "street antisemitism." Furthermore, no government power was now in a position to fight antisemitism even if it had the best intention to do so. 11

These writers believed that Jews would not benefit from a Nazi takeover. Therefore, they expressed the view, as stated in an editorial published in the Day, that the only hope remaining for the Jews of Germany lay in the formation of a coalition of all parties against the Hitlerists. Such a coalition would by no means guarantee a tolerable situation for the Jews, but at least there would be someone upon whom to depend for help and protection. However, the editorial pointed out, as long as the present government continued to waver and there was no sign that such a coalition could be formed, the Jewish situation would
continue to remain unstable. 12

The optimists, on the other hand, felt that the menace which threatened German Jewry as a result of the Nazi success at the polls was not great. In their view, even if the Nazis should come to power, the Jews of Germany would not find their situation drastically altered. These writers held fast to their conception of German culture as highly sophisticated and thus could not conceive of a German government that would threaten the Jewish community to a significant degree. On a more pragmatic level, they based their optimism on the fact that the Nazis remained a minority party.

However, a note of concern was heard in the optimists' camp regarding eastern European Jewry. The Morning Journal, in its editorials, expressed the view that recent political developments in Germany would have a much greater detrimental effect on Jews in eastern Europe than on those in Germany. The hands of antisemites there would be strengthened. Consequently, Jewish suffering in eastern Europe would increase. 13

A similar view was expressed by Jacob Landau, the managing editor of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. He feared that governments in whose lands antisemitic outbreaks had occurred, e.g., Poland and Hungary, and who were currently taking steps to curb such outbreaks for fear of losing prestige abroad, would now have a moral justification for antisemitic outrages committed in their lands. They would now be in a position to argue that if the "cultured German people are no longer ashamed of antisemitic outbreaks, why should we be ashamed?" 14
Throughout 1931, the changing situation in Germany continued to be of major concern to Yiddish journalists. Their differing reactions to such major events as the Nazi victories in various state and municipal elections, the plebiscite in Prussia, and Schleicher's invitation to Hitler to meet to discuss the possibility of the Nazi Party joining a coalition, reveal the continuing disagreement in the press regarding both the future of democracy in Germany and the fate of the German Jewish community.

Following the Nazi victories at the polls, optimism about the future of German democracy continued to be expressed by the Morning Journal. It attributed these gains mainly to a desire by the German people to protest their suppression by the Allies following the war and to dissent among residents of the smaller German states against Prussian "hegemony." The Morning Journal predicted that, as long as such feelings existed among the citizenry, fanatics and revolutionaries would gain votes and strengthen their positions. It was hoped that in the near future the factors that had allegedly contributed to Nazi gains would no longer be operative, that the positions of various reactionary elements would thereby be undermined and that, as a result, the political situation would show marked improvement.15

Other correspondents felt that continued Nazi gains would, in the end, be self-defeating. Jacob Lestschinsky expressed the view that, should the Nazis achieve a position of power, they would be forced to be more parliamentarian and act in a more legal fashion.16

After the Nazi defeat in the Prussian plebiscite, even the Pay seems to have modified its formerly pessimistic tone vis-à-vis the fate of
democracy in Germany. It described the vote of confidence given to the Braun regime as the expression of a desire by the "cultured" German people to correct its error. The German people, according to the *Day*, had come to its senses after seeing the "wild" methods employed by the Nazis against their political foes. They realized that a Nazi victory could have a detrimental effect on Germany.

The current of optimism in the press continued in the wake of Schleicher's invitation to Hitler to discuss the possibility of forming a coalition. Various optimistic reactions to this development were based, in part, on faith in the Germans as a "cultured" and "civilized" people. Therefore, some correspondents expressed confidence that democracy would not be destroyed if Hitler came to power through a coalition government because, as a sophisticated country, Germany was not especially prone to accepting dictatorship as a means for solving its problems in times of stress. Other positive responses to this development flowed from the belief that the Nazis would modify their radicalism once they would assume a position of responsibility within the government. Therefore, Jacob Fishman contended that, by joining the government, the Nazis would be forced to refrain from "pogrom politics."

Throughout 1931, at the same time that these optimistic views regarding the future of German democracy were being expressed, voices of caution were also heard. There were journalists who did not entirely rule out a defeat of the Social Democrats by the Nazi Party. A Nazi takeover, they felt, would deal a death blow to democracy. The *Forward* characterized the trend toward fascism and communism in the various elections as "sad and terrible" and warned that a fascist victory
throughout Germany could "eradicate all that Germany achieved through years of suffering and pain" following World War I. The correspondents did find some comfort in the Nazi defeat in the Prussian plebiscite. They viewed the Nazi setback in Prussia as a step in the right direction. These journalists also envisioned the formation of a popular front which would include all left wing and liberal elements as the only way in which the Republic could be saved. Such a move would, in their view, leave the enemies of the Republic powerless. However, these writers did not rule out the possibility of Hitler's coming to power through the formation of a coalition of right wing parties and elements from within the Centre Party. Their reactions to the Schleicher invitation and to the election trends in general forms an obvious contrast to their optimistic colleagues.

The responses of the journalists to the question of how the events of 1931 would affect the Jewish community specifically were based largely on the same beliefs that guided their views on the fate of German democracy. There were correspondents who recognized the diabolical nature of Hitler's plans vis-à-vis the Jews but whose faith in the cultured Germans and the trust they had that the existing political parties would come to the aid of the Jews led them to conclude that the Nazi movement would soon dissipate and their plans would come to naught. Others discounted much of Hitler's rhetoric and denied that antisemitism was a major principle of Hitler's program. They were certain that Hitler would make peace with the Jews once he defeated the Social Democrats. These sentiments were also echoed in an editorial published by the Morning Journal following the Nazi victory in the municipal election in Dessau in late October. It
stated that, even though the antisemitic side of the Nazi movement is frightening, Nazism in itself is not dangerous. It remained confident that the movement would dissipate within a short time. However, in its opinion, even if Hitler would achieve power, he would not carry out his antisemitic program.\textsuperscript{23}

Naturally, some journalists did not share their colleagues' optimism. In an article in the \textit{Day}, noted journalist and author S. Lirik warned against trusting the Germans because they are "cultured" and rejected the notion that German political parties would help the Jews. Lirik believed that, even if these parties wished to help the Jews, they were powerless to do so. He therefore stated: "We are alone. No one can help us."\textsuperscript{24}

A. Goralnik, also of the \textit{Day}, called the view that Hitler would make peace with the Jews once he had defeated the Social Democrats "a foolish illusion." Rather, he felt that Jews would have no place in Germany should democracy be defeated. Goralnik saw no real solution to the present plight of German Jewry. It was evident that assimilation, heretofore a means of escaping persecution and discrimination, would no longer work because Nazi antisemitism was grounded in racial theories. In addition, Jews could not leave Germany because many countries were now closed to immigrants. Therefore, Goralnik predicted that the "life of the Jews in Germany will be a chain of humiliation and oppression." Opposition by other groups in Germany to Nazism provided his only hope that German Jews would not be totally annihilated.\textsuperscript{25}

During 1932, it became increasingly evident that the eroding economic, political, and social position of German Jewry was being
further undermined by various political elements, most particularly, by the Nazis. Yet, there was little discernible change in the press's assessment of the situation. The optimists continued to cling to the hope that the storm which had struck Germany would blow over rapidly. The pessimists continued to prophesy doom.

The meetings between Chancellor Brüning and Adolf Hitler concerning the chancellor's proposal to extend Hindenburg's term when it would expire in the spring brought, once again, diverse reactions from the Yiddish journalists. The discussion in the press centered around the issue of whether the invitation extended by Brüning to Hitler was reflective of Brüning's weakness or of the political reality.

Some correspondents held that the Nazi Party had proven through its performances in the past elections that it was now a political force which had to be reckoned with. Therefore, these writers saw Brüning's meeting with Hitler as evidence of the Chancellor's eroding position.

Other journalists, following the "optimistic" line thought, saw the meeting as a sign of Hitler's weakness. For example, the Morning Journal expressed in an editorial the opinion that if Hitler felt confident of his immediate future, he would not have entered into negotiations with Brüning. It saw the meeting as proof that members of the Nazi Party had become more responsible and had begun to think more about their duties as patriotic citizens than about revolution. Indeed, the Morning Journal could find no justification for the belief that Hitler would soon rule over Germany.

Brüning failed to dissuade Hitler from seeking the Presidency and, though the press differed in its assessment of Hitler's political
strength, the Day, the Morning Journal, and the Forward unanimously endorsed Hindenburg's reelection. They all agreed that by keeping the President in office, the status quo would be maintained and civil war would be avoided. In addition, they felt that a decisive victory by Hindenburg would deal a death blow to Nazism and other reactionary forces.

Prior to the election, the press voiced speculation regarding the potential effects of the election's outcome on the German Jewish community. The position taken by each newspaper in its editorial comments, as well as by individual journalists, is a reflection of their evaluation of the strength of the Nazi movement. Those who felt that the Nazi strength had weakened, e.g., the Morning Journal, continued to contend that Hitler would not come to power. They saw no cause for alarm within the Jewish community.

The Day, on the other hand, believed that the Nazi Party continued to grow in strength and would soon achieve its political objectives. It did not doubt that Hitler would carry out his anti-Jewish planks if his party attained power. Just prior to the election, an editorial in the Day stated that should German voters elect Hitler, it would signify "... the beginning of a reactionary fascist wave which will spread over all Europe and perhaps even further beyond the borders of the old continent. ... The victory of Hitlerism signified a return to the Middle Ages, the denial of Jewish rights, and the persecution of our brethren in Germany." This editor portrayed antisemitism as a plague which would spread from country to country. If Hitler would be able to implement his entire antisemitic program, his example could lead to antisemitic
outbreaks in other countries as well. The Forward shared these sentiments and projected that if Hitler won the election, the situation of the Jews in Germany would be worse than that of the Jews in Czarist Russia.

It is interesting to note that according to reports in the Yiddish press, some American correspondents reacted similarly. For example, William P. Sims, foreign editor for Scripps-Howard, expressed the view that a Nazi victory in Germany would place German Jewry in mortal danger. He felt that fear for the welfare of German Jewry was well founded because the "present economic struggle carries with it exceptional bitterness. If German Jews would be made scapegoats, the hate movement would soon spread. Jews would not be safe anywhere. Hitlerists are preaching to put Jews outside the law. Hitler's candidacy is a challenge to the Versailles Pact and all liberal and free elements and especially against Jews."29

The Day encouraged the mobilization of American political opinion so that it could at least "whisper a word of warning to Hitler and his cohorts." In its view, Hitler knew that Germany's future would be, in great measure, dependent on American goodwill and therefore, he still would have to reckon with world and especially American public opinion. It urged all nations to act now. The American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress must let their voices be heard in Washington. "Later," the Day stated, "when Jewish blood will have been spilt, when Jewish property will have been pillaged, when the Jews in Germany will no longer have rights, it will be too late."30

The Nazi defeat, and what the Forward, Day, and Morning Journal considered to be a less than satisfactory showing of the communists in
the presidential election, placated the fear of many correspondents. Although the Morning Journal viewed the large vote amassed by the Nazis and communists as an expression of dissatisfaction with the present situation, there was general agreement in the editorial comments of various Yiddish papers that German democracy was strengthened as a result of the election. In the view of these journalists, the threat that fascism and communism had posed to the Republic and the fear of an outbreak of civil war no longer existed, as a result of the German electorate's rejection of both the Nazi and Communist Parties. They felt that the Nazi defeat obviated any future substantial victories, and, therefore, the advocates of democracy throughout the world could now breathe more freely. Germany, in the words of the Day, "can once more resume its place in the circle of democratic nations."31

In spite of this heightened optimism, other correspondents remained sceptical. They took issue with the view that Nazi popularity had peaked and that the movement would soon disappear from the political scene. While not ruling out this possibility entirely, they chose rather to view the large pro-Nazi vote as a great victory. "Why fool ourselves," Goralnik stated in the Day, "twelve million Germans voted for Hitler, for terror, for pogroms, for the most barbaric policies which the modern world has witnessed." In Goralnik's view, many more Germans would have voted for Hitler had he not run against Hindenburg. Goralnik believed that Europe was willing to let Hitler come to power, a development that would possibly cause a paralyzing civil war in Germany. The fact that Germany would be covered by blood, especially Jewish blood, was of no concern to European politicians who, in Goralnik's opinion, were
anxious to see a further weakening of the German state.\textsuperscript{32}

Because Hindenburg failed to win an absolute majority in the Presidential election of March 13th, 1932, a run-off election, as mandated by the law, had to be held. The correspondents of the Yiddish press generally attached very little significance to the upcoming election because they believed Hindenburg would prevail.

The \textit{Day}, however, believed that the election would serve as an important barometer of the German people's feelings toward maintaining a democratic system of government. A substantial Nazi gain, in its view, would not only deal a blow to the Republic, but also, because of Germany's position in the center of the continent, it would raise the spectre of a fascist threat to all of Europe.\textsuperscript{33}

Hindenburg's insignificant gain in the run-off election crushed the \textit{Day}'s hope that "Hitlerism does not govern the minds of the German masses." Hitler, in its opinion, had grown more powerful and gained prestige in the eyes of the world. The paper attributed the people's support of Hitler in part to an expression of their protest against the Allies' policies regarding Germany. The \textit{Day} even speculated that Hitler could have won the election were it not for Hindenburg's personal prestige and popularity.\textsuperscript{34}

Summing up the April 11 run-off election in the \textit{Day}, A. Clanz expressed the view that the danger of fascism was now greater and more frightening because the monarchists and nationalists seemed to have joined ranks by rallying around Hitler. The proletariat camp, on the other hand, remained sharply divided. A united communist-socialist
front was, in his view, necessary to stop the fascists from coming to power. The chances for this to happen now were slim.\(^{35}\)

Hindenburg's marginal gain in the run-off election and Hitler's noteworthy advance, coupled with the prevalent belief that Hindenburg's victory was a direct result of his personal stature, caused those who contended that a fascist regime could not come to power in Germany to reconsider their position. Even the *Morning Journal*, the most optimistic of the Yiddish dailies, conceded that, should the Nazis gain control of state governments in the forthcoming Landtag elections, they would become de facto rulers over Germany. The Nazi defeat in the presidential election would thus be rendered meaningless.\(^{36}\) Therefore, the Yiddish press showed concern about the results of the Landtag elections that were to be held later in April. They were particularly interested in the Prussian election because the largest Jewish communities were located there. Also, Prussia was the largest state and was the principal bulwark of German democracy. A Nazi victory in Prussia could therefore have a profound effect on the German Jewish community because, as the *Forward* put it, whoever governed Prussia would also, in effect, control Germany. The *Forward* was also of the opinion that, if the Nazis would win the election in Prussia, a civil war could erupt in Germany. Should this occur, the threat of war in Europe would become imminent, since Hitler was expected to pursue an aggressive policy toward his neighbors.\(^{37}\)

Commenting on the upcoming contest in Prussia, an editor of the *Morning Journal* stated that, because Hindenburg would not be a factor in this election, the results would determine if the trend in German politics had indeed shifted toward the right. Yet, unlike the *Forward*,
The Morning Journal continued to posit the view that liberal and socialist factions would join forces and defeat the Nazis. It believed that the Jews who supported German liberal parties had no cause to fear that a new political alignment would be formed.\(^{38}\)

The Nazis won handily in the various Landtag elections. As a result of their victories, the following questions, which reflect some of the concerns of the Yiddish correspondents to the elections, were raised by the Day:

A) Would Hitler indeed come to power and, if so, would he implement his program in its entirety?

B) What would be the fate of the Jews?\(^{39}\)

The journalists addressed themselves to various aspects of these questions in their remarks pertaining to the outcome of the Landtag elections. As in the past, there still existed a diversity of opinions as to what would result from the present political turmoil in Germany.

Various journalists, basing their views primarily on popular political sentiment, speculated as to whether Hitler would indeed soon come to power. Clearly, the Nazi victories in the Landtag elections had demonstrated that German support for democracy was deteriorating. Yet, in spite of this anti-Republican trend, the optimists sought to minimize the effect of the elections by pointing to the fact that Hitler had not succeeded in taking over control of the Reich. As in the past, they clung to their belief that fascism would not strike roots in Germany because it was a "civilized" country and its people were highly cultured. The Day speculated that the German people had not yet gone
mad and would ultimately oppose Hitler. The *Morning Journal* continued
to argue that Nazism was a passing phenomenon. However, judging from
the reports in the Yiddish press following the Landtag elections, it
seemed that there was little hope for counter forces to marshal
strength to oppose Hitler. Therefore, much more cautious journalists
warned once more that it would be foolish to place much trust in the
contention that the "cultured" German people would act as a counter-
force to fascism. In Goralnik's opinion, those who espoused this view
did not have a true understanding of the German people. He believed
that the Germans lacked "a feeling of individuality and a will for
freedom" and had, as a people, the greatest talent for hatred. Hitler
was but the embodiment of this spirit, in Goralnik's view, and he
provided the German people with the direction they needed in order to
know "whom to hate and why to hate." He instructed them to direct their
hatred to the world and especially the Jews. Goralnik predicted that
Hitler would fulfill the German desire for a government "whose Volk is
army and generals the leaders."

Other speculation in the Yiddish press following the Nazi victory
in Prussia focused on what were seen to be possible outcomes of the
current political turmoil. The journalists also assessed the effect
these alternatives would have on the German Jewish community.

The *Morning Journal* foresaw only two possible resolutions to the
political dilemma. Either Hindenburg would appoint a commissar to head
the government, or Hitler would be invited to participate in the govern-
ment. The former solution would cause permanent insecurity in Prussia
and would expose the Prussians to the danger of an uprising. The latter
would be a major victory for reactionary forces in Germany. Should Hitler be invited to join the government, many journalists knew there would be far reaching implications in so far as German Jewry was concerned. As Coralnik, Zhitlowsky, and others pointed out, under Hitler's direction the Germans would vent all their frustrations upon the Jew. The rising tide of nationalism in Germany, predicated on the principles of concern and support for one's own people, resulted in the total rejection of the Jew by German nationalists and particularly by the Nazis. In their view, the Jew was a foreign element on German soil, and his culture had a detrimental effect upon the German people. If Hitler had his way, Jews would be expelled from Germany. Therefore, as Zhitlowsky contended, if the Nazis would participate in the Prussian government and be in a position to influence German political life, German Jewry's economic position would certainly be undermined. The Jew's only alternative then would be to try to escape from Germany, but finding refuge elsewhere could, under present circumstances, prove impossible.

Reports in the Forward that Prussian Jewry felt estranged as a result of the election supported Zhitlowsky's contention that German Jewry was being rejected by nationalist elements. Further evidence of this development could be seen in the growing political isolation of the Jews. In the Württemberg Landtag election, for example, many Jews had supported the Democratic Party. Yet, following the Nazi victory there, the Democratic Party entertained the possibility of forming a coalition government with the Nazis. Although the party was not antisemitic, it was ready to close its eyes to the "long knives" which Hitler had
prepared to use against the Jews. 44

Some correspondents, such as Zhitlowsky, clung to the hope that the Nazis would become more moderate in positions of responsibility. They felt that, in being part of the government and having to reckon with public opinion, the Nazis would have to curtail the use of antisemitism to advance their causes. Therefore, these journalists felt that Hitler should be invited to join the government, if only to blunt Nazi aggression against the Jews. Of course, others did not agree. For example, Lestschinsky believed that upon taking office, Hitler would get rid of his more moderate colleagues and begin to show his true colors. 45

Another way the political dilemma could possibly be resolved was by the formation of a "proletarian dictatorship." But, as William Edlin, a journalist active in socialist circles noted, this was not likely to occur because of the divisiveness in the social democratic and communist camps. 46

Given the preference of many German people at this time for right wing political parties, the desire of moderate political parties to come to terms with the Nazis and the growing isolation of German Jewry, one can only conclude that those who hoped for change in the political preferences of the German people were perhaps clutching at straws. In light of the political trends at this time, it seems difficult to believe that Hitler would pursue a moderate course should he come to power. Rather, as political events began to unfold in the latter half of 1932 and in early 1933, it became clear that Hitler would show his true colors and not seek moderation or compromise.
At the end of May, 1932, Chancellor Bruning was forced to resign and von Papen, an arch conservative, succeeded him. He drew the members of his cabinet from the ranks of the aristocrats, militarists, and industrialists. In the Day's opinion, the appointment of von Papen indicated that Hindenburg no longer had any use for Bruning and the liberal bloc. Commenting in the Day on this development, A. Glanz expressed the view that von Papen would remain in office until an opportune time would arise to hand over the reins of government to Hitler. Glanz believed that at such a time, President Hindenburg and his Junkers would even resort to force, if necessary, in order to seat Hitler. Thus Glanz and others believed that a path had been cleared for the initiation of a fascist regime in Germany. They saw the entire turn of events, therefore, as a blow to German Jewry.

In spite of the generally somber mood of the press after von Papen's appointment, some journalists still hoped that Germany could free itself, although with difficulty, from the strengthening grip of a reactionary movement and that the Jews could be saved from Nazi domination. This optimism, most noted in the Morning Journal, was perhaps reflective of the sentiments of some analysts who believed that the political situation in Germany was still fluid. A Nazi triumph, in their view, was not inevitable.

Upon assuming office, von Papen moved to dissolve the Reichstag. Hindenburg approved, and new elections were set for July 31st. The results of the contest could greatly affect the fate of Germany, German Jewry, and liberalism. The Yiddish press apprehensively awaited the outcome of the election. There was much speculation concerning a Nazi
victory. Few analysts, however, ventured to predict the outcome of the election because of the instability of the political situation in Germany. It seemed, from all indications, that the reactionary forces would emerge victorious. All hope of preventing a fascist takeover, however, was not lost. A coalition of Social Democrats and Communists, or Social Democrats, Centrists, and smaller political parties of the same bent could be formed to counteract effectively the forces of right wing reaction in Germany. Ber Smolar, chief correspondent for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency on assignment in Berlin, agreed that such forces could prevent Hitler from coming to power. However, he doubted that such a coalition could be formed because it was not likely for either the Social Democrats or Centrists to make substantial gains in the forthcoming election. A similar assessment of the situation was made by Jacob Fishman in his reports from Germany. In his view, the leftists were no longer a viable force in the political arena. The German people would support some form of a reactionary government, i.e. the present government of von Papen, Schleicher, and the Junkers, or a Nazi regime. The latter could materialize if the Nazis formed a coalition with the Centre Party or if, as reported in the Day, the Hitlerists would succeed in seating two hundred deputies and some smaller parties would decide to form a coalition with them. In spite of predictions that the Nazi Party would be involved in the government, Fishman, as well as other journalists in Berlin, injected a note of optimism in what otherwise was a threatening situation. He believed that Hitler would not win the election and that von Papen would remain in power. Hitler would be offered only a ceremonial post in the government, as
well as a number of positions for his supporters. The Social Democratic Party would remain passively opposed to the regime. The Communist Party would not do anything which would be revolutionary or cause revolution.

The Morning Journal reflected Fishman's optimism in its editorial comments. It once more contended that the danger of Hitlerism had diminished. Hitler, in its opinion, would most likely become more cautious and restrained. This time, the paper's optimism stemmed from the German government's somewhat clandestine declaration that the Jews have nothing to fear in the immediate future.

Thus, the press did not rule out the possibility of a Nazi regime or a regime in which the Nazis would have a voice. The Yiddish journalists did not doubt that if Hitler did come to power, his regime could have a detrimental effect on German Jewry. Samuel Marposhes, the editor of the Day, outlined in his weekly column the course of action he believed Hitler would pursue vis-à-vis the Jews, if he would become chancellor. He indicated that Hitler undoubtedly would implement a great number of the anti-Jewish planks in the Nazi program. For example, Jewish officials would be dismissed from government service, Jewish artists would be purged from the theatre and movies, and Jewish rights would be in jeopardy. Even more important, the Jewish economic position would be thoroughly undermined. In Marposhes' opinion, the prospect for the uninterrupted participation of the Jewish people in the general life of Germany was gloomy. Yet, he felt the determination of German Jewry and the support they could garner for their position in the liberal and radical camps might prevent a total collapse of the Jewish position.
The press also discussed the possible effect that the conservative Papen-Schleicher regime could have on the Jewish community. The *Morning Journal*, in an editorial, expressed the opinion that it would be in the best interest of the Jewish community if von Papen continued to serve as Chancellor. It stated: "No matter how bad the diplomat may be, he still is better than the shouting demagogue," i.e. Hitler. However, Smolar disagreed. He felt that both the political status of the Jews and their economic position would deteriorate if the Papen-Schleicher regime would remain in power. Smolar based his contention on the following facts:

A) The government had remained silent in the face of the growing "pogrom agitation" in the Nazi press.

B) The government had not blocked the passage of a law calling for the confiscation of Jewish property.

C) The cabinet had indicated its opposition to antisemitism but had preferred not to have its position made public.

D) Jews were being expelled from positions in state theatres and the movie industry.

Therefore, Smolar asked: "Is it not the government's responsibility to contain the impetuous temper of racial hatred?" It was clear to Smolar from the government's inaction that the von Papen regime was "passively" antisemitic because it depended on Hitler and did not wish to provoke him. Even if Hitler would not win the election, his party would be a political force to which the present regime would yield. They certainly would not quarrel with Hitler over the issue of antisemitism. Thus, Smolar reasoned, the Hitlerists would have a free hand to carry out their promise to drive the Jews out of Germany. Yet, in spite of his
forecast of a gloomy future for German Jewry, Smolar felt that the Jews in Germany were not as helpless and friendless as many people believed. 54

The Yiddish press was heartened by the outcome of the Reichstag election; Hugenberg and the monarchists were weakened, the Nazi Party did not gain control of the government, and, even more important, the Party showed little growth for the first time since the presidential election. The Nazis did not succeed in breaking the labor front, as is evidenced by their heavy losses in various industrial centers, e.g. Dortmund, Essen. The Centre Party now held the key to the balance of power in the Reichstag. Even if the Nazis and other right wing parties joined forces, they would fall short of a majority. Therefore, Hitler would have to rely on a coalition with the Centre Party if he wished to come to power. It was doubtful that the Centrists would join forces with the Nazis unless Hitler would greatly modify his reactionary demands. Therefore, the press concluded that the German people had now indicated by their vote that they were not ready to succumb to those forces which sought to destroy the Republic. 55 The beginning of the end of Nazism seemed to be at hand. Hitler's chances of being offered the chancellorship were negligible. Yet, contrary to all expectations, Hindenburg did, once again, consider Hitler's candidacy.

The Morning Journal, in keeping with its optimistic assessment of the political situation, considered Hindenburg's invitation to Hitler to meet with him to discuss the possibility of his assuming the chancellorship encouraging. The paper, as in the past, contended that Hitler's willingness to meet to negotiate with von Papen and Hindenburg was, in itself, indicative of the Nazi leader's weakness. It also argued that
dictatorship comes about by force and not as a result of negotiations with other political factions. Hence, Hitler would be forced to adapt himself to the political conditions in Germany in order to obtain posts for himself and his followers. Should Hitler agree to become a member in a coalition government, he would be at the mercy of the other members. They would be in a position of strength and could expel him from the coalition if he attempted to overthrow the government by force and become a dictator. The paper, therefore, concluded that within a short time Hitler would be a "played-out agitator."^56

In view of Hitler's weakness, S. Judson, the co-editor of the Morning Journal, expressed the view that the time had come to remove the Nazi Party from the German political arena. Hindenburg, von Papen, and Schleicher must remain above trivial and cheap politics and protect their country from the wave of Nazism which had washed over Germany. They must not act as they had until now.^57

Some analysts, however, felt that Hindenburg's invitation strengthened Hitler's position and that he now had an even better chance of becoming chancellor than before. J. Piek made this point in an article in which he posited that the Papen-Schleicher regime, due to its inherent character and social composition, seemed unable to solve the difficult social and economic problems which now confronted Germany. If the discontent of the masses continued to grow, neither Hindenburg nor the Reichswehr would be able to keep the present regime in office. This, in Piek's opinion, was Hitler's trump card.^59
Ber Smolar, too, believed that it was but a matter of time before Hitler would be appointed chancellor. German Jewry would be greatly affected should this occur. Hitler would move legally to implement his anti-Jewish program in a way that would not arouse foreign public opinion against him. As a result, those Jews who would remain in Germany would suffer endlessly. They would eventually cease to play a role in German society.59

Various events that followed seemed to support the position espoused by the optimists that Nazism would fade from the German political arena. First, nothing materialized from the negotiations between Hitler and Hindenburg. The Nazi leadership rejected a proposed compromise solution and opted to remain outside the government. Some German politicians and political analysts reportedly viewed this course of action by the Nazis as an admission that Hitler feared becoming chancellor. In their view, Hitler assumed a non-compromising position in order to provide himself with the opportunity to close the door to the chancellorship without losing face. Secondly, he lost ground in many local elections. Thirdly, the Nazi party was racked by dissension and suffered from a lack of funds.60

In light of these developments, when a new Reichstag election was set for November, many political analysts predicted that the Nazis would lose considerable ground in the election. The returns bore out this prediction. The Nazi Party succeeded in seating only 196 deputies in the newly elected Reichstag in comparison to the 233 seats they had held previously. The election returns, according to the Day, were
a clear indication that the German people were turning away from the Nazi Party.61

Yet, in spite of this trend, Jacob Fishman sounded a somewhat discordant note of caution. He warned his readers to be cognizant of the fact that the Nazis were still the largest political party. They could easily diminish the impact of their losses by finding a face-saving explanation for the decline of support.62

The Yiddish press also discussed the effect that the evident decline of the Nazi Party would have on German Jewry. The Day noted that the intensification of antisemitism in Germany had caused many Jews to despair because they sensed that they no longer had a place in German life. Fishman pointed out that other German political parties also harbored antisemitic sentiments. In light of this fact, he cautioned his readers not to conclude that all the troubles that Hitlerism had brought to the Jews would end with the removal of Hitler as a force in German political life. Only "the spectre of an official state antisemitism," i.e., an official program like the one Hitler demanded from President Hindenburg, had suffered a setback with Hitler's defeat. However, Fishman did expect that the Papen regime would now move more energetically and courageously to curb the excesses committed by the Nazis. Therefore, the immediate future of German Jewry seemed brighter.63

In spite of the fact that Nazism seemed to be dying, the president again considered Hitler's candidacy for the chancellorship when von Papen resigned in November. Hitler, however, found the terms of Hindenburg's offer unacceptable. His intransigence on this issue proved
to be a major factor in the evergrowing divisiveness within the Nazi camp. The more moderate elements of the party urged Hitler to compromise. However, he refused to settle for anything less than the chancellorship on his terms. The continued strife within the Nazi camp, the great number of defections from within its ranks, as well as other signs of continued weakening of the Nazi Party, lent support to the contention that its days were numbered. The Day was confident that Hitler would suffer the same fate as Haman of old. Now that he had begun to fall, he would continue to do so. In the Day's opinion, his demise would serve as a lesson to other politicians not to delude themselves into believing that they could hope to reach the pinnacle of power in Germany solely by advocating an antisemitic program.

The Forward and, more particularly, Jacob Lestschinsky, disagreed with the view that the end of Nazism was at hand. Lestschinsky pointed out that, in spite of recent setbacks, the Nazis had gained a foothold in local government. There was growing evidence that the Nazis would be in a position to govern these areas either alone or together with other reactionary groups. These developments on the local level could eventually reverse the setbacks that the Nazis suffered in some municipalities, as well as on the national scene.

Schleicher succeeded von Papen following Hitler's rejection of Hindenburg's offer. However, his term in office was very short. When the Schleicher regime fell, Hindenburg once more extended an invitation to Hitler to head the government. Although the conditions set by the president would severely restrict Hitler's power as chancellor, he did not reject the offer this time. The Yiddish press was initially shocked.
by the appointment because it came at a time when it seemed that the Nazi Party's fortune was at low ebb. This development particularly dismayed correspondents who had been optimistic that Hitler would not come to power.

Fishman, in his daily column on the events of the day, voiced this dismay and shock. He believed that the naming of Hitler as chancellor represented the first step in an attempt by Hindenburg to break away from the Weimar constitution. Fishman rejected the argument advanced by some journalists that Hitler's designation must be tolerated. Rather, in his opinion, the appointment to the chancellorship of an outspoken antisemite whose party had as an official part of its program Haman the wicked's murderous policies against the Jews was a slap in the face to all Jews.  

In its editorial comments on the appointment, the Morning Journal pointed out that Hitler would not have reached his present position had his opponents been united against him. The writer of this editorial felt that Hitler's wickedness would bring shame upon the German people and hoped that, as a result, they would realize that political freedom can only be maintained if factionalism does not prevent the establishment of an effective administration. At this juncture, the Morning Journal did not feel that the newly appointed chancellor was strong enough to establish a dictatorship, but expressed concern over the weakness of the presidency and Hindenburg's possible inability to prevent a chaotic situation from developing in Germany.  

The Bay described Nazism as a menace not only to Europe but to America. It therefore called upon America not to remain indifferent to
the political developments in Germany. "World politics," it asserted, had to be on guard and alert to the perils of Hitlerism until such time that it no longer posed a threat to the world community. 68

The appointment of Hitler as chancellor robbed the Jews of their last consolation, i.e. that Hitler was not yet head of the state. Even the *Morning Journal*, which was consistently optimistic about the future of German Jewry, conceded that its immediate future was bleak. However, the paper did, perhaps wistfully, express the belief that Hitler would be defeated as were other Jewish enemies. 69

Two questions which surfaced in the Yiddish press as a result of Hitler's appointment were:

A) Would von Papen's plan to contain Hitler by having himself appointed vice-chancellor succeed, or would Hitler get rid of his partners and establish a dictatorship?

B) Would Hitler attempt to implement his antisemitic planks?

In response to the former question, it seems that after the initial shock of Hitler's appointment wore off, an increasing number of correspondents were able to justify a more optimistic assessment of the political situation. For example, J. Magidov of the *Morning Journal* pointed out that Hitler had a long road to travel before he could establish a dictatorship. Despite the fact that Hindenburg had appointed him, Hitler was unsure of the President's support and would, therefore, have to win his confidence. Also, Hitler's appointment had not yet been confirmed by the Reichstag. He would have to overcome opposition from the nationalist, centre, and labor camps. Judging from the political
situation, Magidov speculated that Hitler's appointment might possibly have weakened the Nazi position in the overall picture. He expressed doubts concerning the fate of the present regime and believed that, like its predecessors, it would fall after a very brief term in office. Germany's destiny would be determined in the elections that would follow. B. Levitin based his optimism on the fact that Hitler had sworn an oath to uphold the constitution. In addition, von Papen had been given a key position in the government in order to prevent Hitler from veering from his course. As opposed to one writer in the Forward who contended that von Papen's plan to check Hitler's rise would fail, Levitin believed that the composition of the cabinet also denied Hitler the maneuverability he needed in order to establish a dictatorship and to carry out his program. He anticipated that Hitler would be too preoccupied with reconciling any conflicts which might develop among the numerous factions represented in the cabinet to have time to think about a dictatorship. Also, Levitin noted that anti-Nazi forces in Germany continued to wage an active campaign aimed at preventing the establishment of a dictatorial regime and were encouraged by the decline in Nazi strength. In the final analysis, Levitin contended, Hitler had posed a threat as long as he stood outside the government, but now that he was to assume a position of responsibility as head of the government, the threat would be diminished.

Cahan's views in the Forward were similar to Levitin's. According to his analysis, the fact that von Papen was the power behind the scenes and still exercised control over Prussia and the Reichswehr would lead to Hitler's failure. Cahan predicted that when Hitler would be unable
to fulfill his promises, the majority of his supporters would withdraw their support. Further, Cahan argued that if Hitler indeed had power, he would have already choked all political life in Germany by establishing a dictatorship.72

It is interesting to note that the Freiheit sharply criticized those commentators who pondered the question of whether or not Hitler would establish a dictatorship. In its view, such a discussion was pointless because the Hitler-Fapen regime was already in essence a dictatorship.73

As for whether Hitler would implement his antisemitic planks, it seems clear from the discussions in the press that the fate of German Jewry hung in the balance. The correspondents recognized that Hitler and his party wished to reorganize German society along racial lines. Therefore, it was assumed that if Hitler would succeed in establishing himself as a dictator, nothing would prevent him from carrying out his plans. It remained to be seen whether there were elements in the present regime that could and would oppose Hitler's anti-Jewish policies. A. Mukdoni of the Morning Journal implied that Hitler's present partners in the government would give him free rein to do with the Jews as he wished. Abraham Cahan disagreed with Mukdoni's fatalistic assessment of the situation. He argued that Hitler, as titular head of the government, could not act independently. Cahan contended that, had this not been the case, the newly appointed chancellor would have moved to carry out his anti-Jewish programs immediately upon coming to power. Mass pogroms against the Jews did not take place once Hitler became chancellor. Undoubtedly, Hitler's restraint could be attributed in part to the control
von Papen exercised over him.74

Thus, it is clear that with few exceptions the press was in agreement that von Papen's plan to weaken Hitler by including himself in the government would succeed. The present regime would, according to most correspondents, prevent Hitler from carrying out his program. However, there was no doubt in the minds of these journalists that, if Hitler succeeded in establishing a dictatorship, German Jewry would suffer.

The government's decision to dissolve the Reichstag and call for a new election on March 5th, 1933, dampened the optimism of the Yiddish press. It expressed concern that Germany was edging its way toward dictatorship. Both Fishman of the Morning Journal and Coralnik of the Day now felt that there was no longer any basis for optimism. In Fishman's opinion, the present regime represented all the reactionary right wing forces in Germany. Their campaign slogan, "With Hitler and Hindenburg, for Germany, against Versailles," manifested their goal. Fishman hastened to point out that the Nazis controlled the Prussian government and the police in Berlin. Therefore, in his view, to seek comfort in the fact that Hitler did not have full power in the present regime was an act of self-delusion. Similarly, Coralnik predicted that Hindenburg could not continue to exercise control over the army and that labor would not be able to serve as a deterrent to a complete Nazi takeover.75

The March 5th election brought to power a reactionary anti-republican government. As Coralnik had predicted, Germany continued to march blindly toward a new catastrophe. However, from the remarks
in the press following the election, it became clear that, at least in
the minds of some correspondents, the election did not provide a final
resolution to the question of Hitler's ability to establish a dictator-
ship. Some correspondents discounted the Nazi gains in the election
and pointed to the fact that German voters had been prevented from
expressing their true sentiments in the election because of the
campaign of terror and suppression waged by the Nazis. The fact that
Hitler had not garnered a majority of the votes supported their conten-
tion and indicated that there remained in Germany an element that wished
to maintain the republican form of government. The large number of
votes cast for the socialist and communist parties encouraged left wing
Yiddish correspondents to remain optimistic that German workers could
still defeat Hitler and prevent the establishment of a Nazi dictator-
ship. The Morning Journal pointed out that Hitler was still vulnerable.
In view of the fact that he received only 44 percent of the vote, he would
have to maintain a majority in the Reichstag. The danger in the Morning
Journal's view, lay not in a government headed by Nazis, but in a Nazi
dictatorship. This did not seem an imminent possibility. Cahan of the
Forward shared these sentiments.

The worst fears of the Yiddish press emerged when what had seemed
unlikely to happen did, in fact, take place. Shortly after assuming
office, Hitler established himself as a dictator. It now remained to
be seen what course of action Hitler would pursue vis-à-vis the Jews.
Some commentators contended that "power sobers even the greatest dema-
gogue and makes him calmer and more responsible." Therefore, they
believed that the number of atrocities committed against the Jews by
Nazi hooligans would diminish. However, they did speculate that Hitler would pursue a policy which would have a detrimental effect on the political, economic, and social position of the Jews. Jews would, as a result, be forced to flee from Germany.

Fishman disagreed with the view that Hitler would become more moderate. The aforementioned contention was not, in his view, applicable to the "systematic poisonous agitation of racial hatred ... the public promises of a free night to do with the Jews all that which their hooligan hearts desired ... All that which was implied in these promises could not be uprooted magically simply when poisoners celebrated their victory." Fishman, therefore, believed that the Nazis interpreted Hitler's silence as a sign for them to act as they wished. He also pointed out that Hitler never spoke out against the acts of violence. Fishman did not doubt that the Jews of Germany would now be subject to the barbarism of the local Hitlerist storm brigades.

The establishment of a dictatorship in Germany proved the pessimists to be correct. Later events brought about the fulfillment of their prophecy of doom.
Footnotes to Chapter TT


6. Fevusky, "Hitler's Zig"; Editorial, *Day*, 16 September 1930; *Morning Journal*, 22 September 1930; Magidov, "Der Fashisten Zig."


11. Lirik, "Di Iden In Nayen Daytshen Reikhtar"; Sachs, "Vos Ts Itst Forsekumen In Daytsland."


Morning Journal, 12 October 1930.


J. Lestschinsky, Forward, 21 June 1931.

Editorial, Day, 11 August 1931.

S. Peskin, Forward, 31 December 1931.

J. Fishman, "Fun Tor Tsu Tor," Morning Journal, 11 October 1931.

Editorial, Forward, 19 November 1931; Editorial, Forward, 12 December 1931.

Editorial, Forward, 19 November 1931; Editorial, Forward, 12 December 1931.


S. Lirik, "Ot Azoy Velen Iden Leben...," Day, 13 December 1931; Coralnik, "Di Tsvey Vegen"; Forward, 8 August 1931; Morning Journal, 9 August 1931; Forward, 11 August 1931; Editorial, Morning Journal, 28 October 1931.

S. Lirik, "Ot Azoy Velen Iden Leben...".

Coralnik, "Di Tsvey Vegen."

Editorial, Forward, 13 January 1932; Editorial, Day, 10 January 1932.

Editorial, Morning Journal, 10 January 1932.

Editorial, Forward, 2 February 1932; Editorial, Morning Journal, 3 February 1932.

Editorial, Day, 13 March 1932; Forward, 13 March 1932; Morning Journal, 9 March 1932.

Editorial, Day, 2 March 1932. It is interesting to note that Dr. Samuel Margoshes, the Editor of the Day, in his column "The Week," (Day, 2 March 1932) called upon the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress to organize a protest meeting in order to demonstrate to Germany that the American public would not remain silent to the injustice committed against the Jews of Germany.


Editorial, Day, 10 April 1932.

Editorial, Day, 12 April 1932.

A. Glanz, "Der Sakh Hakol Fun Di Daytshe Valen," Day, 12 April 1932.

Morning Journal, 10 April 1932.

Editorial, Forward, 24 April 1932.

Editorial, Morning Journal, 13 April 1932.

Editorial, Day, 26 April 1932.


A. Coralnik, "Kläderadatsch-Ershter Akt."

Editorial, Morning Journal, 26 April 1932.


Forward, 24 April 1932; Forward, 2 June 1932.

Zhitlowsky, "Tz Es Gut Far Iden?"; Forward, 2 June 1932

Edlin, "Haloshus Tropen"; Coralnik, "Kläderadatsch-Ershter Akt."

A. Glanz, "Hitler Oyfen Shvel...", Day, 1 June 1932; Editorial, Day, 2 June 1932.


59. Day, 1 September 1932.

60. Hax, "Vi Lang Kon Zikh Halten Di Itstige Von Papen Regirung In Daytshland?"; Forward, 4 October 1932.


63. J. Fishman, "Fun Tog Tsu Tog," Morning Journal, 7 November 1932; Morning Journal, 11 October 1932; Day, 24 October 1932; I. Klinov, "Daytshve Iden Ohn Politishe Paynd Erev Di Wahlen," Morning Journal, 3 November 1932; Morning Journal, 6 November 1932, for a discussion pertaining to the attitudes of various German political parties to German Jews; Editorial, Day, 8 November 1932.

64. Editorial, Day, 12 December 1932.


73 Editorial, *Freiheit*, 1 February 1933.

74 *Morning Journal*, 5 February 1933; B. Levitin, "Hitler Un Von Papen". Levitin also attributed Hitler's restraint in part to Hitler's desire to avoid international repercussions which could have a detrimental effect on German domestic politics. The minimal number of reported atrocities committed by the "Brown Shirts" reflected strong party discipline. B. Levitin, *Forward*, 4 February 1933.


77 Editorial, *Morning Journal*, 7 March 1933; Cahan, "Di Tsvey Vikhtigste Fragen Haynt."

German Jewry in 1919 generally felt rooted in German life and its equality of rights was taken for granted. Many Jews looked forward to the future with confidence. The proposed draft of the Weimar Constitution seemed adequate in their view to insure the continued development of Jewish life in Germany. These Jews chose to close their eyes to the rising tide of antisemitism and to its possible impact on public opinion and future legislation. Oscar Cohn, the representative of the Independent Social Democrats on the Constitutional Committee and a member of the Po'ale Zion Party, on the other hand, feared that antisemitism could jeopardize Jewish life in Germany. Therefore, he proposed that Jews, like other national minorities in Germany, be granted minority status and that their national cultural rights be guaranteed by the constitution.\(^1\)

Less than two decades later, what Cohn feared came to pass. The rabidly antisemitic Nazi Party came to power in 1933. It became immediately evident that the new society that it proposed to build would be ordered in accordance with Aryan principles. Germany would in time be made Judenrein. On April 7, 1933 an ordinance for the restoration of civil service was enacted into law. It contained an "Aryan paragraph" which called for the dismissal of all non-Aryans, i.e. Jews, from all civil posts. This was but a first step to wrest from the hands of the Jews
their alleged control of German economic life and to free Germany from
the purported intellectual dictatorship which they exercised over the
German people. In retrospect, the events that took place in Germany in
1933 forebode the beginning of the end of the long and at times torturous
history of the Jewish people on German soil.

The Nazis contended that Jews controlled German life in the
Weimar era. Was there any basis in fact to this contention? What was
reflected in the Yiddish press in America about Jewish life in Germany,
particularly in the closing years of Weimar and the initial year of Nazi
rule? To answer these questions, I shall examine in this chapter the
following aspects of German Jewish life:

a) the demographic composition of the Jewish community in the
Weimar era;
b) the role Jews played in German economic and intellectual life;
c) the role Jews played in politics.

I shall also pay particular attention to the description of Jewish life
in Germany as it is reflected in the daily news reports of the period, as
well as in the analysis of the news by the correspondents of the press.

By way of introduction, it is important to note that much of the
statistical data pertaining to the demographic characteristics and economic
and social structure of the German Jewish community in the Weimar Republic
is to be found in the June 25, 1925 census, the last official census prior
to the establishment of the Third Reich. It reckoned as Jews only indivi-
duals who belonged to the legally recognized Jewish community. The 1925
census, however, does not shed light on the segment of the German popula-
tion which had ceased to think of themselves as Jews or who were of Jewish
lineage and considered to be Jewish by the Nazis. Other data are culled from the first census taken by the Nazi regime in mid-1933. As we shall see in our further discussion, unlike the Nazi contention, the Jewish community was heterogeneous in its composition. However, it did have characteristics which set it apart from the German community. The Nazi propaganda machine capitalized on these unique characteristics for its sinister purposes.

The structure of the Jewish community in Germany began to change demographically, economically, and socially in the decades following the promulgation of the Edict of Emancipation. By the twentieth century the German Jewish community was largely urban. Almost three quarters of the Jews resided in Prussia. The remainder lived in various other provinces. The largest Jewish communities existed in Berlin, Frankfurt a. M., Breslau, Hamburg, Cologne, Leipzig, and Munich. The general German population, by contrast, was less urbanized. Eric Rosenthal, in his study of Jewish population trends in Germany, pointed out that in 1933, for example, only 18 percent of the Jewish population lived in towns with less than 10,000 inhabitants as compared to 50 percent of the non-Jewish population. In communities with a population of 500,000 or more inhabitants, the relationship was reversed. Clearly, the larger the community, the more Jews resided therein.

Only 564,379 Jews, comprising 0.9 percent of the total population, resided in Germany, according to the 1925 census. The first census conducted by the Nazi regime in mid-1933 listed only 499,682 Jews or 0.77 percent of the population. The diminution of German Jewry between 1925 and 1933 was largely a continuation of a trend that had begun in the mid-nineteenth
century but was suppressed by the influx of Jews from eastern European countries during World War I and shortly thereafter. This immigration peaked in 1924. After that year, the number of eastern European Jews leaving Germany increased with the growth of antisemitism and the economic depression. With the attrition of the east European Jewish community, it became apparent once more that the native German Jewish community was failing to reproduce itself naturally. Many factors were responsible for this trend. First, Jews, like other urban dwellers, tended to have smaller families. Second, German Jewry was aging. "The whole Jewish population in 1933," as was pointed out by Rudolph Stahl, "was in a state of natural decrease. The percentage of older people among Jews was increasing whilst the percentage of those under twenty years of age was decreasing." The following table illustrates this point.

**TABLE 1 Age Distribution**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jews</th>
<th>The Whole German Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1925</td>
<td>1933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below the age of 20</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 20 and 45</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 45</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Stahl, p. 171

Its death rate, therefore, was high. It is important to note in this connection that Jews had the lowest birth rate and the highest mortality rate of any religious group in Germany. Third, mixed marriages and the loss of these individuals and their offspring to the Jewish community severely affected the capability of the Jewish community to reproduce itself.

Finally, separations from synagogue congregations as well as the total withdrawal of Jews from Judaism also had a dire effect on the community. Indeed, some demographers contend that, had Hitler not pursued a program
aimed at exterminating the Jews, the German Jewish community would most likely have died a natural death. Given the fact that German Jewry comprised a minute segment of the German population and in light of its continuing decline, one finds it inconceivable that Jews would have been in a position, as the Nazis contended, to dominate the German people.

The economic base of the community also began to show signs of change. In the decades following emancipation, Jewish leadership, seeking to right the economic imbalance of the Jewish community, sought to encourage Jews to overcome their predilection for employment in areas historically open to them and which by virtue of their background and interests attracted them. As new doors of economic pursuit gradually opened, Jews gained employment in fields that heretofore had been largely closed to them, e.g., government service, academics. By 1925, Jews engaged in all 166 branches of the economy listed by the Office of Statistics of the Reich. German Jewish leaders hoped that an improvement in the occupational structure of the Jewish community would help narrow the differences between it and the gentile community and bring about a diminution of the existing tension and animosity. Indeed, by the time the Weimar period ended, the dissimilarities between the occupational structure of Jews and non-Jews in large urban areas, as is illustrated by the following chart, narrowed. However, as Ernest Hamburger, the noted historian and former Social Democratic deputy in the Prussian Landtag pointed out, the process of adaptation to the stratification of the total population "did not extend to all branches of economic, social, and cultural pursuits and did not proceed at a pace so strikingly fast as to act as a counterweight to Nazi propaganda."
### Table 2: Occupational Distribution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>General Population</th>
<th>Communities with more than 100,000 inhabitants</th>
<th>Jews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population as a whole</td>
<td>65,218,461</td>
<td>19,802,336</td>
<td>499,682</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number gainfully employed</td>
<td>32,296,496</td>
<td>9,557,374</td>
<td>240,487</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Engaged in

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>General</th>
<th>Communities with more than 100,000 inhabitants</th>
<th>Jews</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>28.9%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry and handicraft</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>48.2%</td>
<td>23.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce and transportation</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>31.4%</td>
<td>61.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public and private services</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic service</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Stahl, p. 171.

Jews continued to maintain their historic clustering in the field of commerce and trade. As the following chart illustrates, in 1933 more than half of the Jews engaged in this field of endeavor were employed in retail, wholesale, and service establishments as sales people, clerks, bookkeepers, etc. The remainder of Jews were self employed. The majority of Jews in this category owned small or medium sized retail establishments. Others were wholesalers of textiles, clothing, metal products, agricultural products, and groceries. Some Jews continued to peddle.

### Table 3: Commercial Activities of German Jews (1933 census)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commercial Enterprises</th>
<th>(1933 census)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light Merchandise</td>
<td>114,652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Business</td>
<td>2,196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publishing</td>
<td>1,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real Estate</td>
<td>17,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Services</td>
<td>1,262</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banking, Insurance, and Stockbrokers</td>
<td>6,170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankers and Stockbrokers</td>
<td>4,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Insurance</td>
<td>1,903</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Restaurateurs, etc.</td>
<td>3,006</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Schleunes, p. 40.
It is interesting to note in this connection that some of the largest and well known department stores in Germany were owned by Jews, e.g. the Teitz, the Wertheim, etc. In 1932, Jewish owned department stores accounted for 79 percent of all business conducted by such enterprises. However, as Jacob Marcus pointed out, "the department and chain store problem, while great when taken by itself, is seen to loom less large when considered in relation to the total merchandising situation. In Berlin, for instance, the department store handled 3.9 percent of all retail trade, while the independent retailers handled 81 percent of it. The four hundred one price stores handled only 1.2 percent of the retail trade in Germany." In view of the fact that Jews owned a great percentage of department stores, Hitler's nefarious allegation that Jews had created the department stores in order to ruin the petty retailer gained credibility. In truth, however, the average Jewish retailer stood to lose as much, if not more, from competition with department stores as his Christian competitor.

The Jewish banker also became a target of the Nazi propagandist. The Nazis alleged that they controlled the German economy and were bent on destroying Germany. In fact, however, there was a marked decline in the role of the Jews in banking in the post war period. This was due to the fact that the private bank, in which Jews played a major role, could no longer amass the necessary capital now needed by German business and industry. The joint stock bank supplanted the private bank. Although some Jews did hold major positions in these banks, on the whole they played a minor role in joint stock banking. As a result of this trend, many private Jewish banks either merged with stock banks or were forced to liquidate their assets when they lost their economic basis for existence. Even in
older traditional Jewish banking centers, e.g. Hamburg, a decline was noted. Frankfurt was the sole exception to the rule. Here, the number of Jewish private banks rose from 57.8 percent of all banking institutions in 1923 to 65.3 percent in 1930. Jews continued to control 69.7 percent of all these banking institutions. In Berlin, one of the largest banking centers and the seat of the largest Jewish community, Jews in 1930 still controlled 62 percent of all banking institutions. Yet here too the trend was downward. One must bear in mind that, while the private banks continued to decline in importance and the number of Jewish owned banks decreased, the number of non-Jews who owned such banking houses increased.

The more influential joint stock banks were not primarily owned by Jews. Of the 1,764 joint stock banks in 1930, only ten were believed to be "Jewish" owned. Jewish bankers of national repute, e.g. Jakob Goldschmidt, Oscar Wassermann, Max Steinfeld, did play a key role in the development of joint stock banks in Germany after the war and held key posts in German banking. These Jews, however, were the exception, not the rule. Jews found relatively few opportunities for employment and advancement in non-Jewish controlled institutions. Few Jews held key posts in these banks. In 1928, only 10.9 percent (or 834) of all officers possessing the right of signature in these houses were Jewish. By 1930, only 7.1 percent (or 642) were Jewish. In the same period, the number of non-Jewish officers possessing the right of signature increased. By contrast, non-Jews began to play an ever increasing role in Jewish and non-Jewish institutions. Between 1928 and 1930 more non-Jews than Jews had the right of signature in Jewish private banks. They had more opportunities for employment and advancement in non-Jewish institutions. Thus, we see that
the visibility of Jewish banking institutions in major centers, e.g., Berlin, Hamburg, Frankfurt, and the presence of nationally prominent Jewish bankers, enabled the Nazis to support their charge.  

The second major category of Jewish economic endeavor was industry and handicrafts. Although Jews were among the pioneers in some of the basic industries, e.g., coal and iron, they now no longer played a major role in this area. Rather, as the following table illustrates, Jews specialized in the manufacture of consumer goods. Therefore, we find a greater representation of Jews in such branches of industry as food and textiles as opposed to construction.  

**TABLE 4** Representation of Jews in German Industry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Jews</th>
<th>Total for Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>10,568</td>
<td>1,629,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemical</td>
<td>2,223</td>
<td>362,751</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>7,220</td>
<td>3,065,509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile</td>
<td>3,517</td>
<td>1,118,715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>2,291</td>
<td>1,248,366</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Schleunes, p. 40

It is necessary to point out that with the exception of craftsmen, few Jews employed in industry engaged in manual labor. Many were engaged in business roles, e.g., sales representatives, office workers, business directors, etc.  

A third source of livelihood for German Jewry was the professions and civil service. The role Jews played in these areas came under Nazi attack. There is no doubt that Jews were over-represented in some professions. Yet, they certainly did not dominate or exercise control over the professions and civil service as alleged by the Nazis. One must bear in mind that although Jews had the legal right to seek a professional
education after 1848, it was not until the establishment of the Republic that they were able to take full advantage of opportunities in this area of endeavor. Even during the era of the Republic, Jews encountered resistance from the bureaucracy which opposed their employment. Contrary to Nazi charges, there occurred only a minimal increase in the percentage of the Jewish work force that engaged in the professions in the Weimar era. Whereas in 1852 3.5 percent of Jews seeking employment entered the professions, in 1925 only 8.7 percent of the Jewish work force in Prussia did so.

In view of the fact that there was opposition to Jews entering civil service posts, Jews seeking a professional career opted to enter those professions where they could operate independently. This explains in part why many Jews chose to practice law and medicine. The following table depicts the Jewish role in the professions in 1933.

**TABLE 5  Representation of Jews in German Professions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Number in Germany</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>18,000</td>
<td>3,000</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Doctors</td>
<td>51,000</td>
<td>5,500</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University Teachers</td>
<td>5,000</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journalists and Writers</td>
<td>17,000</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountants</td>
<td>13,000</td>
<td>515</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dancers, Actors, Artists</td>
<td>23,000</td>
<td>703</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Representatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Agents</td>
<td>216,000</td>
<td>24,000</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Schleunes, p. 41

Undoubtedly, in the professions and civil service, as was the case in other areas of economic endeavor, the visibility of the Jew in the large urban centers lent credibility to Nazi charges that Jews dominated the field.
The same observation can be made regarding Jewish domination of the theatre, motion picture industry, and the press. Although the number of Jewish artists, directors, and journalists was relatively small, many played a major role and enjoyed an international reputation. Their visibility made them vulnerable to Nazi charges of dominating their respective fields. These allegations were readily accepted as fact by the masses, who naively interpreted the data presented to them by the Nazi propagandists. It is interesting to note that Alfred Hugenberg, chairman of the German National People's Party, published more newspapers than Jewish publishing houses. His newspapers enjoyed a greater circulation than those published by Jewish houses. He also owned Universum Film A. G. (UFA), the major motion picture concern in the Reich.¹⁵

Post war economic and political conditions in Germany had a detrimental effect on the Jewish community. Under the Empire, when Germany was taking its initial steps toward industrialization, Jewish initiative and capital were welcomed. Jews, as was pointed out, played a pioneering role in many industries. Economic liberalism allowed independent businessmen to prosper. A strong, predominantly wealthy, Jewish middle class rooted in German life began to emerge, in spite of the fact that Jews had not attained full de facto emancipation. Now, however, far from exercising progressive control over the national economy, as alleged by the Nazis, the Jewish community had to wage a battle for economic survival. The German economy following the war was in great disarray. The Versailles Treaty which officially concluded the war exacerbated the deteriorating economic conditions. Reparation payments,
by far the most onerous burden foisted upon the German people by the
treaty, contributed to the inflationary conditions which plagued Germany
almost incessantly until the end of 1923. The middle class suffered most
as a result of these conditions. Many lost their accumulated wealth,
income, and social standing. The rationalization movement affected the
retail and service industries, resulting in the further erosion of the
position of many members of the middle class. Chronic unemployment further
weakened their position. The depression caused panic in their midst.16

These developments in post war Germany were in part responsible for the
rapid proletarianization of the Jewish community. Many small Jewish
businessmen had been unable to recover from the post war inflationary
conditions during the relatively prosperous period between 1924 and 1928.
The moderately wealthy businessman lacked the financial resources necessary
to compete with the large trusts, cartels, and syndicates which now domi­
nated the German business world. The chain and department stores which
mushroomed after the war began to have their effect on the small retailer.
Many businesses were forced to shut their doors or merge with larger
firms. Former employers now became employees. As a result, 51.7 percent
of the Jews gainfully employed in Prussia were employees as compared to
28.6 percent in 1892 and approximately 20 percent in 1913.17 The hiring
policies of the large concerns tended to exclude Jews from their employ.
Therefore, Jews had to seek employment in Jewish owned enterprises.
The decline of Jewish businesses had an adverse effect on the ever
growing number of Jewish employees. The decline of opportunities for
the independent practitioner and the subsequent bureaucratization of
professions affected the Jewish professional as well. With the growing
tide of antisemitism, private corporations and governmental agencies, both major employers of professionals, began to pursue a hiring policy which limited the opportunities for Jews even more. As a consequence, unemployment soared in the Jewish community. According to estimates, the Jewish unemployed in the latter quarter of 1932 numbered 30,000 individuals or 25 percent of the Jewish work force. Native German Jews, now for the first time, became recipients of social assistance. 18

The demographic changes discussed above weakened the foundation of the Jewish community. A strong current of popular antisemitic sentiment ever present in the Weimar era further undermined it. As a result, some elements of the German community viewed the Jews as a foreign corpus and did not accept them as equals. Therefore, when Jews sought to occupy posts in which they would exercise authority, they encountered resistance. It is for this reason that the number of Jews in the various legislative bodies and government administrative posts remained very small. Only a handful of Jews held leading and influential parliamentary positions. Seven of the two hundred and sixty men who held cabinet posts in the various Weimar governments were of Jewish descent. The majority of those who held such posts did so prior to 1922. The number of Jews in the executive branches of local and state governments, as well as the number of Jewish representatives in the various legislative bodies, diminished as the tide of antisemitism rose and swept the land. In the Reichstag of 1933, only six deputies were of Jewish descent as compared to thirteen in the Reichstag of 1930. 19

As I have noted, Judeophobia existed throughout the Weimar era. It was most pronounced among German Jewry's sociological counterpart, the
German middle class, as well as in student circles. The ruinous effect that the depression had on the middle class exacerbated its antisemitic sentiments. The depression also radicalized German politics. The desperate and disillusioned German middle class began to pin its hopes for a brighter future on the promises held out by the anti-republican, antisemitic parties of the right. The wildly antisemitic Nazi party benefited most from the radicalization of German political life. It is not possible to attribute the phenomenal growth of the Nazi party in the declining years of the Weimar Republic solely to the antisemitism as some correspondents of the Yiddish press contended. However, there is no doubt that "Nazi antisemitism," as Niewyk pointed out, "not only united the anti-Jewish forces, but at the same time integrated them into a movement with a larger and more dangerous Weltanschauung."

As a result of the radicalization of German politics, the political parties which had heretofore enjoyed the support of the middle class and served as a political home for the German Jewish bourgeoisie, namely the Deutsche Volkspartei (DVP) and the Deutsche Demokratische Partei (DDP), lost ground. These parties sought to recoup their political losses by assuming a more right wing posture and by severing their ties with their Jewish supporters. In 1930, the DVP entered into a coalition with the Nazis in Thuringia. The liberal DDP, in which the Jews comprised the left wing, merged with Arthur Mahraun's militaristic and anti-Jewish Jungdeutsche Orden and formed the Deutsche Staatspartei. The fact that the new party purposely avoided the use of the words "democratic" and "republican" in their name, because these terms were an anathema to some German voters, is indicative of the length to which it went in order to
woo back to its ranks the German middle class voter who had succumbed to Nazism. Both the DVP and the Staatspartei failed in their efforts and all but disappeared from the German political scene by the time the Republic ended. 22

This development was particularly vexing to the middle class Jewish voters. They, unlike their Jewish proletariat brothers who had found a home in the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands (KPD) or the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD), found themselves being increasingly isolated politically, particularly after 1930. Many middle class Jewish voters had lost their political homes and could not find a party with whose ideology they felt comfortable or which they felt confident would champion their cause in face of the Nazi onslaught. Their lack of confidence in the various political parties was based on the fact that by 1930 all political parties with the exception of the SPD and the KPD were overtly or covertly antisemitic. No political party dared to include in its platform planks that seemed supportive of Jewish interests, nor did they or their political organs raise their voices to refute the antisemitic charges levelled by the Nazis against the Jews. The moderate political parties yielded to the antisemitic sentiments of their supporters. Jews became expendable. Prior to the September, 1930 Reichstag election, for example, these parties had placed Jewish candidates in lower positions on their lists. Thus, Jews could no longer aspire to represent these parties in the Reichstag. Even the SPD yielded to pressure from the working masses and required that its Jewish candidates declare themselves confessionless prior to placing their names on the ballot. 23
In view of this development, a portion of the Jewish electorate was in a quandary; they could not decide for whom to vote. Their predicament was discussed in the Yiddish press. Prior to the November, 1932 Reichstag election, the press pointed out that Jews certainly could not vote for the rabidly antisemitic Nazi party. Hugenberg's Deutsch-nationale Volks Partei (DNVP) was also antisemitic. However, unlike the Nazi Party, the DNVP supported the von Papen regime. Many Jews considered voting for the DNVP because it would be a means for expressing their confidence in the von Papen regime. Jewish leadership opposed this.

There were in the Jewish community extreme right wing elements, namely Max Naumann and the members of his Verband Nationaldeutscher Juden, who agreed with the DNVP's political philosophy. Only they could actively campaign for and support the DNVP. The Staatspartei, the former DDP, the major political base of German Jewry, had now diminished greatly in strength and ceased to play a significant role in German political life. It no longer placed Jewish candidates on its lists. German Jewry felt that it could no longer depend on this party to support its interests.

The Centre never enjoyed much support from the Jewish community because it represented the interests of the German Catholic laborers. Also, some Jews found the idea of an alliance with a Catholic party repugnant. However, after Chancellor Brüning's regime proved to be sympathetic to Jewish interests, some Jews voted for the party. When Brüning began to court the Nazis and spoke of a coalition with them, Jews grew suspicious of the party's intentions. These suspicions were heightened when remarks made by the Centre deputies in the Prussian Landtag committee discussing the dismissal of Jewish artists from their posts in the theatre and radio
contained racial overtones. As a result of these suspicions, Dr. George Kareski, a noted Zionist and founder of the Jüdische Volkspartei, failed to garner Jewish support for the Zentrum (Centre Party). The SPD remained the staunchest political friend Jews had. It continued to champion the Jewish cause in the face of growing antisemitic sentiment among the German working class. Yet many middle class Jews wouldn't support the SPD because of their opposition to the socialist party's ideology. It is important to note that in spite of the resistance in some Jewish middle class circles to supporting the SPD, an increasing number of Jews did indeed vote for the SPD after 1930. The following chart, based on a survey of the voting pattern of the Jewish electorate before and after 1930, illustrates this point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Party</th>
<th>Before 1930</th>
<th>After 1930</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DBP</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPD</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DVP</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KPD</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zentrum</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Paucker, p. 27.

Undoubtedly, the increase in Jewish support of left wing parties can be attributed, at least in part, to the growing proletarianization of the Jewish middle class. Jewish support of the SPD in particular can be attributed to the party's unflagging support of Jewish civil rights. Furthermore, the transformation of the SPD into a more democratic liberal party attracted many middle class liberals to its ranks.

The major Jewish organizations, namely the CV, as well as the Zionistische Vereinigung für Deutschland, assumed a neutral political
posture. On the one hand, they encouraged Jews to vote and cautioned them not to cast their votes for antisemitic parties. On the other hand, they did not publicly endorse a specific party.\textsuperscript{28} The CV, however, welcomed the efforts of the SPD to protect the Jews from attack on their person and property and its efforts to prevent the further erosion of Jewish civil rights. Therefore, it covertly supported these actions. Both parties feared that a close overt relationship would help support Nazi charges of a Socialist Jewish collusion.\textsuperscript{29}

The degree to which antisemitism permeated various strata of German society can be measured not only by the growing political support enjoyed by the Nazi Party in this period, but also from the willingness of the masses to financially support Nazi activities and attend the rallies and demonstrations which were held throughout the land. From the podium of these mass meetings, the Nazis declared war against world Jewry in general and German Jewry in particular. The Nazis added fuel to the antisemitic fire that they had rekindled by disseminating propaganda containing libelous and often obscene allegations against the Jews. They used, among other tracts, the \textit{Protocols of the Elders of Zion} and resurrected the bogey of ritual murder in order to cultivate hatred against the Jews. The Nazis threatened a night of "long knives" on which Jewish blood would flow freely and promised that the survivors would be reduced to second class citizens.

As a result of the Nazi propaganda campaign, the Jew became a symbol to some Germans of all that was hateful to them. Nazi incitations enabled them to vent their frustrations and hatreds upon the Jew. The attacks against the Jews, Jewish property, and institutions, increased in
number and intensity in the brutalized political climate in the declining years of the Weimar Republic. The Yiddish daily press in 1932 was replete with accounts of attacks on Jews by Nazi hooligans, incidents of profanity against synagogues and desecration of cemeteries, the vandalization of Jewish enterprises and the growing boycott of their business ventures, discrimination and the intensified antisemitic activities of German students at the various universities. Some correspondents questioned the accuracy of these reports. Jacob Lestschinsky, for example, pointed out:

"If we hear that somewhere someone is being beaten, we immediately shout: 'Jews are being beaten.'... Certainly jealousy and hatred, revenge and contempt are the most widely held feelings regarding Jews. However, we must not exaggerate and imagine the situation as if all nations have no other worries and are occupied only with devising troubles and afflictions for the Jews."

By so doing, in Lestschinsky's view, Jews bring about terrible gloom and arouse panic. "Often all the facts that arouse within us panic are but fabricated idle stories, or they are things which our sick fantasy had greatly enlarged." Lestschinsky believed that Jews were taking the words and the deeds of the "antisemites" too seriously. Actual events are more than enough to be concerned about. It is not necessary to inflate minor incidents into major affairs or to invent new ones. Other correspondents shared his view. No doubt the situation in Germany threatened the Jewish community. Yet one sensed relief in the press that the situation had not worsened, given the intensity of the Nazi campaign against the Jews. In the period of 1930-1932, the physical incidents of violence were largely limited to assaults by mobs against small groups of Jews, or against an individual Jew, sometimes resulting in the death of the victim or victims. Pogroms, on the scale Jews from
eastern Europe experienced, were rare before Hitler came to power. The
two noted by the Yiddish press occurred in Berlin in 1930 and 1931
respectively. 32

The first Nazi led anti-Jewish "pogrom" took place in Berlin on
October 13, 1930, the opening day of the newly elected Reichstag (contain­
ing 107 Nazi representatives). While police were busy quelling riots by
left and right wing demonstrators in the area around the Reichstag,
"thousands" of fascist youth marched to the midtown shopping district
singing fascist songs interspersed with cries of "Germany awake!" and
"Hitler lives!" Once there, they systematically smashed the windows of
Jewish owned department stores and shops. They insulted and terrorized
the patrons of Jewish owned cafes in the district. The damage amounted
to millions of marks. The Forward, for example, compared Berlin and
especially Leipzigstrasse, one of the main shopping streets, on the
morrow of the attack to a "battleground from which the embattled armies
withdrew." The police arrested numerous individuals. However, it could
only present cases against 19 of the 108 suspects. Those convicted
received sentences ranging from three weeks to six months in jail.
Although the police tacitly admitted that they may have arrested the
wrong people, they nonetheless were convinced that Nazis had planned and
organized the riots. It is interesting to note that the Jewish Tele­
graphic Agency reported that several days prior to the riots against
Jewish businesses on Leipzigstrasse, Nazis asked proprietors to reveal
their religious affiliation. Those who did not reply to the Nazi query
were treated as Jews. This fact was corroborated when lists identifying
firms to be attacked were found on the person of those arrested. The
police investigation also established the fact that the Nazis held planning meetings prior to the incident.\textsuperscript{33}

The second attack, much larger and certainly more sensational than the aforementioned, took place on September 12, 1931, the eve of the second day of Rosh Hashanah (New Year), as Jews were leaving the synagogues on Fasanenstrasse near the Kurfuerstendamm. It was reported that over one thousand Nazis participated in the riot. They beat anyone who crossed their path and looked Jewish. As a result, many non-Jews were victims of the attack. The police encircled the area and arrested fifty people. However, it was not until late at night before they succeeded in quelling the riot and clearing the entire area of Nazis. Based on documentation that the police found when they searched the Nazi headquarters in Berlin in the course of their investigation of the riots, they concluded that the attack was carefully planned and prepared for. Originally the Nazis hoped to beat the Jews while they were in the various synagogues in the area but arrived too late. The investigation also revealed that Nazi leaders riding in cars that cruised the area commanded the operation.\textsuperscript{34} Trial warrants were issued against thirty-four men arrested in connection with the riots on Kurfuerstendamm. Although some of the defendants at first admitted they acted on orders of Nazi leaders in Berlin, they all filed pleas of not guilty. They did not, however, deny that they were members of the Nazi Party. At the trial the accused denied that the riot was planned. Some of the arrested maintained their innocence and accounted for their presence at the scene of the riots by a benevolent desire to wish the Jews a happy New Year or to see how Jews celebrate their holidays. Some came to demonstrate by their presence that there
were other people besides Jews in Berlin, while still others claimed to be innocent bystanders. Those defendants who did admit to attacking some passersby denied that the riots were planned and attempted to make them appear as a spontaneous demonstration against the "oppressors" of their people. One defendant, for example, attributed his participation to having been angered by the fact that Jews were dressed in holiday clothing and wearing cylinder hats. Another stated: "I hate Jews because all our misfortunes come from the Jewish press." Nazi headquarters maintained their disavowal of responsibility for the attacks in spite of evidence to the contrary. They asserted that the riots had been started by provocateurs employed to discredit the Nazi movement. The accused were brought to justice quickly and were found guilty of disturbing the peace and conspiring against religion. They received sentences ranging from nine to twenty-one months in jail. The Yiddish press commented on the fact that the courts acted justly by handing down moderately stiff sentences. However, their sentences were subsequently reduced. Many were freed. Those remaining in prison gained their freedom when the government issued an amnesty decree for political prisoners in 1932.

Count Helldorf, the Berlin S.A. chief, and his henchmen were tried separately from the other Nazis. They were accused of organizing and leading the riots. Although the prosecutor presented witnesses who testified that Helldorf commanded the operation from his car, he could not prove that Helldorf did in fact organize the riot. As a result, Helldorf and his assistants were only sentenced to a six month jail term for breaching the peace. Subsequently after an appeal, he too was freed. The court of appeals accepted his statement that he had come to
Kurfuerstendamm when he had heard what was going on in order to prevent possible "thoughtless acts" on the part of his men. He argued that his presence on the scene had a calming influence on the men and did not incite to violence as charged.  

Nazi hooligans also desecrated Jewish cemeteries and profaned synagogues. The rash of these events alarmed the Jewish community. According to reports in the Yiddish press, the CV ascertained that Nazis had desecrated over one hundred cemeteries in the period from January, 1923 to September, 1932. Although many more incidents occurred, the CV listed in their literature only those they could attribute with certainty to the Nazis. These incidents are doubtless another index of the intensity of antisemitism in the Weimar Republic.

The Nazis also sought to choke the Jews economically. They organized a boycott of Jewish businesses and agitated for the dismissal of Jews from their posts in the arts, professions, and civil service. Nazi propagandists aroused public support for their cause by appealing to the religious feelings and nationalistic sentiments of the German people. They alleged that Jews were anti-Christian and supported their allegations with proof texts from various rabbinical tracts. The Nazis also accused the Jews of not faithfully serving the "Fatherland" during the war. For these, as well as for other reasons which they enumerated in their literature, they argued that Jews were not now deserving of German patronage. Organizers of the boycott hoped to elicit the support of Christian merchants by publishing and distributing lists of Christian owned establishments. The propaganda literature stressed that those who
did not boycott Jewish enterprises would betray the best interests of the Christian merchants and the German people. The Nazis coerced the German masses to boycott Jewish concerns by publishing and widely distributing blacklists of those who continued to buy from Jewish establishments and on occasion they harassed those Christians who continued to patronize Jewish establishments. The boycott of Jewish businesses was widespread and enjoyed a great measure of success particularly in the provinces. There is no doubt that a great number of Jews employed in various business establishments and factories were fired because of the growing antisemitic agitation. Ironically, some Jewish employers, in order to hide the fact that their establishments were Jewish and in order to pacify Nazi agitators, dismissed their Jewish employees and hired Christians in their place.

Some cities, and to a degree even the rational government, jumped on the Nazi bandwagon. The City Council in Neustadt, Bavaria, for example, forbade all institutions receiving a subsidy from the Council to purchase their products from Jewish stores. The resolution it passed read: "Jews have no right to trade in our land. It would be best if they go to Palestine and, as a result, the economic situation would improve here." The national government dismissed Jews in their employ and did not fill posts vacated by Jews with other Jewish candidates.

The Nazis also sought to extend the boycott into the professional sector by establishing associations in the arts and professions. The goal of these groups was to seek, at the very least, the curtailment of Jewish activity in their respective fields, in order to minimize Jewish competition. Hence, Jews employed in universities, the theatre arts,
medicine, and other professions found it increasingly difficult to find employment. Many lost their jobs as a direct result of this agitation.

In spite of its success, some groups in Germany opposed the boycott, albeit in some instances opposition stemmed from selfish motives. The Merchants and Retailers Association, for example, reportedly protested against the boycott because it believed that it harmed the retail trade in Germany. The courts, too, generally sympathized with those harmed by the boycott. In many cases they ruled in favor of the aggrieved. In many provincial cities, where the boycott agitation conducted by the local Nazi press was intense, the courts forbade the continuation of these activities. The Nazis, however, found ways to circumvent these rulings. In Coburg, for example, the Yiddish press reported that the editor of the local Nazi newspaper received a six month jail sentence for agitating against Jewish merchants. The court warned him that should he continue his incitations, he would be fined heavily as well. The day following his sentencing his paper published an article entitled: "German people buy only from Jews. Why?" The article read in part as follows:

"...because the German serves you and the Jew serves you honestly. The Jew is your brother; the German is your enemy. The Jew works hard and with the sweat of his brow. However, the German is lazy and is worthless. The Jew served for four years at the front and endangered his life for the welfare and honor of Germany; the German during the war hid at home, speculated on the market and participated in the various war committees in order not to serve at the front. The Jew died in order that Germans could live. Buy only from Jewish department stores! What do you care what happens to the German retailer. Let the impoverished German storekeeper go to Palestine and sell his wares there..."

There is no doubt from this excerpt what point the author is making.
It is even clearer from the end of the article in which he compares the success of the Jewish businessman to the plight of the impoverished German merchant and from his concluding statement which reads: "It is for this reason that we have to thank God for a republic. Germany belongs to the Jews!"^7

The Nazis found eager supporters, not only among middle class Germans but also in German student circles, for their demand that Jews be excluded from all aspects of German life and most particularly from the economic sector. The rate of unemployment of recent graduates was high. Those students who favored the Nazi policies expressed the view that, if Jewish competition could be eliminated, their chances for employment and subsequent advancement would be enhanced. They, therefore, agitated for the expulsion of Jewish students from the universities and demanded that, at the very least, a *numerus clausus* be established. Nazi students also demanded that Jewish faculty members of the various universities be dismissed. They requested that they be given a voice in all future appointments. University administrators, on the whole, opposed the wholesale dismissal of their Jewish faculty members on the ground that they stood to lose some of the best and most renowned members of their staffs. Nevertheless, according to reports in the Yiddish press, student pressure brought about the dismissal of such noted Jewish professors as Emil J. Gumpel, a mathematician on the faculty of Heidelberg University. Worse, the Nazis subjected Jewish students and teachers to verbal and physical abuse. Nazi students disrupted classes taught by Jewish professors. They attacked Jewish students at random. In addition, Jewish students were among the victims in numerous clashes between Nazi students and their political foes.
The continued violence often forced the closing of various universities throughout the land for short durations.\textsuperscript{48}

The aforementioned activity of the Nazi Party, which caused economic and physical harm to the Jews and scarred them emotionally, did not satiate its craving to crush German Jewry. It continued to press forward with its plan to have the anti-Jewish planks of its program enacted into law. For example, in Thuringia, as was pointed out above, Minister of Education Frick introduced prayers in Thuringian schools in which God is beseeched to uproot all foreign races from Germany. In Oldenburg, a course in \textit{Rassenwissenschaft} became mandatory for all public school students. In Prussia, Nazis introduced a bill calling for the establishment of a numerus clausus in the hiring of Jewish court officials. They sought to limit the number of these officials to one percent of the staff - corresponding to the percentage of Jews in the total Prussian population. The Nazis also introduced a bill to rid the Berlin courts of Jewish lawyers.\textsuperscript{49} In order to limit the purported negative Jewish influence on German cultural life, the Nazis waged a campaign to keep the radio \textit{Judenrein} and the theatre free of foreign artists. They proposed legislation that would enable them to achieve this goal.\textsuperscript{50} The Nazis also sought to place stricutures on the practice of Jewish ritual. For example, they introduced bills in various city and state councils banning ritual slaughter. By mid 1932, according to CV reports, over thirty such bills were introduced.\textsuperscript{51}

East European Jews in particular were the targets of Nazi propaganda and violence. The Nazis sought to reduce the status of east European Jews who migrated to Germany after World War I to second class
citizens and to choke them economically. To this end, the Nazis unsuccessfully attempted to pass legislation invalidating the citizenship of foreigners who settled in Germany after 1914. The Nazis succeeded in their attempt to pass a law in the Prussian Landtag which authorized the confiscation of property and other possessions of east European Jews who settled in Germany after August 1, 1914. The bill's passage was of no immediate consequence, for to become effective it required Reichstag ratification. Such approval was not believed to be forthcoming. The passage of this bill, as well as other Nazi sponsored legislation, was significant, however, because it was a portent of what lay in store for east European Jews in Germany, as well as for native German Jews, should Hitler come to power.  

German Jewish leaders, according to reports in the Yiddish press, recognized that Nazism posed a serious threat to the Jewish community. They therefore appealed to the government to move vigorously to curb all illegal activities of the Nazi party and to safeguard Jewish rights as guaranteed by the constitution. The Reich government headed by Brüning, subsequently by von Papen and later by Schleicher, issued, in response to these appeals, numerous declarations assuring the Jews that they had nothing to fear. However, these declarations did very little to calm the antisemitic storm unleashed by the Nazis. The Brüning regime, for example, did move vigorously to halt the disorders arising from the clashes between the Nazis and their political foes but did not act to halt the antisemitic agitation. Following the Rosh Hashanah riot in Berlin in 1931, for example, Jewish leaders demanded that the Reich government take as strong a stand against such activities as did the Prussian government. Brüning
refused, arguing that a declaration by his regime would only blow out of proportion the danger German Jewry faced and create panic. He did, subsequently, issue a declaration to the *Morning Journal* in response to its telegram expressing the shock and concern of American Jewry. In his response, the chancellor indicated that his government would take steps to prevent the recurrence of such pogroms.54

The Papen regime also reportedly assured a representation of prominent German Jews that it stood ready to protect Jewish rights. Interior Minister Planck issued a declaration outlining the cabinet’s position. However, he did request that its anti-Nazi stand not be made public.55 In practice, however, the Papen regime, too, did little to halt the incitations by the antisemites. The government repealed the laws enacted by the Brüning regime to curb Nazi excesses. As a result, the Nazis were now free to march in their uniforms and to bear arms. They could once more use the radio for propaganda purposes. Von Papen’s administration also pursued a policy of purging "foreign elements," i.e. Jews, from the German cultural scene and especially from the theatre, movies, and the radio. The government justified its action by contending that the presence of foreigners in these media aroused the anger of the people. It also moved to purge all Jews from government posts. In light of these developments, Smolar asked rhetorically, "What will remain for Hitler, if not only for the storm troops to beat Jews in the streets without being punished?"56

The correspondents of the Yiddish press advanced various explanations as to why Brüning did not act forcefully to halt Nazi incitations and why von Papen instituted a policy which discriminated against German
Jews. Some journalists attributed Brüning's and von Papen's actions to the fact that they were both antisemites. Others viewed their respective policies regarding the Jews as a means to pacify the Nazis and contain them politically. All correspondents, however, agreed that the German Jewish situation was deteriorating. The Jewish community had to act now in order to protect itself from attack.\(^57\)

To act effectively against the recognized Nazi threat, the Jewish community had to act in unison. Means had to be found to unify the various elements which comprised the Jewish community. Solutions had to be found to those issues which proved to be divisive. Subtle changes were indeed taking place within the community. D. Charney at the end of 1932 reported in the *Day* that as a result of the growing isolation of German Jewry and the boycott of their enterprises, the diverse elements which comprised the German Jewish community had begun to draw closer together. The traditional animosity between native German Jews and Ostjuden in Germany began to dissipate. Native Jews had begun to stop looking down upon the Ostjuden and slowly ceased to view themselves as being superior to them. It became commonplace now to find native German Jews attending various cultural and educational meetings sponsored by east European Jews. In addition, dormant national and religious feelings came to life. The religious revival was evidenced by greater attendance at holiday services by those who never attended such services before. More people also attended meetings and lectures sponsored by Zionist organizations.\(^58\)

Yet, in spite of signs that the community was drawing closer together, differences between liberal and nationalist elements proved to be at this point in time, irreconcilable. Liberal Jews, on the one hand,
perceived themselves as Germans of the Jewish persuasion. They believed that the Jewish community was a religious body and, as such, had to concern itself only with religious or social welfare matters. Consequently, liberal Jews generally opposed the involvement of the Jewish community in political issues because such action implied separateness. It is for this reason that liberal Jews in Berlin opposed a proposal presented at a special meeting of the Berlin Kahal in 1931, calling upon it to meet the Nazi challenge by taking all necessary steps which would insure the civil and political rights of its members. On the other end of the spectrum, Zionist minded Jews perceived the Jewish community as a distinct group within German society, having unique cultural and religious characteristics which must be nurtured and perpetuated. Therefore, at the aforementioned meeting, it was no wonder that Alfred Klee, representing the Jüdische Volkspartei, a coalition of Zionist parties in Berlin, supported the proposal that the Jewish community expand its activities to include defensive actions that would guarantee the inviolability of Jewish rights.59

In view of the impasse, the Jewish community could not, at this point, take a unified stand against Nazism. Therefore, various Jewish organizations and groups pressed ahead with a variety of defensive activities. East European Jews organized various mass demonstrations and protest meetings whose primary aim was to appeal for fair play and assistance from their non-Jewish fellow citizens. Self-defense organizations to aid Jews threatened by Nazis also came into being in Berlin and elsewhere. The CV took a different approach. It undertook a massive educational campaign directed at the non-Jewish community. Its purpose
was to expose the Nazi party for what it was and to debunk its anti-Semitic allegations. A press bureau was established for this purpose. Its functions included the gathering of data pertaining to antisemitic incidents in Germany, as well as composing refutations to allegations. The information was published in various "in-house" publications and distributed without charge to the German press. The CV also distributed handbills and pamphlets and also posted posters in order to educate the masses. Its leaders met with noted political figures and legislators, as well as press executives, in order to keep them posted on the situation and to enlighten them about the seriousness of the threat that Nazism posed to Germany. The CV also kept the Jewish community informed of the situation through its various publications, as well as at special meetings called for this purpose. It prevailed on Jews to protest against attempts to restrict their civil rights and encouraged them to use their vote to elect officials who would be willing and able to defend Jewish rights. The organization offered aid and counsel to those in the community who suffered at the hands of the Nazis. Its lawyers fought incursions of the law in the courts and met with a measure of success, particularly in civil cases related to the Nazi boycott of Jews.

In spite of the gathering storm clouds, the general mood of German Jewry was optimistic. German Jews, for the most part, continued to pin their hopes on Hindenburg and the Reichswehr to maintain a democracy in Germany. The optimists hoped that, with the improvement of economic conditions, Germans who supported Hitler would withdraw their support and as a result the Nazi party would collapse. Other German Jews were
confident that there still remained in Germany cultured elements that supported progress and civility and opposed the antisemitic barbarities committed by the Nazis. Although, they argued, these elements were now suppressed, they eventually would reemerge and support the Jewish cause. As was pointed out above, Hitler's participation in the Reich government and his chances of becoming chancellor in the closing months of 1932 grew more remote as the political fortunes of the Nazi Party waned. Even those Jews who felt that it was remotely possible for Hitler to become chancellor believed that, if this came to pass, his tenure in office would be short. German Jewry undoubtedly would suffer under a Nazi regime, but would overcome its difficulties. Therefore, Hitler's ascension to power at the end of 1933 filled the hearts of German Jews with consternation and trepidation. In spite of the initial shock, however, an air of optimism continued to prevail in the German Jewish community. Lion Feuchtwanger, the noted German Jewish author, for example, foresaw only a change in tactics but no major change in the government's policy vis-à-vis the Jews. In his opinion, Hitler would continue the discriminatory policies instituted by von Papen. He would, unlike his predecessor, implement this policy with less finesse. "Generally," Feuchtwanger stated, "I cannot imagine how even the present regime in Germany would wish to expel German Jewry who regard themselves part of the German people and who have resided in Germany for hundreds of years." He was of the opinion that, as long as Hindenburg would be President, no change in the constitution would be made. No laws would be enacted that would deny the Jews their civil rights.
Many German Jews shared Pfeuchtwanger's optimism that Hindenburg would oppose vigorously any attempt to deprive Jews of their rights. They relied on his loyalty to the constitution and his sense of justice. It is for this reason, for example, that both the CV and the Zionist Federation did not express despair when Hitler was appointed chancellor. The CV urged German Jewry to remain calm and not to act until the course Hitler would chart for Germany would become clear. The _Jüdische Rundschau_, the Zionist organ, commenting in an editorial, expressed the view that, while Hitler's appointment was unavoidable, it did not imply that Jewish rights would now be violated. It was certain that President Hindenburg, as well as other parties which supported the new cabinet, would respect the rights of the Jews as guaranteed by the constitution. German Jewish optimism also stemmed from the belief that both von Papen, the Vice-Chancellor, as well as other cabinet ministers could also be relied upon to oppose any attempt by Hitler to violate the constitution. 63

The basis for Jewish optimism proved to be illusory. Hitler moved immediately to remove the shackles which bound him and prevented him from reorganizing German social, economic, and political life in accordance with racial doctrines. He won Hindenburg's consent for the dissolution of the Reichstag and called for new elections in March. It soon became clear that the election was but a veiled attempt by Hitler to lend an aura of legality to his resolve to establish a dictatorship in Germany. In the ensuing days following the dissolution of the Reichstag and prior to the election, the Nazis moved to crush all civil and political opposition. The Nazi regime used the occasion of the Reichstag fire 64 at the end of February to impose martial law and suspend all civil freedoms.
The emergency decrees which they issued at this time were used by the Nazis for their political advantage. They censored the free press and often suspended it when it published what the government considered to be detrimental to the best interests of the country. The regime did not, however, hamper the widely circulated Nazi press. It continued to incite against the political enemies of the regime and the Jews, even though such incitations clearly violated the law. The Nazis crushed the political parties and hampered them in their efforts to conduct a campaign for the coming election.

Of particular concern to the Jewish community, according to reports in the Yiddish press, was the Nazi drive against the Communist Party, because Nazi propagandists used the term "Marxist" and Jew synonymously. The Nazis sought to avenge the death of their comrades in clashes with the communists by beating and torturing Jews. Often they linked various Jewish organizations with the Communist Party and raided and searched their offices on the pretext that they were looking for communist literature. The Nazi regime, for example, used this to justify searching the CV offices following the Reichstag fire.

Simultaneously, the Nazi Party moved to bring all governmental bodies under its control. The issuance of a decree authorizing the cabinet to dissolve all local government institutions which failed to heed the central government strengthened the authority of the Reich government. The new government appointed Nazi officials to head various ministries. Frick, for example, was appointed Minister of Interior, and Göring was chosen to head the police in Prussia. The regime also filled civil service posts on both the national and local levels with party members. As a
result of these developments, no one was in a position to oppose the Nazis. Therefore, by the time the election was held, a Nazi dictatorship was a fait accompli.65

With this in mind, it is important for us to summarize the reports in the Yiddish press regarding the events during the initial months of the Nazi regime, following the March election, to gain an insight into what the correspondents perceived to be Hitler's policy vis-à-vis the Jews and how this policy, in their view, affected German Jewry.

It is important to bear in mind, however, that it was not possible for the Yiddish press to present to its readers a complete and accurate account of what was actually happening in Germany. The German press was censored, as were news reports sent from Germany. Many refugees were afraid to talk about their experiences because they feared Nazi reprisals against relatives and acquaintances still in Germany. Yet those who did talk of their experiences provided data which enabled reporters to describe the situation in Germany. The picture painted on the basis of these accounts was rounded out by testimonies gathered from visitors returning from Germany, from letters received by relatives of German Jews, as well as from data gathered by various foreign embassies in Germany, including those of the United States and Poland. The Yiddish press was also severely hampered by the fact that its correspondents were denied access to press briefings held by the German government for the members of the foreign press. Therefore it had to rely heavily on information gathered by reporters representing the foreign press in Germany.66

According to accounts in the Yiddish press, the Nazi Party allowed its members to celebrate the party's victory at the polls on
March 5th, by giving them a free hand to wreak physical vengeance upon those who were portrayed as enemies. Nazi gangs, for example, conducted wholesale raids in various cities and hamlets on the eve of March 9th and 10th in order to intimidate all those opposed to the regime. Jews suffered greatly from this spate of violence. Correspondents of the press likened the situation in Germany to the days of the Spanish Inquisition. They expressed the view that never in modern times had Jews been subjected to such terror and barbarism. The perpetrators did not fear police intervention because the Nazis controlled the police. Also, S.A. troops served as auxiliary police. The hooligans were also convinced that they had the tacit approval of their leaders. In light of continued incitations to violence by other Nazi leaders, they did not take seriously Hitler's exhortations following the election to remain calm, maintain party discipline, and avoid incidents which could place the Nazi government in a bad light.

Although street violence did subside after a while and life in large urban centers, e.g. Berlin, returned to normal, at least on the surface, Jews continued to be terrorized, particularly in predominately Jewish neighborhoods and in provincial cities which were removed from the eye of the foreign observer. Individuals with Semitic appearances feared to walk in the streets or appear in public places because the Nazis continued to attack Jews in the streets and cafes. Some Jews had their beards torn off. Others had swastikas burnt into their scalp. Women were not spared. As a result, some Jews began wearing swastikas in order to ward off attacks. Nazis also continued to raid Jewish homes and synagogues. Oftentimes when homes were searched, the occupants were
humiliated or beaten and their possessions were confiscated. In some cases, they took a member of the household to Nazi barracks for questioning and often tortured him. The victims had to sign statements that they had been well treated before they were released. Arrests of Jews continued and the number of Jews who disappeared and were presumed murdered by the Nazis mounted with each passing day. In view of the raids and kidnappings, some Jews feared to sleep at home. Some hid in the fields and forests. Others fled to the provinces in the hope that their Jewish identity would not become known. Concentration camps were built to house the ever growing number of individuals who were considered by the state to be a threat to the government or who could, as a result of their conduct or expressed beliefs, be victims of mass terror. The Yiddish press in mid-1933 could not establish with any degree of certainty the number of individuals incarcerated in concentration camps, nor could it estimate the number of Jews imprisoned in such camps. Various estimates ranged from 59,000 to 80,000 prisoners. The government, however, at the end of July, reported that only 18,000 individuals were being held in concentration camps. Moreover, according to these reports, based on accounts of those released or escaped from concentration camps, the lot of the Jewish prisoners was more woeful than other internees. Nazi jailers singled Jews out and subjected them to much harsher and often inhuman treatment. This was the case as well in prisons or Nazi barracks to which Jews were brought and then tortured by their Nazi inquisitors. Jews, unlike other political prisoners, in the Nazi view could not be rehabilitated. Therefore, they had to be annihilated. Correspondents of the Yiddish press, in light of these reports, rejected
the contention of the apologists of the new regime that the atrocities committed by the Nazis against the Jews were linked to the Nazi drive against their political opponents.

At first, the government denied that Jews were mistreated or tortured. Hitler's foreign press chief, Hanfstaengl, for example, at a press conference held on March 21st, called the press reports pertaining to atrocities base lies. In light of the mounting evidence which disproved the Nazi contention, the government officials at first attempted to lay the blame for the atrocities at the doorstep of irresponsible elements bent on blackening Germany's name. They later conceded that the incidents may have been accidental acts committed by overzealous Nazis. However, in light of Hitler's statement that violence was necessary to break the resistance to the new system that he wished to institute, there could be no doubt that what had occurred had been planned and executed by members of his party with the government's tacit approval and possibly its encouragement.

The acts of terror committed by Nazi hooligans did not, as we shall see in the following chapter, go unnoticed outside Germany. Numerous rallies took place in various European countries and in the United States to protest the actions of the Nazi government and to decry the atrocities it committed against its political enemies and German Jewry. According to press reports, these demonstrations disturbed the Nazi regime. It was particularly incensed by the growing opposition to its policies pertaining to Jews. The Nazi party blamed Jewish Marxist refugees for instigating an inflammatory campaign against the German people and called for a boycott of Jewish businesses in retaliation.
for this campaign. Hitler endorsed the boycott and sought cabinet approval. In his view, an organized boycott was necessary to assuage the masses who were enraged that Jewish businesses, and particularly Jewish department stores, were allowed to continue to function to the detriment of the German merchant. An organized demonstration would allow the government to exercise control over the situation and prevent violence. Vice Chancellor von Papen, Foreign Minister Neurath, and Labor Minister Seldte opposed the boycott because they believed that it would have a detrimental effect on the German economy and perhaps even result in retaliatory measures against German nationals who were working abroad, e.g., in Poland. Various business leaders, as well as the moderate nationalist press, echoed these sentiments. Yet the government agreed to tolerate the boycott. The Nazi Party, in view of the opposition, decided to limit the boycott to one day. The date set for the boycott was April 1. It is important to note in this connection, that the Nazi Party resorted to blackmail in order to force German Jews to initiate a campaign in which they would refute the reports in the press pertaining to their mistreatment by the Nazis. They threatened to renew the boycott if the reports in the press continued to be published and intimated that a renewal of the boycott would be accompanied by pogroms. German Jews acceded to the Nazi wishes in the hopes of avoiding a blood bath.

The correspondents of the Yiddish press did not generally accept the contention that the boycott was called for in order to punish German Jewry for spreading lies about Germany. Rather, they viewed the Nazi argument as a pretext to seek official sanction for the expansion of the "cold pogrom" which had been initiated upon Hitler's coming to
power in order to humiliate German Jewry and annihilate it economically.

According to these journalists, Hitler would not be able to fulfill most of his campaign promises. Many of the socialist planks of the Nazi program, as well as the proposed agrarian reforms, ran counter to the interest of those elements upon whom Hitler depended for financial support. Any attempt by Hitler to implement these planks would be vigorously opposed by them. Hitler would also not be able to bring about the suspension of reparation payments or a revision of the terms of the Versailles Treaty, because of opposition by the allied powers. Therefore, in their view, Hitler was anxious to implement those planks which would meet with the least opposition and which would provide his followers with concrete evidence that he was attempting to fulfill his campaign promises. Such a course of action would draw their attention away from his failure to achieve his other objectives. The anti-Jewish planks of his party's program filled this bill. By expelling the Jews from their businesses and positions, he would be able to provide employment for some of his followers. It is for this reason that Hitler, in the view of some Yiddish journalists, was anxious to implement these planks as soon as possible and sought the cabinet's approval of the boycott.

The regime never officially renewed the boycott as threatened. However, the Nazi Party and the government continued, as they did before the official boycott, to uproot Jews from German economic life. The number of Jewish businesses forced to close their doors continued to grow as did the number of Jewish businesses that were expropriated and placed under Nazi management. Nazis were also appointed to key positions in various business organizations and often filled posts vacated by Jewish
business executives who were dismissed. These developments resulted from the government's policy of Gleichschaltung or coordination, whose goal it was, in the economic sector, to make businesses more responsive to government demands and more sensitive to the welfare of the entire nation.

In view of the fact that Jewish businesses provided the greatest number of jobs for Jewish employees, the nazification of these enterprises resulted in the dismissal of a great number of Jewish wage earners. They could not, according to reports in the Yiddish-press, find other employment because the government was making a concerted effort to force all businesses to fire their Jewish employees. In large concerns Nazi cells of employees forced proprietors, through intimidation and sabotage, to fire all Jews in their employ. The government used similar techniques to force owners of smaller businesses to follow suit. Even Jewish employers acceded to these demands in hope of avoiding personal harm and saving their businesses from ruination and expropriation. The situation of the Jewish employee deteriorated even further after the government established the German Labor Front and eliminated the unions in May, 1933. Although membership in the front was voluntary, no one, in practice, could get a job unless he was a member of this organization. Since membership in the Front was not open to Jews, this spelled greater unemployment for Jews.

In the political sphere, Gleichschaltung manifested itself in the dissolution of all political parties with the exception of the Nazi Party. It became the official party and the demarcation between it and the state gradually disappeared. The regime took steps almost immediately to implement the party's program, as was pointed out above. For example,
the Aryan Paragraph in the "First Decree Supplemeting the Law for the Restoration of Professional Civil Service" laid the foundation upon which the new society would be built. In the eyes of the law, now even converted Jews, their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, as well as children of mixed marriages, were also considered to be non-Aryan and hence subject to all disabilities which the law prescribed for this group. When the government sought to legally implement the Nazi program, this paragraph served as the basis for closing practically all avenues of economic pursuit to the Jews, barring Jews from participating in and contributing to German culture as well as banishing them from German political and social life.

In 1933 the government enacted laws which eliminated Jews from all branches of civil service, including teaching, and all but closed the legal profession, the sciences, and the medical arts to Jews. The establishment of a Reich Chamber of Culture in September resulted in the exclusion of Jews from art, music, literature, etc. The "unofficial" dismissal of Jews from their posts in state and municipal theatres and opera houses now received official sanction. Jews were also excluded from the fields of journalism and farming. Jews were also no longer permitted to own land. Generally, the various laws passed in 1933 exempted from disabilities only those non-Aryans who had been appointed to their posts prior to August 1, 1914 or who were engaged in combat or who had been wounded on the battle field during the war. Fathers or sons of persons killed in the war were also exempted. In practice, however, these exemptions were of no practical value. In the legal field, for example, no one would hire a Jewish lawyer to present his case before a Nazi judge or jury.
As a result of the boycott and the discriminatory legislation, Leitschin-sky reported at the end of October that approximately 5,000 Jewish doctors, 3,000 Jewish lawyers, judges and notaries, 2,000 actors and singers, and 1,000 journalists as well as tens of thousands of Jewish employees had lost their posts. Impoverishment became widespread. An ever increasing number of Jews had to depend on the community for sustenance.

It is also important to note that numerous reports appeared in the press concerning various social, cultural, scientific, athletic, and professional organizations which coordinated their by-laws with the statutes of the government. As a result, Jews were barred from membership in these organizations. Thus, German Jewry seemed to be on the verge of returning to the ghetto from which it had fought to escape.

Nazi leaders justified their actions by contending that the legislation only reflected the wishes of the people who demanded the exclusion of Jews from German life. They argued that it was in the best interest of German Jewry to legally define its status under the new Reich, rather than leaving its fate in the hands of the "enraged" German people. In truth, however, many Germans who made such demands were incited by Nazi propagandists. As a result of Nazi indoctrination, they transferred their anger and vented their frustrations on their Jewish compatriots. The legislation enacted in the course of the year only legalized practices for which the Nazi party had agitated over the years and which were implemented by segments of the populace or local governmental authorities after Hitler became chancellor. For example, the Yiddish press reported that even prior to the promulgation of restrictive legislation by the Reich government, local authorities in
some cities forbade Jewish attorneys and local Jewish prosecutors to handle criminal cases. Numerous Jewish judges, prosecutors, and other legal personnel were dismissed. In Breslau, for example, the Nazis forcibly drove Jewish lawyers and judges out of the courts.

The Nazis were not only bent on shattering the economic structure of Jewish life in Germany, but also desired to eradicate all Jewish influences on German culture as well as preventing future Jewish participation in German cultural life. As was pointed out, Jews were dismissed from their posts in state theatres and opera houses. The government also banned foreign Jews from the German stage and opera. Schools and universities gradually dismissed their Jewish staff. The participation of Jews in the German press all but ceased. The desire to expunge all vestiges of Jewish culture also found expression in the public burning on May 10th of works authored by Jews by Nazi students in various university towns throughout Germany. These students demanded, according to reports in the Yiddish press, that in the future all books written by Jews in the German language be designated as translations, since a Jew can think only in Yiddish. When the Jewish author wrote in German, in their opinion, he was using an alien tongue. They also insisted that the printing of works in Gothic script should be reserved for books written only by Aryans. Works authored by Jews could be printed only in Latin script. The passage of the "Law Against The Overcrowding of German Schools" prevented many Jewish students from pursuing their studies and thus limited the future participation of Jews in German culture. The law enacted at the end of April, introduced a numerus clausus. Jews could be enrolled in German gymnasiuums or universities to a maximum proportion of 1.5 percent of the number of Aryan
entrants. In institutions where the number of Jews exceeded 5 percent of the total of registrants, the excess was dismissed. Only applicants whose fathers had fought at the front during the war or whose parents were married before the adoption of the law, and then only if either his father or mother or two of his grandparents were of Aryan origin, were exempted. Although no restrictions were placed on the admission of Jewish children to elementary schools, tuition as well as other grants to poor Jewish children and orphans were withdrawn.

The underlying assumption of the exclusionary legislation was the premise that Jews were a menace and the prime enemy of the German people. It had the effect of setting German Jewry apart as outcasts. This attitude toward non-Aryans, for example, expressed itself in the refusal of students to enroll in courses taught by Jewish professors. It manifested itself in the refusal of witnesses to answer questions asked by Jewish lawyers in the course of court hearings. It also resulted in the mistreatment of Jewish school children. Jewish children in elementary schools, for example, were forced to sit in separate sections of the classroom. They had to learn Nazi tracts, along with their Aryan classmates, in which Jews were portrayed as members of an inferior race and German Jews accused of acts of political and economic treason against the Reich. Their classmates often humiliated them and frequently physically attacked them as a result of this propaganda.

How did German Jewry react to these developments? Did they believe full equality and emancipation would be eventually restored to them? From reports in the Yiddish press, there is no doubt that certain segments of the German Jewish community saw the handwriting on the wall
and did seek to remedy their situation. The Zionists, for example, advocated emigration as the best solution to the problem. However, Germany imposed restrictions on emigration on the one hand and few countries, on the other hand, were willing to open their doors to Jewish émigrés. Also, a good number of German Jews who were willing to emigrate lacked the means and the necessary skills to establish themselves in a new country. Other Jews, bewildered by the developments, failed to comprehend what had befallen them. They continued to express the belief that the Nazi regime would be short lived and, with its fall, their rights would be restored, if not in full, at least in part. Therefore, a number of German Jews sought refuge in neighboring countries until such time when the fascist storm that engulfed Germany would blow over. Assimilationists sought some accommodation with the present regime. They were even willing to accept the status of second class citizens in exchange for assurances that they would be allowed to continue to live in Germany. The greatest tragedy, however, for these Jews was that after decades of cultural assimilation, they were forced into a world they did not know or want to be part of as a result of boycott, administrative measures, and growing social isolation.

Those Jews who remained in Germany clearly had no choice but to adjust to their new circumstances. They were forced to create an economic and cultural ghetto in order to insure their survival, but sought solace in the hope that the storm that burst over their heads would soon be over.

The storm did not blow over but rather intensified. In retrospect the prophecies of doom proclaimed by a small group of correspondents were
borne out by later events. Clearly what had transpired in Germany in 1933 was but an initial step toward the fulfillment of the Nazi plan to annihilate not only German Jewry, but world Jewry as well.69
Footnotes to Chapter III

1 Oscar Cohn made his proposal at the meetings of the Constitutional Committee as well as at the first and second reading of the draft proposal.

It is important to note that antisemitism at this point was not yet a spontaneous expression of the overwhelming majority of the German people. Hamburger does note that "strong as the tide ran and rampant as antisemitism was, it did not break out of the area of emotional feeling. As a political movement antisemitism was disorganized and compromised for the time being. The disastrous end of the war and the inglorious exit of the monarchs and their governments were uppermost in the minds of the voters who set the pace for the election to the National Assembly, and of the members of the Assembly themselves." Ernest Hamburger, "One Hundred Years of Emancipation," Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook, XV (1969), pp. 31-36.

Similarly, Hitler in his book Mein Kampf says:

"In 1918, there was no such thing as systematic anti-Semitism. I still remember the difficulties which we met everywhere as soon as one mentioned the word 'Jew.' Either people looked at you stupidly or one met with a violent response. Our first attempts to show the general public its true enemy, at that time, seems to be almost futile and only very slowly things turned out for the better. ... In the winter of 1918-1919, however, something like anti-Semitism began to take root," Quoted from American Jewish Committee, The Jews in Nazi Germany (New York: American Jewish Committee, 1935), pp. 15-16.


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6Hamburger, "One Hundred Years of Emancipation," p. 59. This point is illustrated by the following statistics culled from the 1933 census:

"More than the Christian population, Jews had engaged in Handel und Verkehr (trade and commerce) (61.3% as compared to 19.4% of the general population in 1933) and in professions and public or private service jobs (12.5% as compared to 8.4%); fewer Jews had been occupied in industry or the crafts (23.1% as compared to 40.4%), in agriculture or forestry (1.7% as compared to 28.9%). Socially, also, Jews differed: almost half of the Jewish population was self employed (46% as compared to 16.4%), one-third were white-collar employees (as compared to 17%), and only 8.7% classified themselves as workers (as compared to 46.4% of the general population in Germany).” Herbert A. Strauss, "Immigration and Acculturation," Leo Baeck Institute Yearbook, XVI (1971), 76-77.


9These individuals, through their contacts in various countries, helped the German economy by increasing the flow of foreign capital into Germany.


The statistics pertaining to the occupational patterns of the Jews in other provinces are not available for 1925, but it is believed the pattern was analogous to that of Prussia. Marcus, The Rise and Destiny of the German Jew, p. 108.

It is important to note that Schleunes rounded out his percentages. Thus, actually 0.529% of all journalists and writers in Germany were Jews. Schleunes, The Twisted Road to Auschwitz, p. 41; Marcus, The Rise and Destiny of the German Jew, pp. 121-122.

Schleunes, The Twisted Road to Auschwitz, pp. 42-43; American Jewish Committee, The Jew in Nazi Germany, pp. 10-12.

Ramon Knauerhase, An Introduction to National Socialism, 1920 to 1939 (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1972), pp. 27-40.


Hamburger, "One Hundred Years of Emancipation," p. 61.


Mahraun's party did not accept Jews as members.

Hamburger, "One Hundred Years of Emancipation," pp. 41-43.


Growing antisemitism among the German working class can be attributed in part to former members of the Nazi party who had recently joined the SPD and in part to labor's resentment of Jewish support for Papen's wage cut policy. See Day, 13 October 1932.

For a discussion pertaining to the July, 1932 Reichstag election, see B. Smolar, Day, 31 July 1932; J. Lestschinsky, Forward, 29 July 1932. For a discussion pertaining to the November, 1932 election, see I. Klinov, "Daytehe Iden Ohn Politische Fraynd," Morning Journal, 3 November 1932; Day, 24 October 1932.

Editorial, Morning Journal, 28 October 1931.

Morning Journal, 31 July 1932; Morning Journal, 1 November 1932.


Forward, 21 June 1931.


The summary is based on a great number of reports in the Yiddish press pertaining to Nazi atrocities and propaganda activities.

Freiheit, 14 October 1930; Forward, 14 October 1930; Day, 14 October 1930; Forward, 15 October 1930; Morning Journal, 16 October 1930; Forward, 16 October 1930; Day, 20 October 1930.

Morning Journal, 14 September 1931; Day, 15 September 1931; Forward, 16 September 1931; Morning Journal, 16 September 1931; Forward, 18 September 1931.


Day, 19 September 1931; Forward, 19 September 1931.

Morning Journal, 23 September 1931; Day, 23 September 1931; Forward, 24 September 1931; Day, 10 February 1932; Morning Journal, 11 February 1932; Forward, 12 February 1932; Forward, 14 June 1932; Day, 11 July 1932; Forward, 11 December 1932.

Day, 23 September 1931; Forward, 24 September 1931; Day, 27 October 1931; Day, 28 October 1931; Forward, 29 October 1931; Forward, 30 October 1931; Forward, 2 November 1931; Day, 10 February 1932; Morning Journal, 11 February 1932; Forward, 12 February 1932.

See for example Morning Journal, 7 June 1932; Day, 18 June 1932; Forward, 30 October 1932.

See for example J. Lestschinsky, Forward, 15 May 1932; Day, 5 July 1932.

Hitler's encounter with Galician Jews in Vienna had a profound effect on shaping his antisemitic views. They epitomized the stereotype of the ghetto Jew depicted in Volkisch thought. The following quotation from Hitler's Mein Kampf is insightful in explaining why the Ostjuden suffered most from Hitler's racial policies.

"One day when I was walking through the inner city, I suddenly came upon a being clad in a long caftan, with black curls. Is this also a Jew? was my first thought. At Linz they certainly did not look like that. Secretly and cautiously I watched the man, but the longer I stared at this strange face
and scrutinized one feature after the other, the more my mind reshaped the question into another form: Is this also a German?"

Moreover, although Hitler at first had doubts about the truth of the charges leveled against the Jews in the antisemitic Volkisch literature which he read, he concluded after observing the Jews in Vienna that they were indeed different. Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf (New York: Reynal and Hitchcock, 1939), pp. 73-79.

53 See for example Day, 3 July 1930; Day, 11 December 1931; Forward, 5 August 1932; Morning Journal, 30 December 1932.

54 Morning Journal, 18 September 1931; Morning Journal, 22 September 1931; Morning Journal, 10 November 1931; see also J. Lestschinsky, Forward, 15 January 1932.


57 See for example J. Lestschinsky, Forward, 15 August 1932; J. Lestschinsky, Forward, 25 August 1932; Day, 1 September 1932; Forward, 3 December 1932; Morning Journal, 9 December 1932.


It is interesting to note that Michael Dobkowski traces the roots of the phenomena to which Charney called attention, to "the antisemitic shocks occasioned by World War I and the contacts it fostered with the vibrant Judaism of Eastern Europe." The perception of danger in the early 1930's resulted in the acceleration of a process which had already begun.


59 Morning Journal, 20 September 1930; Forward, 8 August 1931; Day, 8 August 1931; see also J. Lestschinsky, "Troyerge Gyszikhten," Forward, 28 December 1930.


62 Day, 2 February 1933.

63 See for example Day, 31 January 1933; Morning Journal, 31 January 1933; I. Klinov, "Der Shvartzen Tog in Daytshland," Morning Journal, 2 February 1933.

64 Although Van der Lubbe, a Dutch Communist was sentenced to death for setting the fire, an International Jurist Committee investigating the fire stated that there were grounds to suspect Nazi leaders of setting the fire. Fritz Tobias, The Reichstag Fire (New York: Putnam, 1964).

65 See for example Morning Journal, 3 February 1933; Morning Journal, 5 February 1933; Day, 7 February 1933; Day, 9 February 1933; Day, 10 February 1933; A. Glanz, "Hitlers Emese Tsil," Morning Journal, 16 February 1933; Day, 1 March 1933; Morning Journal, 1 March 1933.

66 See for example Morning Journal, 7 March 1933; Forward, 13 March 1933; Forward, 15 March 1933; Day, 15 March 1933; D. Sherman, Day, 25 March 1933; Forward, 28 March 1933.

67 See for example Forward, 21 June 1933; Forward, 28 July 1933.

68 J. Lestschinsky, Forward, 29 October 1933; see also Forward, 23 April 1933; Day, 23 April 1933.

69 The summary of the events of 1933 was based primarily on the articles and news reports in the daily Yiddish press of the period. See also American Jewish Committee, The Jews in Nazi Germany, pp. 31-63; Black Book Committee, The Black Book (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946), pp. 80-90 and insert between p. 106 and p. 107.
CHAPTER IV
The Protest Movement and the Boycott Movement
in the United States, 1933

Protest

The American Yiddish press, as I have mentioned in the preceding chapter, called the attention of its readers to the atrocities committed by Nazi hooligans against German Jewry. It also noted those measures enacted by the Nazi regime which abrogated basic rights of Jews, as well as those steps taken by the regime to suppress the further development of Jewish national culture. From the press reports, however, it is clear that some American Jews remained uninformed of the situation. Others may have been too distracted by the effect of the depression on their daily lives to pay attention to events that were taking place in Germany and that were having a profound effect on the lives of their co-religionists there. Still others doubted if any reaction to the atrocities and condemnation of the anti-Jewish policy of the Nazi regime could be effective. These Jews wondered if anyone would pay attention to their protests and heed their pleas. Yet, based on my research and judging from the response to the call of various Jewish organizations to combat Nazism, it is fair to conclude that American Jews generally knew about the Jewish situation in Germany. They expressed concern about the well being of their brethren there and wished to voice their indignation. Some Jews even expressed the belief that their own safety and well being would be
threatened by the spread of Nazism. Therefore, they, together with
their leaders, sought to devise a course of action which would still
Hitler's "murderous" hand. The accounts in the Yiddish daily press in
1933 reflect the differences of opinion expressed by various individuals
and organizations on this matter and describe the controversy which
resulted therefrom.

Not surprisingly, the American Jewish Committee and B'nai Brith
opposed any action that would smack of intervention in the internal
affairs of any nation. Therefore, they resorted to the time honored
method of quiet diplomacy in the hopes of bringing about a change in
Nazi policy vis-a-vis the Jews. These organizations contended that
any other course of action would arouse Hitler's wrath and result in
retaliatory measures against the German Jewish community. Other Jewish
organizations, including the American Jewish Congress, advocated a
more activist approach. They supported a range of activities which
included protest meetings, street demonstrations, and even an economic
boycott. It was their hope to bring about a revision of Nazi policy
through moral and economic pressure.

In this chapter I shall describe the activities undertaken in 1933
by various segments of the American Jewish community to arouse the public
to the plight of German Jewry and to dissuade the Nazis from continuing
their persecution of the Jews. Particular attention shall be paid to
the controversy which arose in the Jewish community as a result of these
variant proposals and to the discussion of these activities by the
correspondents of the Yiddish daily press. The Nazi Party had already
become a force in German politics by 1931. It had widely disseminated its invective against German Jewry and had attacked them mercilessly, with impunity. American Jews appealed to the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress to take steps to combat Nazism.¹

One of the most meaningful steps to combat Nazism was a series of protest demonstrations and marches undertaken by segments of the American Jewish community in 1933. Proponents of protest demonstrations believed that much could be accomplished through such action. In their view, Jews would become more familiar with the Jewish situation in Germany and more conscious of their obligation to their brethren there. The non-Jewish world's attention, too, would be drawn to the discriminatory policy of the Nazi regime as well as to the atrocities being committed by the Nazis. As a result it was hoped the world community would also raise its voice in protest. Demonstrations in the United States would hopefully arouse American public opinion against Nazi racial policy and atrocities and result in a demand by the public for American government intervention on behalf of oppressed German Jewry. The advocates of protest demonstrations argued that such a request would make it easier for the American government to intercede on behalf of German Jewry. Many correspondents believed that action by the American government would be efficacious because America was a powerful patron of Germany. Moreover, they hoped that other governments which had not yet reacted to Nazism would now be spurred to action. Those who espoused the view that the intervention of foreign powers on behalf of German Jewry would be effective hastened to point out that
British intercession early in March had resulted in the Nazi regime's aborting of its plan to carry out a pogrom against the German Jewish community on the eve of the March 5th election. Mounting world opinion against the Nazi regime would, as it was hoped, bring the German government to the realization that "Jews would not tolerate a situation in which their brethren were led like sheep to the slaughter" and that the continued pursuit of its anti-Jewish policy would be detrimental to its own welfare. It was expected that moral pressure resulting from the demonstrations would force Germany to yield on this issue.\(^2\) The movement to protest against Nazism gained momentum in the American Jewish community only after Hitler had been appointed chancellor and it became clear that he would not be sobered by the power he had attained, but rather would persist in his efforts to establish a dictatorship and implement his party's program. The American Jewish Congress played a leading role in this effort. It sponsored a meeting

"to acquaint the American public with the grave dangers which are represented in the Hitler program; the danger to the democratic ideal, to peace of the world, to the cause of religious liberty, and more especially and immediately, the threat to the safety and physical well-being of six hundred thousand Jews in Germany."

The meeting took place on Sunday morning, February 26, 1933, at Carnegie Hall in New York City as part of the regular Sunday morning service of the Free Synagogue. The discussants included Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, honorary president of the American Jewish Congress; Bernard S. Deutsch, president of the Congress; Martin Conboy, a prominent Catholic layman and advisor to Cardinal Hayes and Dr. S. Parkes Cadman, chairman of the Committee on Good Will between Jews and Christians of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ. They agreed that the lack of religious tolerance
shown by the German Chancellor and his party doomed the Nazi movement to ultimate failure. Moreover, the speakers stressed their belief that although German politics was not a necessary concern of the American people, the Nazi threat to freedom was a challenge to the citizens of this country and the world. They recognized that many Germans fell victim to the Nazi atrocities, but stressed that German Jews suffered the most. Therefore, they called upon all freedom loving individuals to enter a vigorous protest against the brutal attacks upon German Jewry.

The Yiddish press reacted positively to the aforementioned protest meeting at Carnegie Hall. It commented particularly on the non-Jewish participation in the deliberations. The Day, in an editorial pertaining to this meeting, expressed the view that due to the fact that Christian leaders spoke out against Nazism, not only in their own names but also in the name of their co-religionists in Germany, the hands of German Christians opposed to Hitler would be strengthened. The Day thought, too, that these statements would dissuade others from supporting Hitler's regime. In the Day's opinion, Christian condemnation of Nazism, as well as its castigation of the Nazis for committing atrocities, would demonstrate to Hitler and his supporters that Jews were not alone in their opposition to the Nazi regime and its policies.

In spite of this initial step, it seemed, at least from the reports in the Yiddish press, that little else was being done or planned by the Jewish organizations to combat Nazism. With each passing day, as reports in the Yiddish press pertaining to Nazi atrocities and discriminatory acts, particularly against Jews, grew more numerous, the press expressed concern about the welfare of German Jewry. The Day reported
that it had received numerous letters from its readers demanding that a conference of Jewish organizations be convened for the purpose of organizing a mass protest against the persecution and terrorization of the Jews in Germany. The American Jewish Congress reportedly also received similar requests.5

The American Jewish Congress did not remain insensitive to the wishes of its constituents. Its National Executive Committee met on March 12th at the Commodore Hotel in New York City in order to discuss the situation of the Jews in Germany and to determine what action the Congress should take which would be likely to help the Jews in Germany. In spite of a heated and at times acrimonious debate pertaining to the best ways to give voice to the Jewish indignation over the ill treatment of German Jewry, the National Executive Committee succeeded in hammering out a policy. It endorsed Dr. Margoshes' proposal to convene mass meetings throughout the United States on a day to be designated, in order to call attention to the situation in Germany. It felt that a stronger expression at this point in time could precipitate a backlash in Germany which would be detrimental to the Jews. Therefore, it rejected proposals calling for public demonstrations and marches. Moreover, by rejecting the proposal that the American Jewish Congress concern itself with the broader issue of German fascism and persecution of other groups in Germany by the Nazis, the Executive Committee underscored its desire to limit the American Jewish Congress's activities to the Jewish issue.6

The debate highlighted the divisiveness of the Jewish community on this issue. Lines along which various factions would later be divided now began to emerge. The differences were brought into even sharper focus
by the debate which ensued in the Jewish community after the Congress
issued an invitation to all Jewish organizations in the metropolitan area
who were in agreement with its policy to limit the scope of the protest
to the Jewish issue, to attend a meeting at the Astor Hotel on March 19th.
The purpose of the meeting was to discuss plans for a "monster" demonstra-
tion to be held shortly in New York City.

The Jewish communists who had been isolated from the rest of the
Jewish community as a result of their anti-religious, anti-Jewish, and
anti-Zionist policies, sought to use the threat of Nazism "to bridge the
chasm separating them from the rest of the Jews." The International
Workers Order (I.W.O.), a predominately Jewish communist fraternal body,
announced its intention to attend the meeting in spite of the fact that
it disagreed with the Congress's proposal. It hoped to present to the
delegates an alternative program for discussion. The I.W.O. proposal
called for:

1. Mobilization of the Jewish masses for the purpose of
   fighting German antisemitism and the pogroms in Germany.
2. Waging a battle against fascism, the root cause of the
   present troubles in Germany.
3. Fighting for the release of communists, socialists,
   intellectuals, Jews, and other individuals arrested and perse-
   cuted by the Nazi regime.
4. Organizing street demonstrations, protest meetings,
   and sending telegrams to the German ambassador in Washington,
   as well as to the German government.

The divergent proposals were the subject of a fierce debate between
the Freiheit, the communist Yiddish daily, and the Day, which identified
with the Congress's view. The Freiheit, in its editorials, contended
that the Nazi plan to annihilate German Jewry, and most particularly its
proletarian element, was but one aspect of the Nazi plan to crush labor in order to insure the rule of "aristocrats and capitalists." The I.W.O. proposal, in its view, addressed itself to the root of the problem, i.e., fascism, and not to one of its manifestations. Therefore, it deserved to be supported. In contrast, the Congress's proposal suggested that a fascist regime in Germany could be tolerated as long as its policies would not impair Jewish rights. The Freiheit rejected this notion because it argued that if one accepts fascism, one must also accept its consequences. Therefore, it had no doubt that the voice of protest would be stifled by the adoption of the meaningless and ineffective course of action proposed by the Congress.9

The Day disagreed with the Freiheit's view and sharply criticized the I.W.O.'s program of action. It contended that Jews, as Jews, could protest only against the persecution of Jews in Germany. To do otherwise would confuse the issue and destroy the common ground upon which the entire Jewish community stood united. To lend Jewish organizational support to the I.W.O.'s program, in the Day's view, could provide Hitler, his sympathizers, and anti-Jewish elements in the United States with an opportunity for counter protests that would only weaken the Jewish sponsored protest movement. The Day made it clear, however, that it did not oppose demonstrations sponsored by non-Jewish organizations which would address related problems, nor would it oppose Jewish participation in these activities.10

The Congress's decision to hold protest meetings set into motion a chain of events which brought it into open conflict with the American Jewish Committee and B'nai Brith. It also brought to an end the efforts
of the Joint Conference on Germany which had been established for the purpose of working out a common policy with respect to the German situation.\textsuperscript{11}

The diametrically opposed views which precluded further joint action were set out in statements by the respective organizations. On March 13th, Bernard Deutsch wrote, in the name of the Congress, a letter to Dr. Cyrus Adler, President of the American Jewish Committee, and to Senator Alfred M. Cohen, President of B'nai Brith. He appealed to both leaders to reconsider their opposition to the protests. Deutsch offered this insightful explanation for the Congress's decision to call for a day of national protest:

"It was felt that the demand for immediate mass protest was of itself so justified and indeed so insistent and nation-wide that it was our duty to make that response in the matter which the Jewish people have the right to expect of the American Jewish Congress, and that, unless steps were taken immediately to provide for the fitting and proper expression of resentment on the part of our fellow Jews, the situation would in all likelihood get completely out of hand and proposals be made and action be taken which might prove hurtful to the interests of our fellow Jews in Germany...."

"I may add, my dear Dr. Adler, that the arguments advanced in support of these positions were so unanswerable and so wholly in accord with the fundamental principles of the American Jewish Congress, which aims to cooperate with and to guide Jewish opinion rather than to control and dominate it, that the conclusion was reached that no further time should be lost in the task of formulating and giving expression to the unparalleled measure of indignation and protest that has made itself felt with regard to the tragic plight of our fellow Jews of Germany and that, moreover, it was the business of the Congress to cooperate with any and all Jewish communities which sought to give expression to their own sense of sympathy and solidarity with their afflicted fellow Jews."\textsuperscript{12}

The American Jewish Committee and B'nai Brith, on the other hand, decided to continue to pursue a more restrained course of action. They restated their policy in a statement they issued following the Congress's
announcement that it would sponsor a national day of protest. The policy statement read as follows:

Though in this bewildering situation it is only natural for decent and liberal-minded men and women to feel outraged at these occurrences and to desire to give public expression to their indignation and abhorrence, the American Jewish Committee and B'ni Brith are convinced that the wisest and most effective policy for the Jews of America to pursue is to exercise the same fine patience, fortitude, and exemplary conduct that have been shown to the Jews of Germany. This is not a time to further inflame already over-wrought feelings but to act wisely, judiciously, and deliberately.13

The Yiddish press expressed concern that the American Jewish community could not form a united front and devise a program of action that would be acceptable to everyone. Disunity in its view, dimmed the voice of the Jewish community and weakened its protest. Therefore, on the eve of the Congress's planning conference, commentators in the Yiddish press continued to urge Jews to follow their leaders, maintain discipline, and lend their moral and financial support to the cause.14

In spite of the opposition, the planning session at the Astor Hotel took place as scheduled. The Day described the meeting as one of the "most colorful meetings that New York Jewry experienced." It was attended by well over twelve hundred duly accredited representatives of various national and local organizations. An almost equal number of delegates could not gain admission to the meeting because of lack of space. The Congress remained firm in its resolve not to allow political issues to be raised at the meeting. In view of the fact that the I.W.O. had planned to use this forum to introduce a plan that the Congress leadership considered to be political in nature, its delegates as well as
representatives from Icor and other radical trade organizations which endorsed its program were also barred from the meeting.

Bernard Deutsch, in his opening address, reiterated this point and stressed that "Germany has a right to whatever government it desires, but no one has a right to interfere with the human rights of the Jews, or to subject them to the intolerable indignities and persecutions which they are now suffering." The speakers supported the objectives for which the conference had been called. After a heated debate they unanimously adopted a resolution agreeing in substance with that proposed by Dr. Margoshes. It called for the holding of simultaneous protest demonstrations throughout the United States, initiated with a "a monster" demonstration in Madison Square Garden. A "Committee of One Hundred" was elected to carry out the resolution.

It is important to note that the heated debate which ensued following the introduction of Margoshes's resolution produced a number of diametrically opposed views. It once again demonstrated how divided the Jewish community was on this issue. On the one hand, some delegates felt that the resolution was not far reaching enough. They doubted whether the protest meetings were sufficient to bring about a change in Nazi policy. Therefore, they supported an amendment to the resolution proposed by J. George Freedman, commander in chief of the Jewish War Veterans, instructing the Committee of One Hundred to proceed to the organization of a boycott of German goods in this country.

On the other hand, Judge Joseph M. Proskauer and James N. Rosencerg, both members of the Executive Committee of the American Jewish Committee,
pleaded with the delegates to be cautious in working out plans and preparing resolutions because "unintelligent" action could cause even more trouble for the Jews in Germany. In light of the fact that "influential sources" recently had taken an interest in the Jewish situation in Germany, they urged the assembled delegates to wait and see if an improvement would indeed occur in the situation before taking further action.15

The American Jewish Committee and B'nai Brith echoed Proskauer's and Rosenberg's pleas in an official policy statement which they released on March 20th. In it both organizations reiterated their commitment to take all possible steps to ameliorate the suffering of the Jews in Germany. They stressed that prejudice cannot be fought "merely with appeals to passion and resentment, however justified passion and resentment may be." Moreover, they cautioned the Jewish community that all efforts on behalf of German Jewry must be "intelligent and responsible." Therefore, they could not join forces with the Congress and endorse its plan of action. Rather, the American Jewish Committee and B'nai Brith insisted that their long standing policy of enlisting the aid of influential, concerned parties to intercede on behalf of the oppressed would be most efficacious in this instance as well. In light of these statements, the chasm between the American Jewish Congress and the American Jewish Committee and B'nai Brith seemed unbridgeable.16

The correspondents of the press generally regarded the meeting as a success because, in their opinion, it achieved its main objectives. The Jewish situation in Germany became the prime topic of conversation in all Jewish circles. Jews were sufficiently aroused to see it as
their duty to support activities designed to bring about a change in the situation in Germany. As a result, many Jews reacted positively to the "Committee of One Hundred" and lent it their enthusiastic support. American Christians too, and even some German Americans, expressed sympathy and understanding. Some even joined the protest movement.¹⁷

Not surprisingly, individuals closely identified with the Congress, as well as commentators of the Yiddish press, rejected the American Jewish Committee's and B'nai Brith's policy. Stephen Wise expressed strong opposition to a Jewish policy which was formulated on the basis of the results of intercessory activities of influential parties. Rather, he contended that a Jewish policy had to flow from the principles of human rights, justice, and equality.¹⁸

Commentators of the press resented the implication that only "elitist Yahudim" had the capacity to act responsibly and with tact. They challenged the right of the Committee to leadership in this instance, in view of the fact that its position did not reflect the wishes of the masses. Some reporters even called the continued viability of the Committee into question.¹⁹

Radical left wing elements in the Jewish community also could not find a niche in the Congress's camp. They attributed their rejection to the fact that the American Jewish Congress did not oppose fascism per se. Also, they pointed out that the American Jewish Congress feared cooperating with communists in a joint venture. The editorial writers in the Freiheit were particularly critical of the American Jewish Committee for influencing the Jewish Congress to limit the scope of its
protest to the Jewish issue. They took the Congress to task for acting only after it feared that it would lose its leadership role in the present crisis. 20

The contention that the American Jewish Congress did not wish to work with communists had basis in fact. The leaders of the Congress held a private meeting on March 18th with individuals associated with the Freiheit. Rubin Salzman, the general secretary of I.W.O., revealed that at this meeting the representatives of the Congress had made it clear that United States intervention on behalf of German Jewry was contingent on the exclusion of communists from the planned protest. Therefore, the Congress indicated it would bar all radical left wing organizations from the planning session. 21 The I.W.O. consequently issued a call to those dissatisfied with the protest sponsored by the Congress to participate in a pre-conference at the Irving Plaza Hotel in New York City on March 21st. The organizers of the conference hoped to attract to its ranks right wing labor organizations which had endorsed the Congress's program. Three hundred and thirty-seven representatives from two hundred and thirteen organizations including, among others, the left wing Po'ale Zion, attended the meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to lay the foundation for action by a broad based united front of Jewish laboring masses against fascism and antisemitism in Germany.

A provisional committee was appointed to organize further action. Subsequently, this committee sent invitations to all Jewish popular organizations, right wing Jewish labor organizations, and general labor organizations to attend a conference on March 28th, at the Broadway Central Hotel in New York City. 22
Thus, we see that the American Jewish community was unable to muster a single voice to speak for it and remained divided along ideological lines and societal affiliations. The American Jewish Committee and B'nai Brith continued their policy of quiet diplomacy. The communists believed that the Jewish problem in Germany could be solved only by uprooting fascism. The leaders of the American Jewish Congress yielded to pressure from their affiliated organizations. They agreed to sponsor protest meetings but felt that they could not at this point endorse an American boycott of German goods.

In spite of the opposition to its plans, the American Jewish Congress, following the March 19th meeting, proceeded to exercise the mandate given it by representatives of various organizations. Firstly, it sought and won the approval of Secretary of State Hull for an investigation of the Jewish situation by the American Embassy in Berlin. Secondly, it proceeded to lay plans for a "monster" demonstration to be held in New York City's Madison Square Garden on March 27th. It further encouraged Jewish Communists throughout the land to hold similar meetings on that day.

As the day of the rally neared, pressure was exerted upon the leaders of the Congress to dissuade them from carrying out their plans. Numerous letters, cables, and telephone calls were received in the Congress's office from individuals whom the Day described as "intercessors" and well meaning "Yahudim" beseeching the leadership to call off the protest. The growing universal protest and particularly the impending protest demonstration in the United States, in the view of the analysts in the Yiddish press, caused consternation among German
leaders. They believed that the German government felt compelled now to take steps to quiet the growing indignation. They also noted that the Nazi regime was in a quandary. On the one hand, some German leaders feared that negative public opinion could have a detrimental effect on Germany's foreign relations and economy and therefore advocated a moderation of the regime's present discriminatory policy. On the other hand, other governmental figures felt that the implementation of the anti-Jewish planks of the Nazi program by the government was necessary to prove the sincerity of the present regime in fulfilling its campaign pledges to its supporters and to insure their continued support. In order to satisfy both needs, the Nazi regime now took steps that were designed to still the voices of the protesters and at the same time allow it to continue to pursue its present policy vis-à-vis the Jews and other political enemies. The regime tried to allay the fears of those who expressed their indignation by convincing them, through an intensive propaganda campaign, that there was no basis in fact to the atrocity tales published in many newspapers throughout the world. It did now, for the first time, admit Jews had been mistreated but hastened to point out that Germany had just undergone a revolution. Incidents of this nature were unavoidable in the course of a revolution. The regime gave its assurances that it was unequivocally opposed to acts of violence and barbarism and that steps had been taken to prevent a recurrence of such incidents. Von Neurath, the German Ambassador to the United States, in a rare interview granted to American correspondents, voiced these sentiments. He likened the reports in the press regarding the atrocities allegedly committed by his government to similar reports in the press
during the past war. In the latter instance, Germans had been accused of committing atrocities against the Belgians and had been portrayed as barbarians by the people of the press. The Ambassador stressed that German Jews viewed their present situation as an internal matter and were opposed to foreign intervention on their behalf. He noted that he concurred in this Jewish view and cautioned that Jewish protests in the United States could prove to be not in the best interests of German Jewry.

The Nazi regime, in addition, coerced German Jews to write letters to their relatives and acquaintances in the United States in which they denoted that atrocities were committed by the Nazis and in which they asked that the protest meetings be called off. According to reports in the press, the government, ironically, even resorted to physical abuse and blackmail in order to cause these letters to be written. Some German Jews hoped to win favor in the eyes of the regime by their compliance. Jewish communities, too, agreed to send letters because they hoped that as a result of their cooperation they would be granted special privileges, e.g., they would not be denied the right of ritual slaughter.

The American Jewish Congress received numerous letters of this nature from German Jews, including noted German Jewish leaders. Leading German Jewish organizations also issued similar statements just prior to the day of the scheduled protest. The Reichsbund jüdischer Frontsoldaten, in a statement to the American Ambassador in Berlin, echoed the sentiments of von Neurath, that atrocities were unavoidable in the course of a revolution. It claimed that irresponsible individuals had perpetrated these acts. The government, however, opposed the mistreatment of Jews and
intervened on their behalf whenever possible. The Central Verein, in its declaration, sought to absolve German Jewry from responsibility for the atrocity reports. Its statement read in part as follows:

The antisemitic aims in the various domains of life and business which are manifesting themselves, fill us indeed with grave concern. While opposing them, the federation regards them now, as before, as a German domestic affair. We are convinced, however, that equality of rights for German Jews which they have earned in war and peace alike, by their sacrifices of life and property, will not be abrogated and that German Jews will remain inseparably united with the German Fatherland and, together with all Germans of good will, will be able to work for the resurgence of the Fatherland.

The appeals by German Jews did not go unnoticed by the leaders of the American Jewish Congress, although they did minimize their validity because they assumed they had been written under duress. Furthermore, a reply the Congress received on the eve of the protest from Secretary Hull, to its query about the Jewish situation in Germany, impelled it to meet on March 26th in order to reassess its position. In his reply, the Secretary informed the Congress that Ambassador Sackett, after careful investigation, confirmed that Jews had been physically mistreated but reported that the situation had improved. He remained optimistic that no more physical attacks on Jews would occur.

At its emergency meeting the Administrative Committee formulated a four point program which it forwarded to von Frittwitz, the German Ambassador, with the request that he transmit it to his government. The program called for:

1. An immediate cessation of all antisemitic activities and propaganda in Germany.

2. The policy of racial discrimination and economic exclusion of Jews from German life must be ended.
3. The government must protect Jewish life and property.

4. A commitment that east European Jews who had settled in Germany since 1914 would not be expelled.

That afternoon, some leaders of the Congress began to waver and seriously entertained the idea that the protest be postponed. A "noted news agency," according to the Day, even reported that a decision had been reached to call off the impending protest rally. Many communal leaders, upon hearing this, demanded that the demonstration be held as scheduled. In their view, this was the only possible way to stop the pogroms on German Jewry. Dr. Margoshes, too, in a heated speech at the meeting of the Executive Committee that evening, warned that other organizations would assume the leadership of the protest, if the Congress yielded to pressure.

The Executive Committee, faced with a popular revolt, once more yielded to the wishes of its members. After much discussion, it voted unanimously to hold the protest meeting as planned. It issued a statement to the press to that effect and appealed to all Jews to attend the rally en masse. 24

The Yiddish press hailed this decision. In editorials on the day of the protest meeting, it encouraged its readers to participate. It was felt that, if American Jews acted now, German Jews could be saved from physical and economic destruction. The Day stressed that even if the reports pertaining to the atrocities were exaggerated, every Jew, given the present circumstances in Germany, must see it as his national duty to voice his indignation. Even if only four Jews had been tortured to death, the Day asked, "Do we not have to protest for the life of the four?" 25
March 27, 1933 was a day of national protest. Jews in their respective communities gathered to voice indignation. Some also fasted and prayed for the cessation of the persecutions. Non-Jews added their voices to the protest. Jewish communities throughout the world also demonstrated on this day. Once more Jews had demonstrated that they would not stand by silently and allow the civil, political, and religious rights of their brethren to be violated. The protests, as the Morning Journal pointed out in connection with the New York meeting, served as a warning to the Nazi regime that the "people of Israel have not lost their protector. Jewish blood is not unclaimed." The Jewish protest will not abate as long as Hitler persists in persecuting German Jewry.

The Madison Square Garden meeting was without a doubt the most notable rally held that day in the United States. The protesters represented a cross section of American Jewry. They came from all walks of life and espoused varied religious and political philosophies. The participants were united in their resolve to do battle with Nazism and, from accounts in the press, they exuded confidence in their ability to emerge victorious. Jewish notables, politicians, labor leaders, and Catholic clergymen addressed the rally. The roster of speakers included such individuals as: Bernard S. Deutsch, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, Abraham Cahan, Dr. Samuel Margoshes, Haim Greenberg, the noted labor Zionist, Rabbi K. S. Margolies, the dean of Orthodox rabbis of the United States, former governor Alfred E. Smith, Senator Robert F. Wagner, William Green, President of the A.F. of L., Bishop William T. Kanning, and Bishop Frances J. McConnell.
Bernard Deutsch, the chairman of the event, set the tone of the meeting in his opening remarks. He indicated that neither the American Jewish Congress nor the Jewish people bore enmity and ill will toward the German people. Rather, they recognized that a great number of Germans, like their Jewish countrymen, were victims of Hitlerism. Deutsch noted that the meeting was convened to express the resolve of the Jewish people not to rest until the civil, religious, and political rights of German Jewry would be restored. At the same time, it allowed for the expression of sorrow for the German people who were suffering because of the demise of democracy in their country. This theme was repeated by other speakers who also denounced racial and religious bigotry and the suppression of religious liberties in Germany. They also appealed to the conscience of America and the world community not to remain silent to the plight of German Jews. Stephen Wise delivered the closing address of the evening. He repeated the note that had been struck by practically all the speakers:

"I close as I began," he said. "We are not met in the spirit of bitterness, hatred or revenge. We do not desire that the German people be punished because of the unwise action of the measures and the injustice of some practices of its government. Whatever nations may ask in the spirit of reparation and reprisal, we who are Jews know that our spirit must be in consonance with the high tradition of Jewish forebearance and Jewish forgiveness. But there must be no further reprisals against our fellow Jews, no penalizing them as German hostages because the conscience of the world utters its mighty protest. God help the German people to be equal to themselves."

In the course of his address, Dr. Wise reiterated the demands of the American Jewish Congress, which had been transmitted to the German government through its Ambassador in Washington.
At the request of Dr. Wise, the assembled rose to express their agreement with these demands. They also unanimously approved a resolution introduced by Israel N. Thurman of the American Jewish Congress, empowering the Congress to raise funds to be used to combat antisemitism and to protect Jews throughout the world.29

An air of optimism could be detected in the Yiddish press following the protest rallies. Correspondents pointed out that, not only did Hitler fail in his efforts to still the voices of Americans who wished to protest against Nazi racism and intolerance, but rather he was forced to take their sentiments into consideration. As a result, he would have to halt the physical persecution of the Jews. This step, the Morning Journal pointed out in an editorial, weakened Hitler's position. He would have to bow to American public opinion, as the Day's editors pointed out, in order not to alienate the American government upon whose good will he was dependent. World Jewry, therefore, now looked forward to a steady improvement in the situation of German Jewry.

Fishman, in his daily column, shared these sentiments and expressed the view that the recent events in Germany and the reaction of world Jewry to them could also serve as an object lesson to other antisemitic governments regarding the treatment of their Jewish citizens. They cannot hope to violate the rights of the Jews in their countries and, at the same time, intimidate Jews in other countries in an attempt to prevent them from protesting against such violations.30

The Freiheit's correspondents, however, did not share their colleague's optimism. They also criticized the method employed by the American Jewish Congress to wage war against Nazism, despite the fact
that the protest meetings had drawn attention to the plight of the Jews in Germany and resulted in a massive expression of indignation against their ill treatment. These correspondents, who supported the I.W.O. programs, as could be expected, continued to contend that the amelioration of German Jewry's degenerative status could be achieved only by bringing about the downfall of the fascist regime in Germany. They hastened to point out that in the past, when the Congress had protested similar acts against Jews, it had also protested against the perpetrators of these atrocities. In this instance, however, the Congress concerned itself exclusively with the Jewish aspects of the Nazi terror and excluded all political consideration from its protest action. Therefore, the reporters concluded that the protest would not succeed in deterring Hitler from persecuting the Jews.31

Nazi deeds in the days following the protest proved their conclusions to be correct. The Nazis did not cease and desist from committing atrocities against the Jewish community albeit now they did so in a more clandestine fashion. A cold pogrom against the Jews was instituted. It became rapidly clear that Hitler was bent on implementing his anti-Jewish program. In light of these developments, the Yiddish press reported that Jews vowed to continue their struggle against Nazism, until such time as the German people would be able to remove the Nazi yoke from their shoulders, and the rights of the Jews would be restored. It also stressed that steps would have to be taken to encourage the world's leaders to translate the expressions of sympathy of the world community into concrete programs of action on behalf of German Jewry. Such programs would insure that the world community would not, in the end, turn its
back on the Jews and become indifferent to the atrocities perpetrated against them by the Nazis. More particularly, the press demanded that American politicians who had heretofore remained by and large silent do all in their power to influence Washington to intercede on behalf of German Jewry. In addition, it pointed out that Jewish leaders must be prepared in the days ahead to counter all steps that the Nazis undoubtedly would take to weaken their struggle. Moreover, practical measures would also have to be undertaken by world Jewry and, more specifically, by the American Jewish community, to insure a victory against Nazism while providing a measure of security for the German Jewish community.

The correspondents believed that the aforementioned goals would be accomplished only if the Jewish community could overcome its factiousness. They were concerned that divisiveness would weaken the hands of Jewish combatants in their struggle against Nazism. Therefore, they pleaded with Jewish leaders to lay their differences aside and establish a body that could speak with authority for the Jewish people. Indeed, Jewish leaders did take steps to convene a World Jewish Congress. However, as Shalom Asch pointed out in the Forward, the need for unity was immediate, and the conference was scheduled to take place in 1934. The chasm between the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress seemed unbridgeable. Efforts to bring both sides together failed. More importantly, a growing number of members of the Congress expressed dissatisfaction with its leaders and their policies. It seemed from reports in the Yiddish press that the Congress would become a house divided unto itself.
The Congress's critics felt that its leaders failed to chart a course of action for the Congress. They had not prepared a plan of action prior to the initial protest meeting, nor did they outline their plan for continued action after the rally. More importantly, the leaders, in their view, failed to capitalize on the strong sentiments expressed by American Jews and on the expressions of sympathy voiced in the non-Jewish world, and did not undertake an effective program of action. The lack of leadership and the resulting inactivity of the Congress disturbed them. Ironically, the critics accused the leaders of resorting to the same methods that they had recently found to be abhorrent and that they believed to be ineffective; namely, intercessory diplomacy. This led Dr. Karl Fornberg, the noted Yiddish publicist, to conclude that should the Congress continue in this direction, its efforts to wage war against Nazism would be paralyzed. For these reasons, columnists like A. Coralnik, who favored an aggressive course of action against Nazism, stressed the need for new leadership; leadership could propose new solutions to remedy the many pressing problems facing the Jewish community and, more immediately, address the German Jewish question.

There is no doubt from reading the press reports pertaining to the Congress's activities, or lack thereof, that, to a degree, the criticism leveled against the leaders of the Congress were justified. The Congress prided itself on the fact that it was a democratic organization. Its policies reflected the desires and needs of its constituent organizations. It could not cooperate with the American Jewish Committee and B'nai Brith because they resorted to intercessory diplomacy. Yet, Bernard Deutsch and Stephen Wise did not hesitate to meet secretly with Under-Secretary
of State Phillips in order to persuade him to use his good offices to bring about the cancellation of the Nazi boycott scheduled for April 1. Reportedly, at this meeting, which took place on March 30th, both leaders assured Phillips that the Congress would not henceforth take steps that would further antagonize Nazi officials. Phillips promised to intercede diplomatically on behalf of the Jews.\(^3\)

More importantly, it seemed as if the leaders of the Congress chose not to take the initiative in this matter. As demonstrated above, they acted only when goaded and then only to curb the activities of the masses and to prevent them from pursuing a course of action they deemed to be irresponsible. This pattern is further illustrated by the Administrative Committee's decision on April 13, 1933 to renew the protest action in the wake of mounting criticism of its inactivity in light of the intensification of the anti-Jewish Nazi campaign. It issued an invitation to Jewish organizations to attend a meeting on April 19th at the Hotel Pennsylvania in New York City. The purpose of the meeting would be to discuss proposals designed to carry the protest forward. Once more, the Congress opened the meeting only to representatives of organizations who agreed that the protest should be confined only to the Jewish persecutions in Germany. The Congress hoped to enlist the support of Jews and all "liberty loving and humane Americans" in the struggle against the "brutal assault upon Jewish rights." It also wished to inform the world community, through the renewal of the protest, that Jews would continue to wage their battle "until complete justice will be meted out to the Jews in Germany and their citizenship will be restored to them."\(^3\)
More than fifteen hundred delegates from over six hundred organizations representing a constituency of two million attended the meeting. They came from all strata of Jewish society; Zionist and non-Zionist, labor and capital, religious and non-religious.

The reports in the press of the meeting reflect the tension and divisiveness in the Congress's camp. Some delegates were critical of the leadership and most particularly of Stephen Wise for the reasons mentioned above. Some representatives, as at the previous meetings, demanded that the Congress immediately formulate a drastic and more substantive program of action to combat the Nazi program of extermination and vilification against German Jews. Many delegates called upon the leaders of the Congress to declare a boycott against Germany. Elias Ginsburg, representing the Zionist Revisionists, was in fact most vociferous in his criticism of the Congress on this score. He demanded that the Congress stop dabbling in diplomacy and adopt stringent measures to combat the Nazi persecution of the Jews. Ginsburg expressed the view that, if the Congress could not declare a boycott now, Jews should opt to join the American League for the Defense of Jewish Rights (ALDJR) which had assumed the leadership of the boycott movement. In fact, the press reported that some delegates speculated that the Congress would indeed announce an endorsement of the boycott on May 10th, the day it designated for further protest action.

As a result of the criticism, Stephen Wise had to defend his leadership. He appealed to the delegates for trust and confidence. However, Wise did offer to resign if the representatives continued to express lack of confidence in him. He said: "I do not mean to tell you
in advance what we are going to do; we are not going to disclose our campaign so that Hitler as well as you will know our next move; I will not be your leader if I cannot be trusted." Wise also rejected the demand that the Congress declare itself in favor of a boycott of Germany. He stated that the "time has not yet come for an official boycott - we still have other weapons."

Interestingly, for the first time, speakers sharply criticized the American government because it did not follow the tradition of past governments in raising its voice in protest against discrimination and persecution. Ab. Goldberg reflected the sentiments of the assembled delegates when he said: "The most generous (statement) that can be made about our government is that we are disappointed in its action." He expressed the fear that the Nazi plague could spread to America. Since American Jewry numbered four million, Goldberg felt that they had the right to demand that the Roosevelt administration act "boldly" and "clearly." The United States government must present the demands of the Jewish community to the assembled representatives at the forthcoming disarmament conference in Washington. The administration must point out to the leaders of the world that "freedom is not possible as long as a savage power rules a large European country." Stephen Wise, however, justified the administration's position. "We can't," he said, "expect our government to act toward Germany as if we were in a state of war. We do not want to go to war with any people in the world. The fact that no American Ambassador has been sent to Berlin is sufficient in itself."

The conference adopted three resolutions. The first, "a resolution on renewal of protest," proclaimed the firm resolve of the
organizations represented at the conference "to continue with utmost
diligence the protest against the persecution of the Jews of Germany by the
Hitler government." It expressed confidence that

"our fellow Americans, irrespective of race or creed, will
continue to join with us in the protest against the attempt
of the Hitler regime to re-establish in Germany the reign of
medievalism. Our struggle is directed not against the people
of Germany but against the policy of its present rulers, which
is a menace not only to its immediate victims but also to the
peace of the entire world. Our struggle to obtain justice for
the Jews in Germany ought to and shall have the support of the
civilized world."

The second resolution, "resolution on demonstration," called for
a protest march through the streets of New York on May 10th, "which
had been designated by the Nazis as the day on which all books of Jewish
authorship and origin shall be publicly burned throughout Germany."
The resolution called upon Jewish communities to hold similar protest
marches on that day.

The third resolution, "resolution of petition," called for the
"gathering of signatures to a petition to be presented to the United
States government and the League of Nations, protesting against the
inhuman attempt of the German government to deny to a peaceful and law
abiding element of its population the full civic rights and the elementary
right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, and to petition
them to use their good offices to the end that justice shall be done to
the Jews in Germany."41

Thus, at least for the moment, the leaders of the Congress managed
to still the voices of opposition within its camp. They also succeeded
to direct the organizations represented in the Congress to activities it
believed to be effective in bringing about a resolution of the German
Jewish question. However, the Congress did not win the American Jewish Committee and B'nai Brith over to its side. These organizations continued to oppose the Congress's plan. The Committee advised inquirers that "in its opinion further meetings were likely to lead to severe retaliation against German Jews who were being held as hostages by the government."

Moreover, on April 28 the American Jewish Committee and B'nai Brith issued a joint statement, published in the English language press, in which they restated their policy. It read in part as follows:

Dismayed as we are that no evidence has as yet been given by the authorities of Germany of their intention to undo the incalculable injury inflicted upon an innocent part of their citizenry, and fully understanding and appreciating the natural desire of human beings to express sorrow and indignation, we nevertheless consider such forms of agitation as boycotts, parades, mass meetings and other similar demonstrations as futile. They serve only as an ineffectual channel for the release of emotion. They furnish the persecutors with a pretext to justify the wrongs they perpetrate and, on the other hand, distract those who desire to help with more constructive efforts.42

The leaders of the Congress naturally retorted with a strong condemnation of the Committee and B'nai Brith. They emphatically stated that the Congress "will not allow a minority group, which does not represent the Jewish public in the battle against the antisemitic plague in Germany which is spreading to various European countries," prevent the demonstrations from taking place. Moreover, they expressed regrets that the joint statement had been released to the English language press because it erroneously left the American public with the impression that the Jewish community was not united in its support of a policy of condemnation and protest when, in fact, the masses were united in their support of the Congress's position.43
The heated debate between these organizations continued. Each organization tried to justify its position. The leaders of the Committee tried to dissuade the Congress from holding the protest rally. Thus on May 3, Cyrus Adler sent a letter to Deutsch in which he requested that Deutsch use his influence to bring about the postponement of the parade. Adler pointed out in his letter that the Committee believed that the regulations being framed by the Nazi regime to limit Jewish rights "may be somewhat less drastic than the forecasts made in the earlier days of the present regime in Germany." The Committee's conviction flowed from its belief that the "influence of public opinion, especially of the protests offered in the Parliament of Great Britain, and of the attitude of our Department of State," will force the Nazi regime to moderate its policy toward the Jews. Adler further stated that the Committee concluded that, "in view of the tenseness of the present situation, any provocative action taken outside of Germany may have an unfavorable influence on the proposed regulations." Deutsch in his response to Adler criticized the Committee's policy and its assessment of the situation. "The American Jewish Committee," he said, "seems to be more deeply concerned about provocative action taken outside of Germany than with the damnable character of the policies of destruction framed by the Hitler Government against the Jewish people." He reminded Adler that "no course of action is as provocative as the acquiescence of inaction in the face of deep and terrible wrong." Further, he said:

"You are thinking solely of 'provocative action taken against Germany' and the 'effect thereof upon our 'sorely tried and harassed brothers in Germany.' ... The American Jewish Congress in all that it does and may will insist upon the restoration of equality of status not only for the Jews of Germany of all groups and classes and professions, but upon something more, of which the
American Jewish Committee seems completely to have forgotten, the demand for equality of status for the non-National Jews of Germany, for the most part east European, with all other non-National groups in the German Reich.

... You are concerned with the possibility of making some drastic regulations less drastic. The American Jewish Congress concerns itself with a larger problem. That problem arises out of the war which Hitlerite Germany has chosen to wage upon the Jewish people. You cannot fail to know that a distinguished American who has recently returned from Germany has stated in the presence, among others, of representatives of your Committee, 'Hitler's purpose is to show the nations of the world how to destroy their Jewish population.'

For these and other reasons, Deutsch indicated the Congress felt compelled to once more call upon the Jewish people to demonstrate their indignation. Deutsch's other remarks in his letter to Adler reveal even more clearly the philosophy of the Congress. They help us understand why the Congress could not work jointly with the Committee and B'nai Brith on this matter. He stated:

"Nothing that our government may be moved to do, nothing that non-Jewish bodies may be led to see that it is their duty to do in the name of the decencies of civilization and humanity exempts us as Jews from the solemn obligation of standing up as a people in the sight of the world and protesting against the horror and the shame of the Hitler war upon the Jewish people. To do less would be short only of treason to the cause of our people."

The correspondents of the Yiddish daily press expressed similar sentiments in their discussion of the joint statement and the Committee's policy of intercession and quiet diplomacy. Jacob Fischman in his daily column in the Morning Journal viewed the joint statement issued by the Committee and B'nai Brith as a "kind of last outcry of a bankrupt leadership." The Day, in an editorial, stressed that, unlike the masses who were "fearless" and who "advocated an open policy," the Committee and B'nai Brith were dominated by fear and clung to the policy of intercession. It, therefore, questioned the right of the Committee to speak in
the name of the "Jewish people" whose views they opposed.

The commentators of the press believed that the Committee's policy of intercession and quiet diplomacy failed to achieve its objectives. The Nazis continued to persecute the Jews. Fornberg pointed out that, were it not for the protest and boycott, the fate of German Jewry would have been sealed. The Nazis would have felt free to continue in their course. Similarly the Day, in an editorial, pointed out that the Committee's appeals to the administration in Washington and to various Congressmen achieved nothing. Both remained silent, leaving the impression in Europe that America is not opposed to Nazi terror.

According to reports in the Yiddish press, the American Jewish Committee's opposition to the protest, as voiced by Adler, disturbed and angered many Jews. They had confidence in the Congress's leadership and believed it had "enough national responsibility to know what must and must not be done to stop the frightening persecution and assaults being committed against the German Jews." They, therefore, criticized the Committee for offering unsolicited advice and implied in their criticism of the Committee that it, in fact, was not a democratic organization and did not represent American Jewry.

Many segments of the Jewish community supported the protest demonstrations that were scheduled to take place on May 10th. This is evident from the numerous letters of inquiry for instructions regarding the forthcoming protest march, as well as letters of support received by the Congress from Jewish organizations representing a broad spectrum of views and interests in the community. This contention is further supported by
the fact that numerous organizations published declarations of support in
the Yiddish press in which they appealed to their members to participate. The correspondents of the press advanced three major reasons why they
felt it imperative that the protest succeed. Firstly, they expressed the
hope that an imposing demonstration would goad the American Congress to
act. It would make it clear to the administration that the American
Jewish community demanded that it respond "more humanely" to the Jewish
issue. In this connection, the Day reported on May 5th that the consensus
of opinion in "important" circles in Washington was that the more imposing
the forthcoming rally would be, the greater the chances that the Senate
would discuss the question of the Nazi persecution of Jews and formulate
plans to help the victims of Nazism. In a related report which appeared
on May 8th in the Morning Journal, an unnamed member of the Roosevelt
administration, responding to the criticism of the government concerning
its opposition to raising the Jewish question at the economic conference
in Washington, pointed out that massive participation in the protest
parade would be a clear signal to the administration that public opinion
favored American intercession. Secondly, some correspondents continued
to stress the point that had been made earlier in connection with the
initial protest demonstration; namely, that a massive protest could
arouse the world to do battle with Hitler, who was bent on destroying
the world. Jews, they pointed out, were but the first victims in the
war Hitler was waging against humanity. Thirdly, the demonstration
would serve as a warning to the Nazis that there were limits to their
deeds. The Jewish community would not stand idly by and let itself be
slaughtered. The protest would continue until the rights of German
The Verband issued a call to its members which expressed the sentiments of the Yiddish speaking American Jewish community on this issue. It read in part as follows:

Enemies of the Jewish people in other countries are being encouraged by Hitler and his gangs to begin pogrom and annihilation movements similar to the one which the Nazis are now conducting in Germany.

The entire progressive world must express itself in unison against the black cloud of reaction and pogrom policies which Hitler has brought in his wake. The Jewish masses must be in the forefront of the protest and in the fight against the great danger of Hitlerism that has engulfed the Jewish people and progressive mankind.

Through the great protest demonstration the American government, the President, the Secretary of State, the senators and congressmen shall be called to action, to give a warning to Hitler, that America cannot and will not tolerate Hitler's methods of annihilation, pogrom, and destruction. ... The American government, in this difficult hour of Jewish national tragedy, shall demonstrate its tradition of freedom and through her political strength help stop Hitler's deeds.

Preparations proceeded apace for the forthcoming protest rallies in spite of attempts to derail the protest movement by the Nazis as well as the the Committee and B'na'i Brith.

On the day of the rally the world Jewish community once more responded to the call of its leaders to turn out en masse to demonstrate against the persecution and degradation of the Jews in Germany. They were joined by their non-Jewish compatriots. One of the largest and most colorful rallies took place in New York City. The Yiddish press reported that a million individuals had participated either as marchers or observers.
in the six hour protest which included a parade from Madison Square to Battery Park. Even radical left wing labor groups who had been excluded from the Madison Square Garden protest meeting participated. The parade was followed by a protest rally in Battery Park. The long list of speakers included General John F. O'Ryan, the grand marshall of the parade; Bainbridge Colby, Secretary of State in the Wilson cabinet; Rev. John Haynes Holmes of the Community Church; Dr. Samuel Margoshes, Dr. Stephen Wise, Louis Lipsky, F. H. LaGuardia, Ab. Cahan, and Elias Ginsburg.

The reports in the Yiddish "bourgeois" daily press pertaining to the event stressed that the rally demonstrated that, in spite of the irreconcilable differences over this issue in the Jewish community, Jews from all walks of life laid aside their differences and protested in unison against the mistreatment of their fellow Jews by the Hitler regime. This assessment is an overstatement. The protest did indeed bring together Jews of varied backgrounds. It did evoke an outpouring of indignation. However, the position of the American Jewish Committee and B'nai Brith remained unchanged. Its supporters condemned the demonstration and did not participate. Jewish communists, as was noted above, took part in the rally. However, they viewed their participation as apart from the rest. Their contingency marched last and arrived at Battery Park after the official conclusion of the meeting. More importantly, they (unlike other demonstrators) protested not only against Nazi barbarism but against the fascist regime as well. Thus, not a united community, but rather a fragmented Jewish community, waged a battle against Nazi barbarism. Each faction chose weapons it believed to be most
effective to accomplish its particular goals.\(^53\)

Once more speakers expressed amazement and concern about the situation in Germany. They denounced Nazi antisemitism and condemned the policies of racial discrimination inaugurated by the Hitler government against the Jewish people. Dr. Holmes gave voice to the desires of the demonstrators when he warned Germany that "her crimes will not go unpunished and the conscience of mankind will settle its score with those who now govern Germany." Dr. Wise naturally reiterated the pledge of the American Jewish Congress not to cease in its efforts until Jews have been restored to a position of equality with all other inhabitants of Germany. Some speakers also criticized the United States government for remaining silent. They demanded that the State Department be instructed to transmit the feelings of the American public to the German government. The demonstrators refused to be satisfied with rhetoric. They gave their most resounding support to those speakers who called for a boycott of Germany by the international community.\(^54\)
Boycott

There was a growing realization in the Yiddish speaking community, particularly after the May 10th rally, that more effective means had to be sought to counteract the Nazi threat. The idea of an organized boycott of German goods and services, as a weapon to combat Nazism, had been discussed but hardly acted upon. It now became more attractive to a growing number of individuals and organizations. The interest in the boycott deepened as disillusionment with the protest movement, stemming from its failure to achieve its goals, grew. The initial outpouring of indignation had not brought about a change in Nazi policy vis-à-vis the Jews, as had been hoped; nor did a more favorable policy seem to be in the offing. Moreover, Congressmen, with few exceptions, did not raise their voices in protest against Nazi barbarities, nor did they pressure the administration to use its good offices to influence the German government to modify its "Jewish" policy. The administration, to the chagrin of many Jews, not only remained silent, but by virtue of its inaction and pronouncements, seemed to accept at face value the Nazi regime's assurances that the situation of the Jews in Germany had improved and would continue to get better as the general conditions stabilized. The boycott, therefore, according to reports in the Yiddish press, seemed to some individuals and organizations to be the only remaining effective weapon in the Jewish arsenal that could be deployed against Germany.
It must be noted that initially some Jews expressed their reaction to Nazi barbarism by boycotting German products. Later, they clamored for an organized boycott. Some speakers at the planning meetings as well as at the protest rallies sponsored by the American Jewish Congress, voiced these demands. The enthusiastic response to the calls for an anti-Nazi boycott at these meetings underscored the strength of this desire.\(^55\)

The Jewish War Veterans (J.W.V.) was the first organization to declare an official boycott of German goods and services. It introduced a proposal at the Congress's planning session on March 19 calling for such action. Following the defeat of this proposal, the J.W.V. proclaimed a boycott on May 5, 1933.\(^56\)

Many other Jewish organizations, according to press reports, favored an organized boycott. Yet, both the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress opposed such action. The former, in line with its stated policy, objected to any form of public expression of indignation, including a boycott. The latter, while not opposing a boycott in principal, felt such action at this point in time to be unwise. It continued to hope to be able to effect a change in Nazi policy through moral and diplomatic pressure. The Congress promised to reconsider its position if it became clear that these efforts would not bear fruit. Its leadership vigorously resisted all efforts by its constituents to reconsider their position.

The Yiddish daily press, judging from its editorial comments, initially opposed an organized boycott. It later reversed its position.
The Day at first termed proposals for an organized boycott as "irresponsible." It felt these proposals gave our "enemies an excuse to carry out their devilish plans." In its opinion, the seriousness of the Jewish situation in Germany mandated that Jews must act with restraint and responsibility. Subsequently, however, the Day criticized the Jewish community in America for being notably passive. It endorsed Samuel Untermyer's stand on the boycott. Like him, it urged that a well organized boycott be executed.  

In the United States, proponents of an organized boycott argued that it was the only effective weapon Jews had. They bolstered their argument by noting reports which indicated that the fledgling anti-Nazi boycott in Europe and in the United States had begun to have a detrimental effect on German shipping, tourism, the film industry and fur trade. They felt, however, that the boycott movement in the United States needed leadership and organization in order for it to become an effective instrument. Dr. Coralnik, one of the most vociferous proponents of the boycott movement in the Yiddish press, sought to fill this need by founding the American League for the Defense of Jewish Rights (ALDJR), in April, 1933. He convened a conference of organizations at the Astor Hotel in New York City on May 14th for the purpose of discussing and adopting proposals that would facilitate the establishment of an organized boycott. 

The pros and cons of a boycott of German goods and services were heatedly debated by columnists of the Yiddish daily press, particularly just prior to the ALDJR conference. The readers of the press, as is evident from the letters they wrote to the editors, expressed similar
opinions and shared the same concerns as the journalists.

Despite strong popular sentiment for a boycott, an element within the Yiddish speaking community remained opposed to using this means as a weapon against the Nazi threat. It based its opposition on the following reasons:

1) Jews were a moral, cultural and ethical people. As such, they could not use a weapon against their enemies that was "coarse" and "uncivilized." Rather, Jews, in their view, had to resort only to moral pressure to effect a change in Nazi policy vis-à-vis the Jews. Also, if Jews resorted to a boycott, they could no longer use moral pressure. They could not protest being boycotted by others when they themselves resort to this weapon as a means of combatting their foes.

2) They expressed fear that a boycott declaration at this time could undermine efforts being made by friendly powers to influence Germany to change its anti-Jewish policy. Moreover, they speculated that governments that have not as yet acted, e.g., the United States, may be deterred if a boycott is declared.

3) They feared that, in the end, a boycott could prove to be more detrimental than beneficial to those they sought to help. Certainly, the German Jewish manufacturer, businessman, and employee would, like his German counterpart, feel the effects of a boycott against Germany. The Nazi regime would undoubtedly be angered by such action. Rather than modifying its policy as hoped, the Nazis could use the anti-Nazi boycott as a pretext for the intensification of its boycott of German Jewry.

4) Germans with whom by and large they have had no quarrel would
suffer from a boycott.

The proponents of a boycott rejected these arguments for the following reasons:

1) Hitler, they pointed out, is not moral and his regime would not yield to moral pressure. Those individuals who could have been swayed by appeals on humanitarian grounds were being eliminated from German society and certainly no longer occupied positions of influence in the government. Hence, Jews had to rely on other means to bring Hitler to his knees. Moreover, Germany was using force to implement its program. Jews were too weak to counter the Nazi threat with force. They had to resort to the only effective weapon they had; namely, economic pressure. Its use is not immoral because, when a nation is engaged in a battle for its survival, every means employed to insure its continued existence is "ethical and moral." Jews, therefore, are within their rights when they refuse to do business with Germany.

2) They were disappointed with the results of the representations made by some powers to the German government and did not believe that the American government would be more successful, should it choose to intervene. Therefore, the fears of the opponents of a boycott on this score were baseless.

3) The Jewish situation could not worsen. If anything, German Jews had everything to gain and little, if anything, to lose by the actions of the Jewish community at large. Moreover, they viewed the boycott as a "sacrificial act." If, in order to secure the future well-being of German Jewry and possibly world Jewry, a few individuals would have to suffer economically, we must not hesitate to pay this price.
4) Similarly, although there are some German workers who oppose the Nazi regime, there are others who actively support it. Therefore, a boycott is justified to bring all workers to the realization that the Nazi regime and its policies are detrimental to the best interests of Germany.

On May 15, 587 delegates representing 288 merchant, labor, Zionist, religious, professional, and fraternal organizations attended the ALDJR conference. Reports in the press described the atmosphere in the meeting hall as being charged with emotion and a desire on the part of the delegates to act immediately and in the most effective manner to repay Germany in kind for denegrating the honor and self-worth of the Jewish people. They expressed their desire to help the ALDJR by responding generously to Elias Ginsburg's appeal for funds. The impressive roster of guest speakers included Abraham Coralnik, Samuel Untermeyer, Samuel Karkoshes, Morello Laguardia, Louis Lipsky, James W. Gerard, former United States Ambassador to Germany, Jacob DeHaas, and Elias Ginsburg.

Coralnik's address set the tone of the meeting. "Germany," he said, "led by Hitler, declared war against the Jewish people with the objective of annihilating the Jews, not only in Germany but also throughout the entire world. This is no longer the ordinary antisemitism. This is a declaration of war, and we shall respond with war." Furthermore, Coralnik pointed out that "nothing to date has helped; not diplomacy and not the good sweet word and advice from our friends." Therefore, he concluded, "Let us respond with our only weapon - a boycott."
Other speakers endorsed Coralnik's call for an organized boycott. They criticized Jewish leaders who continued to fight the Nazi threat with "well tried, ineffective weapons." They underscored the need to use a new approach to help German Jews, specifically a boycott. Only it, in their view, could break the back of the Nazi regime. Samuel Untermeyer, the keynote speaker, attacked the American Jewish Committee and all "timid" souls with barbed criticism. He said:

"To the few timid, credulous, well-intentioned souls among the American Jews who have no defense plan whatever to offer, but who are unwilling to commit themselves to a boycott, what are you going to do? Are you going to sit idly by while your brethren in Germany are humiliated, degraded, deprived of their rights of citizenship and kicked out of their professions and employment and left to starve by the Austrian upstart and his band of ruffians?"

Untermeyer asserted that the members of the Committee and others of their ilk, were

"...no more peace loving than the rest of us. The only difference between us is that you lack the will and courage to fight. It is so easy to counsel peace, when there is no peace. What you recommend is virtually a counsel of despair and surrender to the most inhuman forces that have dominated government in centuries."

The leaders of the boycott movement hoped to unite all factions of the Jewish community in support of the boycott. They, as did the leaders of the protest, believed that in unity lay strength. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that speakers at this rally appealed to all Jews to support the movement. Gerard underscored the importance of unity by cautioning that Jews who continue to trade with Germany also weaken non-Jewish support for an economic boycott of Germany.

A boycott resolution aimed at enlisting the support of the entire American Jewish community won unanimous approval. The text emphasized
that the boycott was to be "directed exclusively against the goods, products and services of the German Reich proper, and shall continue until all anti-Jewish laws, edicts and policies have been repealed and renounced." 62

The press reaction to the boycott conference was predictably favorable. The Day expressed confidence that, in the end, other nations would recognize that as long as the Nazis remained in power there would be no peace in the world. They, therefore, would join the Jews in boycotting Germany. The Forward pointed out that world Jewry would not, in the face of the present persecution, yield to the desire of the German Jewish community that Jews not engage in an anti-Hitler campaign. Rather, it was duty bound to choose the means to right the wrong. The Forward advocated a boycott as the best means. The Morning Journal, too, in its editorial remarks, endorsed the boycott. It disagreed with the proponents of the boycott who opposed sending financial aid to German Jewry, e.g. Louis Lipsky. The Morning Journal stressed that the jobless and homeless Jews could not wait until the boycott had its desired effect. These activities complement each other. The Morning Journal, therefore, urged that both camps work out their differences. In its view both endeavors would enjoy a greater measure of success if they would complement one another. 63

The formation of the ALDJR and its support by some officers and members of the American Jewish Congress did not goad the Congress to reconsider its opposition to an official boycott. At an emergency session held in Washington on May 20-21, the boycott issue, as Margoshes pointed out, was never given the prominence it deserved. A boycott resolution
which both he and Coralnik had fought for was referred to a special committee, thus, in effect killing it. The opponents of the boycott resolution pointed out that the Congress continued to hope to effect a change in Nazi policy through diplomatic means. It held this session in Washington in order to pressure the administration to speak out against Nazi atrocities. Therefore, in their view, it would have been foolhardy to pass a boycott resolution at a time when the American Jewish Congress sought to enlist the aid of the American government to bring about an end to Nazi atrocities.

The Congress's inaction on the boycott proposal naturally disappointed its proponents. Margoshes summed up their feelings pertaining to the meeting's accomplishments thusly:

"What had to be and should have been one of the most meaningful and dramatic sessions in the history of the American Jewish Congress was allowed to pass as yet another ordinary Jewish meeting... Following the historical Madison Square Garden demonstrations and the colossal protest march in New York, today's session of the American Jewish Congress looked like a zephyr after a hurricane."

Interestingly, judging from the editorial comments in the Freiheit to the Congress's rejection of the boycott resolution, one can conclude that the Jewish communists favored a boycott of Germany. The Freiheit sharply criticized the American Jewish Congress. It questioned its sincerity with regard to waging a war against Nazi barbarism. The Congress, in its view, had in effect strengthened Hitler's hand by rejecting the resolution.

It is important to note the Congress had failed to effect a change in Nazi policy vis-à-vis the Jews by exerting moral and political pressure on the Nazi regime. The protest movement, as was pointed out above, did
not have its desired effect. The Congress's efforts to enlist the aid of friendly nations, and most particularly the United States, to intercede on behalf of German Jewry also generally failed. Roosevelt ignored all appeals by the American Jewish Congress. He also refused to meet with a delegation of its representatives in spite of requests by congressional leaders that he do so. Democratic congressmen were most reluctant to act because of a commitment to the newly elected President that he take the initiative in questions relating to foreign affairs. Republicans, of course, felt powerless to influence the President. Therefore, not surprisingly, many correspondents of the Yiddish press took Roosevelt to task for his silence and inaction. They challenged the contention voiced by some correspondents that Roosevelt would speak out at an opportune moment. Zivion warned that as a result of the administration's present policy, Jews would not vote for Roosevelt again. They would repay him for failing to come to the aid of the Jews in their hour of need.66 Some correspondents, however, later modified their criticism of the administration when the Senate did discuss Nazi barbarism at its closing session in June. They considered the scathing attack on the Nazi regime by Senate majority leader Robinson and others as the Roosevelt administration's response to the demands of the Jewish community to take a public stand.67

Furthermore, the American Jewish Congress also attempted to appeal directly to President Hindenburg. Bernard Deutsch wrote an open letter to him on August 15, in which he petitioned the President to use the power of his office to save German Jewry from "certain extermination." Hans Luther, the German Ambassador in Washington, refused to transmit
the petition. The leaders of the Congress also believed that a second letter sent directly to President Hindenburg never reached his attention.

Having exhausted all avenues to exert moral and political pressure on Germany with no lasting results, the Congress, as other organizations had already done, now concluded that it must resort to the only remaining weapon - a boycott. Its Executive Committee discussed the question of boycott endorsement at an emergency session on August 6th. The Administrative Committee also discussed this issue. On August 17th it passed a resolution committing the Congress to active participation "in the movement for the boycott of German goods and for whatever assistance the organization can give to the Jewish forces already engaged in the boycott of Nazi Germany." It also recommended that the Executive Committee at its August 20th meeting "go on record as ready to promote the boycott and to cooperate with all Jewish agencies now engaged in the furtherance of the boycott movement to the end that a consolidated boycott organization may be effected to enlist the support of the Jewish as well as the non-Jewish population of America."

However, the Congress did not take any steps to officially endorse a boycott until Stephen Wise reversed his position on the question. He did so in an address he delivered at a rally in Irague in mid-August. Deutsch, commenting on Wise's address, noted that in spite of the fact that 99 percent of the membership of the Congress favored a boycott of Germany, the Congress had not acted to date, out of deference to Wise. He attributed Wise's reversal of position to the influence of various delegates to the Zionist Congress who convinced him that the boycott was the only efficacious weapon in the Jewish struggle against Nazi
discrimination and brutality. Undoubtedly, too, the Day pointed out in an editorial, the failure of the Congress to convince the Roosevelt administration to condemn the Nazi atrocities was also a factor in Wise's decision.

Now, with virtually no opposition within its ranks to a boycott, the National Executive Committee of the American Jewish Congress could officially endorse the boycott, as recommended earlier by the Administrative Committee. Dr. Joseph Tenenbaum, the chairman of the National Executive Committee, did not state specifically that the purpose of its meeting on August 20th at the Hotel New Yorker would be to endorse a boycott. However, earlier, the Morning Journal conjectured that a discussion of the boycott issue would dominate the deliberations. Similarly, on the day of the meeting, the Day noted that the Congress was ready to act on the question of a Jewish boycott in a "decisive and expeditious manner." Furthermore, it pointed out that delegates from all parts of the country will represent the views of their respective communities pertaining to the boycott. As a result, the decision reached by the conference would be "an expression of the great masses of the Jews in America regarding the boycott."

As expected, the boycott issue dominated the discussions at the stormy and tense all day meeting of the National Executive Committee. The speakers stressed in their addresses that the boycott was the "only powerful weapon against horrific Hitlerism." Dr. Tenenbaum and other speakers demonstrated the correctness of this view by showing statistically that the boycott of Germany to date had already begun to have a detrimental effect on the German economy. In line with the Administrative
Committee's recommendation, he introduced a boycott resolution. Speaking to the resolution, Dr. Kargoshes stressed that the delegates must, together with organizations already working in this direction, "build an iron boycott wall around the murderous Nazi regime."

The delegates did indeed adopt a boycott resolution which called upon the American Jewish Congress to

1) promote a nation wide boycott of everything that comes from Germany;

2) coordinate and integrate all existing organizations under one leadership in order to insure that the boycott would be carried out systematically and efficiently;

3) issue an appeal in the name of common humanity to all citizens of the United States to join the boycott movement;

4) seek the support of the A.F. of L. and other labor groups;

5) start a publicity and enlightenment campaign as to the aims and scope of the boycott movement.

The press reports of the meeting are of particular interest to us because they highlight the concerns of the delegates. We note from these reports that the delegates' anger with Bernard Deutsch and Stephen Wise surfaced in the course of the discussions. They once more criticized both leaders for failing to provide adequate leadership in this hour of crisis for the Jewish people. More importantly, the critics felt that both Deutsch and Wise impeded all attempts to have the Congress adopt a tougher stand against the Nazis. One speaker summed up the sentiments of the critics thusly:
"Instead of leading the masses, instead of organizing the American people against Germany in a huge boycott movement, Mr. Deutsch and Dr. Wise hampered the boycott and did not fulfill their obligation to the Jewish people."

Other speakers based their criticism of the leadership on the fact that they allowed much precious time to elapse before agreeing to endorse a more forceful program of action against Nazism.

The attendees also expressed anger with the Roosevelt administration and criticized it for remaining silent in the face of mounting evidence of Hitler's continued persecution of the Jews. The leaders of the Congress shared these sentiments. Now they too, for the first time, publicly castigated the Roosevelt administration for its failure to intercede on behalf of German Jewry. It is precisely the administration's inaction which played a major role in the Congress's decision to endorse a boycott of Germany. This is evident from Bernard Deutsch's stirring address in which he scathingly attacked the Roosevelt administration. He noted that both he and Dr. Wise had pinned their hopes on finding a solution to the painful Jewish question in Germany through diplomatic contacts. Therefore, they both tried on numerous occasions to influence President Roosevelt and Secretary of State Hull to protest against the maltreatment of Jews by the Hitler regime. Both the President and the Secretary had turned a deaf ear to these pleas. Furthermore, Deutsch noted that new evidence had come to light to support the contention that Hitler will not change his policy vis-à-vis the Jews. In light of these two developments, both he and Dr. Wise concluded that a boycott of Germany would be the only recourse left to the Jews.
The boycott resolution passed by the conference restated this position. It viewed the boycott as "a measure of self-defense against the barbarism of the Hitler persecutions."\(^{72}\)

Now that the Congress had officially proclaimed its endorsement of the boycott, it remained to be seen if it would forge links to various organizations involved in the boycott movement. Certainly, the question in the back of the minds of many individuals was whether the Congress would work together with the ALDJR on this matter. Samuel Untermeyer expressed this concern when he addressed the National Executive Committee of the Congress on August 20. He did so even more explicitly in a letter to Joseph Tenenbaum in reaction to the Congress's announcement that it intended to pursue an independent course. It read in part as follows:

"... From an interview which I had in my office with Mr. Deutsch and Dr. Margoshes, I understand that the American Jewish Congress will coordinate its activities with us who are pioneers in the field. I hope this will be achieved and that all attempts to compete will be terminated for the benefit of the cause in which we are all so deeply interested."\(^{73}\)

Later, the Day, too, echoed these concerns in an editorial. It cautioned that the "old mistake of organizational conflict and competition for honor" must be avoided. It underscored the importance for the Congress to coordinate its activities with the ALDJR.\(^{74}\)

In spite of its declaration to go it alone, the executives of the Congress did attempt to coordinate the boycott activities of their organization with those of the ALDJR. Representatives of both organizations met for this purpose in Untermeyer's office on August 23rd. They remained in contact through September. Upon Wise's return from Geneva at the end of September, where he had attended the World Jewish Conference,
he, together with Bernard Deutsch and Joseph Tenenbaum, met with
Untermeyer at the latter's home. It seemed at the conclusion of the
meeting that an agreement pertaining to the coordination of activities
would be reached. Wise undoubtedly desired to work with the ALDJR,
because he realized that fragmentation could weaken the movement. Perhaps
his desire also stemmed from the fact, as Danzis pointed out, that he
felt uncomfortable that people like Coralnik and Untermeyer were leading
so large a movement, rather than the Congress. Subsequently, on the
24th of September, a second delegation consisting of Deutsch, Tenenbaum,
and Margoshes attended the ALDJR's Executive Committee meeting at
Untermeyer's home. In spite of the fact that both sides were cognizant
that their continued bickering would weaken the movement, a satisfactory
modus vivendi could not be achieved. Untermeyer rejected the Congress's
demand for parity in the leadership of the movement. Rather, he insisted
that "if there shall be coordination in this movement, the League must
have leadership." The Congress; understandably, as a national organiza-
tion with a wide range of activities, could not agree to this. As a
result, it decided to pursue its own boycott activities. Subsequently,
the Congress established a committee for this purpose, chaired by Max
Winkler, a professor of Economics at City College. The committee's main
function would be to minimize the import of German goods to the United
States by influencing consumers of such products to purchase substitute
products from other sources. The Congress also planned to hold a national
conference in November whose purpose would be to strengthen the boycott
movement by bringing into the movement Jews and non-Jews who favored a
boycott. 75
Thus, as was the case with regard to the protest movement, the American Jewish community remained divided along ideological lines. The American Jewish Congress, while not opposing an organized boycott in principle, endorsed it only as a last resort. The American Jewish Committee and B'nai Brith, by contrast, opposed an organized boycott. This stemmed from their opposition to any form of public agitation. They did not, however, actively oppose a spontaneous boycott waged by private citizens. There is no doubt, however, that the variety of activities undertaken by the American Jewish community in hope of reversing the tide of discrimination in Germany aroused public opinion in their favor in many parts of the world. Yet some major powers, such as the United States, remained unmoved. Moreover, there is no question that the divisiveness in the American Jewish community weakened the effectiveness of their activities.
Footnotes to Chapter IV

1 Day, 10 March 1931; Morning Journal, 19 October 1931; Samuel Margoshes, "The Week," Day, 8 March 1932.


3 Day, 27 February 1933; Morning Journal, 27 February 1933; American Jewish Congress, Administrative Report, July 1932 to May 1933, pp. 38-39. It is interesting to note that on February 26th the Socialist Party also sponsored a meeting in New York's Town Hall to denounce Hitlerism in Germany and Fascism in Italy. Ab. Cahan used this occasion to condemn the antisemitic activities of the Nazis. Jacob Panken, a former municipal court justice, in his address demanded that the American government and the League of Nations submit formal protest against the antisemitic atrocities committed by the Nazis. Day, 27 February 1933.

4 Editorial, Day, 28 February 1933.

5 Joel Slonim, Day, 14 March 1933.

6 Joel Slonim, Day, 14 March 1933; American Jewish Congress Administrative Report, p. 41; American Jewish Congress Administrative Committee, Minutes of Meeting, Tuesday, 14 March 1933.

7 Melech Epstein cites several striking examples of negative positions taken by the Jewish communists on issues of concern to the American Jewish community which led to their rejection and subsequent isolation. Their position stemmed undoubtedly from ideological considerations. This is best illustrated by their stand following World War I on the relief issue. They refused to participate in activities of the Jewish war relief agencies because of their "non-proletarian nature." The Jewish communists also rejected a proposal to participate in a protest movement against pogroms that were rolling over eastern Europe because such a protest would "in effect imply tacit recognition of the capitalist governments." Their anti-Zionist stand following the riots in Palestine in 1929 further acerbated the situation. Melech Epstein, The Jew and Communism (New York: Trade Union Sponsoring Committee, 1959) pp. 73-75, 223-233, 284-286. The quote in the text is found on p. 284.

8 Day, 13 March 1933; Morning Journal, 13 March 1933; Day, 15 March 1933; Day, 16 March 1933; Day, 17 March 1933; Freiheit, 17 March 1933; Day, 18 March 1933.

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Editorial, Freiheit, 17 March 1933; Editorial, Freiheit, 19 March 1933. A similar view was expressed by R. Yukelson, Freiheit, 16 March 1933.


The American Jewish Committee, Twenty-seventh Annual Report, pp. 36-38; American Jewish Congress, Administrative Report, pp. 40-44.

Quoted from the American Jewish Congress, Administrative Report, pp. 43-44.


Morning Journal, 20 March 1933; Day, 20 March 1933; Forward (New York edition), 20 March 1933. In the final draft of the resolution which was issued later, all of American society was called upon to unite with American Jewry in protest against the gruesome Nazi atrocities.

Forward (New York City edition), 21 March 1933.

Day, 21 March 1933; Day, 23 March 1933; Forward, 22 March 1933; Forward, 23 March 1933; Morning Journal, 23 March 1933; S. Judson, "Fun Tog Tsu Tog," Morning Journal, 23 March 1933.


Freiheit, 20 March 1933; Freiheit, 21 March 1933; Editorial, Freiheit, 21 March 1933; Editorial, Freiheit, 22 March 1933; Editorial, Freiheit, 22 March 1933; Editorial, Freiheit, 24 March 1933; S. Alamazow, "Nit Zey Bakamfen dem Fashism, Nit Zey Bashitsen di Tdishe Masen," Freiheit, 21 March 1933.

Freiheit, 22 March 1933.

Freiheit, 21 March 1933; Freiheit, 22 March 1933; Freiheit, 23 March 1933; Freiheit, 24 March 1933; Day, 23 March 1933.

Ab. Cahan, Forward, 28 March 1933; Morning Journal, 28 March 1933; Morning Journal, 30 March 1933; Morning Journal, 27 March 1933; Day, 27 March 1933; Forward, 27 March 1933; K. Fornberg, "Der Tsvayer Akt,"


Numerous Jewish communities throughout the world held demonstrations on that day. Those communities which could not arrange to hold their meetings on March 27th did so shortly thereafter. The press estimated that a million Jewish people throughout the United States voiced their indignation on March 27th. They were joined in protest by members of other faiths.

27 Day, 28 March 1933; Morning Journal, 28 March 1933; Day, 29 March 1933.

28 See above, pp. 155-156.

29 Day, 28 March 1933; Morning Journal, 28 March 1933; Day, 29 March 1933. For a description of the preparations for the protest meeting in Chicago, see Forward, 25 March 1933. It is important to note that there, as in New York, Jewish communists hoped to broaden the scope of the protest. The organizing committee rejected their demands. As a result, they did not participate in the meeting. The themes of the addresses delivered at the meeting in Chicago were similar to those expressed at Madison Square Garden. Reports of other meetings held in communities throughout the United States and Europe can also be found in the press.


31 Freiheit, 28 March 1933; R. Saltzman, "Velen Zay Zikh Vayer Nokhtshepen Dokhen Idishen Kongress," Freiheit, 28 March 1933; M. Epstein, "Di Masen Vilen a Kamf Gegen Hitlerizm," Freiheit, 29 March 1933.

32 This fear was not entirely groundless. World leader's meeting in Washington in May to discuss disarmament, refused to discuss the "Jewish issue." The Day, commenting on this development, expressed the view that world leaders, in spite of the protest by the world community, were ready to sacrifice Jews. They wished to pacify Hitler and prevent him from posing a threat in other areas of vital concern. Editorial, Day, 21 May 1933.
Suggestions as to the relief measures which needed to be undertaken included providing legal and economic aid to the victims of Nazism, as well as opening Palestine to the homeless. As for measures to combat Nazism, suggestions were made to attempt to reach out and provide accurate information pertaining to the situation in Germany by establishing an information bureau and an Anglo-Jewish press for those elements in the community which did not read Yiddish. The general press, it was felt, did not provide adequate coverage. There was also growing dissatisfaction with the protest movement and the continued reliance of Jewish leaders on diplomacy. Many individuals suggested that a boycott needed to be declared against Germany. *Forward*, 16 April 1933; Ab. Goldberg, "Erets Yisrael Iz der Entfer," *Morning Journal*, 14 April 1933; B. Z. Goldberg, "In Gang Fun Tog," *Day*, 11 April 1933; Editorial, *Forward*, 11 April 1933.


35 *Forward*, 2 May 1933.


38 *Day*, 31 March 1933; *Morning Journal*, 31 March 1933.


40 The Administrative Report fixed the attendance at over twelve hundred delegates.


42 Quoted from the American Jewish Committee, Report of the Executive Committee, pp. 41-42.

43 *Day*, 30 April 1933; *Morning Journal*, 30 April 1933.

44 Quoted from American Jewish Congress, Administrative Report, p. 76; see *Day*, 5 May 1933.
It is interesting to note that there was much criticism of the general press for reporting that only 100,000 people participated in the march and rally. S. Judson expressed the view that the press was influenced by its readership and its policies. M. Katz of the Freiheit pointed out that the Yiddish "bourgeois" press had to inflate the number of participants to demonstrate the success of the event. He criticized the English language press for minimizing the enormity and the significance of the protest. He felt that they found it necessary to do so because they were celebrating their honeymoon with the Roosevelt administration. See S. Judson, "Fun Tog Tsu Tog," Morning Journal, 14 May 1933; M. Katz, "Oyf Morgen Nokhen Groysen Farad," Freiheit, 13 May 1933; Ya'akov Shwartz, "Der Punkt Fun Vanen Es Hot Zich Gehert di Shtim Fun a Milyon Iden," Day, 12 May 1933.

The themes of the addresses at the protest rallies in other communities were similar and need not be elaborated upon. A description of these meetings may be found in the press.

For a detailed discussion of the boycott movement, see N. Gottlieb, "The Anti-Nazi Boycott Movement."

One such proposal was made by Aaron Sapiro, an American Jewish lawyer who had gained notoriety some years earlier when he had filed a
defamation suit against Henry Ford. He proposed that in each country a committee comprised of Jewish importers be established. He envisaged their primary tasks to be:

1) the seeking out of non-German manufacturers who could supply similar articles to those currently being imported from Germany;
2) compiling lists of these manufacturers and their products;
3) furnishing this information to consumers of German goods to enable them to purchase non-German products.

Morning Journal, 3 April 1933; Editorial, Day 4 April 1933; Editorial, Day, 15 April 1933. See also Morning Journal, 8 March 1933; Morning Journal, 30 March 1933; Forward, 26 April 1933.

58 Forward, 16 April 1933; Forward, 17 April 1933; Day, 17 April 1933; Morning Journal, 10 May 1933.

59 Editorial, Forward, 26 April 1933.

60 As was noted, the Jewish War Veterans were the first to boycott Germany. Their activities received little press coverage. The League's activities, however, did. The J.W.V., after the League was formed, sent a letter to the League in which it pledged its support and promised to send a delegation to the planned conference. Day, 8 May 1933.

It is important to note that Moshe Gottlieb conjectured that Coralnik decided to act at this time because:

1) He may have found the boycott declaration of the J.W.V. a source of inspiration;
2) He was influenced by the call to boycott on the part of European Jewry;
3) Of the failure of the American and Jewish defense organizations to declare a boycott.


61 It is interesting to note in connection with this debate that S. Dingol pointed out that whereas individuals were free to act in this matter as their religious feelings dictated, Jewish leaders, by virtue of their position, had to act more cautiously and responsibly. He therefore approved of a spontaneous individual boycott but cautioned that Jewish leaders, prior to endorsing a boycott, had to be certain to provide relief for those Jews who might be economically affected by it. S. Dingol, "Torulene Fipershaft in der Kampf Kogen Hitlerei," Day, 14 May 1933; A. Coralnik, "Fun Vort Tsv Tzit," Day, 13 May 1933; A. Coralnik, "Un der Kozak Sheht Zikh Nit," Day, 24 March 1933; K. Danzis, "A Boykot Gegen Daytshland," Day, 23 March 1933; B. Z. Goldberg, "In Gang Fun Tog," Day, 11 April 1933; Day, 4 April 1933.

62 Day, 15 May 1933; Morning Journal, 15 May 1933; Morning Journal, 16 May 1933; Forward, 17 May 1933.

63 Day, 13 May 1933; Editorial, Day, 14 May 1933; Editorial, Forward (New York City), 16 May 1933; Morning Journal, 16 July 1933.
64. S. Margoles, "A Fargenitste Gelegenhayt," Day, 22 May 1933; Day, 22 May 1933; Day, 23 May 1933; Day, 24 May 1933; Morning Journal, 24 May 1933.

65. Editorial, Freiheit, 23 May 1933; Editorial, Freiheit, 26 May 1933.


67. Day, 11 June 1933; Morning Journal, 11 June 1933; Forward, 14 June 1933.

68. Day, 16 August 1933; Morning Journal, 16 August 1933; Editorial, Day, 17 August 1933; Freiheit, 18 August 1933; Morning Journal, 18 August 1933; Morning Journal, 23 August 1933; Day, 23 August 1933; Forward, 25 August 1933; Freiheit, 25 August 1933.


70. Forward, 15 August 1933; Day, 15 August 1933; Morning Journal, 16 August 1933; Editorial, Day, 16 August 1933.

71. Morning Journal, 16 August 1933; Day, 20 August 1933.


73. Morning Journal, 20 August 1933.

74. Editorial, Day, 17 September 1933.

CHAPTER V

The Refugees, 1930-1933

The Problem

The foundation of the German Jewish community in the period under discussion, as demonstrated above, was greatly weakened by the poor economic climate. The instability of the political situation in general, and the rise of the Nazi Party as a political force in particular, further contributed to German Jewry's deterioration. The Yiddish press reported that, as a result of these developments, Jews began to emigrate from Germany as early as 1931. The emigration at first, at least according to some reports, was small but increased as economic conditions in Germany worsened and the threat of Nazism loomed even larger.

Jewish intellectuals were among the first to leave Germany because they, perhaps more than any other single group, were most adversely affected by the economic depression. They hoped to find opportunities for employment in neighboring countries. Later, the somewhat more affluent middle class German Jewish businessmen who sought to protect their wealth and secure their physical well being joined them. A great number of Jews of east European origin also fled at this time. They, in particular, feared that, if Hitler would become chancellor, they would be the first to be driven from Germany. Disillusionment resulting from the rejection of the Jews from German society was also a factor in the emigration of
Jews from Germany. German Jewish exiles expressed disappointment in the German people. They pointed out that few Germans, if any, raised their voices to protest Nazi atrocities against the Jews. The German intelligentsia in fact sought to justify the atrocities. Some churchmen even praised Hitler's deeds. Therefore, these bitter and disillusioned Jews concluded, as Ab. Goldberg pointed out, that the "German is still a primitive creature and is still closer to the forest than to the civilized city." Thus, they sought to escape from the atmosphere of hopelessness in which they had been living by fleeing from Germany. The Yiddish press reported that by and large the refugees hoped to return to Germany as soon as the storm which engulfed their homeland would blow over. It is for this reason, according to these reports, that those of means who had the ability to flee with capital, took only sufficient funds to tide themselves over the short term.

The depth of the tragedy which befell the Jews in Germany and, most particularly, those who were native born, can be measured by a remark made by a German Jewish intellectual who fled to Paris. He said:

"I am a German; just as German as the racists. My family has lived in southern Germany; in the Rhine region for more than twelve centuries. I am rooted in Germany and now millions are coming in Germany and proclaiming that I am a foreigner. For years I believed that this is not more than an affliction, a passing cloud. But now I realize that a racist psychosis has taken hold of the majority of the German people. This is for me a spiritual catastrophe. My entire life, all that which I believed in, was destroyed. I lost all hope. I simply saved myself for a while in a foreign land in order to ponder and in order to search my soul. It is not important to me whether or not Hitler comes to power. This is a matter of secondary importance to me. What is important is that Hitler is already a power in Germany and that he controls millions of minds and souls."1
Interestingly, in spite of the rapid deterioration of the Jewish situation, particularly following Hitler's appointment as chancellor, a segment of German Jewry, most notably those who advocated assimilation as a solution to the "Jewish problem," continued to view themselves as Germans and considered emigration as a traitorous act. They sought an accommodation with the new regime. They hoped that this period of trial and tribulation would be short in duration and that thereafter, they could once more live freely as Germans. One correspondent compared these individuals to a "favored son who awakened to find his father standing over him with an ax in his hand ready to chop his head off" and did not know how to react. Related to this was a report in the Yiddish press about an article which appeared in a German Jewish publication authored by an individual identified as a German liberal rabbi. The rabbi stressed that Judaism is a religious belief and that, regardless of one's nationality or race, anyone who embraced its teachings is Jewish. Therefore, German Jews are Jewish by religion but German by nationality. He said:

"We German Jews are part of the German national corpus. We belong to it. It is our political nationality. Our grandfathers have fought for the liberation of Germany. We are German regardless if this is pleasing to our enemies or not. We are German not because they recognize this or not, but because Germany is part of our ego; because our fate is bound up with its fate. We do not intend to leave Germany and to belong to another nationality - to ask for hospitality from others. Here we are. Here we will fight for our rights until our last breaths. It is necessary to know to choose the moment when to shout and when to be silent. Now is the time for us to be silent."

Unnamed "prominent" Berlin Jews expressed similar views at a meeting attended by Dr. S. Margoshes while on a fact finding visit to that city at the end of 1933.
Not everyone in the German Jewish community shared this view. Nationalists viewed the turn of events as an affirmation of their beliefs that assimilation was a bankrupt philosophy. Rather, they argued, Jews must seek to develop their own national culture and rebuild their national home. In light of recent developments, they urged their Jewish compatriots to emigrate because they foresaw no future for them in Germany. They also strongly criticized those Jews who continued to place great emphasis on their "Deutschtum" but negated the value of "Judentum." As one Zionist author pointed out to Margoshes at the aforementioned meeting,

"...these individuals learned nothing from experience. Germany was theirs and not Hitler's. Their national home means nothing to them. They are only interested in sparing their 'Deutschtum.' They are fearful of a mass emigration because it can cast doubt on their patriotism."^2

The German Jewish emigration intensified following Hitler's appointment as chancellor and most particularly after the March 1933 election, when the Nazi regime took steps to implement its anti-Jewish program and the S.A. abandoned all restraint and intensified its terror campaign. Refugees streamed across Germany's borders to such neighboring countries as France, Holland, Belgium, Switzerland, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. Yet, this wave of emigration was short lived. By April it became evident that the initial panic fleeing had begun to slow considerably. Nevertheless, by the end of the year, reports estimated the number of refugees to be about 50,000 to 65,000. As a result of the large number of Jews wishing to leave the country, those organizations in Germany which were in a position to help individuals emigrate were besieged with requests for counsel and aid. A most surprising development was the expressed interest in Palestine, particularly by
non-Zionists. Zecharyah Shuster, for example, reported in the Day in June that the Palestine Office in Berlin received 1,200 inquiries daily from Jews who sought information about emigration to Palestine or who wished to apply for an immigration certificate. Some Jews even expressed the belief that their only remaining hope for survival was settlement in Palestine.4

According to reports in the Yiddish press, many more Jews would have emigrated were it not for various obstacles which hindered their emigration.5 Firstly, in spite of the declarations by the government that it desired the emigration of Jews from Germany, its action belied its stated policy. Both local governments, e.g., Breslau and the Reich government, attempted to prevent individuals from fleeing. Subsequently, at the beginning of April 1933, the Nazi government issued an edict requiring all Germans desiring to travel abroad to obtain an exit permit. According to instructions issued by Göring, permits were to be denied to individuals who, the government believed, could, while abroad, spread "libelous" tales concerning Germany, or who were opposed to the regime and could harm the government if they were permitted to leave Germany. This edict adversely affected the Jews. The police confiscated their passports and invalidated them for travel abroad. They even harassed and humiliated Jews who succeeded in obtaining exit permits. Some Jews left Germany only after the border police confiscated all valuables in their possession. Other less fortunate individuals had to return to their former residences, penniless.

Secondly, German Jews who wished to leave Germany encountered difficulties liquidating their assets. In addition, according to reports in the
Yiddish press, the bank accounts of Jews were monitored by the police to prevent the withdrawal and transfer of funds abroad. Initially, those Jews who had the good fortune of obtaining an exit permit had to leave their possessions and valuables in Germany. Therefore, émigrés who did not have foreign bank accounts or relatives and/or friends to support them became dependent upon local relief organizations for sustenance until such time as they could re-establish themselves.  

Thirdly, Nazi agents continued to harass those who fled. Moreover, according to reports by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, the German government attempted to influence, with a degree of success, business firms not to employ Jewish refugees. Thus, even Jews who succeeded in escaping lived in fear of reprisals.

Fourthly, due to the economic depression, some countries which had traditionally opened their gates to victims of religious and political persecution refused to relax their immigration restrictions. Labor in these countries pressured their respective governments to oppose immigration on the grounds that the immigrant would compete with the native worker for the few available jobs. Latent antisemitic sentiments also surfaced in some countries as the depression deepened. The immigration from Germany, viewed largely as Jewish, only acerbated these feelings. Thus, even those German Jews who wished to flee from Germany could find few places where they could re-establish themselves on a permanent basis.

The doors to the United States, for example, remained closed, by and large, to individuals fleeing from religious and political persecution in Germany. Even German refugees who by law were entitled to a visa to
enter the United States in order to join their closest kin, e.g. parent, spouse or children who were American citizens, found themselves barred because of age or health. Immigration restrictions were a direct result of the strict enforcement of President Hoover's executive order of 8 September 1930. Jewish refugees seeking asylum in the United States were adversely affected, according to reports in the Yiddish daily press, by these restrictions. Therefore, the leadership of the American Jewish Congress, for example, sought to influence the Roosevelt Administration to rescind this order. On March 21st, Bernard Deutsch and Stephen Wise appeared before the House Immigration Committee to urge it to make such a recommendation to the President. Wise, apart from justifying his request on humanitarian grounds, also pointed out that American citizens spent $290,000 each year to support their relatives in Germany. Therefore, he felt, if for no other reason than being economically expedient, reunification of these people with citizen members of their families who resided in this country must be encouraged. On the morrow, Rep. Samuel Dickstein, the chairman of the House Immigration Committee, introduced a resolution in the House which authorized the Secretary of State to cancel the 1930 order. The resolution was not adopted, but was referred back to the Immigration Committee for discussion. Other appeals to the administration by Jewish organizations, e.g. HIAS, as well as by some leading American organizations, e.g. American Civil Liberties Union, also fell on deaf ears. Administration officials continued to argue that increased immigration could further damage the economy. Therefore, with some exceptions, immigration restrictions remained in force all through the year. Thus the German quota, as well as the quotas of other lands, remained unfilled at
a time when countless numbers of individuals sought asylum in the United States. Anti-immigration forces, bolstered by the support of organized labor, had clearly won the day.\textsuperscript{10}

It is important to note in this connection that, even within the Jewish camp there was reluctance, if not outright opposition, to pressure the administration to change its policy, given the present economic situation in the United States. Reportedly, these individuals feared that such action could give rise to charges that Jews placed the interests of their brethren in Germany ahead of American interests. Samuel Dingol, in a series of articles in the \textit{Day} pertaining to the German Jewish situation, attributed the failure of the American Congress to adopt the Dickstein resolution partly to the fact that "those Jewish leaders whose opinions would have carried weight with the administration," specifically the leaders of the American Jewish Committee, did not support the resolution. Rather, they placed their trust in the Secretary of State and in his efforts to bring about a resolution of the Jewish situation in Germany. Later events demonstrated that their trust in him was misguided.\textsuperscript{11}

The gates of England, too, remained closed to a mass emigration from Germany, in spite of the outpouring of sympathy in England for the German Jew. Here, as elsewhere, economic conditions precluded liberalization of the immigration policy. In fact, pressure was brought to bear on the government to prevent the influx of refugees because it was feared that these individuals would become public charges. Opponents of immigration, here as elsewhere, pointed out that it would be detrimental to the economy if refugees were allowed to seek employment. So heightened were these fears that Otto Schiff, Chairman of the Jewish Refugee Committee, found it
necessary to make a public statement regarding the refugee situation. In a letter to the editor of the London Times on October 6th, he tried to allay these fears by noting that the estimated number of refugees in England was 1,500. He also pointed out that at no time since Hitler had come to power were there more than 2,000 to 2,500 Jewish refugees in England. Many of these individuals were helped to re-emigrate to Palestine or other countries. Those who remained in England did not in any way compete with Britishers. In fact, the enterprises they established could open new markets for British export trade and create opportunities for the British unemployed. Further, no Jewish refugee became a public charge. The Jewish community bore all their expenses.¹²

The British government not only restricted immigration to England but to Palestine as well. The number of individuals granted permission to immigrate to Palestine each year was determined largely on the basis of the estimated economic absorptive capacity of the land.¹³ This became a bone of contention between the Palestine Zionist Executive and the High Commissioner's Office. The former always contended that the Palestinian economy could provide employment for a larger number of individuals than the High Commissioner believed was possible. Thus, for the half year beginning 1 April 1933, the Commissioners approved the issuance of 5,500 of the 12,750 certificates requested by the Executive.¹⁴ The situation in Germany made it imperative that the British government show more flexibility in its determination of the quota in order to allow Jews fleeing from Nazi persecution to find a haven in Palestine. Yet, although the British government was sympathetic to the plight of the Jews and did publicly condemn the Nazi policy vis-à-vis the Jews, it
nevertheless refused to relax present immigration restrictions because it believed that only an evenhanded policy would be beneficial to both Arab and Jew. Various M.P.'s tried to bring about a relaxation of the present restrictions, but they did not succeed. For example, on 3 April, Sir P. Cunliffe-Lister, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, made it clear, in responding to the question of Colonel Wedgwood regarding the relaxation of restriction of immigration, that "there can be no question of departing from the principle which had been consistently followed that immigration to Palestine must be governed by the economic absorptive capacity of the country." Subsequently, when the issue was raised again in Parliament on April 13th, Sir John Simon, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, once more restated the government policy. However, he did announce that the High Commissioner authorized the issuing in advance of 100 certificates to individuals in the labor category. Concessions were also announced which would allow Jews with capital or skilled laborers to emigrate to Palestine more freely. Understandably, Zionist leaders were disturbed by the British policy and roundly criticized it. At the Zionist Congress in Prague Nahum Sokoloff alluded to the fact that Palestine was still not available as a refuge for German Jews, in spite of the fact that Britain, in accordance with the terms of the mandate, had to help establish a Jewish homeland there. Zelig Brodetzky, the noted British Zionist and member of the Executive, was even more vociferous in his criticism. He accused Britain of pursuing a pro-Arab policy. To support this contention, he pointed out that the mandate regime gave preference to Arabs in filling government posts and granting loans. It also gave them free land. No restrictions were placed on Arab immigration.
Jewish immigration, however, was restricted. The High Commissioner never granted in full the Yishuv's request for certificates, in spite of its demonstrated need for a greater labor pool.17

The determination of the labor schedule for the half year commencing October, 1933 further demonstrated the Mandate's insensitivity to the needs of the Jewish people. The Jewish Agency requested 25,000 certificates. The High Commissioner determined that 6,500 certificates could be issued. However, he authorized the release of only 5,500 certificates because he contended that at least 1,000 Jewish tourists remained in Palestine illegally. Of these, only 3,500 new certificates were issued because 2,000 had already been released. The Commissioner also stipulated that 500 certificates must be set aside to enable tourists whose permits expired but who chose to remain in Palestine, to do so.

In October the Arabs rioted to protest the increase of Jewish immigration to Palestine. High Commissioner Wauchope met with Arab leaders and announced steps to be taken to prevent the continued illegal Jewish immigration to Palestine. Subsequently, tourists found to be in the country illegally were arrested and deported. Even individuals presently gainfully employed faced deportation. The British policy caused much resentment in Jewish circles. The Executive of the Jewish Agency, for example, issued a declaration protesting the High Commissioner's action. It believed that the present policy violated the principle of economic absorption capability that was used as a yardstick to determine Jewish immigration. In addition, it criticized the British government for reneging on its earlier commitment to Weizmann that all Jews who had a chance for employment would be admitted to Palestine. The Executive
attributed the illegal immigration to the government's restrictive policy and noted that the illegal immigrants contributed greatly to the development of the land. Ironically, the prosperity brought in its wake an illegal Arab immigration which the mandate government to date had not attempted to stem. The Jewish inhabitants of Palestine, therefore, must not be penalized for the riots which the Arabs had organized.

Subsequently, the High Commissioner, meeting with a delegation of the Va'ad Leumi (National Council) and other Jewish groups concerning his policies, made it clear that Jewish troubles in other lands could not be taken into consideration in determining the immigration schedule. He once more appealed to them to cooperate to prevent the illegal immigration to Palestine.

It is important to note that the heightened interest in Palestine exhibited by German Jews waned at the end of the year as a result of the negative reports pertaining to the difficulties encountered by some German Jews who had returned to Germany. The interest in Palestine was further dampened by the restrictive immigration policy and Arab unrest. 18

Even Germany's neighbors, who at first welcomed and assisted all those who fled from their Nazi persecutors, began to take steps to halt the immigration when they realized that the panic fleeing was not temporary. They also began to restrict the activities of the refugees in their midst and actively encouraged their re-emigration. The magnitude of the problem can be realized from a careful reading of the reports concerning the refugees in France. Here, by the end of the year, according to various reports, approximately 25,000 Jewish refugees, representing a
cross-section of German-Jewish society, had fled. At first, the refugees arriving in France needed little assistance. Some were affluent and able to support themselves. Others had relatives who could provide for their needs. The picture changed dramatically by April, 1933. The Nazi regime took steps to stem the tide of emigration and to limit the capital that could be taken out of Germany by individuals granted exit permits. The number of illegal immigrants having nothing but the shirts on their backs increased. These developments resulted in an increase in the number of refugees entering France who needed assistance. The immediate needs of the indigent were provided by relief committees in the various communities along the German-French frontier. They provided the refugees with food, shelter, and even train tickets to Paris. The municipalities, too, cooperated in the relief effort by allocating funds for this purpose. Both Jew and non-Jew participated in this humanitarian undertaking. In addition to the local relief committees mentioned above, various other Jewish organizations in France also aided the emigrant. A committee headed by former French ministers Léon Berard and François Pilet was founded to help the Jewish intellectual establish himself and continue his studies and research. This committee also sought to aid the German Jewish student to continue his studies in France. Likewise, the Fédération des Sociétés Juives de France appointed a committee to advise refugees on how to establish themselves in France. For example, it helped those interested in opening a business to establish commercial ties. HICEM, the coordinating organization of HIAS, the Jewish Colonization Association (ICA), and Emigdirect, sought permanent homes for the refugees in countries outside of Europe. It provided them with the necessary funds for relocation.
By encouraging re-emigration, HICEM hoped to lighten the burden which presently rested on the shoulders of the local relief organizations.  

The Franco-Jewish organization whose activities in 1933 drew the most attention in the Yiddish press was the National Committee of Aid to the Victims of Antisemitism in Germany, founded in March of that year and headquartered in Paris. It was headed by such noted French Jews as Edmond and Robert de Rothschild, Sylvan Levi, President of the Central Committee of the Alliance, Israel Levi, the grand rabbi of France, as well as noted French politicians such as Paul Painlevé and Édouard Herriot. The committee began its activities with an initial fund of four million francs contributed by ICA, the Alliance, the House of Rothschild, and various other Jewish and gentile donors. From April to the end of September, it aided 7,151 individuals by providing them with shelter, meal tickets, and a daily stipend.

The Committee also sought to find employment for the new arrivals. It cooperated closely with other organizations which sought to help the emigrants relocate to countries where opportunities existed for them to re-establish themselves on a permanent basis. By involving other communities in the effort of caring for the refugees, it hoped to be able to continue to aid additional refugees arriving daily in Paris. In some cases, funds were provided to individuals unable to adjust to France or to emigrate elsewhere, to return to Germany. In view of the increase in the demand for assistance and the decrease in available funds for disbursement, the committee was forced to limit the period of assistance to a maximum of three months per individual. Baron de Rothschild, the President of the Consistoire, who took a personal interest in the activities of the committee,
held numerous meetings at his home in order to explore new avenues to raise funds to enable the committee to meet its monthly operating budget of 75,000 francs, and to discuss other related issues. Towards mid-year, however, the Forward reported that the Rothschilds, for reasons not specified in the report, withdrew their support. Jewish organizations in other lands grew indifferent to the Committee's activities. The Committee no longer received their financial support. Therefore, on October 19th the Committee was forced to close its doors.

Some individuals who received assistance from the Committee, as well as certain elements of the French Jewish community, criticized it. The former group constantly complained about the intolerable living conditions and the poor quality of food they received. They even staged several hunger strikes to protest the situation. The poor living conditions exacerbated the traditional enmity between the native German Jews and the Ostjuden. Some German Jews still felt superior to the Ostjuden and resented being treated in the same manner as they. They even refused to share the same living quarters with them. On the other hand, the continued patriotism of the native German Jews upset the Ostjuden. They also complained that the officials of the Committee discriminated against them. The alleged discriminatory policy of the Committee also elicited criticism by the French Jews, particularly those of east European origin. These sentiments were voiced by the Pariser Haynt, the Yiddish daily. In an editorial, the writer expressed the view that the Committee "helped little with the seven million francs" that were raised because it "took useful, productive people and made beggars out of them." He also sharply criticized the Committee's treatment of the east European Jews and charged that the handful of
prominent Jews who raised the funds disbursed them to their friends who had fled to Paris. However, the Committee did practically nothing for the Ostjuden. The directors of the Committee denied these allegations. Accounts in the Yiddish press pertaining to the activities of the Committee corroborate the fact that there was no intentional discrimination against the Ostjuden. While the charge that the Committee turned the productive German refugee into a beggar may be true, one must bear in mind that the Committee's activities were limited by the funds at its disposal, as well as by factors over which it had no control. Therefore, for example, the Committee, given its limited resources, could not provide for both the basic needs of the many who sought assistance and for programs to retrain German Jews. It was also not successful in finding employment for the refugees in France. This was due in part to the fact that many refugees lacked marketable skills and partly to the restrictions imposed by the French government on their employment. The following chart illustrates the occupational structure of a cross section of the refugee community in Paris. The data was culled from 5,604 registration cards completed by the refugees at the time they applied for assistance. The Committee, according to reports by G. Cooper and others, was able to find employment for a little over 700 individuals. Some were placed in their field, while others, for lack of a better alternative, took jobs in domestic service and in farming. Thus, it was not uncommon to find former physicians working as waiters and women from very comfortable homes working as maids. Former businessmen and professionals fared far worse than any group because there was a glut of merchants and professionals in France. Furthermore, some refugees were too old to try their hand at a new occupation. Thus, for many the situation was hopeless.
TABLE 7  
Occupational Structure of the Jewish Refugee Community in Paris

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merchants</td>
<td>1,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clerks</td>
<td>675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Representatives</td>
<td>260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyers</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doctors</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School Teachers</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musicians</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architects</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authors and Journalists</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pharmacists</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Window Dressers</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bankers</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printers, Typesetters, Goldsmiths</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Locksmiths, Technicians, etc.</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: G. Cooper, Forward, 8 October 1933

The continued flow of refugees to France placed the French government in a quandary. On the one hand, it had always opened its doors to the victims of persecution and was reluctant to change its policy now. On the other hand, special interest groups, e.g. professional associations, as well as a number of communities, particularly in the industrial centers of eastern France, petitioned the government to halt the immigration and to place restrictions on the employment of refugees currently in France for the obvious reason that France was in the midst of an economic depression and jobs were scarce.

Understandably, the Frenchmen feared additional competition. The government did indeed move in this direction when it became clear that a great number of refugees sought to re-establish themselves in France. It outlawed the employment of foreigners. This policy dealt a severe blow to those refugees who were nationals of various European countries and, most particularly, Poland. They were, in effect, forced to return to their
former homelands where, at best, they faced an uncertain future.\textsuperscript{27}

Moreover, the initial sympathy for the German Jewish refugee in both Jewish and non-Jewish circles was dissipating. Economic factors undoubtedly contributed greatly to this development. German Jews competed with them for jobs and became their rivals in business. Perhaps, even more importantly, some Jewish refugees served as business representatives for German firms. They were able to sell their wares much more cheaply than the French merchant because Germany had embarked on a policy of dumping in order to create a market for its boycotted goods. Thus, these agents indirectly harmed French industry. In Jewish circles, in addition to the above reasons, there was growing resentment of the more affluent German refugees who lived in luxury and shirked their responsibility to their less fortunate brethren. Therefore, as one leader in the Parisian Jewish community was reported to have said: "Why should we do, \[aid the German refugees\] if they do not?\textsuperscript{28}

The fate which awaited the east European Jewish refugee from Germany was in a sense more dire than that of his native German Jewish brother. Although he could return to his former homeland, he knew that it could offer him few, if any, opportunities to establish himself. This was particularly true in the case of the Polish Jew. The Yiddish press reported that many former Polish citizens, and for that matter other German refugees, did not have an opportunity to, or could not, liquidate their assets. They, therefore, arrived in Poland penniless. Moreover, Jews who were deported to Poland often had to use whatever funds they did have to pay the German government for the food it provided for them, as
well as for the police guard which accompanied them to the border. Even
greater suffering befell those individuals and their children who lived
in Germany for many years but never became German citizens. More often
than not, they could not speak Polish and had no cultural ties to Poland.
More importantly, many no longer had relatives or friends in Poland to
turn to for aid or counsel and had to turn to relief committees for
assistance. In view of the fact that many refugees arrived in Poland
impoverished, local relief committees, particularly in the frontier
communities, had to shoulder a great burden. So much so, that some
committees lacked sufficient funds to provide for the basic needs of the
refugees. In mid-May, W. Zukerman reported from London that, according to
reports in the Polish press, some committees were not in a position to pay
for the refugees' transportation to major Polish centers. Some committees
even lacked sufficient funds to provide bread. As a result, hundreds of
families in dire economic straits found themselves stranded in various
Polish frontier communities.

The tragic fate that awaited the repatriated Jew is described in
a report by Z. Shohet in the forward. He had interviewed a group of
former Galician Jews in Lemberg. Their source of income had been cut off
when they were expelled from Germany. Few opportunities existed in
Galicia for employment because of the poor economic climate. Those
individuals who had left possessions in Germany or who had bank accounts
there clung to the hope that the German government would eventually
allow foreign nationals to transfer their wealth abroad. They would then
have the means to re-establish themselves. The less fortunate Jews,
however, had to turn to their relatives who themselves, in many instances,
had no means. If they had no one to turn to, they relied on charity. The refugees regarded these options as short term solutions to their plight. Shohet concluded from his conversations with this group of refugees that either they would have to return to Germany when the situation improved or they would have to find a new home in a country that could offer them opportunities to support themselves.29

Given the situation in Poland and the fact that many Ostjuden considered themselves to be German, it is no wonder that those who fled to other countries protested when local relief committees insisted that they return to their former homeland. They charged that these committees discriminated against them because they did not attempt to find homes for them in other countries as they did for the native born Jew.30
Attempts at a Solution

The plight of the German Jew became the concern of the world Jewish community. Jewish organizations as well as individuals proposed various programs of action which they believed would alleviate the suffering of German Jewry and would solve the Jewish refugee problem. Some proposals simply suggested that relief funds be made available for the destitute. Others called for the support of constructive programs, e.g. job retraining. Still other proposals were more broadly conceived and included plans for both welfare and constructive assistance. A segment of the Jewish community objected to providing any assistance to German Jews so long as they resided in Germany. It believed that the only solution to the problem was emigration. Therefore, it proposed that Jews support a movement to Palestine and other countries.\footnote{31}

In 1933 the HIAS, the Jewish Agency, and the American Joint Distribution Center (J.D.C.) launched fund raising drives in the United States to raise funds for a variety of activities that each organization had undertaken. They hoped that the programs they endorsed would contribute to the solution of the various problems that arose as a result of the present Jewish situation in Germany.

The HIAS, in conjunction with ICA and Emigdirect, under the umbrella of HICEM, initiated a program of assistance to meet the basic needs of the impoverished refugees. They
worked closely with the various communities that had undertaken to assist the refugees. Most refugees, as noted above, could not remain in the countries to which they fled. These organizations, therefore, undertook the task of helping relocate and resettle refugees in permanent homes. Hence, the HIAS launched an emergency drive in the spring of 1933 to carry out its activities on behalf of the German Jewish refugees. At this time, too, the Jewish Agency launched a world wide campaign to raise funds to help settle in Palestine the persecuted Jews of Germany and other lands. American Zionists supported this campaign.

The J.D.G., unlike the HTAS and the Jewish Agency, placed greater emphasis on aiding the Jews in Germany. Therefore, it sought two million dollars for the following purposes:

1. The feeding, housing, and care of Jews made destitute by economic oppression.

2. Relief for professionals, intellectuals, and other members of the white-collar class.

3. Aid for those who are forced to leave Germany and seek opportunities in other lands.

Interestingly, Rabbi Jonah B. Wise, the chairman of the campaign, noted that German Jewish leaders with whom he had recently been in contact, stressed that they were not seeking charity but a loan to fund the various relief and educational programs they had undertaken. The request by German Jewish leaders for a loan reflected, as the Day noted in an editorial, the prevalent belief among some German Jewish leaders that the Nazi regime would be short lived.
Other organizations in Europe launched similar appeals. In view of the fact that many fund raising drives had already been launched, resulting in duplication of effort in some instances, some European Jewish leaders concluded that all appeals and activities undertaken on behalf of German Jewry had to be coordinated. They believed that duplication of effort must be avoided in order to maximize the funds that could be made available to assist German Jewry. The American Yiddish daily press, in its news reports and in its editorial comments, endorsed this view. It noted that in England the Central British Fund for German Jewry had been established for precisely this purpose. It hoped that the American Jewish community, as well as other Jewish communities, would follow suit. Furthermore, it stressed the importance of coordinating the entire Jewish relief effort. Relative to this, the Morning Journal in an editorial proposed that American Jewish leaders form a central relief committee akin to the Central British Fund for German Jewry. According to its proposal, the Committee would determine the allocation to each participating organization. The participants, however, would maintain their autonomy in disbursing their respective allocation.

American Jewish leaders did not form a central relief committee in the United States as proposed in the Morning Journal. However, Jonah Wise, who headed the J.D.C. campaign, did take steps toward coordinating the activities of the J.D.C. with those of other European Jewish organizations. He established contacts with Jewish leaders in London, Paris, and Berlin while on a fact finding trip to Europe. Wise also promised the leaders of the recently organized Zentralausschus für Hilfe and Aufbau to arrange for contacts between them and European
Jewish leaders and the J.D.C. in order to insure the systematic conduct of relief activities. 37

Towards the end of 1933, however, initial steps were taken towards the realization of the ultimate goal of coordinating all relief activities on behalf of German Jewry. On October 29th, a four day international conference, convened under the joint auspices of the Joint Foreign Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the Alliance Israelite Universelle, and the Comité des Déléguations Juives, opened in London. Forty-five organizations presently involved in some aspect of relief work for German Jewry sent representatives to the meeting. The sponsors of the meeting hoped that the delegates would agree to establish an organization to coordinate present and future activities. They also expected the delegates to hammer out a program of action to which all could agree. The sponsors, therefore, appointed subcommittees to discuss specific aspects of the relief effort and to make recommendations to the conference for action. These subcommittees addressed such issues as the problems of German Jewish immigration, the settlement of German Jews in Palestine, the restructuring of Jewish life in Germany, and temporary relief for the refugees. It was clear from the outset that the task would not be an easy one due to the fact that these delegates represented organizations with diverse views.

Naturally, the orientation of the organizations determined the kinds of programs each group believed should be undertaken on behalf of German Jewry. This proved to be a major factor which caused divisiveness among the delegations. The heated discussions pertaining to the degree to which the newly proposed organization should support the settlement of
Jewish refugees in Palestine illustrates this point. On the one hand, the Zionist-oriented delegations believed that the major thrust of all relief activities must be directed towards settling refugees in Palestine. The lion's share of the funds to be raised, in their view, must by necessity be allocated for this purpose. On the other hand, non-Zionist oriented delegations regarded funding the settlement of Jews in Palestine as but one activity among others in a broadly conceived plan of action. Moreover, according to some reports, the fear of Zionist domination led to the defeat of Sir Osmond d'Avigdor Goldsmid's efforts to win approval for the establishment of a central committee to coordinate all relief activities, including the settlement of Jews in Palestine. Instead, the conference approved the formation of a General Advisory Council for Relief and Reconstruction with an Executive Committee functioning in London. It gave local organizations discretionary power to raise and disburse funds. However, if they chose, they could transfer part or all of their funds to the Committee in London. It was understood that all organizations would consult with the Committee prior to undertaking a project on behalf of German Jewry. To accomplish its objectives, efforts would be made to raise two million pounds sterling.

According to press accounts, the delegates left the meeting with a sense of accomplishment. Editorial comments also noted the achievements of the meeting. Initial steps had been taken to establish a comprehensive relief program. A series of programs to provide constructive assistance for the German Jewish community, as well as for the German Jewish refugee, won approval. Some divisive issues had been resolved; yet, much had to be done on this score. Therefore, though the delegates only succeeded in
establishing an advisory council instead of an authoritative central agency, this was still considered to be a major accomplishment. In addition, a permanent commission to deal with the regulation of emigration from Germany, as well as other related questions, had been appointed. 38

The aforementioned activities undertaken by the world Jewish community provided succor for destitute Jews in Germany. They aided German Jewish leaders in their efforts to restructure Jewish life in Germany on a new foundation. Moreover, they alleviated, to a degree, the plight of the refugees. However, some Jewish leaders continued to be concerned by the fact that they could not find permanent homes for those who wished to emigrate from Germany as well as for those who fled but languished in their host communities. Therefore, according to reports in the Yiddish press, Jewish leaders, who believed that the Jewish problem in Germany could be solved only through emigration, made a concerted effort to persuade various nations to admit refugees and provide them with opportunities to establish themselves there.

Naturally, Zionist leaders continued to stress that great emphasis had to be placed on developing a Jewish homeland in Palestine where the persecuted Jews from Germany and other countries could be relocated. However, given the problems pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, many Zionist leaders concluded that the Palestinian solution could only partially solve the refugee problem. 39

Settlement in Palestine was feasible only for a portion of the refugees. Not all German Jews wished to settle in Palestine. Also,
many German Jewish refugees lacked marketable skills that would enable them to become successfully absorbed into the Palestinian economy. As Chaim Weizmann pointed out, German refugees in the main were businessmen and professionals. Palestine was not commercially and industrially developed. Only a limited number of professionals could be absorbed. Therefore, he stressed that only those individuals who were committed to the Zionist ideal and who were willing to make sacrifices could successfully settle in Palestine.

More importantly, the leaders of the Yishuv felt that Palestine could not withstand the shock of a mass migration of German Jews. Leaders such as Weizmann and Ruppin spoke of settling only a limited number of individuals over a period of years. Yet, unlike the British authorities, these leaders, as noted above, felt that Palestine could absorb many more individuals than were presently allowed to immigrate. They, therefore, continued to pressure Britain, with little success, to liberalize its immigration policy to Palestine.

As a possible solution to the German refugee problem, Jewish leaders also seriously considered proposals calling for the settlement of Jews in countries hitherto not considered because they were not "highly developed" economically or culturally. The following countries were mentioned as possibilities: Angola, the nations of Central and South America, northern Australia, the nations of the Far East, and Russia, specifically Birobidzhan. The proponents of these proposals pointed out that the undeveloped nations would welcome and utilize the talents, skills, and know-how of the German Jews. An orderly emigration would not present a hardship for the host country. Antisemitic feelings would not surface
as they had in various European countries and in the United States where anti-immigration sentiment was strong.\footnote{41}

However, efforts to find permanent homes for the refugees were largely unsuccessful. Many individuals and organizations, according to reports in the Yiddish daily press, concluded that the refugee problem in all of its ramifications could be solved only through an international effort.\footnote{42} They, therefore, petitioned the League of Nations to intercede on behalf of German Jewry and urged that it play an active role in seeking a solution to the refugee problem.

At an economic conference held in Amsterdam in July to pronounce a world wide Jewish boycott against Germany, a resolution was passed calling on the League to investigate the Jewish situation in Germany, to extend its protection to the Jews, and to provide relief for the victims of Nazi persecution in accordance with the Versailles Treaty.\footnote{43} The 18th Zionist Congress also passed a resolution calling on the League and Britain, as the Mandate power, to make possible immediate systematic financial aid in order to implement the mandate in Palestine and help the persecuted German Jews.\footnote{44} In a similar vein, the World Jewish Conference which met in Geneva in September passed a resolution calling on the League to:

1. regulate and supervise the Jewish emigration from Germany

2. provide for the German Jews who were now dispersed throughout the world as refugees and who were unprotected and stateless

3. to do all that is possible, together with the mandate power, to open the doors to Palestine for the thousands of German Jews who wish to make Palestine their home.\footnote{45}
Chaim Weizmann and Morris Rothenberg urged that the League guarantee an international loan to the Jewish people. The funds would enable Jews to purchase land in Palestine and develop it so that refugees would be able to settle there.  

Jewish leaders pressed ahead with the demand for League action. They did so in spite of the fact that the League had not demonstrated that it could exert sufficient moral and political pressure on Germany to effect a change in its anti-Jewish policy. The nations most affected by the influx of refugees to their lands also felt that the League had to act on this matter. They did not, however, wish to bring the issue before the League because they feared that such action would jeopardize their relationship with Germany. Holland, however, was persuaded to raise the issue at the League's meeting in the fall. Its Foreign Minister, Jonkheer de Graeff, introduced a resolution at the opening session of the Assembly on September 29th calling for immediate international collaboration to deal with the economic, financial, and social problems caused by the presence of German refugees, particularly in countries bordering on Germany. The Dutch proposal was referred to the League's Second Commission, which dealt with technical matters. No one raised objections to the Dutch proposal in the course of the discussions held by the Commission. Therefore, it appointed a subcommittee to formulate a formal proposal. After considerable deliberations, the subcommittee recommended the following course of action:

1. The Council of the League appoint a High Commissioner for Refugees

2. It was to allocate an initial sum of no more than 25,000
Swiss francs to enable the Commissioner to begin his work. The sum was to be repaid at a later date.

3. Private organizations would be responsible to raise all the funds needed by the Commissioner.

4. All nations should admit refugees and, to the degree that it would be possible, assist them to obtain employment.

Germany insisted that the Commissioner’s activities be divorced from the League. Germany’s objections reportedly stemmed in part from its desire to weaken the office of the High Commissioner and in part from its opposition to be a party, as a member of the League, to the appointment of a High Commissioner to help people it was persecuting. The committee worked out a compromise in order to avoid a German veto. The High Commissioner would be appointed by the League. He, however, would not report back to the Council but to an autonomous commission appointed by the Council. The press reported that France, Holland, and other nations objected to this compromise. They argued that the refugee question had international ramifications and could not be divorced from the League’s activities. Yet, they yielded on this matter reportedly because Germany agreed to contribute to the Commissioner’s fund. Subsequently, the issue was referred back to the Second Commission and later to the full Assembly for approval. Although some members of the League felt that the revised plan was a tactical error, it nevertheless won approval. 48

Jewish leaders, too, had strong reservations about the proposal, particularly because they feared that the League would not be in a position to exert its influence on individual members. Yet, for lack of other alternatives, they pledged to support the Commissioner. The American
Jewish Congress voiced these reservations in its congratulatory cable to the Council. It expressed the hope that the High Commissioner's efforts to obtain the official cooperation of various governments in his quest to resettle the refugees would not be hindered by the fact that he was not under the direct jurisdiction of the League. It is important to note in this connection that the Day, in an editorial, rejected the view expressed in some Jewish circles that the Jewish aspects of the problem not be highlighted and that the effort to aid the refugees be conducted under non-Jewish auspices. Rather, the Day argued, Jewish organizations must be represented on the Advisory Council of Organizations which was to be formed to advise the High Commissioner. They must play an active role in raising funds for his efforts on behalf of the refugees. This would insure that the proposed project would go forward and in a direction most beneficial to the Jews. It, therefore, endorsed the American Jewish Congress's request that it be appointed as a member of the Council and suggested that the membership of the World Zionist Organization as well as other Jewish organizations be considered.

Numerous individuals were considered as possible candidates to fill the post of High Commissioner. Former President Hoover, for example, declined the offer. Other candidates were Christian Lange of Norway, Austin Chamberlin, the noted British statesman, and Lord Robert Cecil. The latter, subsequently, was appointed chairman of the Governing Body. The post was finally offered to James McDonald, Director of the Foreign Policy Association.

According to reports in the Yiddish press, American Jewry welcomed McDonald's appointment. Many Jews speculated that the American
government would actively support his effort. Some even conjectured that the government would now relax its restrictive immigration policy. Indeed, the United States government did agree to participate in the Commission and appointed Prof. Joseph P. Chamberlin of Columbia Law School to be its representative on the Governing Board. However, it rapidly became clear that the United States would not play an active role nor would it alter its present immigration policy.

The Council also extended invitations to other governments which were presently involved in the refugee problem or who it felt could contribute to its solution. They included Belgium, Great Britain, Denmark, Holland, France, Italy, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia, and Uruguay. These nations accepted the invitation and sent representatives. McDonald, for his part, immediately set about organizing the Commission. He also met with Dr. Chaim Weizmann and Dr. Nahum Goldmann, the representatives of the recently founded General Advisory Council for Relief and Reconstruction to discuss Jewish participation and representation on the Advisory Council of Private Organizations. As a result of these discussions, invitations were extended to various Jewish organizations, including the Joint Distribution Committee, the Jewish Colonization Association, and the Jewish Agency.

Several developments made it clear that the task of the High Commissioner would be a formidable one. Firstly, Germany never endorsed the refugee plan and remained opposed to a planned emigration. According to a report in the Morning Journal, Germany's opposition stemmed, in part, from its hope that panic fleeing would arouse anti-Jewish feelings throughout the world. Thus, Germany could justify its actions against
the Jewish community. In addition, Germany's withdrawal from the League, shortly after the program was adopted, roused fears, particularly in Jewish circles, that the situation of German Jewry would worsen. However, the Day, in an editorial, cautioned against such pessimism. It pointed out that, although Germany no longer belonged to the League, it would have to maintain its relationships with other countries and therefore, it would have to take their views into consideration. Jews must not despair but continue their battle. 

Secondly, shortly after McDonald's appointment, Britain insisted that Palestine be excluded from the High Commissioner's field of activity. It noted that it had made this clear at the closed session of the committee which created the Commission, and hence, Palestine had been omitted from the resolution announcing the creation of the Commission. McDonald viewed this request as a curtailment of the possibilities for settling the homeless refugees. He insisted on his right to submit to the British government a request for the admission into Palestine of German refugees under a separate and distinct immigration quota. 

The initial meetings of the Governing Board took place in Lausanne, Switzerland, on December 5-8, 1933. They were devoted, in part, to organizational matters and, in part, to a report from McDonald. In it he outlined the scope of the problem and the tasks of his Commission. McDonald viewed his mission as being twofold. Firstly, he hoped through conferences with private organizations and various governments in Europe and the Americas to formulate a comprehensive program for retraining and placing refugees. This would enable the refugees to become a more productive element in their new homelands. Secondly, he
would negotiate with various governments regarding issuing special passports to the refugees and other related issues. Fund-raising would be left to the private organizations presently concerned with the refugee problem. Yet, it became clear in the course of the concluding session that a substantive plan of action, at least for the time being, would not be formulated. Delegates were either unwilling or not in a position to act. It also became clear that those countries which had admitted numerous refugees wished to lighten their burden by encouraging refugees in their midst to re-emigrate. Nations which had admitted few refugees to date did not wish to admit any more. A bitter exchange of words between Joseph P. Chamberlin and Senator Berenger of France brought home this point very clearly. The former noted that the American government would encourage and be supportive of the efforts of private organizations to raise funds for German refugees. However, it recognized the fact that the task would be difficult because of the economic depression. Further, Chamberlin implied that countries which presently have numerous refugees residing within their borders must take steps to absorb them. He made it clear that the United States would not change its immigration policy. The latter stressed that the exodus from Germany had just begun. France had done all that it could, given the present economic situation. Now, it had reached a point where it might have to close its doors to the refugees. The delegates from Holland, Poland, and Czechoslovakia expressed similar views. Lord Cecil concluded the discussion by noting that the European countries had absorbed the maximum number of refugees possible. Hope lay only in finding homes for the refugees in other parts of the world, most notably in the Americas.
The initial sessions of the Commission concluded without formulating a plan of action. High Commissioner McDonald, according to reports in the press, would now seek to contact the German government in order to persuade it not to act in a manner which would precipitate a new wave of panic fleeing. He would also explore the possibility of settling refugees in various South American countries, North African countries, as well as in Southern France. Needless to say, the High Commissioner would have to convince both the United States and Britain to relax their restrictive immigration policies and bring about a change in the present immigration policy to Palestine. 57

Thus, we see that in 1933 only a few nations acted in a generous manner to alleviate the plight of the refugees and offer them asylum. They could do no more because of their economic dislocation and unemployment. Other nations that had not acted maintained that they could not be of assistance for similar reasons. Britain could have permitted a great emigration to Palestine but instead took steps to curtail it. The United States showed no concern for the plight of the refugee. It did not even admit refugees under existing quotas.

Equally disturbing was the fact that Jewish leaders could not set their differences aside and act in a more effective manner on behalf of German Jews. The fact that some American Jews opposed the emigration of German Jews to America for fear of an antisemitic backlash was indeed shocking.

As a result, German Jews who sought to escape from Germany were forced to remain there. They had no choice but to adjust to the new
circumstances.

The world continued to keep its doors closed to the refugees. By its inaction it demonstrated to Hitler that it did not care for the Jews. In effect it gave him a carte blanche to do with them as he saw fit. In retrospect, one wonders what the fate of the six million Jews would have been had the world acted more responsibly.
Footnotes to Chapter V


3 The exact number of refugees could not be established with any degree of certainty. The estimate of the number of refugees was determined on the basis of various relief committee reports. It is important to bear in mind that numerous refugees relied on their own resources or turned to relatives and friends. They never registered with relief committees. Thus, towards the end of the year, varying estimates were given for the number of Jewish refugees. Neville Lasky, in a report submitted to the relief conference held in London at the end of October, estimated the number to be 65,000. About a month later, the High Commissioner for Refugees estimated their number to be only about 51,000. See Day, 14 March 1933; Day, 23 March 1933; Day, 26 March 1933; Morning Journal, 26 March 1933; Day, 6 April 1933; J. Lestschinsky, Forward, 29 October 1933; Forward, 30 November 1933; Morning Journal, 24 September 1933; Morning Journal, 30 October 1933; Morning Journal, 6 December 1933.


5 Ab. Goldberg, for example, reported that two-thirds of the Jewish populace was willing to emigrate if they would have the opportunity. Ab. Goldberg, "Der Ayntsliger Plan," Morning Journal, 3 August 1933; see also Morning Journal, 24 September 1933.

6 Morning Journal, 15 March 1933; Morning Journal, 17 March 1933; Morning Journal, 2 April 1933; Day, 4 April 1933; Forward, 4 April 1933; Day, 7 April 1933; Day, 25 April 1933; Forward, 28 April 1933.

7 G. Cooper, Forward, 7 April 1933; Morning Journal, 19 April 1933; Forward, 20 May 1933; W. Zukerman, "Di Tragedyah Fun Idiske Arbayer in
The depression motivated President Hoover to seek means to restrict immigration to the United States. In 1930 he requested that the Congress halve the present quotas. Congress, however, adjourned prior to passing a law to this effect. Therefore, Hoover, at the end of April, 1930 turned to the State Department for advice. It had the primary responsibility of administering the Johnson Immigration Act of 1924. The Department recommended the strict interpretation of the "liable to become a public charge" clause of the 1917 Immigration Act, which it had found to be very effective in the past in cutting off undesired immigration. Subsequently, on September 13, 1930, the Department of State issued a press release on the "likely to become a public charge clause." As a result of this policy, immigration to the United States was curtailed.

Opponents of restrictive immigration believed that the executive order confirming this policy did not have the force of law. They petitioned President Roosevelt to rescind the order. For a detailed discussion of American Policy on refugees, see Barbara McDonald Stewart, "United States Government Policy on Refugees from Nazism, 1933-1940" (Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, 1969).

The immigration policy for most of 1933 was regulated by the immigration ordinance of 1925. Towards the end of 1933, a new ordinance was issued which maintained the economic basis of assessment, but applied stricter controls. The 1925 ordinance classified "eligible immigrants in economic categories; those of independent means..., those qualified in a profession, those with definite employment available upon arrival, and dependents of permanent residents or immigrants. The category of workers with employment prospects, which became known as the 'labour schedule,' accounted together with dependents for the great majority of immigrants during most of the inter-war period. ... Twice yearly the Palestine Zionist Executive and later the Immigration Department of the Jewish Agency Executive submitted to the chief immigration officer its estimate of the number of workers who could be absorbed into employment during the next six-month period, giving details of the precise trades
and occupations in which jobs could be provided. The High Commissioner, acting upon the recommendation of his immigration officer, then fixed the number of certificates to be issued under the labour schedule. These were transmitted directly to the Zionist Organization, which was given a free hand in their distribution through its network of Palestine Offices abroad." Noah Lucas, The Modern History of Israel (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), pp. 107-108.

14 Day, 19 April 1933.

15 The government once more restated its policy in May, when Col. Wedgwood asked the government what its response would be to the resolution passed by the Association of League Societies calling for the relaxation of immigration restrictions for Jewish refugees from Germany to enter Palestine. Morning Journal, 23 May 1933.

16 Forward, 15 April 1933. According to a report in the Times (London) on 15 April 1933 pertaining to the debate in the House of Commons, the following are the concessions that the High Commissioner had authorized:

1. The allocation to the British Passport Control Office in Berlin of blocks of 200 immigration certificates for grant to Jews in Germany with capital of not less than 1,000£ without reference to headquarters, to enable arrangements to be made as early as possible.

2. ...A liberal review of application for immigration certificates by German Jews who were members of certain skilled trades and crafts with a capital of not less than £250 or who possessed capital of not less than £500 provided that the authorities were satisfied that there was room for them and that they had enough capital for the occupation which they proposed to follow and were qualified for that purpose.

3. ...The High Commissioner has given express orders that there was to be considerate treatment of application by German Jews who had settled in Palestine already for the admission of parents or other relatives who had hitherto lived in Germany.

17 B. Sholvin, "Di Tsiyonistishe Kongres un di Daytsh Idishe Katastrofe," Morning Journal, 30 August 1933.

18 Day, 23 October 1933; Day, 10 November 1933; Forward, 10 November 1933; Day, 15 November 1933; Forward, 15 December 1933; Day, 23 October Morning Journal, 16 November 1933; Day, 22 November 1933; Morning Journal, 8 December 1933; Morning Journal, 1 November 1933; Morning Journal, 29 October 1933; J. Fishman, "Fun Tog Tsu Tog," Morning Journal, 31 October 1933; B. Smolar, Day, 9 December 1933; Zivion, Forward, 26 December 1933.

19 An official report published in the French press on 24 May 1933 estimated that 25,000 Jewish refugees had been admitted. Later, both

Day, 14 March 1933; Freiheit, 15 March 1933; Morning Journal, 14 March 1933; Morning Journal, 15 March 1933; Day, 23 March 1933; Forward, 24 March 1933. Interestingly, the Morning Journal on 20 March 1933 noted that reports of a large number of German Jewish refugees in Paris were exaggerated. According to this report, only a small number of refugees fled to France. None had turned to the Parisian Jewish charity organization for assistance.

Herman, "Daytshe Iden in Pariz."

Morning Journal, 19 April 1933; Herman, "Daytshe Iden in Pariz;" Herman, "Vi Frankraykh Hot Zikh Ougarufen Cyf di Natsi Retsihos Tsu Iden."

Day, 26 March 1933; Forward, 26 March 1933; N. Herman, "Vi Frankraykh Hot Zikh Ougarufen Cyf di Natsi Retsihos Tsu Iden;" D. H. Waxman, "Der Skandal Mit der Hilf Fur di Daytshe Fliktlinge in Pariz," Day, 2 October 1933; G. Cooper, Forward, 8 October 1933; G. Cooper, Forward, 14 October 1933; A. G., "Letter;" N. Herman, "Daytshe Yomim Norim," Morning Journal, 18 October 1933. It is interesting to note that Waxman reported that the Committee aided 8,000 individuals until the end of July.

The writer of the editorial also criticized the French Jewish masses in Paris, as well as Jews in New York and London for doing very little for German Jewry. Waxman, "Der Skandal Mit der Hilf Fur di Daytshe Fliktlinge in Pariz."


Morning Journal, 21 May 1933; G. Cooper, Forward, 4 October 1933; G. Cooper, Forward, 8 October 1933. For similar reports see also D. Einhorn, "Letter," Forward, 13 May 1933; A. G., "Letter."

Forward, 11 July 1933; Day, 11 July 1933; Day, 17 August 1933; Morning Journal, 20 August 1933; G. Cooper, Forward, 12 October 1933.

Smolar, "Daytshe Iden Hoben File Matirer."
Similar conditions existed in other European countries. For example, see the following reports for:

1) Holland and Belgium: Forward, 1 August 1933; M. Mirenberger, "Antlofene Iden in Daytsland un Zayer Tsukunft in Holand," Morning Journal, 26 December 1933; Forward, 7 December 1933; Forward, 20 October 1933; D. Lehrer, "Daytshe Akhzoriyos Tsu Iden Veken Alte Vunden in Belgie," Day, 2 July 1933.

2) Switzerland: Forward, 6 April 1933; Forward, 25 April 1933; Forward, 14 May 1933.

The Zentralausschus für Hilfe und Aufbau served as an advisory board and clearing house for all welfare and emigration services provided by the major German Jewish organizations. As such, the monies that were raised were used to fund diverse programs such as providing financial assistance for basic needs, retraining, legal aid, as well as for assistance to those who wished to emigrate. Its leaders established and maintained contacts with Jewish organizations throughout the world which were engaged in raising funds for German Jewry. The Zentralausschus für Hilfe und Aufbau negotiated with the German government pertaining to matters of concern to the Jewish community. Max Naumann's Society for National Jews did not participate in the Committee's activities. It is interesting to note that H. Kaiser criticized the Committee for discriminating against the Ostjuden. His criticism is similar to that voiced by the critics of the Parisian Committee and in my view, is not entirely justified. Day, 8 July 1933.

I. Klinov, "Di Ershte Praktische Plener Vi Tsu Helfen di Daytshe Iden," Morning Journal, 19 May 1933; R. Bogen, "Idishe Kinder in Daytshe
The delegates approved the following programs for relief work outside of Germany:

1. The establishment of loan societies for the commercial and industrial classes;
2. The setting up of programs to re-train young immigrants in order to direct them into productive pursuits;
3. The rescue of children from Germany and their transference elsewhere.

For reconstruction within Germany, the delegates agreed to:

1. Take steps to preserve existing Jewish schools and to help establish additional institutions;
2. Grant assistance to philanthropic and religious institutions;
3. Grant financial support to loan societies;

In addition a series of other proposals had been approved pertaining to the Palestinian effort. *Jewish Chronicle* (London), 3 November 1933; *Day*, 30 October 1933; *Day*, 31 October 1933; *Forward*, 31 October 1933; *Day*, 1 November 1933; *Morning Journal*, 1 November 1933; *Day*, 2 November 1933; *Morning Journal*, 2 November 1933; *Forward*, 2 November 1933; *Editorial*, *Morning Journal*, 3 November 1933; *Morning Journal*, 5 November 1933; *Morning Journal*, 16 November 1933; *Morning Journal*, 21 November 1933; *Morning Journal*, 17 November 1933; W. Zukerman, "Iz Meglikh a Faraynigtzer Idisher Front?", *Morning Journal*, 20 November 1933.

*Morning Journal*, 27 April 1933; *Zivion*, *Forward*, 14 September 1933; *Zivion*, *Forward*, 5 December 1933; *Zivion*, *Forward*, October 10 1933.

*Morning Journal*, 22 August 1933; *Day*, 21 August 1933; *Day*, 25 August 1933; *Morning Journal*, 25 August 1933; *Day*, 22 October 1933; *Morning Journal*, 8 June 1933; *Day*, 29 June 1933; *Editorial*, *Day*, 30 June 1933; *Editorial*, *Morning Journal*, 30 June 1933; N. Herman, "Waitsman's un Rotenberg's Plener Far Daytshe Iden In Erets Yisrael," *Morning Journal*, 20 June 1933; B. Z. Goldberg, "In Gang Fun Tog...", *Day*, 1 November 1933.


*Day*, 21 August 1933.
The League's action on the Bernheim petition is the most striking example of its inability to help the Jewish masses in Germany. Franz Bernheim, a Silesian Jew, employed by the Gleiwitz branch of the Deutsches Familien Kaufhaus was dismissed as a result of a Nazi law prohibiting the employment of Jews. He charged that his dismissal violated the German-Polish Convention of 1922 which guaranteed the rights and privileges of all minorities in upper Silesia. In June, 1933, Germany agreed to correct all violations of the contract. Jews won a moral victory but nothing else. The Jewish situation in Germany proper remained unchanged. Even the Jewish situation in upper Silesia changed very little.

The Morning Journal reported that there were 51,000 Jewish refugees. Cf. fn. 3.

CHAPTER VI

Summary and Conclusion

Judeophobia existed throughout the Weimar era. It was most pronounced among German Jewry's sociological counterpart, the German middle class, as well as in student circles. The depression acerbated their antisemitic sentiments. The Nazi Party attributed the ills that afflicted Germany to the Jews. It proposed a broad based program to solve Germany's varied problems. A key ingredient in the Nazi remedy was the purging of all Jewish influence from German life. The Nazis wished to make Germany Judenrein by building a new society in accordance with Aryan principles.

An objective analysis of the data pertaining to the demographic, economic and social structure of the Jewish community in the Weimar era, however, would negate the Nazi contention of Jewish domination. Census statistics highlight the fact that Jews comprised a minute segment of the German population. The Jewish community ceased to reproduce itself and, as a result, was diminishing. Moreover, the German Jewish community had changed socially and economically in the decades following the promulgation of the Edict of Emancipation. In fact, by the time the Weimar era ended, dissimilarities between the occupational structure of the Jews and non-Jews in large urban areas narrowed. In spite of this trend, Jews did maintain characteristics...
which set them apart from the German community. They did continue to cluster in certain areas of economic endeavor, e.g., commerce, trade, and the professions. Their visibility in these fields, particularly in large urban areas, lent credibility to the Nazi charges that Jews dominated these areas of economic pursuit. These allegations were readily accepted as fact by the masses who naively interpreted the data presented to them by the Nazi propagandists. Furthermore, it is important to note in this connection, that post war economic and political conditions in Germany had a detrimental effect on the Jewish community. Far from exercising progressive control over the national economy, as alleged by the Nazis, the Jews had to wage a battle for economic survival.

It is against this greatly weakened and diminishing community which had contributed greatly to the development of German culture and economic growth, that Hitler unleashed his invective. He degraded them and subjected them to the most inhumane treatment.

One who reads the reports in the American Yiddish press as well as numerous articles relating to the events in Germany is shocked and dismayed by what transpired. He, like the correspondents, ponders how a people reputed to be cultured and sophisticated allowed themselves to be led by a demagogue like Hitler and others of his ilk. The reader of these reports can well understand why the journalists described the Jewish situation in Germany in the darkest colors and spoke of impending doom. However, one wonders whether those correspondents who spoke of the destruction of the German Jewish community and possible annihilation of Jewish communities throughout Europe had an inkling of what was
subsequently described as the "Final Solution." Would it be more accurate to assume that they interpreted the unfolding ominous events in light of past Jewish experiences in Europe, and particularly in eastern Europe? I believe, based on my reading, that the latter conjecture is correct. Many journalists of the American Yiddish daily press did draw parallelisms between their own experiences in Russia to those which were being experienced by German Jews in the early thirties. They also sought to compare the situation to that in Spain in the time of the inquisition and expulsion. Therefore, they largely described the Nazi threat to the Jewish community in terms of loss of civil equality, political and cultural isolation, economic destruction, hunger and pogroms, with no reference to mass annihilation.

In this connection it is important to note that the reporters' perception of what transpired colored their reportage of events relating to the Jews in Germany. In some instances, as correspondents stationed in Germany pointed out, some reports had no basis in fact. Moreover, following the establishment of a Nazi dictatorship in 1933, it was not possible for the Yiddish press to present to its readers a complete and accurate account of what was actually happening in Germany. The Nazi regime censored the press as well as all reports sent from Germany. The fact that the correspondents of the Yiddish press did not have access to press briefings held by the German government for members of the foreign press also severely hampered it. Therefore, it had to rely heavily on information gathered by reporters representing the foreign press in Germany. The Yiddish press also had to base its depiction of the situation on testimonies gathered from refugees and visitors as well as
on reports prepared by various embassies for their respective governments. Nevertheless, fact finding studies by various groups in the United States as well as reports prepared by the GV corroborate the fact that the situation was as dire as depicted in the Yiddish press. In fact, many individuals contended that, when all the facts would become known, only then would the magnitude of the tragedy which befell German Jewry become clearer.

The correspondents of the Yiddish press began to keep a watchful eye on the political events in Germany in mid 1930. At that time it became clear that German politics had become radicalized. In 1930-1932 commentators, in discussing the various elections, wondered what effect the continued growth of the Nazi Party would have on the future of democracy in Germany. They also pondered the question whether a Nazi victory would have an adverse effect on the German Jewish community.

This study shows that those who addressed these issues were either optimists or pessimists. The optimists contended that Nazism would not strike roots in Germany. Its threat to the Republic would dissipate rapidly. They supported their contention by stressing that the Germans, as a "cultured" people, would not countenance a dictatorship. They made note of the fact that anti-Nazi forces in Germany continued to wage an active campaign aimed at preventing the establishment of a dictatorship. Thus, Socialists and Communists, or Socialists together with Centrists and other smaller political parties could form a coalition and prevent the Nazis from coming to power. Furthermore, the Nazi Party never garnered a majority of the votes. Even if they should come to power, they would be dependent on less reactionary forces
to remain in power. Moreover, the optimists believed that a Nazi victory would be self-defeating. They would be forced to be more parliamentarian and act in a more legal fashion. As a result, the Nazis stood to lose their support.

The pessimists, however, rejected these arguments. They believed that Nazism would strike roots in Germany and uproot republicanism. They stressed that it would be foolish to place much trust in the contention that the "cultured German people would act as a counterforce to fascism." In their view, those who espoused this opinion did not have a true understanding of the German people. The Germans, in fact, lacked a "will for freedom" and had a "talent for hatred." Even more importantly, the continued disillusionment with democracy and most particularly the failure of the various Reich governments to solve the pressing economic, social, and political problems paved the way for a dictatorship. They sincerely doubted whether the communists and socialists, or for that matter, any group of political parties, would be able to form a coalition to head off a Nazi dictatorship.

The optimists and pessimists were also divided in their opinions concerning the effect of a Nazi victory on the German Jewish community. The optimists recognized that a Nazi victory could cause problems for the Jewish community. However, they consoled themselves with the belief that Nazism would be short lived and thus would not have a long range detrimental effect on the Jewish community. They pinned their optimism on their belief that Germans as a cultured and sophisticated people would not elect or support a government that would pose a serious threat to
Moreover, since the Nazi Party remained a minority party, they doubted that an antisemitic conservative cabinet could be formed. Hitler would have to depend on the support of more moderate parties to form a coalition and remain in power. The optimists had confidence that these political parties would defend the Jews and force Hitler to moderate his anti-Jewish policies. Some optimists even posited the view that Hitler's anti-Jewish drive must be seen as a pretext to defeat the socialists. They believed Hitler would make peace with the Jews when this was accomplished. The pessimists, however, linked the fate of the German Jewish community to the fate of democracy in Germany. Hence, they prophesied doom. They noted that German voters displayed increased support for the Nazi Party and its antisemitic policies. German political parties, including the Socialist Party, acquiesced to the feelings of the German people and attempted to demonstrate that they too were not pro-Jewish. Moreover, in their opinion, political parties were powerless to help the Jews even if they wished to do so. Furthermore, Hitler, even if he desired to, could not moderate his anti-Jewish policy. He had to satisfy his supporters by fulfilling his campaign promises through concrete action. The antisemitic planks of the Nazi program would be the easiest to implement. It stood to reason, therefore, that the Nazis would intensify their Jew-hating and move to have their antisemitic planks adopted as the law of the land.

There seemed to be general agreement that the political developments in Germany would have an even greater detrimental effect on Jews in eastern European countries. The hands of the antisemites would be strengthened. Antisemitic regimes would have a moral justification for
The correspondents knew that Hitler could be appointed chancellor. Yet they were shocked when the appointment was made because it came at a time when the fortunes of the Nazi Party were at low ebb. After the initial shock wore off, an air of optimism prevailed in the press, primarily because many correspondents hoped that von Papen could keep Hitler in check. Even after the March 5, 1933, election, some correspondents questioned Hitler's ability to establish a dictatorship. Hitler, they pointed out, remained vulnerable by virtue of the fact that he needed the support of his partners in the coalition to remain in power. The fact that a large number of votes were cast for the Socialist Party and the Communist Party buoyed the optimism of left wing correspondents. They hoped that these parties would be able to form a coalition and prevent a Nazi dictatorship. These hopes proved illusory. Hitler, shortly thereafter, established a dictatorship. Optimists once more contended that Hitler would be sobered by his newly gained power. They hoped that as a result Nazi atrocities would diminish.

The reality which subsequently unfolded before their eyes brought to fruition the prophecies of doom. Hitler began to legalize discriminatory practices for which his party had agitated and which had been instituted in part by the von Papen regime. He set about to reorder German social, economic, and political life in accordance with racial doctrines. The "Aryan Paragraph" in the "First Decree Supplementing the Law for the Restoration of Professional Civil Service" provided the legal foundation for the new society. It served as a basis for closing practically all avenues of economic pursuit to the Jews, barring them
from participating in and contributing to German culture as well as banishing Jews from German political life. Nazi atrocities did not abate as hoped. The German Jewish symbiosis came to an end. According to the Yiddish press, this development affected Jewish assimilationists the most. After decades of cultural assimilation, they were forced into a world they did not know or want to be part of. German Jews who remained in Germany by choice or as a result of circumstances set about adjusting to the new German society. They began to create an economic and cultural ghetto in order to insure their survival. German Jews did, however, find solace in the hope that the Nazi regime would be short lived.

The Yiddish press in editorials and articles sharply condemned the Nazi persecution of the Jews. Yet, as noted above, some journalists remained optimistic that the Nazi storm would blow over shortly. The Jewish socialists, represented by the Forward, remained hopeful that the Social Democrats would be able to prevent the Nazis from coming to power. Similarly, the Jewish communists, represented by the Freiheit, pinned their hopes on a communist revolution to bring about a resolution to the German political situation. The Morning Journal at times posited the view that the tragedy that befell German Jewry was the will of God. Jews must pray, give charity, and repent; hopefully matters would then improve. Therefore, it is not surprising that for these and other reasons the aforementioned Yiddish dailies did not take the initiative to suggest a program of defensive action when Nazism first began to menace the Jewish community. The independent Day, however, not tied to any specific ideology, agitated almost from the first for an aggressive
program of action designed to bring about a change in Nazi policy vis-à-vis the Jews. Its editor, Dr. Samuel Margoshes, was instrumental in rallying the forces of the American Jewish Congress to support protest demonstrations. The other dailies joined in support of this movement. Dr. Coralnik, the noted Day publicist, called for a boycott of Germany. He, too, subsequently won the support of the Yiddish press. Segments of the Jewish and non-Jewish world actively participated in this effort.

In this connection it is important to note that following the initial protest demonstrations the Yiddish press did begin to voice criticism of Jewish organizations for not taking the initiative to propose an innovative, aggressive program of action designed to force the Nazi regime to change its policies vis-à-vis the Jews. Some correspondents also castigated the American Jewish Congress for abdicating its role as a leader. Moreover, they decried the divisiveness within the Jewish community as demonstrated by the failure of the American Jewish Congress to work together with the American Jewish Committee and B'nai B'rith and by the inability of Jewish communists to find a common ground with other Jewish organizations in the battle to force Hitler to change his anti-Jewish policies. The divisiveness not only weakened the voice of Jewish protests but also the efforts to help the Jews in Germany re-order their lives and to find solutions to the pressing refugee problem.

The Yiddish press noted the expressions of sympathy for the plight of German Jewry voiced by concerned individuals of all religious persuasions and by friendly nations. It stressed, however, that these nations must intercede on behalf of the German Jewry. They must resort
to punitive action should Germany refuse to change its anti-Jewish course. Such steps must not be construed as meddling in the internal affairs of a sovereign nation. Moreover, they must concretize their sympathies in programs of action that would ameliorate the Jewish suffering in Germany and contribute to a permanent solution of the refugee problem. They viewed the League's appointment of a High Commissioner for Refugees as a step in this direction.

The Commissioner's task proved to be formidable. Those countries which had admitted numerous refugees now wished to halt immigration and encourage the refugees residing in their midst to re-emigrate. Other nations which had admitted few refugees refused to admit any more. His subsequent efforts did not bear much fruit. Thus, with the doors of the nations shut, German Jews faced doom in Germany.

In this connection, the columnists in the press singled out Britain and the United States for criticism. They noted that the British government had turned a deaf ear to the demands made in Parliament that it liberalize the immigration policy to Palestine. Moreover, it took steps to deport illegal Jewish immigrants, including individuals who had already established themselves there. The latter action came in response to Arab riots. The press charged that the British government had done nothing to set limits on Arab immigration to Palestine. It, therefore, concluded that Britain was pursuing a pro-Arab policy. Its actions had closed a major avenue of escape to the Jews.

The United States remained indifferent to the pleas that it act in a more humanitarian fashion. It saw no urgency in the situation because, according to the press, it accepted the Nazi regime's assurances
that the Jewish situation would improve. The Roosevelt administration maintained its silence in the face of mounting evidence that the Nazi regime actively violated the human rights of the Jews. Even more importantly, it refused to admit German Jews to the United States under existing quotas and even refused to provide temporary asylum for them. Moreover, it shirked its responsibility by demanding that other nations open their doors to the refugees.

The nations of the free world, in the period under discussion, with few exceptions, only paid lip service to the plight of German Jewry. They were concerned with the effect that an influx of refugees would have on the poor economic situation in their respective countries. Furthermore, they feared that Jewish immigration in particular would exacerbate antisemitic sentiments that had begun to surface. The leaders of these nations did not withstand popular pressure to close the doors of their countries to foreigners. By turning a deaf ear to pleas for humanitarian action on behalf of all refugees from Germany, the nations of the world sealed the fate of those who wished to escape from Germany.
Listed here are very brief biographical sketches of some of the journalists whose views have been cited in this study. A knowledge of the background of these individuals is important for an understanding of the interpretation of the events of the day as reported in the press.

Abraham Cahan (1860-1951), Yiddish and English author, journalist and active socialist leader. He fled Russia because of revolutionary activities and came to the United States in 1882. Cahan played a major role in organizing immigrant Jewish workers in the United States and helped build Jewish trade unions. He was also a pioneer of Yiddish journalism in the United States. He helped found the Forward in 1897, became its first editor, and served in this capacity with but a brief interruption for almost half a century.

Daniel Charney (1888-1959), Yiddish author and journalist. His poems, stories, translations, and critical essays appeared in various Yiddish journals and newspapers throughout the world. Charney lived in Berlin from 1925-1934. There, in 1926, he assisted David Bergelson with his pro-Soviet periodical In Shpan. From 1927-1929 he was press chief for Emigdirect and, with Elias Tcherikower, co-edited its publication Di Yidishe Emigratsie. Upon his expulsion from Germany in 1934, Charney emigrated to France and later was admitted to the United States.
Abraham Coralnik (1883-1937), Yiddish literary critic, essayist, and journalist. He studied philosophy and received his Ph. D. degree from the University of Vienna in 1908. Coralnik began his literary career in Germany in 1893. He contributed to various philosophic reviews. Coralnik served as editor for numerous publications including the Zionist publication Die Welt. After coming to the United States in 1915, Coralnik joined the staff of the Day as a special writer. He was an active Zionist and served as one of the Zionist representatives on the Council of the Jewish Agency for Palestine.

Melech Epstein (1899- ), Yiddish Communist journalist and author. At an early age he became interested in social and political problems. His activities in the revolutionary labor movement in Russia led to repeated imprisonments by the authorities. He became a professional journalist after he came to the United States in 1913. Various Yiddish newspapers, including the Heint and Freiheit, employed him as a labor editor. Epstein was one of the founders of the latter newspaper and for awhile also served on the editorial board of the Communist monthly Der Hamer.

Jacob Fishman (1878-1946), Yiddish journalist and active Zionist. He contributed to the development of the Yiddish press in the United States. Fishman began his journalistic career as a reporter and later as co-editor of the New York Tageblatt (1893-1914) and the Varhayt (1914-1916). He established the Morning Journal in 1916 and served as its managing editor. Fishman wrote a daily column of comments on world and Jewish events. He also was a co-founder of the Yiddish Writer's Union. His Zionist activities date back to his early days in the United
States, when he became active in pre-Herzl Zionist societies. He later was among the founders of the Zionist Organization of America.

Abraham Goldberg (1883-1942), author, journalist, and influential American Zionist leader. Although Goldberg received a degree in law from New York University, he chose to pursue a career in journalism. He became associate editor in 1918 and later, editor of the Hebrew monthly ha-Toren. He was also editor of the official Zionist bi-weekly Dos Yiddishe Folk and contributing editor of the Morning Journal and its weekly, the Amerikaner. Goldberg wrote in Hebrew, Yiddish, and English. He published poetry, skits, and feuiletons. Goldberg's Zionist activities date back to his early years when he was among the first members of the Socialist Territorialist Party. He co-founded the Poale Zion organization in 1903 and, still later, served as President of the Zionist Organization of America. Goldberg assisted Chaim Weizmann in the establishment of the Keren Hayesod. He was a member of the executive of the Jewish Agency and also served as vice-president of the American Jewish Congress.

Ben Zion Goldberg (1895-1972), Yiddish author and journalist. Goldberg received a Ph. D. degree in psychology from Columbia University but pursued a career in journalism. He joined the Day in 1921, served on its editorial staff, and occupied various executive posts. His numerous articles on psychology, politics, social problems, and literature appeared in the Day. Goldberg also contributed to various American newspapers including the Daily Eagle (Brooklyn). He was active in Yiddish cultural activities.
Nahum Herman (1894-1944), Yiddish journalist. He contributed many articles over the years to such Hebrew and Yiddish periodicals as ha-Tsefirah and the Pariser Haynt. Herman resided in Paris from 1912 until his deportation to Auschwitz by the Nazis in 1944. During his residency in Paris he served as a correspondent for the Morning Journal. Herman was active in Socialist Zionist circles in Paris.

Solomon Judson (1878-?), author and journalist. He wrote works of fiction in both Hebrew and Yiddish. He also contributed to the European Hebrew periodical press including ha-Tsefirah. Judson began his journalistic career in the United States in 1901. In 1913 he joined the staff of the Morning Journal and served as co-editor.

I. Klinov (1890-?), author and journalist. He contributed to various Hebrew and Yiddish periodicals in Russia. Later, in 1922, he became the Berlin correspondent for several Yiddish dailies, including the Morning Journal. Klinov participated actively in socialist activities in his youth but later joined the Revisionist movement.

Jacob Lestschinsky (1876-1966), sociologist, author, and journalist. His sociological studies of the Jewish community are considered to be pioneering works in the field. In 1921, while residing in Berlin, Lestschinsky served as the correspondent for the Forward. He served in this capacity until 1933 when he was arrested by the Nazis and then expelled. At the age of seventeen he joined the Benei Moshe League. Lestschinsky pamphleteered for Zionist Socialism and helped found the Zionist-Socialist Party in Poland.
Jacob Magidov (1869-1943), Yiddish author and journalist. Magidov practiced law before embarking on a career in journalism in 1894. He contributed to the Jewish Socialist press. Magidov joined the staff of the Morning Journal in 1901 and was appointed city editor. Magidov played an active role in the Jewish labor movement in the United States. He was among the founders of the United Hebrew Trades. In addition, Magidov was active in the Socialist Labor Party.

Samuel Margoshes (1887-1968), American Zionist leader and Yiddish journalist. He was ordained in 1910 by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and earned a D.H.L. degree as well. In addition, he received a Ph. D. degree in philosophy from Columbia University. In 1922, Margoshes joined the staff of the Day and later served as editor (1926-1942). He wrote articles in Yiddish and English on current events and Jewish affairs. Margoshes engaged in various communal, educational, and relief activities. He played an active role in the activities of such organizations as the American Jewish Congress and the Zionist Organization of America.

Bernard Shelvin (1882 - ? ), Yiddish journalist. Shelvin began his journalistic career while residing in London. He contributed to various Hebrew periodicals. After arriving in New York in 1908, Shelvin joined the staff of the Morning Journal. His articles dealt mainly with Hebrew and Yiddish literature and music. Shelvin was active in the HIAS and the Zionist Organization of America.

Ber Smolar (Boris) (1897 - ? ), author and journalist. After coming to the United States in 1919, Smolar studied journalism at
Northwestern University in Chicago. He joined the editorial staff of the *Forward* in Chicago. Smolar joined the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in 1924 and subsequently became its chief European correspondent. He was stationed in Berlin (1932-1937) until his expulsion by the Nazis.

Zivion (pseudonym of Ben Zion Hoffman) (1874-1954), Yiddish essayist and journalist. He was ordained as a Rabbi and later received a doctorate in science and engineering. Zivion joined the Bund in 1897 and remained a faithful interpreter of its ideology. His articles, written in Hebrew and Yiddish, appeared in various journals in Europe and later in the United States, including the *Jewish Daily Forward* and the *Zukunft*.

William Zukerman (1885-1961), journalist. He began his journalistic career with the *Forward* in Chicago. After World War I Zukerman was sent by the *Morning Journal* to establish and direct its news bureau in London, a task he fulfilled until the beginning of World War II. In this capacity he travelled through Europe, writing investigative reports pertaining to Jewish affairs. In addition, he wrote articles and correspondence for various English newspapers and periodicals. Zukerman was a Jewish Socialist and internationalist. He was active in the Workmen's Circle and the Jewish Labor Committee.
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