

Boycotts, Anti-Nazi,

Pre-World War II actions to boycott German goods in reaction to the Nazi persecution of the Jews. Following the Nazi rise to power in 1933, there were Jewish protests throughout the world against the policies of the new regime in Germany. These protests developed into boycott movements in many countries, most importantly in the United States.

On March 19, 1933, the Jewish War Veterans organization announced a boycott in the United States. Following the Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses (see boycott, anti-Jewish) in Germany on April 1, 1933, additional boycott groups were formed in the United States and elsewhere. In May 1933, the Yiddish journalist Abraham Coralnik founded the American League for the Defense of Jewish Rights. He was succeeded six months later by Samuel Untermyer, who became a leading figure in the boycott movement until the United States entered World War II. Untermyer changed the organization's name to the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League to Champion Human Rights, in order to emphasize the universality of the cause. In 1933, Untermyer and Coralnik organized the World Jewish Economic Conference in Amsterdam in an unsuccessful effort to coordinate an international Jewish boycott movement.

The American Jewish Congress (see world Jewish Congress) issued its own boycott declaration in August 1933, and its joint boycott council, formed in 1935 together with the Jewish labor committee's boycott movement, became one of the two leading boycott organizations in the United States. However, efforts to unify the boycott activities of Untermyer's League and the Joint Boycott Council were unsuccessful.

Support for the anti-Nazi boycott was widespread in the United States and elsewhere, but the movement never received the wholehearted backing of many important organizations and leaders, both among the American public in general and in the Jewish community. In the United States, the American

Jewish committee and B'nai B'rith were among the organizations opposing the boycott, while the board of deputies of British Jews in England and the Alliance Israelite Universelle in France opposed the movements in their respective countries.

In Britain, the Board of Deputies turned down a proposal to foster an economic boycott of Germany at a meeting held on July 23, 1933. Dissenting members of the board, including Lord Melchett (Henry Mond), formed the Jewish Representation Council. Together with an ad hoc committee, the Organization for Ending Hostilities to German Jews, this council strove to organize a boycott in Great Britain. Lord Melchett also played a role in convening the World Jewish Economic Conference in 1933. After 1934, however, the British boycott movement became splintered and lost most of its effectiveness.

Whereas several British and American organizations opposed international Jewish political activity in principle, the Jewish Agency found itself working against the boycott through the Haavara Agreement (Transfer Agreement) reached with Germany. The agency's understanding of the practical necessities of aiding German Jews to leave Germany and emigrate to Palestine with part of their capital led to this conflict.

In January 1936, Simon Marks, Sir Herbert Samuel, and Lord Bearsted went to the United States from England to negotiate with American Jewish leaders on the creation of the council for German Jewry. However, they had to yield to American Zionist insistence that no scheme to transfer German goods out of Germany be considered.

The boycott met with limited success; the fur trade between Britain and Germany virtually ceased, and several American department stores, such as R. H. Macy and Gimbel Brothers, agreed to stop buying German goods. There is also some evidence that leading figures within the Nazi regime were at times concerned about the possible effects of the boycott movement on the

German economy. However, the movement failed in its overriding goal of forcing Nazi Germany to change its Jewish policy.