

## The Nazi Boycott of Jewish Businesses of April 1, 1933: Prelude to Annihilation

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With Hitler's ascension to Chancellorship on January 30, 1933, the Nazi regime immediately began persecution of its domestic enemies with rising antisemitic violence. Jewish German shopkeepers and Eastern Jewish immigrants were the first targets of antisemitic violence. Under the Nazi regime, their paramilitary harassed and attacked Jewish owned businesses and professionals throughout the month of March. International media and Jewish organizations condemned the attacks and summoned an international boycott of German goods. In response, the Nazi regime initiated a nation-wide boycott of Jewish businesses on April 1, 1933. This boycott became the first state-sponsored attack on Jews within Germany and was the first step of state-sponsored persecution that ultimately led to the destruction of two-thirds of Europe's Jews. The Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses, which started as a reactionary development, advanced antisemitic policies and escalated international tensions against Germany. The outcome of the Nazi boycott of Jewish businesses did more harm than good for the Nazi Party by marginalizing support for Nazi antisemitism domestically and brought diplomatic consequences from the West. This article argues that despite heightened antisemitism, the Jews of Germany as well as American news media underestimated Nazi antisemitic violence by thinking it only to be a phase in Germany's unstable political climate. This underestimation from the American news sources could have likely influenced mixed perceptions among the American public concerning the severity of Nazi intentions as well as questioning Franklin D. Roosevelt's foreign policy. To arrive at this assertion, I examine a brief socioeconomic history accompanied by historiography, oral histories to survey the Jewish perspective, and news sources from the Associated Press and local papers from Eastern Tennessee revealing that both Jewish Germans and non-Jewish Germans received the violence unfavorably. To understand how and why the social-economic turmoil of the boycott transpired, an explanation of its historical context is deserving.

### **Narrative and Historiography**

The roots of economic strife between Germans and Jews preceded a century before the Nazi Party rose to power. Legislation liberated Jews in occupational fields in the early nineteenth century where Jews climbed the socio-economic ladder from cattle drivers, tailors, shoemakers, and blacksmiths to bankers, doctors, lawyers, industrialists, and department store owners. This economic advancement displaced many small shopkeepers and artisans with Jewish-owned department store monopolies in retail as well as the banking and commerce industry. During Napoleon's blockade, Jewish bankers gained wealth in commerce within the European continental markets. Jewish bankers became integral to the German economy and financed the capital

necessary for the industrial growth of Germany to surpass Great Britain as the industrial giant of Europe.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century, frequent crashes in the German economy every few decades caused farmers to face high tariffs and rising costs of loans, and, consequently, struggling German farmers were forced into foreclosure to banks run by both Jewish and non-Jewish Germans. The causes of these economic crashes were broadly the result of mismanagement by German finance ministers, including indemnity payments from the Franco-Prussian war, malpractice by elite Jewish and non-Jewish bankers, and especially the economic crises of the 1920s exacerbated specifically to Germany by the terms of reparations from the Treaty of Versailles.

Despite being just one percent of the population, Jews made up eighteen percent of bank owners in Germany and one-third of bank owners in Berlin. By 1910 Jews held top positions in one third of Germany's largest companies. Just as Jews were overrepresented in the upper and middle class, they were underrepresented in the laboring class of agricultural and steel workers. The socioeconomic disparities of Germany's modernization resulted in a German populace that felt marginalized by a Jewish minority that were seen as overrepresented in the banking, legal, academic, media and medical fields. Provocateurs such as Otto Boeckel spread an antisemitic rhetoric that rallied a disgruntled German proletariat.<sup>2</sup>

In *The Hitler Myth*, Ian Kershaw states that the boycott was the first course of action perpetrated by the Nazi Party concerning the "Jewish Question." Antisemitism was not the major point of the Nazi Party platform that drew in support in the early 1930s. Hitler's speeches prior to 1930 rarely reflected antisemitic propaganda and especially curtailed his antisemitic rhetoric in front of upper-middle class audiences. Even by 1932 Hitler's antisemitism remained a minor point in his prominent speeches such as the New Year exhortation to the Nazi Party, his speech to the Dusseldorfer Industrieklub in January as well as his "Appeal to the Nation" in July. Kershaw claims that the "Jewish Question" had minimal effect on the growing appeal of Hitler and the Nazi Party.<sup>3</sup>

Avraham Barkai states that the boycott of April 1, 1933, was not an abrupt occurrence and describes that the prelude to the boycott consisted of gradual increases in antisemitic propaganda and violence. Prior to the Nazi rise to power, small scale protests and street violence only occurred infrequently with little difference when compared to Nazi attacks against other political opponents such as Communists. However, from the burning of the Reichstag and with Hitler's appointment as Chancellor at the end of January in 1933, antisemitism became a government policy. Local police who previously made half-hearted attempts to stop antisemitic violence became auxiliaries

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<sup>1</sup> William Brustein, *Roots of Hate: Anti-Semitism in Europe Before the Holocaust*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 207-208.

<sup>2</sup> Brustein, *Roots of Hate*, 185-186, 209-212.

<sup>3</sup> Ian Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 233-234.

of the Nazi paramilitary. Throughout March antisemitic violence escalated to unprecedented levels.<sup>4</sup>

On March 28, 1933, an appeal signed by the Nazi Party leadership addressed all functionaries of the Nazi Party urging them to enact a nation-wide boycott of Jewish businesses, goods, and professionals. In order to keep his political appeal to all non-Jewish Germans, Hitler refrained from being directly involved in antisemitic actions of the Nazi Party. This tactic was intended to keep the popular support of the majority of German citizens and to appease members of the Reichstag. Despite a presence of antisemitism in the Reichstag, their hatred existed primarily in rhetoric and not physical violence.<sup>5</sup>

William Brustein suggests that the German populace had nuanced receptions of the boycott despite economic disparities. Jewish overrepresentation in the business and professional class is one factor that had fueled economic antisemitism. Brustein notes that in the state of Prussia, Jews represented over 49% of workers in commerce, 18% of doctors, 15% of dentists, and 25% of lawyers by 1925. Nationally, Jews represented over 16% of lawyers and over 10% of all physicians by 1933. However, he further states that despite economic self-interest and opportunism, many Germans saw the boycott as unfavorable because they were an “inconvenient and impeded choice” and were unable to shop at Jewish stores and employ their services.<sup>6</sup>

The primary victims of the boycott were middle-class German Jews and *Ostjuden*. The *Ostjuden*, emigrant Jews from Eastern Europe, were easily targeted due to their traditional dress and lack of acculturation compared to German Jews. They often made their living as street peddlers, petty tradesmen, and employees in Jewish shops. Their lack of acculturation to German society and visible public presence made them easy targets in the streets. In the middle of March, violence against the professional class of doctors and lawyers became institutional when the League of National Socialist Lawyers called to purge the legal system of Jews and the League of National Socialist German Physicians called to boycott Jewish doctors. Despite overrepresentation in the professional class and financial industries, the groups who suffered the most fell to the middle-class shopkeepers and immigrants.<sup>7</sup>

Barkai asserts that according to the Nazis, the boycott represented a “defensive measure” reactionary to the international criticism against the rise of antisemitic violence in March. He quotes a sudden change of environment from a Jewish German on the day of the boycott, that “suddenly even the street seemed to me strange and alien. Yes, the entire city had become a strange and alien place.”<sup>8</sup>

## Oral Histories

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<sup>4</sup> Avraham Barkai, *From Boycott to Annihilation: The Economic Struggle of German Jews 1933-1943*, (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1989), 13-14.

<sup>5</sup> Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth'*, 234-235.

<sup>6</sup> Brustein, *Roots of Hate*, 209-223.

<sup>7</sup> Barkai, *From Boycott to Annihilation*, 15-17.

<sup>8</sup> Barkai, *From Boycott to Annihilation*, 17-21.

Lisl Nussbaum was a young Jewish woman living in Bavaria whose course in life took an abrupt turn due to the boycott. She mentioned that Jewish popular opinion of Hitler and the antisemitism representative of the Nazi Party would only be a phase. She recalled to her interviewer that “the Jewish people just did not want to believe that Hitler could make it.” She further suggests that the people were in denial, until the Nazis began distributing propaganda flyers in her hometown of Fruet, outside of Nuremberg, calling for Jews to die in the streets. This event in November, she states, was the beginning.<sup>9</sup>

Despite claiming to have a normal childhood, her wedding, planned for April 2, 1933, came to a disastrous ruin. On April 1, “all over Germany... anything owned by a Jew, store, whatever, two Nazis were standing in front and said, ‘don’t go in, this is a Jew.’” The boycott ruined her wedding plans by intimidating venues not to host Jewish weddings. Nussbaum resorted to reducing the number of guests to their immediate families and held the wedding at a private villa. She further stated that she had to hide her wedding dress and proclaimed, “we could not let a word out that there will be a wedding, you didn’t know what they had in mind... especially a day after the boycott.”<sup>10</sup>

Nussbaum further detailed the Jewish perspective of Hitler after the boycott, explaining that many were still assured that his time would not last. While she recalled her personal fear of what was happening, “people said ‘oh don’t worry about it, Hitler won’t stay long, let him be on now and the people will see what he is, and he will be out...’ That was the mistake.” She further illustrated her last years in Germany, that after just two years her husband was thrown out of law practice for not being a World War I veteran. Her husband received calls from Nazis, threatening that if he continued to work at his law office after they banned Jews from legal practices, then there would be consequences. Lissl Nussbaum and her husband migrated to Palestine briefly before obtaining visas to the United States.<sup>11</sup> Nussbaum and her husband were fortunate to leave Germany before the Nazi policies banned emigration for Jews. Many would not have their same opportunity.

Jacob Frost was a young man who worked with his father at a Jewish-owned department store at the time of the boycott in the town of Gera, near Leipzig. He described that as a youth he was treated well being the only Jew in his most of his classes. As he entered secondary school he was introduced to antisemitism from his teachers and classmates, some of which joined the Hitler Youth. He commented that his German friends would often defend him against antisemitic attacks from classmates and teachers. After secondary school, he worked in apprenticeships in clerical and accounting work until working with his father at a Jewish department store. He described the Nazi policies that initiated antisemitic policies. During the boycott Nazi paramilitary stood outside his employer’s shop with signs stating, “do not buy from Jews.” He remembers that they did not rob

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<sup>9</sup> Lisl Nussbaum, interview by Merle Gross, *USC Shoah Foundation*, February 27, 1996, accessed September 28, 2020, <https://vha-usc-edu.libproxy.troy.edu/viewingPage?testimonyID=12531&returnIndex=0>.

<sup>10</sup> Nussbaum, *USC Shoah Foundation*.

<sup>11</sup> Nussbaum, *USC Shoah Foundation*.

or steal the merchandise but broke many windows of the store. He recalled days after the April boycott, a brownshirt gave him a one-way ticket to Palestine, but he refused to go.<sup>12</sup>

Joseph Sachs was born and raised in Wurzburg, as was his father who was a World War I veteran and owned a shop that employed roughly fifty people. His father's business survived the Depression by taking out a loan from a large bank. His father passed away when Sachs was sixteen years old in 1929, and he was urged by his mother to go into business. He then entered an apprenticeship under his uncles and extended family. While an apprentice, he first became aware of the Nazi perpetrated antisemitism growing around him. He recalls in 1933 that he and his family "did not want to realize it" and did not believe it to be "a permanent danger" until propaganda depicted hateful threats such as "when the blood from the Jews drip from our knives" and "the Aryan race would be debased by the Jews." He then recalls the boycott which was on the Sabbath and his factory was closed. He remembers laughing with his family because they did not plan to open anyway. He was later arrested by the Gestapo, marched to the factory under suspicion of illegal activity, and was released. Sachs emigrated from Germany to the United States with many of his family and has lived there since. However, many of his extended family did not survive the Nazi regime.<sup>13</sup>

Max Walldorf was the son of a World War I veteran and finishing secondary school at the time of Hitler's accession to power. Walldorf adds to the perspective of Jewish-Germans on behalf of his father as a shopkeeper. Throughout his youth, Walldorf proclaims that the Nazis never gave him trouble. He further described the political climate of the time: "with every election, one of the party's majority changed, and when the Nazis came to power the expectation was, they won't be in power very long, they'll soon get kicked out in the next election." However, he admitted that "nobody thought there would not be a next election."<sup>14</sup>

Walldorf recalls the events of the Nazi Boycott through his experiences as a young man. He remembers how many of his German classmates were attracted to the Nazi paramilitary's uniforms. Several incidents reign in his memory. The first act of aggression against his father came from a local farmer's son who was also one of his customers. He retold his father's story. When he came home one night, "the son of one of the farmers, a really good friend to him, put a dog on him and chased him out of the farmyard. This was the first act of aggression against my father." In early 1933, five or six young men in uniforms blocked his father's shop where he stood his ground and argued with them until they left. He recalled how the boycott further changed the social climate against his family afterwards, when he continued to buy beer from the pub for his father. A customer scolded the bar owner, "are you still serving those Jews!?" The owner told his father

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<sup>12</sup> Jacob Frost, interview by Alex Churney, *USC Shoah Foundation*, April 10, 1995, accessed October 1, 2020, <https://vha-usc-edu.libproxy.troy.edu/viewingPage?testimonyID=57433&returnIndex=0>.

<sup>13</sup> Joseph Sachs, interview by Hanna Riselsheimer, *USC Shoah Foundation*, January 30, 1997, accessed October 1, 2020, <https://vha-usc-edu.libproxy.troy.edu/viewingPage?testimonyID=28000&returnIndex=0>.

<sup>14</sup> Max Walldorf, interviewed by Evan Robins, *USC Shoah Foundation*, February 25, 1996, accessed September 28, 2020, <https://vha-usc-edu.libproxy.troy.edu/viewingPage?testimonyID=12333&returnIndex=0>.

to stop bringing his children to fetch the beer as he warned him, “you’re only getting me into trouble.”<sup>15</sup>

The oral histories of the survivors reveal how unaware Jewish Germans were of the extremism building against them. The Jewish consensus regarded it as typical of the Weimar politics to have strife between parties, and that as soon as one fringe group entered, they would be replaced just as quickly. This was an unfortunate false perception that underestimated Nazi antisemitism and the policies enacted against the Jewish population.

### **The U.S. News Media and the Boycott**

The United States news media had nuanced interpretations of German antisemitism leading to the boycott of April 1, 1933. The articles provided accounts from German Jews that expressed their loyalty and solidarity to the German state rather than Jews who had emigrated, “defamed” Germany, and lobbied for an international boycott. The narratives presented not only reveal how German Jews were unaware of how the Nazi Party would receive their appeals, and also the lack of empathy from the conservatives in the German government.

The *Chattanooga Daily Times* provided a transparent representation of how the leaders of the Jewish community in Germany initially reacted to the boycott. Members of the general council of German Jews and the board of Berlin’s Jewish community signed an appeal addressed to President von Hindenburg, Chancellor Hitler, cabinet members, and the president of the Berlin police. The appeal expressed confidence that the German government would protect their “rights and means of existence.” The appeal continued as a defense against the accusations that they were responsible as provocateurs of the international boycott against Germany. The appeal expressed its solidarity to the German nation, “Because of the fault of a very few for whom we never have nor ever will assume responsibility, economic ruin is being prepared for German Jews who feel they are united to the German fatherland in heart and soul,” further expressing solidarity with Germany, the appeal stated that 12,000 of Germany’s 500,000 Jews died fighting in World War I.<sup>16</sup>

The same article offered a narrative of how preparations for the boycott were already set in place. On the day of authorship, March 29, 1933, the article noted that across Germany antisemitic protests erupted over the presence of Jews in the judicial system. Over one thousand Germans protested outside of the Goerlitz courthouse demanding the deposition of Jewish judges and lawyers. “Nazi Storm troopers occupied the building, and thirty-five Jews were placed under protective arrest.” In Muenster Nazis occupied the court and barred Jews from entering, also confiscating knives used for Jewish butchering rites. The Berlin municipal government ordered that commencing on April 1, “all supplies for municipal projects and offices must be purchased from nationalist merchants.” This order caused forty-eight Jewish shops which had already been

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<sup>15</sup> Walldorf, *USC Shoah Foundation*.

<sup>16</sup> “Jews of Germany Appeal for Rights,” *Chattanooga Daily Times*, March 30, 1933, accessed September 30, 2020, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/604399946/>.

picketed by Nazis to immediately close. At the University of Westphalia, Jewish professors were blocked from entering their classrooms. In addition to several Jewish lawyers, Professor Hugo Sinzheimer, a Jewish academic and reporter for the war guilt commission as well as the German Peace society, were all arrested.<sup>17</sup>

The protests that led to the arrests developed into hooliganism and vandalism perpetrated by the Nazis and police auxiliaries. Twenty-four Jewish shops had their windows shattered in the city of Emden, and in Goettingen every Jewish shop received the same destruction. However, the article noted that the Silesian Chamber of Commerce ruled against the boycott as they saw it to be an “inexpedient movement.” The ruling caused a halt in antisemitic propaganda for the following days. Nazi Storm troopers forced the closure of Jewish businesses in the cities of Zittau and Eberswalde, where the shops had tar smothered over the buildings and cinema houses destroyed. Despite the carnage, the local Nazi chapter in Silesia disapproved the violence and withdrew responsibility for its destruction according to the article.<sup>18</sup>

In the same paper, March 30, 1933, other articles demonstrated how problematically the consequences were felt in Central Europe. The vandalism permeated from German to Austrian cities. In Vienna, the Austrian Nazi newspaper *Deutsche-Oesterreichische Tageszeitung* warned against resistance to the boycott and those members of the government would be risking their lives to resist the Nazi boycott. Furthermore, they warned that any agreements made between the chancellor and assembly would be disregarded by the local Nazis.<sup>19</sup> Another article warned that the boycott would bring economic consequences to Germany, stating “German insurance companies, rather than Jewish shopkeepers, are the chief sufferers from anti-Jewish demonstrations...” Consequently, it suggested that “German national wealth is being deliberately destroyed.”<sup>20</sup>

The *Chattanooga Daily Times* reported promptly on the events of April 1, highlighting its antisemitic attack on Anglo-American Jews, as well as Albert Einstein and Lion Feuchtwanger. Reporting from its correspondent in Berlin a day prior, the article described the order signed by Minister of Propaganda Dr. Joseph Goebbels as a response to U.S. and British reporting on German antisemitism, or as Goebbels described, anti-German propaganda. The article also stated that it was issued by the Nazi Party and not the German government. The order mandated that if anti-German propaganda did not cease by that next Wednesday, then the boycott would resume “with full force and vehemence which until now had been undreamed of.” The article described the organization of the boycott’s order designed by Goebbels, that the Jews were responsible for the boycott of German goods prior and had “taken bread from German workers by agitating an international anti-German boycott.” Albert Einstein fled Germany due to antisemitic violence insisting he would not return until the violence ceased. Lion Feuchtwanger published many articles

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<sup>17</sup> “Jews of Germany Appeal for Rights,” *Chattanooga Daily Times*.

<sup>18</sup> “Jews of Germany Appeal for Rights,” *Chattanooga Daily Times*

<sup>19</sup> “Austrian Chief Warned He Risked Life by Nazis,” *Chattanooga Daily Times*, March 30, 1933, accessed September 30, 2020, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/604399946/>.

<sup>20</sup> “Jews’ Windows Insured; Teutons Pay for Bricks,” *Chattanooga Daily Times*, March 30, 1933, 2, accessed September 30, 2020, <https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/604399946/>.

condemning the Nazi Party for its antisemitic violence. Goebbels stated that “German Jews can thank the wandering Einstein and Feuchtwanger.”<sup>21</sup> This tactic held Jewish Germans as hostages for a ransom of international compliance.

On April 5, 1933, the *Chattanooga Daily Times* followed the boycott with a revealing yet ambiguous narrative. An article written one day prior on the fourth described the events and relations with the U.S. embassy. It noted that Chancellor Adolf Hitler’s cabinet stepped in to halt the boycott until “the cessation of foreign protests and reports concerning anti-Jewish atrocities in Germany.” The Nazi controlled Pan-German Press suggested that the U.S. and Polish embassies were collecting accusation accounts by Eastern Jews in Germany against Nazi violence. The U.S. embassy indeed collected reports from Americans on Nazi violence as confirmation of the state-sponsored violence. The Jewish quarter in East Berlin had been raided by a “large force of police assisted by Nazi auxiliaries” searching for weapons and propaganda.<sup>22</sup> Following the boycott, the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* published an array of articles from German sources questioning the strategy of Franklin D. Roosevelt’s foreign policy. Citing the *Berliner Morning Post*, the *Knoxville News-Sentinel* echoed its criticism that Roosevelt was leading the United States into an inevitable war. It accused Roosevelt of “first passively and then actively support[ing] the Jewish boycott since 1933 which is undermining mutually beneficial commerce between both countries.” The article further depicted Germany as the leader against western imperialism, that “one gets the idea of the pharisaical quality of this message when one sees that Roosevelt wants German and Italian guarantees in Iran in the face of English terror against the freedom of the fighting Arabs...”<sup>23</sup> A reprinted article from German sources would be liable to stir isolationist sentiment and American antisemitism among lay readers by empowering antisemitic fervor abroad.

## Conclusion

The antisemitic violence that transpired throughout the days surrounding the boycott were not unprecedented, but many within Germany and abroad found them unexpected, underestimating the extent that Nazi antisemitism would entail. The consensus of Jewish Germans held that the rise in antisemitic propaganda and violence would only be a phase and the Nazi Party would be voted out of office after the consensus realized their belligerence. Many of the Jews within Germany were hopeful that conservatives and even Nazi Party officials in the government would be open to hearing their appeal of solidarity to Germany through military service and patriotic fidelity. Neither Jews within Germany or the Germans were monolithic in how they received the boycott and economic destruction of Jewish Germans. Even in Silesia the Nazi Party Chapter disapproved

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<sup>21</sup> “Nazis’ Boycott Against Jewry Cut to One Day,” *Chattanooga Daily Times*, April 1, 1933, accessed September 29, 2020,

<https://newscomwc.newspapers.com/image/604394265/?terms=nazi%2Bboycott&pqsid=UXLNpAGdoYNjzMtXdO17MA%3A177000%3A322595401>.

<sup>22</sup> “Nazis Order Halt in Jewish Boycott,” *Chattanooga Daily Times*, April 5, 1933, accessed September 19, 2020, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/604395364/?terms=nazi%2Bboycott>.

<sup>23</sup> “Raps Nazi Boycott,” *The Knoxville News-Sentinel*, April 16, 1933, accessed October 1, 2020, <https://www.newspapers.com/image/596561587/?terms=nazi%2Bboycott>.

the violence, while elsewhere the local Nazi Party Chapters were instigators and perpetrators. German municipal districts found the boycott unfavorable, such as Silesia which foresaw that it would only bring destruction and hurt their local economy. This also reveals that localities had their own agency to resist the boycott. In this perspective, Jewish Germans as well as other Germans indifferent to the Nazi Party, underestimated its antisemitic belligerence.

From the oral histories, the consensus of German Jews was that the rise in antisemitism was a phase that would pass. The Jewish survivors interviewed had normal-seeming childhoods until they came of age during the Nazi era and were exposed to antisemitism. The instability of the Weimar Republic normalized an atmosphere of political violence, blinding them to what was coming. Even with Hitler's ascension to Chancellor, the consensus remained that it was just a temporary storm that would soon pass.

As many historians have stated, the newspapers and media not only provide a narrative of events, but the way it is presented influences how the populace interprets the events. Regardless of whether Hitler signed the documents to initiate the boycott, the news stated that Hitler stepped in to restore order. This can be interpreted in several diverse ways. One, it could give a false perception that it was the Nazi Party behind the boycott and not Hitler at all. Or, it could depict Hitler as being in complete control with the elements of destruction at his fingertips, predicating his move on international compliance. Yet, it could be interpreted as a combination of both, while Hitler made the move to step in as a strategy of enhancing his own image of power and projecting a cult of personality in his own narcissistic fashion. It could also be argued that this was the first step in his move towards testing international reactions. Reprinting articles from German media exposed American readers to German sentiment. However, this had to be done cautiously, as it could have very well stirred up isolationist opinions and criticism of Franklin D. Roosevelt's foreign policy. This could have easily been a trap set by German propaganda media with the intent to spread antisemitism abroad.

The socioeconomic mobility of Jewish Germans in modernity became a pillar of Germany's success in advancing its industrialization, but also left non-Jewish Germans marginalized. Antisemitic violence against the Jewish population was not unprecedented, yet oral histories of Jewish Germans and news sources reveal that both the Jewish and non-Jewish German populace underestimated the severity of Nazi extremism. The boycott of April 1, 1933, became the first state-sponsored attempt to destroy Germany's Jewish population. Gravely unfortunate to the fate of European Jews, it was only the beginning.

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