NAZIS IN NEWARK

WARREN GROVER

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Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2003 by Transaction Publishers

Published 2017 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

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Library of Congress Number: 2003050772

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Grover, Warren.
Nazis in Newark / Warren Grover.
p. cm.
Includes bibliographical references (p.) and index.
ISBN 0-7658-0193-0 (alk. paper) ; ISBN 0-7658-0516-2 (paper: alk. paper)
1. Newark (N. J.)—Ethnic relations. 2. Newark (N. J.)—History—20th century. 3. Nazis—New Jersey—Newark—History—20th century. 4. National socialism—New Jersey—Newark—History—20th century. 5. German American Bund—History. 6. Anti-Nazi movement—New Jersey—Newark—History—20th century. 7. Jews—New Jersey—Newark—Politics and government—20th century. 8. Jews—New Jersey—Newark—Biography. 9. Minorities—New Jersey—Newark—Political activity—History—20th century. I. Title.

F144.N69 G76 2003
974.9'3200431—dc21 2003050772

ISBN 13: 978-0-7658-0516-4 (pbk)

For My Son
Owen Peck Grover
and
To the Enduring Memory of My Son
Daniel Charles Grover
(1966-1997)

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Contents

Acknowledgements ix

Introduction 1

1. Responses to Nazism 10

2. The New Minutemen 39

3. The Friends: Supporters and Enemies 72

4. Dr. S. William Kalb and the Anti-Nazi Boycott 111

5. The Failure of Liberalism 138

6. The Rise of the German-American Bund, 1936-1937 174

7. 1938 and Kristallnacht 208

8. The Nazi-Soviet Pact and World War II, 1939-1940 252

9. 1941, America Enters the War 307

Afterword 333

Bibliography 341

Index 351

Illustrations follow page 173

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Acknowledgements

Without my supportive family the writing of this book would have been much more difficult. I thank my wife Andrea for her patience and her editorial skills, my brother Dr. Stuart Grover for serving as a sounding board for many of the ideas in this work as well as for editing the first draft of the manuscript, and my son Owen for good-naturedly enduring endless calls about computer problems.

I thank the United Jewish Communities of MetroWest New Jersey and its executive vice president, Max Kleinman, for their support of this project.

Irving Louis Horowitz, Chairman of Transaction Publishers, made valuable suggestions for *Nazis in Newark.*

For early and consistent advice and encouragement, I am grateful to Franco Zerlenga and Myron Sugarman. Myron was also instrumental in helping me obtain interviews with some of the surviving Minutemen.

Dr. Edward Shapiro read the manuscript and provided insightful historical and editorial suggestions. Dr. John Earl Haynes, 20th Century Political Historian of the Library of Congress, was helpful with the chapters involving the American Communist Party. Jon Zonderman edited an early draft of the manuscript, and my editor at Transaction Publishers, Laurence Mintz, applied his fine skills to the final manuscript.

Jennifer Lenkiewicz provided valuable research and clerical assistance.

Throughout the research and writing of the book, I received assistance from many archival and library institutions. I wish to express special gratitude to the Jewish Historical Society of MetroWest, repository of the community records that were invaluable in the writing of this book, and its archivist, Joseph Settanni. Archivists Marek Web and Fruma Mohrer and library directors Zachary Baker and the late Dina Abramowitz at the YIVO Institute were unstinting in their help. Charles Cummings, director of the New Jersey Division of the

Newark Public Library, was a font of information on that collection and offered much useful advice. Principal librarian Robert Blackwell was unflappable during six years of requests for sources and information. Staff members James Stuart Osbourn, Valerie Austin, Willis Taylor, and April Kane were always gracious with their assistance.

Other archivists who facilitated my research include Timothy Driscoll, Andover Harvard Theological Library; Linda Colton, FBI; the late Monsigneur William Field, Seton Hall; Father Ed Leahy, St. Benedicts; Tom Frusciano, Rutgers University; Kenneth Myers, New Jersey Historical Society; Kevin Proffitt, American Jewish Archives; Ronald L. Bulatoff, Hoover Archive; Ruth Grant, Steven Wise Free Synagogue; Wayne De Caesar and Fred Romansky, National Archives College Park Maryland; Marilyn Ibach, Library of Congress; Jeff Cohen, Jewish War Veteran's Archive; and Bette Epstein, New Jersey Archives.

I am grateful to the many people who provided information and leads, including Judy Amsterdam, Frank Askin, Ruth Bardach, Jack Behrle, Steven M. Bergson, Burton Bleakney, Ed Brody, Bernard Bush, Emma Byrne, the late Nat Dunetz, Jack Fischer, Bernard Forgang, Martin Fox, Loretta Freeman, Martin Gen, Miriam Gittelson, the late David Goldfarb, Pam Goldstein, Melissa Fay Green, Dr.Irena Gross, Seymour Graifman, Doris Harlan, Henry Hascup, Dr. William Helmreich, Isidor Hirschhorn, Russell Hollister, Joseph Horowitz, Martin Horowitz, Michael Howard, Donald Karp, Drs.Alan and Deborah Kraut, the late Jerry Kugel, Phil Lax, the late Jerry Lehman, Roberta Levine, Mac Lohman, Janet Lowenstein, Dr. Robert and Zelda Lowenstein, Mark Lowenthal, Maurice Malamuth, Seymour Malamuth, David Margolick, Tina Marzell, the late Miriam Melrod, Bruce Miller, Jon Miller, Dr. Barbara Mitnick, Emmanuel Nathan, Jack Oelbaum, Laurissa Owen, Sarah Owen, Dr. Victor Parsonnet, Rose Peck, James Patuto, Benjamin Perlmutter, Dr. Clement Alexander Price, the late Lucille Procida, Sid Rosenkrantz, Akiva Roth, Dr. Donald Rothfeld, Dr. Albert Rothseid, Doris Rothseid, Paula Sandfelder, Bernard Schneiderman, Martin Schwartz, Fran and Clark Silver, the late Hope Shapiro, Seymour Sperling, Daniel Stacher, Harry Starrett, John Steinbach, Barbara Steiner, Ned Steiner, the late Harry Stevenson, the late Allie Stoltz, Elliot Sudler, Barry Taub, the late Hank Veillette, Paula Warhaftig, Ray Weckstein, Dr. Robert Weinmann, Dr. Jay Weiss, and Dr. Stephen Whitfield.

My maternal grandfather, Rabbi Simon Glazer (1879-1938), author of *The Jews of Iowa* (1905), provided the genetic component of my interest in local history.

I am indebted to the late Pinnie Josephson and the late Mickey Fischer for providing the inspiration to write *Nazis in Newark*. A few weeks before leaving a thirty-year business career, I was swapping Newark stories with Pinnie. He mentioned an event about which I had heard many versions over the preceding forty years—the night Abner "Longie" Zwillman and his gang beat up a group of local Nazis. The next day I was with Mickey Fischer, a top-ranked amateur boxer in the late 1930s. When I asked if he remembered the incident, he related that Zwilllman, Newark's Jewish crime boss, had formed an anti-Nazi group in the 1930s called the Minutemen and that Nat Arno, an ex-boxer and member of Zwillman's gang, had been its leader. I decided that I would write an article on the Minutemen for the local press. After some initial research, I realized that this incident was only one part—and a fascinating part, at that—of a larger story. A month later I began writing this book.

Without the help of those acknowledged, this book could not have become a reality. However, I take sole responsibility for the book's contents.

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Abbreviations

ACLU	American Civil Liberties Union
AFC	America First Committee
AFF	American Fellowship Forum
AJC	American Jewish Congress
ALAWF	American League Against War and Fascism
ALPD	American League for Peace and Democracy
AYC	American Youth Congress
BPWC	Business and Professional Women's Club
CDA	Committee to Defend America by Aiding the Allies
CIO	Congress of Industrial Organizations
FFF	Fight for Freedom
Friends	Friends of the New Germany
HUAC	House Un-American Activities Committee
IWO	International Workers' Order
JBC	Joint Boycott Council
JDC	Joint Distribution Committee
JLC	Joint Labor Committee
JWV	Jewish War Veterans
LWV	League of Women Voters
NSANL	Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League
NSDAP	National Socialist German Worker's Party (Nazi Party)
OD	Uniformed Service of the Friends and the Bund
WILPF	Women's International League for Peace and Freedom
WPU	Women's Political Union
Y	YM&YWHA

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List of Illustrations and Maps

Nat Arno, commander of the Minutemen, 1934-1940

Louis Slott, first commander of the Minutemen

Louis Slott's membership card in the Minutemen

Minuteman Alex Portnoff, 1942

Minuteman Max "Puddy" Hinkes

Minuteman Abie Bain

Minuteman Lou Halper

Minuteman Moe Fischer

Abner "Longie" Zwillman, late 1920s

Meyer Ellenstein, Newark mayor, 1933-1941

Abner "Longie" Zwillman, 1938

Minuteman Benny Levine and Benny Leonard, 1931

Nat Arno after a boxing match, circa 1932

Nat Arno and Benny Leonard in Newark gym, circa 1927

Nat Arno and Dr. S. William Kalb in 1940

Nat Arno and Minutemen

Dr. S. William Kalb and Congressman Samuel Dickstein at an anti-Nazi meeting, March 1937.

Advertisement for Schwabenhalle, 1933

Schwabenhalle, 2002

Newark Bund leader Matthias Kohler, 1940

Walter Kauf, Friends of the New Germany, arrest photo 1933

Rabbi Joachim Prinz, Temple B'Nai Abraham

Michael Stavitsky, president of the Newark Conference of Jewish Charities, circa 1935

Rabbi Julius Silberfeld, Temple B'Nai Abraham

Rabbi Solomon Foster, Temple B'Nai Jeshurun

Reverend Luke Garner, 1935

Luke Garner and Eleanor Roosevelt in Newark, circa 1944

Frank Kingdon

Frank Kingdon and Erica Mann, 1941

Amelia Moorfield, 1935

Nancy Cox, press photo from 1937

Jack Malamuth, circa 1935

Arthur Bell, N.J. Grand Dragon, Ku Klux Klan at Camp Nordland, Andover N.J., August 1940

Fritz Kuhn, leader of the German-American Bund, reviews goose-stepping Nazis, May Day, 1940

August Klapprott, New Jersey Bund leader, July 1937

Norman Thomas, June 1938

Minuteman contingent picketing Bund rally at Schwabenhalle, September 26, 1938

"Left" and "Right" unite to picket September 26, 1938 Bund meeting

Map of Third Ward, Newark

Map of Essex County and surrounding areas

Introduction

An insignificant-looking building stands on Springfield Avenue, less than a mile from downtown Newark. Its ground floor is occupied by a bar; on the second and third floors are meeting halls for African-American Masonic orders. Long forgotten, this building was once the center of the fierce anti-Nazi struggle that took place in Newark from 1933 until 1941.

Then called Schwabenhalle, it was the scene of two major riots five years apart, as well as numerous lesser conflicts over an eight-year period. The combatants were the same each time—Newark's Nazis and its anti-Nazis. From Hitler's ascension to power in January 1933 until the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, Newark was the center of a battle that pitted the Nazi movement and its supporters against those who believed in freedom and democracy.

What makes Newark unique in this struggle is that two anti-Nazi groups, the Minutemen[1] and the Newark division of the Non-Sectarian Anti-Nazi League (NSANL), combined to attack two domestic Nazi organizations, first the Friends of the New Germany and later its successor the German-American Bund. The struggle extended to efforts against neo-Nazi groups such as the Silver Shirts and the Christian Front, as well as the potentially Nazi America First.

The Minutemen was a group made up of prizefighters and gangsters who fought against domestic Nazis and their sympathizers with physical confrontation and intimidation. The NSANL, on the other hand, used protests and a boycott against German goods as its weapons of choice.

As in other American cities with large Jewish and German populations, Newark in the 1930s had both Nazi activities and Jewish opposition. Many works on the Jewish history of American cities include the period 1933-1941, but few mention Jewish physical and political resistance to domestic Nazism.[2] Only in Newark was there an anti-Nazi fighting force that remained active from Hitler's rise in 1933 to American entrance into World War II. Additionally, in works

on Jewish boxers and gangsters who fought Nazis, there are no groups mentioned with the longevity of the Minutemen or a leader who remained as committed to the battle as Nat Arno.[3]

Arno was a minor prizefighter in the 1920s, and an enforcer for Newark's preeminent Jewish gangster, Abner "Longie" Zwillman, a role he continued to play throughout his time as the Minutemen's "commander." Dr. S. William Kalb, leader of Newark's anti-Nazi boycott effort, could not have been more different. A physician by training, Kalb essentially gave up his medical practice in the 1930s to make anti-Nazism his life's work.

Close coordination between Arno and Kalb, based both on personal feelings and ideology, made it possible for the Minutemen and the anti-Nazi boycott activists to consistently aid each other and to create an anti-Nazi force in Newark that held at bay German-American Nazis and other anti-Semitic groups while at the same time giving a sense of purpose to those Newark Jews who wanted to inflict damage on Germany.

Newark, New Jersey was one of the nation's most prominent cities. Strong leadership kept Newark from becoming a suburb of New York City. Newark's large industrial and commercial base produced enough jobs to employ its workforce. By the close of World War I in 1919, Newark was one of America's largest industrial producers. But beginning in the 1920s the city entered a long era of decline during which its industrial base steadily shrunk.

The city's inability to expand by absorbing adjoining suburbs, along with zoning policies that allowed manufacturing and commercial use close to or within residential areas led to an exodus of many of the city's business and cultural leaders. By 1929, over 60 percent of the board members of Newark's influential Chamber of Commerce lived in Newark's suburbs while keeping their businesses in the city.[4] The Great Depression and attendant social problems led to the city's further decline. Newark's employed population of almost 200,000 in 1930 dropped 20 percent to 159,000 in 1940, while the population also declined from 442,337 to 429,760.[5]

Founded in 1666 by Puritans from Connecticut, Newark remained a fundamentally conservative city. The waves of German, Irish, Jewish, and Italian immigrants who populated the city throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries created vibrant working and middle classes, but did little to change the city's underlying conservatism. Throughout the period studied in this work, effective anti-

Nazi responses came from conservative rather than liberal sources.

Those Newark liberals who were also anti-Nazi were few in number and unable to transmit their values to the public at large. The small liberal community found itself co-opted during the late 1930s by the American Communist Party, and thus tied up in that organization's internecine strife around the Nazi-Soviet Pact of 1939 and Hitler's subsequent march east into the Soviet Union in 1941.

The Newark chapter of the Communist Party was organized in July 1932,[6] and became the city's first organized opponent of Nazism immediately after Hitler came to power six months later. By seizing on the issues of Nazism, as well as pacifism, unionism, and racism, Newark communists were able to influence many of the city's liberals. Although they had no influence on the socially conservative Minutemen and NSANL, there were times when these two groups cooperated with the communists in anti-Nazi actions.

Ethnic groups made up much of Newark's population. It is estimated that in 1930 the city included 85,000 Italians, 65,000 Jews, 47,000 Germans, and 38,000 Irish. According to the 1930 census, there were also 39,000 African Americans in Newark.[7]

Newark's ethnic groups often battled each other for political, social, and economic power. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, descendants of the city's Puritan founders vied with both German Lutherans and Irish Catholics for religious and political preeminence. In the 1920s and 1930s, Italians and Jews battled the Irish for political power. The emergence of Mussolini and Hitler caused distrust between the Jews and their Italian and German neighbors. Irish Catholics' latent anti-Semitism was piqued both by European events and such homegrown anti-Semites as Father Charles E. Coughlin. Newark's Irish Catholics especially resented Jewish radicals, although they made up only a small fraction of Newark's Jewish population.

Within the Jewish community itself, the split between Eastern European and German Jews made matters worse. German Jews had settled in Newark as early as the middle of the nineteenth century, part of a larger wave of liberal Germans who had fled the reactionary regimes that came to power after the failure of democratic revolution throughout Europe in 1848. By the 1930s, the German Jews had established themselves economically as well as socially. They had their own liberal synagogues, a business club, and a country club. They were the powerful voices on the Conference of Jewish

Charities, which provided economic and social aid to the city's needy Jews, mostly Eastern Europeans who had come to America in the 1880s after Polish and Russian pogroms. At first resentful of these Yiddish-speaking Eastern European Jews, the German Jews soon saw that it was in their interest to help assimilate these newcomers and provide them with charitable assistance. The Young Men's/Young Women's Hebrew Association (YM&YWHA) and Jewish settlement houses sprouted up in Newark, as they did in other Eastern and Midwestern cities during the early decades of the twentieth century.

The two factions in the Jewish community had different responses to Nazism. The prosperous German Jews held political and economic views similar to those of other businessmen—they were anti-union and anti-radical, and they saw Nazism as a temporary phenomenon. They felt they were "100 percent American" and should attend to their businesses and families, leaving God and government to attend to Hitler.

They took no action against Newark's Nazis and for the most part were unenthusiastic about the boycott Kalb and the NSANL organized against German goods and services. And they would never think of mixing it up in the streets of Newark alongside Arno and his Minutemen. Their activities were focused on supporting relief efforts for both Jews in Germany and those who had emigrated to other countries, particulary America.

Many in Newark's German Jewish community belonged to Temple B'Nai Jeshurun, a synagogue in the liberal Reform movement of Judaism. They followed the political and religious lead of their rabbi, Solomon Foster, the first rabbi in America with two American-born parents. An anti-unionist, Foster was hostile to Eastern European Jews, whom he said were more active in unionism than Christians. Foster's involvement on the boards of the Salvation Army and the University of Newark, and his frequent participation in interfaith events, made him the Christian clergy's favorite Newark Jew.

Large numbers of Eastern European Jews arrived in Newark in the 1880s through the early 1920s. Most worked as laborers and craftsmen in the trades they brought with them from their homelands. Some opened small retail businesses. Their children learned English in Newark's schools and tried to achieve the American dream.

Whether they remained in the working class or became professionals, small business owners, or white-collar workers, Jews shared a fear of anti-Semitism instilled in them by their parents and grandparents, who had faced it personally in Europe. It was from these

roots that Newark's particular brand of anti-Nazism was born.

Jews in Newark enjoyed a rich organizational life. A series of studies conducted in the late 1930s identified 140 Jewish fraternal and family associations providing welfare, charitable, social, and cultural services. In addition there were local branches of sixteen national organizations, plus eight athletic and three political clubs.[8]

There were approximately 65,000 Jews in Newark during the 1930s.[9] The only English-language Jewish newspaper in the city (or in the state for that matter) was the weekly *Jewish Chronicle*, founded in 1921 by Anton Kaufman, who was still the publisher. The paper was tightly aligned with the organized Jewish community, and reported on the charitable, social, and religious activities of the Newark area's major Jewish institutions. During the 1930s, the *Chronicle* increasingly covered the activities of Newark's Eastern European Jews.

Through the early 1930s Rabbi Solomon Foster wrote a weekly editorial for the *Chronicle,* which reflected the assimilationist ideology of his congregation. He was a strong proponent of the maintenance of good relations with the Christian community. During the 1930s, the *Chronicle* reflected the internal conflicts of much of the Jewish community, trying to maintain a middle course. Fearing the Nazis, the *Chronicle* endorsed the anti-Nazi boycott, yet remained aloof from the street brawls and other violent tactics the Minutemen used against the Nazis.

Germans first arrived in Newark in the 1830s. In 1833 the first German church and aid society were founded and by 1835 there were approximately 300 Germans in the city.[10] The 1848 German revolution brought substantial numbers of Germans to Newark. By 1879, the community had become influential enough to produce a German-born mayor, William H. Fiedler.

With their industriousness, thrift, and focus on education, Newark's Germans established an economically thriving community. Their many singing societies and *turnvereins* (sports clubs) encouraged the city's educational system to adopt compulsory music and gym classes. Additionally, Newark's first opera house and the Academy of Newark were the products of German initiative.

Germans were the first to challenge Newark's Puritan hegemony. The major battle was over Sunday Sabbath observance, which most German-Americans eschewed in favor of a day of family relaxation and beer and wine drinking. The issue came to a head in 1879 when

William H. Fiedler was elected on a platform of non-enforcement of the Sunday laws prohibiting alcohol. His opponent, Theodore Macknet, on the other hand, was committed to strict enforcement of the Sunday laws.[11]

World War I brought a halt to the German community's ascendancy in Newark. Anti-German hysteria affected the entire country and in Newark, streets with German names were changed and Germans were discriminated against in employment and housing.[12] This hysteria had a permanent effect on many Germans, who dropped out of German-American organizations and sought to completely integrate themselves into American life.

Another wave of German immigrants came to Newark in the wake of World War I. While they helped maintain and invigorate the German community, they also brought a heightened nationalistic identity. Simultaneously, the German population spread from its traditional neighborhoods, moving west up Springfield Avenue and into the suburb of Irvington.[13] While Germans who arrived in the nineteenth century were escaping undemocratic regimes, those who immigrated in the 1920s were fleeing a German economy decimated by war, reparations to the victorious allies, and hyperinflation. Many were resentful of Jews and angry at the communists. They would prove to be fertile ground for Nazi provocateurs.

Newark's Third Ward working class and small-business owners were the first Jews to encounter Nazism, in 1933. The Third Ward had once been home of much of the city's German population, but Jews gradually replaced the Germans starting in the 1880s. And African Americans were a significant minority in the area by the 1930s. Springfield Avenue ran through the Third Ward. It was one of Newark's main retail shopping streets and a mixed Jewish/German area. Many Jews and Germans lived in adjacent neighborhoods along Springfield Avenue in Newark and Irvington. Their relations were generally cordial. They shopped in each other's stores, lived with each other in multiple-family homes, and went to the same schools. Relations between the older German settlers and the German Jews, communities that had come to America at the same time, were even closer. The Essex County branch of the German-Austrian War Veterans, the largest German-American veteran organization, had Jewish members. However, once Hitler came to power in January 1933 and persecution against Jews in Germany began, relations between Jews and Germans in Newark deteriorated.

The Minutemen came from the large Eastern European working class. They perceived the essence of Nazism and acted accordingly. They did not trust the government to protect the Jews. Indeed, they believed that Nazism in Newark could only be defeated with iron pipes and fists. No rallies, resolutions, picketing, or words of any kind would stop the Nazi's lethal hatred of Jews—only force. From 1933 to 1940 they fought the Nazis in the streets.

The majority of the German-American population in the Newark area avoided Nazism and its bellicose anti-Semitism. However, a minority composed mainly of post-World War I immigrants—many of whom remained resident aliens and had not sought American citizenship—actively engaged in pro-Nazi activities. They were encouraged by a small group of German nationals planted in Newark—some as early as the 1920s—as agent provocateurs by the German Nazi Party (NSDAP) to set up an American Nazi party.

These men worked to win over elements of the Newark area's German-American community, using ceaseless propaganda, consisting mainly of charges that a Jewish-Communist cabal was running the Unites States. Hundreds of agents were sent to cities with large German populations to convert the local German Americans to the Nazi cause and set up a "fifth column." The German government assumed responsibility for this effort in 1933.

The Friends of the New Germany (Friends) was established to further this cause. Newark was one of the Friends' first targets, both because of its large German-American population and its proximity to New York City, the center of Nazi activity in the United States. When the Friends began operating in Newark in the spring of 1933, it openly advertised its meetings and anti-Semitic message, a provocation that led to the creation of the Minutemen.

Although a few German Americans denounced the Nazis, most simply did not want to get involved. But Newark and Irvington's Eastern European Jews lived cheek-by-jowl with the German community. They felt threatened by the Nazi presence in their neighborhoods and with the unchecked violence against Jews in Germany.

They felt even more threatened after learning that the Friends were distributing anti-Semitic literature and holding meetings of brown-shirted men. Unreported by the press, these manifestations elicited neither governmental denunciation nor police action. Consequently, the Jews determined to protect themselves. Longie Zwillman, Newark's most feared Jew, picked the toughest members of his gang

for an anti-Nazi organization, the Minutemen. When the Friends of the New Germany held its first public meetings in Newark in the fall of 1933, the Minutemen attacked them with a fury that was noted throughout America.

An anti-Nazi boycott group, led first by Newark Post 34 of the Jewish War Veterans, then by the city's Young Men's Hebrew Club, and finally by the NSANL, soon joined Zwillman's anti-Nazi effort. Dr. S. William Kalb became boycott chairman of Post 34 in April 1933. By early 1934, Kalb had formed a personal and organizational alliance with Nat Arno, Zwillman's designated Minutemen commander. Arno and Kalb's organizations proceeded to battle Nazism in Newark until 1941.

The alliance between criminals and aspiring middle-class sons of Eastern European immigrants was a remarkable seven-year partnership. It demonstrates once again how America's immigrants are willing to fight against those who threaten the ideals of freedom and democracy.

Notes

1. Elements of Longie Zwillman's Third Ward Gang merged with and then assumed control of the Minutemen in 1934. The Minutemen emanated from Newark Post 34, Jewish War Veterans, and the Young Men's Hebrew Club (see chapter 2).
2. See Endleman, Judith E., *The Jewish Community of Indianapolis*, Bloomington, IN, 1984, pp. 172-178 (resistance to the German-American Bund through violence and education); Swichkow, Louis J. And Lloyd Gartner, *The History of the Jews of Milwaukee*, Philadelphia, 1963, pp. 304-307 (resistance to domestic anti-Semitism by education); Sarna, Jonathan D. and Nancy Klein, *The Jews of Cincinnati*, 1989, pp. 139-146 (resistance to domestic anti-Semitism by education); *Jewish Life in Philadelphia, 1830-1940*, Murray Friedman, ed., Philadelphia, 1983, pp. 20, 21 (resistance to the German-American Bund through education); Gartner, Lloyd P., *History of the Jews of Cleveland*, Cleveland, OH, 1978, pp. 300-302 (resistance to Nazism and anti-Semitism through education and the anti-Nazi boycott); Gordon, Rabbi Albert I., *Jews in Transition (Minneapolis),* Minneapolis, MN, 1949, pp. 50-53 (mention of anti-Semitism but not of resistance); Vorspan, Max, and Lloyd P. Gartner, *History of the Jews of Los Angeles*, Philadelphia, 1970, pp. 205-207 (resistance to Nazism and anti-Semitism through education); Cutler, Irving, *The Jews of Chicago, From Shtetl to Suburb*, Urbana, 1996, p. 128 (resistance to Nazism through anti-Nazi boycott); Klinger, Maurice, A. Abbot Rosen and Dr. Walter Zand, "Jewish Defense Agencies," pp. 175-178 as published in Sentinel Publishing Co.'s *History of Chicago's Jewry, 1911-1961*, Chicago, 1961 (resistance to Nazism through anti-Nazi boycott and education); Adler, Selig and Thomas E. Connolly, *The History of the Jewish Community of Buffalo*, Philadelphia, 1960, p. 383 (mention of Nazi activity but no resistance); Raphael, Marc Lee, *Jews and Judaism in a Midwestern Community: Columbus, Ohio, 1840-1975*, Columbus, OH, 1979 (no mention of Nazism or anti-Semitism); Helmreich, William B., *The Enduring Community: The Jews of Newark and MetroWest,* New Brunswick, NJ, 1999, pp. 29, 172 (resistance to Nazism through violence and education); Burton Alan Boxerman, "Rise of Anti-Semitism in St. Louis, 1933-1945," pp. 251-269, as published in *YIVO Annual*, XIV, New York, 1969 (demonstrations against Nazis in St. Louis in 1938).

3. See Teller, Judd, *Scapegoat of Revolution*, New York, 1954, pp. 183,184 (attacks by Murder Incorporated against Nazis in metropolitan New York); Berman, Susan, *Easy Street*, New York, 1981, pp. 144-146 (David Berman —father of Susan— a gangster, fought Nazis in Minneapolis); Eisenberg, Dennis, Uri Dan, and Eli Landau, *Meyer Lansky: Mogul of the Mob*, New York, 1979, pp. 184-186 (Rabbi Stephen Wise asked Lansky to stop the German-American Bund in New York. After several years of success, adverse publicity caused Wise to tell Lansky to halt the operation.); Rockaway, Robert A., *But He Was Good to His Mother*, Jerusalem, 1993, pp. 225-233 (Jewish gangsters in New York, Newark, Minneapolis, Chicago, and Los Angeles fought Nazis); Levitt, Cyril H. And William Shaffir, *The Riot at Christie Pits*, Toronto, 1987 (a riot between Toronto anti-Semites, many of whom supported the Nazis, and Jewish youths, some of whom were boxers).
4. Stellhorn, Paul Anthony, *Depression and Decline: Newark, New Jersey: 1929-1941*, pp. 26,27; PH.D. Dissertation, University Microfilms International. By the onset of World War II over 85 percent of the Chamber's board lived outside of Newark. In 1916 all members of the Chamber's predecessor, the Newark Board of Trade, lived in the city.
5. U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, New Jersey Abstract*, New Jersey Division, Newark Public Library, pp. 191, 213; *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940*, Population, Vol. II, Part 4, Washington, DC, 1943, pp. 928, 930.
6. CPUSA, Reel 225, Delo 2919, Report on the New Jersey District-District 14, 7/18/32, p. 1.
7. U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940*, op. cit., p. 930.
8. WPA New Jersey Writer's Project, Ethnological Survey, Box 2, Folder 25, Jews in New Jersey- Notes, Mazie Berse, "List of Newark Organizations," 13 pages, undated circa late 1939, early 1940.
9. Ibid., Box 2, Folder 28, Letter from H.S. Linfield, director, Jewish Statistical Bureau to Dr. G.Y. Rusk, 4/14/37.

   A Newark YMHA flier from 1939 estimates the Jewish population of Newark as 70,000 (see Box 2, Folder 4). Linfield estimates the Jewish population of Newark's suburbs as:

Irvington	1,295
East Orange	2,000
South Orange	1,000
West Orange	500
Orange	1,000
Montclair	450

10. *A History of Newark*, Newark, 1911, vol. 2, William Von Katzler, "The Germans of Newark," pp. 1048,1049.
11. Cunningham, John T., *Newark*, Newark, 1988, pp. 199, 200.
12. Ibid., pp. 259, 260.
13. Irvington was a total suburb of Newark—it had neither a hotel nor a railroad station, depending on Newark for both. For purpose of this study, events in Irvington are construed as part and parcel of the struggle between Newark's Nazis and anti-Nazis.

1

Responses to Nazism

On January 30, 1933 Adolf Hitler became the chancellor of Germany. The next evening, Rabbi Jonah P. Wise, national chairman of the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC),[1] appeared in Newark to plead for funds for Eastern European Jews who faced "starvation conditions and economic pressure [which were reducing them] to an animal level." Wise made his plea at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Board of Directors of the Newark Conference of Jewish Charities.[2] To meet the crisis, the JDC hoped to raise $1.5 million from American Jewish communities. Although he mentioned no quota for Newark, Wise asked the board to sponsor fund-raising activities to help the effort. The board's response was to appoint a committee of five, to formulate plans and to "cooperate fully" with the JDC.[3]

Rabbi Solomon Foster of Temple B'Nai Jeshurun, Newark's oldest, wealthiest, and most prestigious congregation, was chosen to chair the committee.[4] The Newark Conference of Jewish Charities was dominated by wealthy, relatively assimilated Jews whose families had emigrated from German states, including Moravia and Bohemia (now the Czech Republic), in the nineteenth century.[5] Many belonged to Temple B'Nai Jeshurun.

The fund-raising campaign for Eastern European Jewry never got off the ground because events in Germany turned Jewish attention from Eastern to Western Europe. By February, newspapers were reporting that an ugly tide of anti-Semitism was sweeping Germany. Across the United States, Jews and Christians, collectively and individually, voiced solidarity with German Jewry. In Newark, the City Commission passed a resolution calling on the German government to desist from attacks on Jews. The North Jersey Region of the American Jewish Congress (AJC) and the New Jersey Federation of YM & YWHAs (the "Y") sent a resolution to President Franklin Roosevelt protesting Nazi excesses.[6]

Newark's English-language Jewish weekly, the *Jewish Chronicle*, on February 17 (in its first editorial notice of Hitler's ascension to power), took German Jews to task for "smoothing the road" for Hitler by treating his predecessors Heinrich Bruening, Franz von Papen, and Kurt von Schleicher with tolerance "and even flattery."[7] In the same issue, the *Chronicle* reported that at an event honoring Meyer Ellenstein, a newly appointed Newark commissioner, Rabbi Julius Silberfeld of Temple B'Nai Abraham lauded Ellenstein's rise to prominence from humble beginnings as a tribute to democracy and contrasted it with a recent speech by Hitler condemning democracy.[8]

Across the nation, Jewish groups discussed how to respond to Nazi actions. The AJC called a March 19 meeting, which was attended by 1,500 delegates from national and local Jewish organizations. It was decided to hold anti-Nazi protest rallies in Jewish communities throughout the country on Monday, March 27. In Newark, Samuel I. Kessler, a prominent attorney and president of the Newark Y, called a meeting to discuss the city's participation. He appointed a committee, composed mainly of Conference of Jewish Charities board members, to organize the rally. The committee added representatives from Newark Jewish groups to ensure that the rally committee represented a cross-section of the Jewish community.[9] However, it soon became apparent that some Newark Jewish constituencies were either excluded or under-represented.

The rally was scheduled for the 1,800-seat Fuld Hall at the Newark Y, located near the city's center. Participants would include not only Jewish groups but also Protestant and Catholic representatives. William Untermann, president of Newark's Ezekiel Lodge of B'Nai Brith, said that his group was generally opposed to mass meetings, preferring that "responsible Jewish leaders" meet with representatives of the German and American governments. He was, however, in favor of the rally. [10] The position of national B'Nai Brith mirrored that of the American Jewish Committee in its preference for behind-the-scenes diplomacy. Neither group supported the March 27 rallies.

Uninvited, Newark's Communist Party organization, a group with many Jewish members, decided to stage its own protest rally on April 2 at Newark's Krueger Auditorium, a popular venue for Jewish and left-wing meetings. Other participants in this event were Communist- affiliated groups such as the Russian Mutual Aid Society, the Slovak Worker's Society, the Unemployed Council, the International Workers Society, International Labor Defense, and the Jack London Society.[11]

Representatives of twelve Newark-area Jewish youth groups, feeling excluded from the March 27 event, met at the office of Assemblyman Herman Blank and made plans for their own anti-Nazi rally on April 2. This would protest the treatment of German Jewish students and young professionals. This was unacceptable to the organizers of the Y rally, since it would nullify their objective of a unified Jewish response. Assemblyman Blank was called to a meeting with Joseph Kraemer, the North Jersey AJC president and chairman of the Y rally committee. Under pressure, Blank agreed to cancel the youth rally. He told the press that the youth groups would take part in the Y rally because "I believe the demonstration will be more effective if young and old hold hands."[12]

The rally was taken seriously by all segments of Newark's Jewish population. *Schochtim*, who slaughter animals in accordance with the Jewish laws of *kashrut,* vowed to fast all day on March 27, to stop work at 4 PM, and to attend a special service at Adas Israel Synagogue on Prince Street. Newark Post 34 of the Jewish War Veterans of America (JWV) said it would forward to the British Embassy in Washington a resolution asking that Great Britain temporarily set aside the quota restriction on immigration to Palestine. Edward Fenias, a Newark lawyer and president of the New Jersey Institute of Social Research, called upon members of Kappa Delta legal fraternity at Mercer Beasley Law School (which became part of Rutgers Newark Law School in 1937) to support the rally and described the "present orgy of Hitlerism as a moral pagan reversion."[13]

The day of the rally, many Jews fasted and attended prayer services. That evening over 2,000 people filled Fuld Hall, with another 1,000 outside listening on loudspeakers. Mayor Jerome T. Congleton declared that as the "chief executive of Newark, I wish to add my protest to yours. Reports from Germany fill our souls with indignation. We not only protest but revolt against such deeds." Rev. Dr. Benjamin Washburn, Episcopal bishop of Newark, added his protest and praised "the tremendous power of such protest meetings" held throughout the country. Eugene Kinkead, a former congressman and Catholic lay leader, pledged the Catholic Church's support for Germany's beleaguered Jews. The two congressmen representing the Newark area, Frederick R. Lehlbach and Fred Hartley, also decried Nazi persecution.

Michael A. Stavitsky, vice president of the Conference of Jewish Charities, emphasized that Jews had survived "many Hitlers" and

would again. In attendance were the rabbis from Newark's three non-Orthodox synagogues, Rabbi Foster of B'Nai Jeshurun, Rabbi Silberfeld of B'Nai Abraham, and Rabbi Leo Lang of Oheb Sholem. The sole representative of the over thirty Orthodox synagogues was Rabbi Joseph Konvitz, of Congregation Anshe Russia, who spoke to the crowd in Yiddish.[14]

The rally resulted in a resolution demanding cessation of anti-Semitic propaganda; abandonment of the Nazi policy of discrimination and economic exclusion of Jews from German life; proper protection of Jewish life and property by the German government; and protection for the 200,000 Eastern European Jews who had fled to Germany to escape persecution and starvation. President Roosevelt was asked to place the resolution before the German government.

Other rallies took place on March 27 in Chicago, Paris, and in New York City, where over 22,000 filled Madison Square Garden while 25,000 more outside listened to Governor Alfred E. Smith and Senator Robert Wagner.[15] The *Newark Star Eagle* editorialized that the rallies in Newark, New York, and elsewhere were part of a moral duty "to protest against brutality and stupid hatred."[16]

The sudden and intense Nazi persecution of Jews in Germany evoked the reaction that culminated in the March 27 rallies. But over the next five-and-a-half years, until Kristallnacht in November 1938, there would be no other such interdenominational mass action in Newark on behalf of German Jewry. Throughout America, the Depression, isolationism, latent anti-Semitism, and fear of communism, muted Christian opposition to atrocities against Jews. Thus, with few exceptions, the burden of the anti-Nazi struggle, both in Newark and across America, was borne by Jews.

By the end of the first year of Nazi rule in Germany, Newark's Jews had countered with five responses: commitment by Jewish organizations to a boycott against German goods; financial support from Jewish groups to help impoverished German Jews either live in Germany or emigrate; rallies and petitions to influence the American government to act against Nazi persecution of Jews; agitation to allow persecuted Jews unrestricted access to Palestine; and violence against the Friends of the New Germany, an American Nazi organization.

The boycott against German goods enabled Newark's Jews to strike a direct blow at Nazi Germany. Since the boycott campaign was international, it had the potential to promote solidarity among

Jews throughout America and all over the world. Indeed, the participation of all Jewish organizations in Newark could bridge the gulf separating "establishment" Jews from first-and second-generation Eastern European Jews. By the end of 1933 the boycott effort in Newark was well underway, as it was in other American cities.

Fundraising for endangered Jews in Europe was another important response. The Newark Conference of Jewish Charities was a leader in this regard, raising tens of thousands of dollars. Since ancestors and relatives of many conference board members came from German-speaking lands, they had a familial sympathy for their brethren in Germany. Eastern European Jews also participated in fundraising, often through *landsmanshaftn* and other benevolent and fraternal orders. *Landsmanshaftn*, sometimes called KUVs, were immigrant hometown associations that provided health and death benefits to members and their families, financed by monthly dues.[17]

Rallies, mass meetings, and petitions were outlets for the anger and frustration of Newark's Jews and had the potential to influence public opinion against Nazism. They generated press coverage in Newark's two dailies, both of which had a predominantly Christian readership. The participation of political leaders could influence government policy against the Nazis. Also, some of these rallies and mass meetings enlisted the aid of sympathetic Christian clergy and lay leaders who had access to large and/or influential Christian audiences.

Physical violence against Nazi events in Newark and its suburbs had positive effects on the struggle against domestic Nazism. To first and second-generation Jews in Newark's Third Ward,[18] attacks on Nazis were a morale booster. Impotent in the face of the Depression and anti-Semitism abroad, these residents were elated that Jewish men from their neighborhood, frequently relatives or friends, were confronting the Friends of the New Germany. This was particularly so since the Friends were staging anti-Semitic rallies adjacent to Jewish homes and businesses. Other Jews in the Newark area were proud of the fighters and viewed them as embodying Jewish manhood.

Violence against the Friends and their sympathizers had a salutary effect. Nazis in Newark and Irvington, a city adjacent to Newark, were less likely to hold events close to the Third Ward. The threat of violence discouraged active membership in the Friends and later in the German-American Bund. Additionally, the fear of violence prevented the Friends from engaging in hostile incursions against Jewish businesses in the Third Ward.

The sum total of these responses was impressive. The Jewish community of Newark, from the establishment (living in upper Clinton Hill, southern Weequahic, or in the suburbs of South Orange and East Orange) to the working-class residents of Prince Street, recognized the threat of Nazism. The establishment, secure in its financial and social positions, was dismissive of the Friends of the New Germany, viewing them as a small group of crackpots. Most were concerned about the fate of European Jews, especially those in Germany. Newark's Eastern European Jews worried about friends and relatives abroad, but were equally concerned with domestic Nazism. They had less faith than their wealthy co-religionists in the willingness of the police and government to prevent anti-Semitic outbreaks.

* * *

The spring of 1933 saw a spate of repressive measures against German Jews: on April 1 a one-day, nationwide boycott against Jewish businesses occurred; April 7 saw quotas applied to the number of Jewish students allowed in institutions of higher learning and laws prohibiting Jews from working in government offices; on April 21 ritual slaughter was prohibited; and on May 10 books by Jewish authors were publicly burned.

The American Jewish response to these outrages was a boycott against German goods, shipping, and services. The first call for the boycott was made on March 19, 1933 by the national JWV.[19] The New Jersey JWV endorsed the boycott on April 23 at its annual convention in Atlantic City.[20] Newark Post 34, of the JWV acted immediately and appointed Dr. S. William Kalb, a popular activist physician, its boycott chairman.[21]

In May, Dr. Abraham Coralnik, an editor of the Yiddish language daily *Der Tog* (the Day), founded the American League for the Defense of Jewish Rights. A national organization, it was established to pursue the boycott. Congressman— and soon-to-be New York City mayor— Fiorello LaGuardia, and Samuel Untermyer, an international lawyer and former advisor to President Woodrow Wilson,[22] addressed its organizational meeting. The league's formation was well publicized and received a prompt offer of help from the Young Men's Hebrew Club of Newark.

The Hebrew Club was one of the founding organizations (in 1924) of the Y. It had originally been a sports club but then became a social

club as well, as the popularity and prowess of its basketball team attracted youngsters of both sexes. The Hebrew Club left the Y in 1933 for its own location on Clinton Avenue. In a May 17, 1933 letter to the league, the club described itself as an organization of more than 400 young men and women over twenty-one. The letter included the text of a resolution passed the previous night pledging to be "100 percent behind the league" in its struggle to take effective measures against Hitler, and promising to establish a committee to cooperate fully with the league "to help enforce the boycott in Newark." The league wrote back two weeks later that it would send a representative to Newark to organize a branch there.[23]

The Hebrew Club invited more than fifty Jewish fraternal organizations to its facility to meet with Coralnik to create a Newark chapter of the league. In addition to pursuing the boycott, the new group agreed to petition England and the League of Nations to allow unimpeded Jewish immigration to Palestine. The president of the Hebrew Club, the Newark Zionist leader Sholem Lipis, announced that it was contributing $25 to meet the league's expenses and would solicit other organizations.[24]

Meanwhile the league sent its secretary, Maurice Firth, to Newark to meet with "prominent and not so prominent leaders" to enlist financial support and membership for the league's Newark chapter. One of those contacted was Kessler, who supported the league boycott but objected to fundraising on the grounds that it would divert funds from other Jewish charitable campaigns. Firth also contacted the Y's executive director, Dr. Aaron G. Robison, who promised to acquaint Louis Bamberger, Newark's outstanding philanthropist and merchant, with "what is being done." A meeting was scheduled for October 23 at the Y. Firth asserted that "boycott sentiment is very strong here and a powerful body of young men have been doing a lot of effective work. They are rather tired of the local stand-pat leaders."[25]

In October there were meetings between national league leaders and the JWV. But J. George Fredman, the JWV's National Commander and a member of the league's national board, despaired that individual and class antipathies would make such cooperation difficult. [26] Fredman actively sought both JWV and general support for the October 23 meeting. Kalb, speaking for the Newark JWV, went even further, calling for the creation of a Central Jewish Committee:

> The time has come when all Jewish forces must combine their actions in all Jewish critical activities in order to cope with the boycott movement in a more systematic

manner. The amalgamation of such organizations as the American Jewish Congress, the League for the Defense of Jewish Rights and the American Jewish Committee is imperative.[27]

Kalb and other members of an organizational sub-committee prepared a report describing the boycott as the only weapon that could restore the rights of those who could not defend themselves from the Nazi government's oppression. The new committee would include men and women who were "motivated by American traditions and ideals" and desired to help carry out the boycott.[28]

It is significant that one of the three paragraphs describing the "purpose of the committee" was concerned that "no innocent German-American storekeeper or manufacturer" should suffer from the boycott.[29] Eastern-European Jews and Gentile German-Americans in the Third Ward and in Irvington lived in the same neighborhoods and often shopped in each other's stores. In 1933, relations between the two groups were still correct, if not friendly, and a boycott against German-American concerns could have resulted in a counter-boycott of Jewish stores by German-Americans. Indeed, within a year this scenario was realized.

Kalb's hope for a Central Jewish Committee was not realized at the October 23 meeting. According to Firth's notes, the meeting "was extremely fine and enthusiastic and some of the leading Jews in Newark were there." Fredman spoke on the league's aims, but because of his preliminary meetings he thought it inadvisable to mention a campaign or funds. A special committee, which included Rabbi Foster and Kessler, was appointed to make "Christian contacts." Local leaders promised to cover set-up expenses. Kalb was appointed secretary,[30] and Michael A. Stavitsky,[31] newly elected president of the Newark Conference of Jewish Charities, agreed to chair the league's Newark chapter.

League headquarters in New York pressed Stavitsky to delineate how his chapter would interact with New York and how much money Newark could supply the national group. The enormous responsibilities of the Conference of Jewish Charities compelled Stavitsky to resign the presidency of the league by the end of 1933, however, before he could address these issues. Kalb assumed leadership of it, without the title of president, and led the Newark boycott movement until 1940, when the group disbanded. The end of 1933 also saw changes at the national level, with Untermyer succeeding Coralnik as president. Untermyer changed the group's name to the Non Sectarian Anti-Nazi League (NSANL).

The AJC joined the American boycott in retaliation for an April 1 Nazi boycott of German Jewish businesses. Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, a founder and leader of the AJC from 1923 to his death in 1949, assumed a leading role in the American effort.[32] The World Jewish Conference (forerunner to the World Jewish Congress), of which Wise was also leader, endorsed the boycott at its annual convention in Zurich in September 1933 (by that time, boycott committees had already been organized in Great Britain, France, Poland, Belgium, Mexico, and Canada).[33] Wise bitterly criticized Jews who made commercial arrangements with the Nazi government.[34] In Newark, the New Jersey AJC endorsed the boycott at its state convention in late November.[35]

Newark's almost forty *landsmanshaftn* were ardent supporters of the boycott. The largest two were the Israel KUV and the Erste Bershader KUV, and both supplied leaders of Newark's chapter of the League for the Defense of Human Rights and its successor, the NSANL. In response to a request from the league's national office, the Israel KUV—at its June 15, 1933 meeting—appointed a three-man coordinating committee to work with the league. Five months later, the KUV committee reported back to its membership that the boycott in Newark was underway and that funds were needed. A $50 donation was made to the league's Newark chapter, the first of many contributions that the Israel KUV made to the boycott effort.[36]

Adherence to the boycott was a theme of a September 24 memorial service for victims of Nazi persecution sponsored by the Erste Bershader KUV and Newark Post 34 of the JWV. Kalb was the event's organizer and chair. Several thousand came to the Mosque Theater to hear acting New Jersey Governor Emerson L. Richards, Congressman Peter Cavicchia, and Rabbis Foster and Joseph Konvitz, among others. Fredman predicted that German industry would be paralyzed within a year "if the boycott remained as operative as it is now."[37]

Newark's Universalist Church of the Redeemer [38] also supported the boycott. Dr. Sherwood Eddy, a nationally known author and lecturer, encouraged such support at the Church's Community Forum, a venue for lectures and debates on contemporary subjects. The Forum's organizer was the minister of the church, Rev. L. Hamilton Garner, who also endorsed the boycott. Garner, very popular in the Jewish community, was well known for his liberal views and for inviting controversial speakers to the Forum.[39]

* * *

Another early response to Nazism was to give material aid to threatened European Jews, and, when possible, help them emigrate. By May 1933, the Newark Conference of Jewish Charities abandoned its plans for a fund-raising effort for Eastern European Jews because of the greater peril faced by Jews in Germany. The conference's decision to mount a fundraising campaign for German Jewry came after hearing a report from Jonah B. Wise, chairman of the JDC, who had just returned from a fact-finding trip to Germany.

The campaign's opening rally took place on June 12, 1933 at the Y. Louis Bamberger, founder of L. Bamberger, Newark's largest department store, and Newark's foremost Jewish philanthropist, was chairman of the event, and Kessler and Stavitsky were on the committee.[40] Endorsements came from the American Jewish Committee, B'Nai Brith, and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (the umbrella organization of Reform synagogues). Protestant clergy, including Dean Arthur Dumper of Trinity Cathedral (Episcopalian), one of Newark's most historic and influential Protestant churches, also joined in planning the event.[41]

Soon after, the fundraising leadership met at the Progress Club, a private Jewish businessman's club favored by members of Newark's Jewish establishment. Stavitsky set a campaign goal of $200,000. Bamberger immediately contributed $25,000. The campaign's opening dinner at the Essex House, Newark's premier hotel and catering facility, raised another $20,000. Rabbi Jonah Wise reported that on his trip to Germany he had seen one million people assemble on May Day to hear Nazi speeches. He added that most Jewish children did not go to school, and the few who did were so harassed that they could not learn. He was pessimistic about the possibility of eradicating anti-Semitism in Germany in the near future and felt that money raised by the campaign should be used to help Jews leave Germany.[42]

The campaign was to have ended on June 22, but it was extended another few days because only $47,500 had been raised. New York City had already raised $600,000 out of its goal of $1,000,000. The final figure for Newark was approximately $50,000,[43] only a quarter of the goal set. Nevertheless, it was a respectable sum, exceeding the amount raised by the Newark Conference of Jewish Charities for 1933.

Other groups also raised funds and held rallies for German Jews. The "United Front Conference Against German Fascism," a Communist group, met on April 30 to plan such an event.[44] Dr. Frank

Kingdon of Calvary Methodist Episcopal Church in East Orange was the speaker at a rally for German Jews sponsored by the Workman's Circle and other Zionist, Socialist and Jewish labor groups at the Workmen's Circle Lyceum in Newark. Kingdon said fascism was an "outgrowth of unfair terms of the Versailles Treaty." He deplored attacks on Jews and condemned racial, religious, and national prejudice.[45] Stavitsky, concerned about duplication of effort, recommended that organizations and individuals planning relief drives for German Jews unite "for greater efficiency and less confusion."[46]

Jewish organizations formed or expanded in response to Nazism. They hoped a stronger Jewish voice in America would influence Washington to put pressure on Germany to ease its persecution of Jews. The AJC, which had functioned through regional groups, now sought to organize in every Jewish community in the country. Newark had one of the first city chapters. On May 11, over 1,000 people came to the Newark School for Fine and Industrial Arts for the first meeting of the Newark District Office of the AJC, at which Judge Joseph Siegler, president of the New Jersey AJC, presided.[47] Siegler was soon elected president of the Newark district. Two months later a Newark Women's Division of the congress was organized. Its first meeting, on July 11, was a rally in defense of Jewish rights abroad, with Judge Siegler the speaker.[48]

In early July, Abraham Silverstein, a writer for the *Jewish Chronicle* and correspondent for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, formed the Newark Commencement in Absentia League. The purpose of this organization was to hold commencement exercises "in absentia" for German-Jewish students who had not been permitted to receive their diplomas or degrees. The committee's first graduation was held at the "Y" on July 12, 1933. The event's theme was Nazi persecution in the fields of culture, science, and education. A resolution was passed: "To assail vigorously the spread to these shores of the vicious and poisonous propaganda of Nazism." It was sent to the State Department, the German Student Federation, AJC, American Jewish Committee, and B'Nai Brith.[49] These graduations would be held every year throughout the 1930s.

* * *

Zionism was an important factor in Newark's response to Nazism. From 1933 until 1940, Zionists argued for the unrestricted immigra-

tion to Palestine of persecuted European Jews. The Order of the Sons of Zion, a national fraternal Zionist organization, was the strongest Zionist group in Newark. At the national convention in Long Branch in July 1933, members voted to support the boycott of German goods by the American League for the Defense of Jewish Rights and to establish a Jewish commonwealth in Palestine.[50]

Liberal Christian clergy participated in the debate on Zionism, as they had in the boycott. Kingdon organized an October 19 interfaith seminar of Catholics, Protestants, and Jews at which Rev. Dr. John Hayes Holmes, a well- known New York liberal, advised all Jews to leave Germany because its youth were being taught hatred of Jews. Rabbi Stephen Wise advised Jews to remain rather than forsake a heritage of centuries because of the "present regime of hatred and hysteria."

Although Catholic clergy were invited to the seminar, none appeared, causing Bishop Washburn of the Episcopal Diocese of Newark to remark: "I am sorry there is no one speaking at this luncheon representing the Catholic communion."[51] The absence of Catholics at the seminar is not surprising. The ambivalent papal attitude toward Nazism and Judaism, as compared to its attitude of hatred of communism, was shared by the predominantly Irish clergy of Newark.[52] Throughout the pre-war period, with few notable exceptions, Catholic clergy were loathe and, in some cases, forbidden to appear at Newark interfaith gatherings where Nazism, Judaism, or religious pluralism was to be discussed.

* * *

Among the African-American community of Newark there was little if any response to either the plight of German Jews or the appearance in Newark of the Friends of the New Germany. Although 12,000 African Americans lived in the Third Ward along with 15,000 Jews, the two communities lived in separate worlds.

Until World War I there were fewer than 10,000 African Americans in Newark. Employment was plentiful, although mostly in the personal service sphere. World War I brought demand for labor in Newark and African Americans migrated there from the South to find jobs in manufacturing and industry. From 1915 to 1920 the number of African Americans in Newark increased from 9,400 to 16,997. During the 1920s, African Americans continued to migrate

to Newark to both escape oppression in the South and to find jobs in Newark's expanding economy. Housing discrimination forced African Americans to cluster in a few of the worst areas in Newark, particularly the Third Ward. They moved into dilapidated tenements in the ward that had been abandoned first by the Germans and then by the Jews. Much of this housing lacked electricity, running water, and indoor toilets.[53]

Similar to the German Jews, attitudes towards their Eastern European brethren, older Newark African-American residents resented the influx of their southern brethren, complaining that the new arrivals "didn't know how to act." Lacking the resources of the German-Jews, the older African Americans made little effort to aid new arrivals. African-American churches, traditionally providers of social services, could not keep up with the needs of their poor.[54]

Dr. Clement A. Price, Newark's scholar on the African-American experience, states that Newark was in many respects a "Jim Crow City" during the 1930s. Downtown theaters had special African-American sections; private clubs had white only policies; stores refused to hire African-American personnel; city pools run with taxpayers dollars were closed to African Americans except on a segregated basis, and African-American children were refused admission to camps run by the Community Chest.[55]

Despite the poverty of many Third Ward Eastern European Jews, they faced few of the economic, social, and political liabilities of their African-American neighbors. For most of these Jews, the African Americans could be customers in their stores or tenants in their buildings, but not equals in any sense of the word. For their part, African Americans viewed the Jews as part of a system that exploited them.

* * *

Emboldened by Hitler's early success, Nazis and their sympathizers began to congregate in public in large American cities with German-American populations. Organized by agents sent from Germany, and operating with the support of the German Consulate in New York City, the Friends of the New Germany (Friends) appeared in cities throughout America. An Associated Press dispatch from Detroit on March 22, 1933 reported that Hans Spanknoebel, the Friends leader, was Hitler's personal propagandist in America. His title was "Leader of the Hitler Movement in the United States."[56] Spanknoebel

called himself Führer and instructed his followers to do the same. He would soon be famous in Newark. The Newark branch of the Friends became one of the largest in the country.

The first meeting of the Newark Friends took place on April 16, 1933 at Schwabenhalle, a meeting hall for German-American societies on Springfield Avenue, one mile west of the heart of the Third Ward. The approximately 100 people in attendance heard Frederick Weigand, who had recently returned from Germany, speak glowingly of the Hitler movement. Plans were made to hold monthly meetings.[57]

An anti-Semitic incident had occurred a month earlier at an unlikely venue, the Y, during a symposium organized by youth groups to discuss the status of Jews under the Nazi government. After Harry Jacobs, national quartermaster of the JWV, urged the young people to cooperate in the boycott against German-made goods, Richard Krueger, former commander of the German-Austrian War Veterans and an invited guest, replied that the boycott might injure Jewish interests and, in any event, would not force Hitler out of office. Further, he advised the Jews "to draw a sharp line of distinction between themselves and the Communists," which he said had many Jewish leaders. "The present situation came about because Germany had to choose between Bolshevism and Nationalism," Krueger said.

When Krueger sat down, a dozen people sprang to their feet. Dr. Jacob Polevski, a Labor Zionist, asserted "taken individually and collectively the Fatherland never had a more devoted body of citizens, in peace or war, than the Jews." Benjamin Epstein, [58] who had recently abandoned his medical studies at the University of Goettingen because of anti-Semitism, pointed out that about 600,000 Jews lived in Germany, whereas the German Communist party had a membership of 14 million, all of voting age. Krueger did not reply.[59]

Soon after Krueger's remarks at the Y, posters in Newark and Irvington announced a Friends rally for Hitler on May 28 at Montgomery Hall (a common meeting place in Irvington for German groups). This advance notice, unlike the April 16 Friends meeting in Newark, provided opportunity for planning an anti-Nazi action.

On the evening of May 28, 400 people gathered in Irvington to hear Nazi speakers. Forty-five uniformed Nazi sailors from the crew of the Hamburg-American liner *Hamburg* were present. At 8:30, a fleet of taxis arrived with more than forty members of Newark's Young Communist League and their supporters. Some of them un-

furled banners denouncing Hitler. Others threw rocks at the hall. There were shouts of "Down with Hitler!" When a group of the Friends went outside to see what was happening, they were attacked. Not expecting trouble, the Irvington Police had assigned only one patrolman to the event, and when violence erupted the patrolman called headquarters for reinforcements. Thirty-five police were soon at the scene with riot guns and tear gas. They arrived too late for Hans Dreher of Newark and Albert Kappler of Union. It took five stitches to close Dreher's facial cut and Kappler suffered nose and lip contusions.[60]

The police reinforcements broke up the melee, menacing the crowd with nightsticks and ordering them to "keep moving!" Order was quickly restored. There were only two arrests: Albert Woods (a pseudonym), the action's organizer, who gave the Newark Unemployment League (a communist organization) as his address,[61] and Ruth Miller, who protested Woods' arrest. After the two were booked and released on $100 bail, Ruth Miller said, "I was there protesting against fascism in Germany and protesting against the birth of fascism in America."[62] At their trial a week later in Irvington Police Court, Woods and Miller were found guilty of disorderly conduct. The judge, however, suspended their sentences, telling them they were misguided and unwise to stage the demonstration.[63]

After this conflict, Newark's communists established the German Worker's Club, an organization composed of German-American communists and Jews. The group picketed and passed out anti-Nazi literature at Friends meetings. However, the club soon dissolved as Nazis threatened violence against the German-Americans in their neighborhoods and workplaces.[64]

Although the communists were the first Newark group to use violence against the Nazis, after this early encounter, the Minutemen assumed the role of intimidators of local Nazis.

* * *

The Friends announced a celebration on September 31 at Schwabenhalle marking the eighty-fifth birthday of German President Paul von Hindenburg, commander in chief of the German armies in World War I. The Friends local leader, Albert Schley, and national leader Fritz Gissibl were to speak, and the German Consul General in New York, Dr. Hans Borchers, was to be a guest of honor. To stress the non-confrontational nature of the event, a memorial ser-

vice for the war dead of all nations and musical entertainment were to follow the speeches.[65]

Third Ward Jewish residents and merchants were nervous. Signs in German with swastikas on them had been tacked on trees in German areas adjacent to Springfield Avenue, a thoroughfare lined with Jewish businesses. Rumors of late-night meetings of men in Nazi uniforms proliferated. The constant outrages against Jews in Germany were given prominence in the Newark dailies, the *Newark Evening News* and the *Newark Star Eagle*, as well as the weekly *Jewish Chronicle*. For the many Yiddish-speaking Newarkers, the *Daily Forward* and *Der Tog* delivered the same sad news. First- and second-generation Eastern European Jews envisioned imminent threats to their lives and property.

It is not known whether Abner "Longie" Zwillman was approached by others to intervene against the Friends of the New Germany or undertook the responsibility on his own. Prior to the Hindenburg celebration at Schwabenhalle, Zwillman called a meeting of about a dozen of the toughest members of his Third Ward Gang, including Hymie "The Weasel" Kugel, Julius "Skinny" Markowitz, Harry Green, Harry Sanders, Max Leipzig, "Primo" Weiner, and the ex-boxers Nat Arno and Abie Bain.[66] A plan was devised to halt the upcoming Nazi celebration by attacking the attendees.

Prior to the rally members of the gang wrapped iron pipes in newspapers and hid them in a dark alley adjacent to Schwabenhalle. A guard watched the cache as 300 Friends of the New Germany, many in Nazi uniforms, filed into the hall. Zwillman's men did not arrive until the program had started. They picked up their weapons from the alley, being careful to conceal them from the small contingent of police guarding the front door.

Nat Arno went to the back of Schwabenhalle and tossed stench bombs through a second-floor window into the auditorium where the meeting was taking place. Pandemonium broke loose. As some of the Friends rushed down the stairway into the street, Hymie Kugel, screamed "Look what they did to me!" While the police ran to his aid, the other gang members rushed the hall and attacked the Nazis. Having created the necessary diversion, Kugel escaped by outrunning the police. By the time the police returned to the hall, all of Zwillman's men had fled the scene.[67]

Three Nazis were injured—Fred Riddel and Joseph Hamann of Newark and William Van Der Heide of Union. A reporter from the