

Board of Deputies of British Jews

Council representing the Jews of Great Britain. After the Nazis rose to power in Germany in 1933, the board had to decide how to react to the persecution of German Jewry and how to absorb German Jewish refugees. There were no easy answers to these dilemmas, as board members often had to choose between their British and Jewish loyalties, which frequently evoked conflicting interests.

Throughout the 1930s, the board requested that the British Foreign Office step in to stop the persecution of German Jewry, and bring the refugee problem to the world's attention. However, the British authorities refused to do anything that might be seen as barging in on Germany's internal affairs. The board itself did not join the anti-Nazi boycott or the World Jewish Congress (see also boycotts, anti-Nazi). Board members were also hesitant about protesting the British fascist movement's antisemitic campaign.

During the war, the board again asked the British government to intercede on behalf of the Jews trapped in Nazi-occupied countries; publicize Nazi atrocities; help refugees inside Britain and neutral countries; and bomb Auschwitz. The board also tried to convince the British government to lighten their Palestine immigration restrictions. However, the British authorities rejected all their pleas. (see also Auschwitz, bombing of.)