

German Vanguard, German Jewish Followers

(Deutscher Vortrupp, Gefolgschaft Deutscher Juden), organization established in February 1933 by a group of 150 Jewish university students in Germany. The group's goal was to preserve their Jewish religious identity, while at the same time emphasize its fundamental connection to German culture. The Vanguard was headed by a student of religion, Hans Joachim Schoeps.

Schoeps and his followers were extremely patriotic Germans who wanted to be seen as a Jewish political movement within the revival of German nationalism. They looked down on Eastern European Jews, and opposed Zionism, Marxism, and liberalism. Zionism was considered negative because Zionists wanted to become a separate Jewish nation like any other, while the Vanguard believed that German Jews belonged to the German nation, and were only different with regard to their religion. They even saw Zionism as a type of assimilation away from pure German-ness.

Vanguard members failed to understand that the Nazis hated Jews because of their race, and considered them to be non-Aryan, or non-German, to the core. They thought that Jews would eventually be allowed to integrate into the Third Reich. Nonetheless, fearing arrest, Schoeps fled to Sweden in 1938, where he kept up contact with German conservatives throughout the war.