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Exhibit
On March 23, 1933, a Walk to Remember
Anti-Nazi March & Boycott Honored

By [Neely Tucker](#)
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The [New York](#) crowd was all trench coats and fedoras. It was just before noon. Snowflakes were seen outside the staging area of Domchek's Restaurant at 12 St. Marks Pl.

Jewish American war veterans were mounting a protest march against the policies of [Adolf Hitler](#) toward German Jews.

He'd been officially in power for three days. It was March 23, 1933.

The march to City Hall drew about 6,000 participants and hundreds of thousands of spectators, marking perhaps the first public protest in the United States against the Nazi program that would become the Holocaust. Largely forgotten by history, the march and the resulting boycott of German goods it helped launch are the subject of a 75th anniversary exhibition at the National Museum of American Jewish Military History. The exhibit, occupying a small area in the museum in Northwest Washington, opens to the public today, and is scheduled to be on display for one year.

"The march stimulated within the Jewish community a very positive approach -- the boycott," said Robert M. Zweiman, president of the museum and a former corporal in the [U.S. Army](#), as he looked over some of the documents from the exhibit. "We kept the issue before the public, even when other Jewish organizations did not, for fear of Hitler harming Jews in [Germany](#)."

David Magidson, a member of the museum who helped underwrite the exhibit, said he was inspired to do so because he'd always wondered "why Jews didn't do more" when Hitler came to power. "This march shows the beginning of us doing something, that we were not silent," he said yesterday.

The exhibit consists of photographs, a brief newsreel clip and several documents from the era. An undated prewar fundraising letter sent from the Anti-Nazi Boycott Committee of the Jewish War Veterans makes it clear that Hitler's plans were clearly understood before the outbreak of hostilities. Asking for support for the boycott, organization president Edgar H. Burman wrote:

"600,000 Jewish souls -- helpless men, women and children -- are at the mercy of the Nazi terror in Germany. Your help is needed to save them from starvation, terror and annihilation."

That day in New York, the sidewalks were 10 deep in spectators in coats and hats. Men clung to fire escapes and leaned over balconies to get a glimpse. The marchers, mostly Jews but joined by other veterans of World War I, set out behind a small band. Tuba, trumpets, drums, a pair of trombones. There were, by organizers' decree, no placards and no signs.

There was just the music and the men marching by. Snow began to fall.

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[Auschwitz](#) was not a word the world knew.

The National Museum of American Jewish Military History, 1811 R St. NW, is open Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sunday by appointment. Admission is free. Call 202-265-6 2 80 or visit <http://www.nmajmh.org>.

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