

STUDY GUIDE

America and the Holocaust: A Documentary History

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America Hopes for a Restrained Hitler

Document 1.1: “Just In Case He Goosesteps Too Much!”

- What is the significance of depicting Hitler as a child with a toy sword?
- Looking at the figure who represents Germany, what does her appearance tell us about how that country was regarded by many Americans in the early 1930s?

Dorothy Thompson Reports from Germany

Document 1.2: “Starve, Humiliate, Degrade the Jew; In Every Walk, Trade Profession, Nazi Pressure in Law and Slogan”

- What is the difference between the “cold pogrom” (or “cold cleaning up”) that Thompson described, and the other types of pogroms that Jews in Europe have experienced?
- Why did the Germans use euphemisms such as “cleaning up” to describe their policies toward Jews?

The New York Times Interviews Hitler

Document 1.3: “Hitler Seeks Jobs For All Germans”

- What are some of the phrases used by the interviewer which made Hitler appear sympathetic?
- How did Hitler justify his treatment of German Jews?

Boycotting German Goods

Document 1.4: “No Trading with Germany”

- Why do you think Jews were barely mentioned in this call for boycotting the Nazis?
- Who were the “women-folks” to which the leaflet refers, and why were they singled out for mention?

Hitler on Trial at Madison Square Garden

Document 1.5: Hitler on Trial – Resolution and Verdict

- What was the point of having such a “trial” if the verdict was a foregone conclusion?
- What were some possible reasons that the German ambassador refused to participate in the trial?

Chapter 2. The American Mood

Antisemitism in Congress

Document 2.1: Rep. John Rankin's Remarks before the House

—Why is an antisemitic speech by a member of Congress any worse than an antisemitic remark by an ordinary street corner bully?

—Rep. Rankin was deeply hostile to both Jews and African-Americans. What do those two types of bigotry have in common?

"Racial Science" Spreads

Document 2.2: *The Passing of the Great Race*

—White supremacist Madison Grant used the term "native Americans" very differently from how it is used today. What did he mean by it, and why did he choose that term?

—What was the connection between what Grant wrote about different races, and the immigration policy that he wanted the U.S. government to adopt?

Father Coughlin and Hate Radio

Document 2.3: Father Coughlin's Radio Address Concerning Kristallnacht

—Did Father Coughlin's status as a Catholic priest make him more credible, or less credible, to his radio audiences?

—If many Jews had been involved in the Communist revolution in the Soviet Union, as Father Coughlin falsely charged, how would that have been relevant to understanding the Kristallnacht pogrom in Germany?

Antisemitic Attitudes Among the Public

Document 2.4: Roper (1938) and Opinion Research (1940) Polls on Antisemitic Attitudes

—How might public attitudes towards Jews have affected U.S. government immigration policy?

—Do you see a connection between what Father Coughlin said about Jewish Communists (Document 2.3) and the 1938 Roper poll's finding about "Jews' own behavior" being the reason for anti-Jewish hostility?

Antisemitism in the State Department

Document 2.5: Antisemitic Remarks by State Department Officials

—Why did Phillips and Moffat bring up the fact that the Soviet officials were Jewish, instead of just focusing on the Soviets' positions and policies?

—Adolph Berle's diary entry was dated October 10, 1941, which was before the U.S. entered the war. How did Berle's remark about Jews fit into the isolationist mood in America at that time?

Chapter 3. Doing Business with Hitler

U.S. Participation in the Nazi Olympics

Document 3.1: "To the Sport-Loving Public of the United States"

—In his letter (par.1), Brundage used the term "clean American sport." What do you think he meant to imply by that term?

—Why did the booklet accompanying Brundage's letter point out that the Roosevelt administration had not taken any action to "interfere" with the policies of Nazi Germany? How did that strengthen Brundage's case?

Apologizing to Hitler

Document 3.2: Secretary of State Apologizes to Hitler

—Does Secretary Hull's reference to "wild news reports" from Germany (par.6) sound similar to contemporary complaints about "fake news"?

—Why did the Hitler government get so upset when individual Americans criticized it?

A Cabinet Member Participates in a Pro-Nazi Rally

Document 3.3: " 'Heil Hitler' Resounds As Steuben Society Denounces Boycott, Acclaims New Germany"

—In President Roosevelt's view, sending U.S. representatives to Nazi or pro-Nazi events was good for political and diplomatic reasons. What would be some of the arguments against that policy?

—What about this rally indicated that a significant number of German-Americans—not just a fringe minority—were sympathetic to the Hitler regime in 1933?

Censoring Criticism of Hitler

Document 3.4: FDR Objects to Secretary of the Interior's Criticism of Hitler

—Would it have mattered if Ickes had been allowed to criticize Hitler and Nazism? What would such criticism have accomplished?

—Note the date on the diary entry. What were the “recent developments” in March 1938, to which Ickes alluded, that motivated him to want to deliver an anti-Nazi speech?

FDR Urges “Quarantining” of Aggressor Nations
Document 3.5: “FDR’s Quarantine Speech”

—Do you see a parallel between President Roosevelt’s use of the term “quarantine” and the way in which that concept is understood today, in connection with the COVID-19 pandemic?

—Did FDR’s “quarantine speech” lean more towards challenging aggressors, or more towards keeping out of conflicts?

4. The Universities and the Nazis

Nazi Ambassador Speaks at Columbia
Document 4.1: “Luther Calls Hitler Critics ‘Old-Timers’”

—What was the significance of the ambassador’s use of the term “old-timers” to criticize Hitler’s opponents? Why would that have been an effective argument for him?

—Which concepts or language did the ambassador use to appeal specifically to his American audience?

Nazi Official Visits Harvard
Document 4.2: “Render Unto Caesar”

—The *Crimson* editorial compared honoring Hanfstaengel to Harvard’s honoring of a former presidential candidate, Alfred E. Smith. Was this a valid analogy?

—How was it beneficial to the Nazi regime to have Hanfstaengel welcomed by Harvard?

A Nazi University Celebrates
Document 4.3: “Heidelberg”

—Notice how the *Crimson* editors (and other Americans who supported relations with Heidelberg) used euphemisms such as “politics” and “political conditions.” Why didn’t they specifically name, and discuss, what had happened on the Heidelberg campus in recent years, such as the firing of Jewish faculty and burning of books?

—How was it advantageous to the German government to have its universities host these kinds of international academic gatherings?

American Students in Nazi Germany

Document 4.4: “Germany Discussed by One Who Spent Junior Year There”

—Mary Ridder said she “disagreed with [Hitler’s] Jewish policy.” Looking at the specific comments she made concerning the Nazis’ treatment of Jews, would you say that she tended to criticize, or justify, that policy?

—Why would Hitler take time from his busy schedule to meet with an American college student?

Abandoning Refugee Scholars

Document 4.5: Hamilton College President’s Letter Regarding Hiring Refugee Scholars

—Why did President Cowley specify his desire for an “Aryan” professor? Why not just hire the most qualified refugee scholar available?

—Do universities have a moral obligation to assist refugee scholars? Or should they steer clear of controversial matters?

Chapter 5. U.S. Immigration Policy

Immigration Statistics

Document 5.1: “Annual Quotas and Quota Immigrants Admitted, Fiscal Years Ended June 30, 1925 to 1944, by Countries”

—In the column “Annual quota 1930-1944,” notice the large difference between the number of immigrants from “Northern and Western Europe” (line 3) and those from “Southern and Eastern Europe” (line 16). Why were those from Northern and Western Europe preferred by many Americans?

—In 1938, the British government offered to have its unused immigration places given to German Jewish immigrants who were seeking to enter the United States. How significant was that offer? (Compare the total number of places in the British quota with the number of British citizens who were actually admitted to the U.S. that year, to calculate the number of unused British places that might have been given to Jewish refugees.)

When Anne Frank Tried to Come to America

Document 5.2: Anne Frank's Father Asks American Industrialist to Help the
Frank Family Immigrate

—There is a famous saying, “A single death is a tragedy; a million deaths is a statistic.” How did that apply to Anne Frank?

—Otto Frank wrote this letter in 1941. Was there room in America's quota allotments that year for the Franks? See the chart in Document 5.1. (Note that although the Franks were living in Holland at the time, they were German nationals, so they applied to enter the United States under the quota for Germany.)

“Postpone and Postpone and Postpone”

Document 5.3: The Assistant Secretary of State on Ways to Obstruct Immigration

—Long suggested that one of the ways U.S. consuls abroad could block immigration was by “requir[ing] additional evidence” from visa applicants. What kinds of additional evidence would have been difficult for applicants to produce?

—U.S. law allowed the entry of immigrants from around the world (see Document 5.1). Long was seeking to circumvent the law. What reasons could he and his colleagues have regarded as justifying such action?

The “Close Relatives” Rule

Document 5.4: U.S. Immigration Regulation Regarding Applicants Leaving
“Close Relatives” Behind

—Why is it significant that Long informed President Roosevelt of the new rule?

—The rule stated that if an applicant came from a country whose government “is opposed to the form of government of the United States,” that fact alone could make the applicant harmful to America's “public safety.” Is that a reasonable way to determine whether a foreigner should be accepted?

Albert Einstein's Plea to the First Lady

Document 5.5: Albert Einstein Asks the First Lady to Oppose New Immigration
Restrictions

—“Celebrity endorsements” from Einstein and others were used in support of refugees in the 1930s. What are some examples of contemporary celebrities promoting a political or social cause?

—What are some possible reasons that Einstein wrote to the First Lady, instead of to the president?

6. Searching for a Haven

James McDonald Resigns in Protest

Document 6.1: Resignation of The High Commissioner for Refugees Coming from Germany

—Public officials who are unhappy about a particular policy find themselves torn between working from within for change, or resigning in protest. What are some of the arguments that might have been made for why McDonald should have stayed in his League of Nations position?

—Why would President Roosevelt want to have an advisory committee on refugees, if he almost never heeded the advice given to him by McDonald and the other committee members?

Eyewitness to Horror

Document 6.2: “Jews Humiliated by Vienna Crowds”

—The attacks described in the article were “supervised” by Nazi storm troopers from Germany, but were carried out by “triumphant crowds” of Austrian citizens. What did that indicate about the level of antisemitism in Austria at the time?

—In the fourth paragraph, the reporter switched to the first-person. Did that increase the credibility of his account? If so, why?

The Evian Conference

Document 6.3: Refugee Problem Announcement in Preparation for the Evian Conference

—If the Roosevelt administration’s goal was to achieve international cooperation to resettle refugees—as the invitation stated—why hold a major public event? Why not just quietly pursue that goal through behind-the-scenes diplomatic contacts?

—The State Department’s invitation was issued in March, but the Evian conference did not take place until July. Does that delay contradict the statement in the invitation about the “urgency” of the refugee problem?

Suicide of a Jewish Refugee

Document 6.4: “Ends Life to Escape Return to Germany”

—According to the article, Luise Wolf arrived in the United States on April 19, which was only about a month after the German annexation of Austria. How might that development have affected her perspective?

—Why would a suicide such as this attract so little attention from the news media?

FDR Responds to Kristallnacht

Document 6.5: President Roosevelt’s Statement Concerning the Kristallnacht Pogrom

—President Roosevelt emphasized in his statement that “the American people” and “public opinion in the United States” were deeply shocked by the pogrom. Why would he focus on the public’s reaction, rather than his own opinion?

—The president emphasized that the German citizens whose visitor’s visas would be extended “were not all Jews.” How did that illustrate FDR’s overall approach to the plight of Germany’s Jews?

7. The Doomed Journey of the *St. Louis*

Cartoon: Statue of Liberty Ashamed

—Considering that Americans were suffering from the hardships of the Great Depression, why was it “shameful” that the *St. Louis* was turned away?

—The *St. Louis* did not actually sail past the Statue of Liberty, which is near New York City; the ship hovered off the coast of Florida. What does the concept of “artistic license” mean to you in a case like this?

Offer of Haven in the Virgin Islands

Document 7.1: “Virgin Islands Too Offer Haven for Oppressed Jews”

—Governor Cramer could have kept his offer private, and just communicate it to U.S. government officials behind the scenes. Why do you suppose he wanted to have the Virgin Islands Legislative Assembly endorse and publicize the proposal?

—What made the Virgin Islands “a place of safety” for refugees, as the resolution described it?

A Child Appeals to the First Lady

Document 7.2: Eleven-Year-Old Beseeches the First Lady to Accept the Refugees

—Why might the president or first lady take such a letter seriously? Why might they ignore it?

—Most Americans did not agree with Dee Nye’s position. Do you think most people disagreed with the religious and humanitarian sentiments that Dee expressed, or were there other reasons for their opposition to welcoming refugees?

St. Louis Passengers Appeal to the White House

Document 7.3: *St. Louis* Captain's Log Record of Passengers' Telegram to the White House

—Why do you suppose the passengers decided to emphasize in their telegram that there were many women and children on board?

—Was it appropriate for the passengers to share their message with the news media, or should they have treated it as a private communication between them and President Roosevelt?

The Secretary of State and Secretary of Treasury Discuss the *St. Louis*

Document 7.4: Secretary of State and Secretary of the Treasury Confer on the *St. Louis*

—Six months earlier (see Document 6.5), President Roosevelt granted extensions of the visitor's visas of German citizens who were in the United States. What was different about the *St. Louis* passengers, which might explain why the president did not grant visitor's visas to them (so they could enter the Virgin Islands)?

—Secretary Hull said that he discussed the *St. Louis* with President Roosevelt. Why was it significant that Hull spoke to the president?

“The Saddest Ship Afloat”

Document 7.5: “Refugee Ship”

—What is a “plague ship,” and what was the editorial's point in making that reference?

—Do you think it would have made any difference if the *New York Times* had published editorials in support of the *St. Louis* earlier, before the ship had been turned away?

8. The Wagner-Rogers Bill to Save Children

Cartoon: Dr. Seuss on “America First”

—The woman reading the book represents the “America First” movement, which was opposed to the United States taking an interest in any of Europe's problems. What technique did Dr. Seuss use to ridicule her attitude?

—What about this cartoon reminds you of Dr. Seuss's later books, and what about it is different?

The Wagner-Rogers Bill

Document 8.1: Text of the Wagner-Rogers Bill (H.R.J. Res. 165 and 168)

—If a bill had been proposed in 1939 to admit Christian children from some distressed European country, do you think Congress would have passed it? Why or why not?

—The sponsors emphasized, in the preamble to the bill, that “there is now in progress a world-wide effort to facilitate emigration from Germany.” Why do you suppose they felt it was important to point that out? How would that increase the chances of passage?

“20,000 Ugly Adults”

Document 8.2: Remark by FDR’s Cousin Against Wagner-Rogers

—Mrs. Houghteling made her remark in private. Why would she have been unlikely to say the same thing in public?

—When she used the word “ugly,” what does that indicate about what she wanted American society to look like?

President Roosevelt’s Position

Document 8.3: FDR’s “File No Action” Note on Wagner-Rogers

—President Roosevelt never made any public comment on the Wagner-Rogers bill, never replied to Congresswoman O’Day’s question, and never faced any questions from reporters about his position. Do you think that a president today could manage to avoid ever commenting on such a major issue? If not, why not?

—When Roosevelt said that he preferred immigrants who had “blood of the right sort,” what do you think he meant?

Helen Hayes Testifies for Admitting Children

Document 8.4: “First Lady of the American Theater” Testifies for Admitting German Refugee Children

—Some opponents of Wagner-Rogers claimed they did not want to break up German Jewish families. Contrast that with Helen Hayes’s point, in the final paragraph of her testimony, about separating the children from their parents.

—Ms. Hayes recalled her grandmother’s saying that “there is always room for one more” at the dinner table. Do you think most Americans today share that attitude?

Agnes Waters Testifies against Admitting Children

Document 8.5: “Mother Witness” Testifies against Admitting German Refugee Children

—Why do you think Mrs. Waters brought up the point that there were 12 million unemployed in America, when the German Jewish children would have been too young to take away jobs from anybody?

—Mrs. Waters never used the word “Jews” in her testimony. Why do you suppose she did that, and which other terms did she use as code words?

9. American Rescuers

The State Department Rebuffs Varian Fry

Document 9.1: “You should inform Dr. Bohn and Mr. Fry....”

—According to Secretary Hull’s telegram, U.S. consular officials were told “to give immediate and sympathetic consideration” to visa applications from refugees in France. Look at the immigration chart (Document 5.1) to see how many of the quota places for French nationals were used that year (1940) out of the total available under the law; did those statistics support Secretary Hull’s contention?

—The telegram indicates that the Roosevelt administration was very determined to prevent Fry from continuing his work. Cite three phrases in Secretary Hull’s message which indicate how serious and urgent he considered the matter to be.

The Krauses Rescue 50 Children from Germany and Austria

Document 9.2: Erika Tamar’s Passport to America

—How did the willingness of parents to entrust their children to the Krauses compare with the claim by opponents of the Wagner-Rogers bill that it would have been wrong to separate children from their families?

—Should the editors of the *New York Times* have refrained from publicizing the arrival of the children? Or did their obligations as journalists override the Krauses’ concerns?

The Sharps’ Rescue Mission in Czechoslovakia

Document 9.3: Martha Sharp’s Recollections about Rescue Work in Czechoslovakia

—The refugees whom Mrs. Sharp assisted included a prominent surgeon, a leading businessman, and a noted scientist, as well as many ordinary people from all walks of life. What does that tell you about the nature of Nazi policies toward the Jews?

—Why did both the Nazi police and the Dutch border officials leave Mrs. Sharp alone when they realized she was an American?

Lois Gunden Shelters Children in Vichy France

Document 9.4: Recollections of Hiding French Jewish Children from the Nazis

—By hiding Jewish children at Villa St. Christophe, Lois Gunden took a chance that if they were discovered, the Nazi or Vichy police might have retaliated against all of the children and staff who were there. Was that risk justified?

—Gunden and the other Americans at Villa St. Christophe had the opportunity to flee to safety when the Germans took over Vichy France, but they refused to go. Can you think of other examples in American history when somebody had a chance to save themselves but instead chose to continue risking their lives?

Roddie Edmonds Shields Jewish GIs from the Nazis

Document 9.5: Testimony Regarding Master Sergeant Roddie Edmonds' Bravery

—Compare the Roosevelt administration's concern about angering the Germans in the Varian Fry incident (Document 9.1) with how the Germans treated captured American soldiers.

—After the war, Sergeant Edmonds never spoke about what he did to save the Jewish soldiers. What does that say about him?

10. Genocide Confirmed

The Bund Report

Document 10.1: "Report of the Bund Regarding the Persecution of the Jews - May 1942"

—If you were the editor of a newspaper that received a copy of the Bund Report, what about it would make you consider it credible, and what might make you doubt its credibility?

—What were some of the reasons that the Allies did not respond to the Bund Report?

The Riegner Telegram

Document 10.2: Gerhart Riegner's Telegram Revealing the Nazis' Annihilation Plan

—At the beginning of the telegram, the U.S. consul in Geneva described Riegner as "greatly agitated." How might that have influenced the State Department's perception of the information that Riegner was sending? What does it say about the broader question of whether the messenger is as important as the message?

—Riegner wrote that his informant (Schulte) had previously provided him with “generally reliable reports.” Why was that important for Riegner to have mentioned? What about the message might have made the State Department skeptical about its accuracy?

The Sternbuch Telegram

Document 10.3: The Sternbuch Telegram Revealing Additional Details of the Mass Murder

—What were some of the major differences between the Riegner telegram and the Sternbuch telegram?

—Why do you suppose the author of the telegram felt it was important to mention what the Germans were doing to the corpses of their victims?

The Allies’ Declaration

Document 10.4: “German Policy of Extermination of the Jewish Race”

—Why is a statement issued by a government more significant than if the same statement is made by a private individual or organization?

—How would it have been helpful if the Pope had joined the Allies in signing the declaration?

Jan Karski Reports to President Roosevelt

Document 10.5: A Polish Underground Courier’s 1943 Conversation with President Roosevelt

—Why was it important for President Roosevelt to understand the difference between the Nazis’ treatment of Polish Jews and Polish non-Jews?

—Usually an eyewitness account makes a stronger impression than a second-hand report, yet Karski’s statements did not affect President Roosevelt’s policy regarding Jewish refugees. Why do you think that was so?

11. All the News the Media Could Fit

The *New York Times* on Babi Yar

Document 11.1: Two Reporters’ Contrasting Accounts of the Babi Yar Massacre and Why

—Comparing Bill Lawrence’s skeptical article in 1943 with what he wrote in his memoir many years later, how do you understand the reasons that he originally refused to believe what happened in Babi Yar?

—What did Bill Downs mean when he wrote that he was concerned that “we’ll be too soft on them” ?

The Media and the Allies’ Declaration

Document 11.2: U.S. News Media’s Coverage of the Allies’ Declaration on the Mass Murder

—Why was newspaper coverage so important with regard to the Holocaust? What other forms of news media were available to the American public in 1942?

—Think about your own reading habits. When you read a newspaper or a magazine, which parts do you read and which ones do you tend to skip over?

The Media and the Deportations from Hungary

Document 11.3: “Jews in Hungary Fear Annihilation”

—One might expect the imminent murder of one million people to be front page news; yet this article was published on page five. Do you think newspapers today would be more likely to place it on page one? If so, why?

—The diplomat quoted in the article referred to Hungary’s Jews as “members of the faith which is the mother of Christianity.” Why do you suppose he described them that way?

The Nation Urges Rescue

Document 11.4: “While the Jews Die”

—Compare Freda Kirchwey’s explanation about why Jews were being murdered (in her opening paragraph) with the point Jan Karski made in his meeting with President Roosevelt (Document 10.5).

—Kirchwey was worried that the upcoming Anglo-American conference on the refugee problem would turn out to be a “new Evian conference.” Looking back at Document 6.3, what were some aspects of the 1938 Evian conference that gave Kirchwey cause for concern?

I.F. Stone Investigates

Document 11.5: “Justice Department Immigration Figures Knock Long Story Into Cocked Hat”

—Stone pointed out (final paragraph) that many of the foreigners admitted to the United States in recent years were “ordinary immigrants, not refugees.” What is the difference between the two groups, and why is that difference significant?

—Thinking about how the *New York Times* typically covered news about the Holocaust (see Introduction to Chapter 11), what are some of the reasons that an article such as this one by I.F. Stone was never published in the *Times*?

12. American Christian Responses

Rabbi Wise Pleads with Christian Clergy

Document 12.1: Meeting of Rabbi Wise and Christian Clergy, 1933

—What did Rabbi Wise mean when he said that the Nazi anti-Jewish policies also were an attack on “the very heart and fabric of Christianity”?

—Do you think the Christian clergymen would have been more likely to believe the news about Nazi Germany if it had come from a fellow-Christian, rather than from a rabbi?

The U.S. Catholic Press on Kristallnacht

Document 12.2: “Nazi Atrocities and the American War Fever: Are We Preparing for War with Germany?”

—To what was Rev. Blakely referring when he wrote, “we once set out to make the world safe for democracy,” and what did he see as the lesson to be learned from that earlier experience?

—Why did Rev. Blakely point out that the anti-Nazi meetings were “promoted,” and what did he see as the significance of that?

Christian Century Doubts the Holocaust

Document 12.3: “Horror Stories from Poland,” “From Rabbi Wise,” “From The Editors”

—The editors made it seem as if the State Department disagreed with Rabbi Wise’s statements, thus in effect asking readers to choose between the State Department and the rabbi. Which of them do you think readers would have been more likely to believe?

—Part of the reason that the editors gave for doubting the news about the mass murder was that one of those who was publicizing the news was “campaigning for the complete destruction of Germany.” Why would that have mattered?

Jewish and Christian Students Speak Out

Document 12.4: “On Implementing Brotherhood”

—What are some of the reasons that it is difficult to galvanize college students today to become involved in public causes? What unique reasons in the 1940s made it especially difficult?

—Brautigham bemoaned the fact that after the conference, “we have returned to our normal routines.” Is there anything unique about religious seminary students that might make them less likely than others to look away from social concerns and and less likely to just return to their “normal routines”?

A Baptist Farmer’s Gesture

Document 12.5: “Farmer Rogers, His Brother’s Keeper”

—What about Harry Rogers’s attitude reminds you of the letter written by 11 year-old Dee Nye about the passengers on the *St. Louis* (see Document 7.2)?

—Rogers used the phrase “sit idly by,” a well-known expression that originally comes from the Bible. How could it be applied to Americans’ responses to news of the Holocaust?

13. American Jewish Responses

The President and the Rabbi

Document 13.1: Rabbi Wise’s Student Questions His Relationship with FDR

—Explain the two very different understandings that Rabbi Wise and Saadia Gelb had of the notion that Wise could enter the White House only through “the back door.”

—What did Gelb mean by “soapy words”?

Jewish Leaders Appeal to the President

Document 13.2: “Report on the Visit to the President”

—Since the president said he already knew about the mass killings, and he was not prepared to take any particular steps to intervene, why would he agree to this meeting at all?

—Explain the expression “running out the clock,” and how it might have been applied to this meeting.

Jewish Congressmen Meet with the President

Document 13.3: “Minutes of Dinner Meeting on Wednesday evening March 22nd at the Statler Hotel”

—Congressman Ellison believed that Congressman Bloom, who was a strong supporter of President Roosevelt, “had primed the President for the meeting.” What did Ellison mean by that?

—What does the expression “strength in numbers” mean, and how did that apply to this meeting between the president and the Jewish members of Congress?

“If They Were Slaughtering Horses”

Document 13.4: “Confidential Memorandum of Rabbi Meyer Berlin”

—Did Rabbi Berlin mean literally that many people cared more about animal rights than about the mass murder of Jews? Or was he commenting on something about human nature? (Consider this in light of the question following Document 5.2, about a single death and a million deaths.)

—Rabbi Berlin suggested to Senator Wagner that the U.S. should offer asylum to Jewish refugees, “either for permanent stay or merely for the duration [of the war].” Which one of those two options would have been more appealing to the senator, and why?

Jewish Leaders Discuss Strategy

Document 13.5: Meeting of Jewish Leaders Concerning Rescue Advocacy

—While David Wertheim proposed holding a protest march in Washington, D.C., Meyer Weisgal suggested having a demonstration in New York City. What would have been some of the reasons for choosing Washington, and what would have been some of the reasons to choose New York?

—What are some of the most famous protest marches that have taken place in Washington, D.C., and do you think they had an impact?

14. The Bermuda Conference

A Jewish Proposal for Bermuda

Document 14.1: “The Following Proposals are Respectfully Submitted”

—Proposal #3 asked for the admission of more refugees to the United States, within the existing quota system. To see how many lives that might have saved, look at the immigration chart (Document 5.1), and add up the number of unused quota places that year—1943—from Germany and from German-occupied countries in Europe.

—Proposal #8 called on the Allies to give financial assistance to neutral countries that had already given temporary haven to Jewish refugees. Why was that important?

Announcement at the End of the Conference

Document 14.2: “Report of the Bermuda Meeting on the Refugee Problem”

—None of the Jewish organizations or other rescue advocacy groups had asked for “the diverting of Allied shipping from the war effort” to help refugees, so why did the American and British governments, in this announcement, make a point of ruling out that possibility?

—The announcement said that “no negotiations with Hitler could be undertaken,” even though the Allies were already negotiating with Hitler concerning exchanges of POWs as well as some civilians (such as Lois Gunden—see commentary to Document 9.4). How did the Jews who were being held by the Nazis differ from the other prisoners about whom the Allies were negotiating?

Congressman Emanuel Celler’s Response
Document 14.3: Response to Bermuda

—On what grounds did Congressman Celler object to the Allied officials’ position that “victory is the only solution” to the plight of the Jews?

—Congressman Celler said that rescuing the Jews was necessary “lest we forget what we are fighting for.” Similarly, the Jewish organizations which submitted proposals to the Bermuda delegates (see Document 14.1) appealed “in the name of the ideals which the Armed Forces of the United Nations have arisen to defend.” What did Celler and those organizations mean?

A Jewish Leader’s Response
Document 14.4: “The Mockery at Bermuda”

—Rabbi Goldstein called the Bermuda conference a “sequel” to the 1938 Evian conference. In what ways were the two conferences similar, and in what ways did they differ?

—Goldstein argued that the real purpose of the Bermuda conference was “to rescue our State Department and the British Foreign Office from possible embarrassment.” What embarrassment was he referring to?

“An Appeal to the Conscience of the World”
Document 14.5: “I am taking the liberty of addressing to you, Sirs, these my last words...”

—In what way did Szmul Zygielbojm believe his death might help the Jews of Europe?

—Zygielbojm wrote that those who “looked on passively” during the Holocaust bore “indirect responsibility” for the mass murder. Some countries, and some states in America, today have laws requiring bystanders to intervene when they see other people in danger. Do you agree that bystanders should be legally obligated to take action?

15. Obstacles to Rescue

Congressional Sympathy

Document 15.1: Text of the Barkley Resolution (Senate Concurrent Resolution 9)

—The resolution did not propose any steps to rescue Jews. How might congressional perceptions of public opinion, and of President Roosevelt’s position, have influenced the text of the resolution?

—The Allied Declaration confirming the mass murder (see Document 10.4) was issued in mid-December, 1942. The congressional resolution was not adopted until nearly three months later. What did that delay indicate about congressional attitudes toward the plight of the Jews?

A Cartoonist Challenges the State Department

Document 15.2: “Refer to Committee 3, Investigation Subcommittee 6, Section 8B, for Consideration.”

—What does the section of the newspaper that the State Department official on the right is reading indicate about his interests, as compared to his level of interest in the mass murder of the Jews?

—There was no actual “Committee 3” or “Investigation Subcommittee 6” (as per the cartoon’s caption). What did the cartoonist intend to convey by those references?

FDR on “Rescue Through Victory”

Document 15.3: “Speech of the Honorable A. A. Berle, Jr.”

—The assistant secretary of state, Adolph Berle, decided to give this speech about how the Jews could not be rescued, at a rally urging the rescue of the Jews. What does that indicate about the level of protest or criticism that the State Department expected from the American Jewish community?

—How would you explain the contradiction between Berle saying nothing could be done to rescue Jews and then, a few days later, the Bermuda delegates announcing (see Document 14.2) that they were doing many things, in secret, to rescue Jews?

The Allies’ Declaration in Moscow

Document 15.4: “Declaration of the Four Nations on General Security”

—In what way was the Moscow statement a step backwards from the December 1942 Allied Declaration on the mass murder of the Jews (Document 10.4)?

—Why did officials of the War Refugee Board believe it was important for the Allies to acknowledge that the Jews were the main victims of the Nazis?

Empty Ships for Refugees

Document 15.5: “Shipping for Refugees”

—Compare the comments in this editorial about Allied ships taking refugees to Persia (Iran), Mexico and Uganda with the statement made at the end of the Bermuda conference about the unavailability of shipping (Document 14.2).

—Why were the editors of the *Baltimore Jewish Times* unwilling to directly criticize President Roosevelt or the Roosevelt administration on the shipping issue?

16. The Campaign for Rescue

The Bergson Group’s “Race Against Death”

Document 16.1: “This Is a Race Against Death”

—The proposals for rescue listed in this advertisement are not very different from the ones made by Jewish organizations to the State Department before the Bermuda conference (see Document 14.1). But these proposals were made in full-page newspaper ads, while the others were made to government officials in private. Which do you think was more effective, and why?

—This ad, like most of the ads sponsored by the Bergson Group, featured the names of public officials from both political parties, as well as well-known cultural figures. How did having those names strengthen the rescue campaign?

The Rabbis’ Petition to FDR

Document 16.2: “In the name of God, Creator of the Universe...”

—The rabbis had hoped to hand this petition directly to President Roosevelt, but since he refused to see them, they left it with a White House staff member. Do you think it would have made any difference if the president had received it personally?

—The march took place three days before Yom Kippur, also known as the Day of Atonement, which is the holiest day on the Jewish calendar. How did the rabbis connect their march to Yom Kippur (see the references in the opening and concluding paragraphs of the petition)?

Congressional Resolution on Rescue

Document 16.3: Text of the Gillette-Rogers Resolution (H. Res. 352)

—This resolution, introduced in November 1943, began by referring to a previous resolution adopted by Congress, in March of that year, condemning the mass murder of the Jews. What had happened since March which made this new resolution necessary?

—The resolution cites “the American tradition of justice and humanity” as a reason for the U.S. government to take steps to help the Jews. What are some examples of that tradition?

Breckinridge Long’s Testimony

Document 16.4: “Statement of Hon. Breckinridge Long, Assistant Secretary of State”

—Breckinridge Long claimed in his testimony that “any wholesome, proper person” could be admitted to the United States. What do you think he meant by that?

—Long referred to German Jewish immigrants to America as “alien enemies by nationality.” That was technically true, since those Jews were citizens of Germany, which was at war with the United States. But obviously German Jews were not America’s “enemies.” So why would Long have chosen to use that unusual term?

Exposing the State Department

Document 16.5: “Report to the Secretary on the Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews”

—The report based itself (par.2) on the premise that the U.S. government “has for a long time maintained that its policy is...to save those Jews of Europe who could be saved.” What are some examples of actions taken by the government, in the 1930s or 1940s, that were intended to save Jews?

—The report did not accuse any government officials of wanting the Jews to be killed; but it did claim that some officials had tried “to prevent action from being taken to rescue Jews.” What is the difference between those two allegations?

17. Zionism and the Holocaust

The White Paper

Document 17.1: “Palestine Statement of Policy Presented by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to Parliament by Command of His Majesty” (White Paper)

— Paragraph 2 of the White Paper stipulated that both “Jewish and Arab representatives will be consulted” by the authorities. What are some of the reasons that Jewish leaders might not have felt reassured by that promise?

—Some historians contend that the White Paper was antisemitic in practice, if not in theory. What would be some arguments for and against that position?

A Christian Zionist Speaks Out
Document 17.2: “The Fifth Freedom”

—Rev. Brownville described Hitler as “energized by Satan.” From a religious standpoint, what is the significance of that terminology?

—The reverend said that part of the reason Christians should support creation of a Jewish state was that “the Christian is especially indebted to the Jews.” What debt do you think he was referring to?

Proposed Anglo-American Statement
Document 17.3: “Statement for Issuance by the Governments of the United States and the United Kingdom Regarding Palestine”

—In American law, there is a concept called “the heckler’s veto.” Would that have applied to the warning, in paragraph 1 of this proposed statement, against “creating undue anxiety” among “friendly governments and peoples” ?

—If the proposed statement had been issued, what sort of impact might it have had on the campaign to bring about the rescue of European Jews?

1944 Republican and Democratic Party Platforms
Document 17.4: Republican Party Platform of 1944 and Democratic Party Platform of 1944

—What do you think was the most significant difference between the two parties’ planks on Palestine, and why?

—The Republican plank linked the Palestine issue to the European Jewish refugee crisis; the Democratic plank did not link them. Which approach do you think was most appropriate?

FDR’s 1944 Statement on Zionism
Document 17.5: Proposals and Revisions of President Roosevelt’s October 1944 Statement Regarding Palestine

—Which of President Roosevelt’s changes to Rabbi Wise’s draft was the most significant, and why?

—The president watered down Senator Wagner’s text, so that it did not say he was promising to do “all in his power” to bring about the establishment of a Jewish state. Why was FDR unwilling to make such a pledge?

18. The War Refugee Board

Creation of the War Refugee Board

Document 18.1: “Executive Order No. 9417 Establishing a War Refugee Board”

—The first paragraph of the executive order declared that U.S. policy would be “to rescue the victims of enemy oppression.” Yet Roosevelt administration officials—such as Assistant Secretary of State Adolph Berle, in Document 15.3—had until then articulated a very different perspective on rescue. Why did the administration’s position change?

—What did the president’s decision to give the War Refugee Board only meager funding indicate about his view of the Board and its mission?

A Presidential Warning

Document 18.2: Proposals and Revisions of President Roosevelt’s March 24, 1944 Statement Regarding Nazi Collaborators

—Did it matter that the references to Jews were moved from the opening paragraph to later in the statement? Compare this to the impact of an article that appears on the front page of a newspaper, versus the placement of that article on an inside page.

—This presidential statement included references to Japanese mistreatment of civilians. What was the main difference between how the Nazi treated the Jews, and how the Japanese treated civilians in the territories that they conquered?

A Surprising Poll

Document 18.3: Gallup Poll Findings Concerning Temporary Admission of Refugees

—Do you think the responses to the poll would have been significantly different if the poll had not specified that the refugees would stay only for “the duration of the war”? If so, what does that say about the significance of the War Refugee Board’s focus on temporary havens instead of permanent immigration?

—Why did the White House keep these poll results secret?

Rescuing Romanian Jews

Document 18.4: *Life Line to a Promised Land*

—By the time Ira Hirschmann was sent to Turkey, in 1944, the tide of the war had clearly shifted in favor of the Allies. How did that affect the outcome of Hirschmann’s negotiations with the Romanians?

—Hirschmann was a department store executive. Likewise, other Americans who were involved in rescuing Jews in Europe, such as Varian Fry, the Krauses, and Lois Gunden (see Chapter 9), came from professional backgrounds that had nothing to do with refugee work. What is it about human nature that can explain how these individuals ended up doing what they did in Europe?

Raoul Wallenberg’s Mission

Document 18.5: *With Wallenberg in Budapest*

—How does the story of Raoul Wallenberg illustrate the famous saying, “Where there’s a will, there’s a way”?

—Do you think that Wallenberg’s experiences as a young hitchhiker (par.2 of the Introduction) impacted his later rescue work?

19. Bombing Auschwitz

The Auschwitz Escapees’ Report

Document 19.1: “The Extermination Camps of Auschwitz (Oswiecim) and Birkenau in Upper Silesia.”

—Was there anything about this text, or about Rudolf Vrba and Alfred Wetzler, that might make readers doubt the report’s accuracy? What aspect of the text would tend to strengthen its credibility?

—Why did the Germans go to such great lengths to prevent the victims from realizing what was about to happen to them?

A Plea to Bomb the Railways

Document 19.2: Diary of Jacob Rosenheim

—Why would Secretary Hull and Secretary Stimson act as if they were “keenly interested” in the bombing proposal, if in fact they had no intention of taking any action?

—Why would Stimson falsely claim that only the Soviets were operating in the area of Auschwitz?

A Plea to Bomb the Gas Chambers

War Document 19.3: World Jewish Congress Official Urges Assistant Secretary of War to Bomb Gas Chambers at Auschwitz and Nearby Railways

—Kubowitzki framed his message as a request from Ernest Frischer, of the Czech government in exile. Why would the proposal be stronger coming from Frischer?

—Kubowitzki’s letter argued that one of the reasons bombing Auschwitz might “stop further mass exterminations” was because “so little time is left to [the Germans].” What did that mean, and why would it have been a factor?

The War Department’s Rejection Letter

Document 19.4: Assistant Secretary of War Rejects Proposal to Bomb Railways to Auschwitz

—Why would John McCloy and the War Department claim that bombing the railways required “diversion” of U.S. planes, when they must have known that their statement was false?

—Why did they claim that bombing the railways and bridges leading to Auschwitz would be “of very doubtful efficacy,” when no study of its efficacy had been carried out?

A Public Appeal for Bombing

Document 19.5: “Last Chance for Rescue”

—If more American newspapers and magazines had called for bombing Auschwitz or the railway lines leading to it, do you think there would have been a greater chance that the Roosevelt administration would have agreed to order such bombings?

—Do you think the editorial was weakened by the fact that it referred vaguely to “the Allies” and “the democratic world,” instead of specifically challenging the Roosevelt administration?

20. Liberation

A GI Encounters the Holocaust

Document 20.1: Liberation of Dachau

—What difference do you think it would have made, if soldiers such as Private Porter had been told, in advance, what to expect in places such as Dachau?

—Porter mentioned at the end of his letter that his arm was sore from a typhus shot. What does that tell you about the dangers that American soldiers faced in the liberated camps?

Eisenhower Urges Media to See the Camps

Document 20.2: Call for Prominent Witnesses to “Conditions of Indescribable Horror”

—Why do you suppose it was important to General Eisenhower to ensure that nobody could later claim the reports of Nazi death camps were all just “propaganda”?

—Eisenhower specifically proposed that “leaders of Congress” and “prominent editors” be brought to see the camps. Why would such individuals have made particularly useful witnesses?

Marlon Brando, Holocaust Witness
Document 20.3: “A Flag is Born”

—When the “David” character said that “the teachings of my father were wrong,” what was he saying about the persistence of antisemitism around the world?

—How did David see the connection between the Jewish experience in Europe and the need to establish a Jewish state?

An American Chaplain in Buchenwald
Document 20.4: An American Chaplain Encounters Survivors in Buchenwald

—How did Rabbi Schacter compare “seeing pictures of those barracks” (par.4) with his experience of actually seeing them in person?

—Why would the survivors in Buchenwald have been confused, at first, to hear Rabbi Schacter describe himself as “a Jew with American soldiers”?

The Harrison Report
Document 20.5: “Report of Earl G. Harrison”

—What did Harrison see as compelling reasons for permitting the survivors to go to Palestine?

—Do you think Harrison literally meant that conditions in the liberated camps were similar to “following Nazi policy,” or did he say that for dramatic effect? What was his main point?

State of the Field
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