

UNITED STATES
HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
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AMERICAN RESPONSES TO THE HOLOCAUST

IMMIGRATION ACT OF 1924 SIGNED INTO US LAW



- President Calvin Coolidge signed the Johnson-Reed Immigration Act, also known as the “National Origins Act.” This act was based in eugenics, the false idea that some “races” are biologically superior to others.
- This new law limited the total number of immigrants to around 164,000 people per year and established quotas. Only a specific number of people born in each country could immigrate to the United States each year. More than 85% of the immigration slots (about 141,000) were reserved for people born in northern and western Europe.
- The law did not include any protections for refugees.

MAY 26, 1924

ADOLF HITLER APPOINTED CHANCELLOR OF GERMANY



- In the November 1932 German elections, the National Socialist German Workers (Nazi) Party won 33 percent of the vote, more than any other party.
- German President Paul von Hindenburg (*left*) appointed Adolf Hitler (*right*), the head of the Nazi Party, as the new chancellor of Germany.
- Conservative politicians thought they could control Hitler and his followers.
- In 1932, American journalist Dorothy Thompson wrote in *Cosmopolitan* magazine that “Antisemitism is the life and soul of Hitler’s movement.”

JANUARY 30, 1933

FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT SWORN IN AS PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES



- In the November 1932 presidential election, the Democratic candidate, New York governor Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR), defeated the Republican candidate, President Herbert Hoover.
- The United States was still suffering under the Great Depression, which began in 1929. When Roosevelt took office, 25% of the American workforce was unemployed.
- Roosevelt announced a “New Deal” to aid economic recovery. This was his top priority.

MARCH 4, 1933

BOYCOTT OF JEWISH-OWNED BUSINESSES



- The Nazi Party launched a one-day nationwide boycott of businesses owned by Jewish Germans. The Nazis falsely claimed that Jewish communities around the world were spreading “atrocious propaganda” to damage Germany’s reputation.
- The boycott marked the beginning of Nazi efforts to drive Jews from the German economy.
- The boycott was major news in the United States. Many American reporters in Germany covered the story and wrote about the Nazis’ plans even before the boycott began.

APRIL 1, 1933

AMERICANS PROTEST BOOK BURNING



- Pro-Nazi university students throughout Germany burned thousands of books. They targeted so-called “un-German books” that included anti-Nazi ideas or were written by Jewish authors.
- Throughout the United States, Americans protested book burning and other Nazi actions against Jews. At least 65 cities held anti-Nazi marches and rallies. Tens of thousands of people signed petitions asking the US government to pressure the Nazis to stop targeting Jews. Over 100,000 people participated in an anti-Nazi march in New York City on May 10, 1933, as seen here.
- The Roosevelt administration did not formally protest the Nazi treatment of German Jews.

MAY 10, 1933

CONGRESS PASSES FIRST NEUTRALITY ACT



- By the 1930s, many Americans believed that the country's involvement in World War I had been a mistake. They also believed American weapons companies had unfairly profited from the war.
- The House of Representatives and Senate passed a bill that outlawed the export or sale of "arms, ammunition, and implements of war" to any nation at war. President Roosevelt did not support the bill, but was pressured by Congress and by the public to sign it.
- This September 1, 1935, cartoon shows "Europe" trying to pull Uncle Sam [the United States] into a "war" vortex, while Uncle Sam clings to a dock marked "Neutrality."

AUGUST 31, 1935

REICH CITIZENSHIP LAW



- This law, which is part of the “Nuremberg Race Laws,” defined who the Nazi German government considered a “German” and who was a “Jew.” The law defined Jews as a race identified by blood and genealogy. It did not identify Judaism as a religion or culture. This genealogical chart helped Germans understand the new law.
- Under the law, Jews lost their citizenship and became “subjects of the state.”
- Nazi lawyers studied American laws restricting the rights of Black and Brown Americans when planning the Reich Citizenship Law.

SEPTEMBER 15, 1935

GERMANY HOSTS OLYMPIC GAMES



- Throughout 1935, Americans debated whether the United States should participate in the 1936 Olympics, hosted by Nazi Germany. Some argued that the country should boycott the Games to protest the Nazi treatment of German Jews. Ultimately, the United States decided to compete.
- Nazi Germany removed antisemitic signs from the streets of Berlin prior to the arrival of international visitors and athletes. The Olympics was an enormous propaganda success for the country.
- Eighteen Black American athletes competed for the United States, including track star Jesse Owens. Despite winning multiple medals for their country, these athletes still faced racism and segregation after returning to the United States.

AUGUST 1-16, 1936

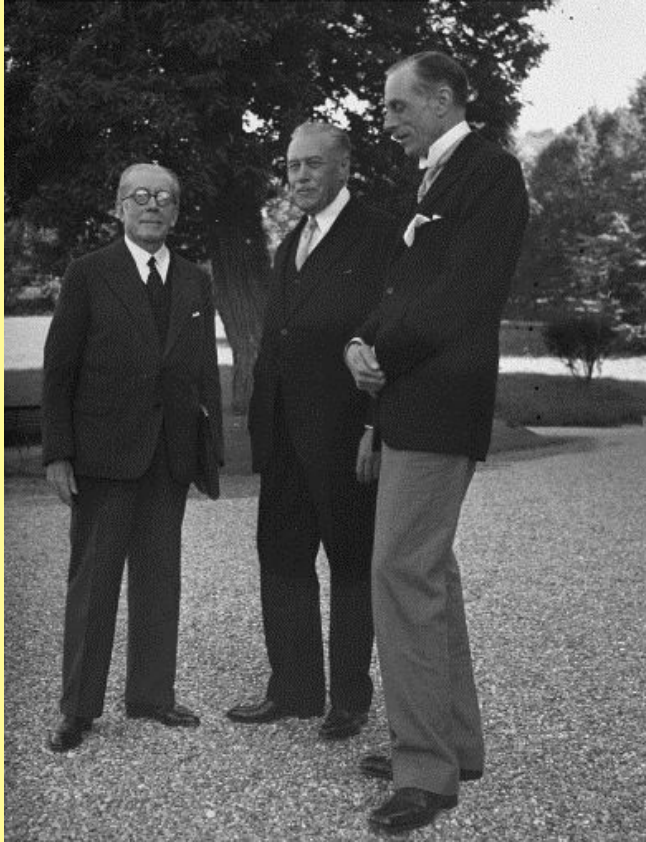
JEWISH REFUGEE CRISIS BEGINS



- On March 12, 1938, Germany annexed Austria, officially adding that country to Germany. The event was called the *Anschluss*. Jewish Austrians were immediately subjected to Germany's antisemitic laws.
- By June 1939, over 300,000 people born in Germany or Austria, most of them Jewish, had applied to join a waiting list for immigration visas to the United States. Under the Immigration Act of 1924, a maximum of only 27,370 of them could enter the country per year.
- This photo shows people waiting in line outside a police station in Vienna to collect immigration papers. Between 180,000-220,000 people escaping Nazi persecution immigrated to the United States.

MARCH 1938

EVIAN CONFERENCE ON REFUGEES



- President Franklin Roosevelt called an international conference to discuss the refugee crisis. Diplomats and representatives from 32 countries met in Évian-les-Bains, France.
- Most of the representatives said that their countries were sympathetic but would not admit more refugees. Some claimed that an increase in immigration would hurt their economy, while others made it clear that they specifically did not want Jewish refugees.
- The German government claimed it was “astounding” that these governments criticized Nazi policy but were unwilling to accept Jewish immigrants.

JULY 6-15, 1938

KRISTALLNACHT ATTACKS



- After learning that his family had been deported from Germany, a Polish-Jewish teenager shot a German diplomat in Paris. In retaliation, Nazi supporters launched a coordinated attack on Jewish-owned stores, synagogues, and homes across the Third Reich.
- The attacks became known as *Kristallnacht*, the “Night of Broken Glass.” It is also called the “November pogrom.”
- Approximately 30,000 Jewish men were arrested and sent to concentration camps. Hundreds of synagogues (including this one in Aachen, Germany) and more than 7,000 businesses were damaged or destroyed.
- *Kristallnacht* was front-page news in the United States for several weeks. Polls showed that 94% of Americans did not approve of the Nazi treatment of Jews, but 72% did not want to admit more Jewish refugees from Germany.

NOVEMBER 9-10, 1938

CHILD REFUGEE BILL INTRODUCED IN CONGRESS



- Democratic senator Robert Wagner (NY) and Republican congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers (MA) introduced a bill to bring 20,000 “German refugee children” to the United States. It became known as the Wagner-Rogers bill.
- The refugee children would be aged 5 to 14, and would not take any of the limited immigration slots. The bill specifically described the children as “German” rather than “Jewish.”
- First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt said that other countries were taking refugee children and the United States “should do our share.”
- Anti-immigrant politicians threatened to end all immigration in exchange for passing this bill. Wagner and Rogers withdrew the bill and Congress never voted on it.

FEBRUARY 9, 1939

PRO-NAZI RALLY IN NEW YORK CITY



- The German American Bund was a pro-Nazi organization. It had an estimated 20,000 members. Most were first- or second-generation immigrants from Germany.
- The Bund required all members to be American citizens. They wanted to make sure their words would be protected by the First Amendment's right to free speech.
- The Bund held a massive rally in Madison Square Garden in New York City. The rally featured a large banner of George Washington, next to American and swastika flags. The Bund's leader, Fritz Kuhn, mocked Jews and called for a white, Christian government.
- Tens of thousands of New Yorkers protested the rally.

FEBRUARY 20, 1939

ST. LOUIS SAILS



- The *St. Louis*, a German ship, left Hamburg for Havana, Cuba, carrying 937 passengers. Almost all were Jewish refugees. Most of the refugees planned to wait in safety in Cuba until they obtained visas to immigrate to the United States.
- The Cuban government refused to allow most of the passengers to land, claiming they did not have the right paperwork. The United States and Canada did not offer to admit them.
- Rather than returning to Germany, the passengers were split up between England, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Two hundred fifty-four passengers were later murdered in the Holocaust.

MAY 13, 1939

GERMANY INVADES POLAND



- The German army invaded Poland. Great Britain and France (“the Allies”) had an alliance with Poland. On September 3, they declared war on Germany. World War II in Europe began.
- The Soviet Union had a pact with Nazi Germany. On September 17, the Soviet Union invaded eastern Poland. Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union divided Poland between them.
- President Roosevelt reassured Americans that the United States would remain a neutral nation. Most Americans did not want to get involved in the war.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1939

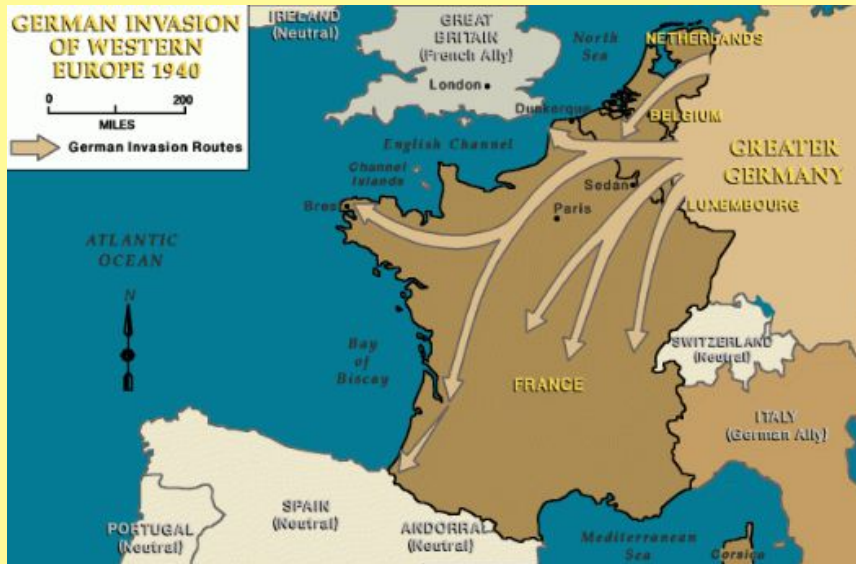
NEUTRALITY ACTS REVISED



- President Roosevelt wanted to revise the neutrality laws to be able to support Great Britain and France (“the Allies”). After a long debate, Congress passed a new Neutrality Act and Roosevelt signed it into law (seen here).
- This act allowed the United States to sell weapons and ammunition on a “cash and carry” basis to countries at war. “Cash” meant that these countries had to buy the weapons, and “carry” meant that they had to transport their purchases from the United States on their own ships.
- Isolationists feared that if the United States sold weapons to the Allies, it would lead to the country entering World War II.

NOVEMBER 4, 1939

GERMANY INVADES WESTERN EUROPE



- Germany launched a surprise invasion of the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, and France. These countries were defeated or surrendered quickly. Hundreds of thousands of Jews in western Europe were now under Nazi control.
- Within weeks, France was split in two. Germany occupied the north of the country, and a Nazi-collaborating French government controlled the south.
- Many Americans believed that the Nazis had placed spies and saboteurs inside western Europe prior to the invasion. They feared Germany would now send spies to prepare for an invasion of the United States.

MAY 10, 1940

MILITARY DRAFT BEGINS



- Congress passed the Selective Service Act, which required that American men between the ages of 21 and 35 had to register with local draft boards. These men were put in a lottery to be drafted into the US military.
- Isolationist members of Congress added restrictions to the act. The draft would only last for one year, and no drafted man could be deployed outside of the western hemisphere or US territories.
- This was the first peacetime military draft in United States history. In August 1941, Congress passed a renewal of the act by one vote.
- The draft affected millions of men. In this photo, movie star Jimmy Stewart (left), who had been drafted, is sworn in to military service.

SEPTEMBER 16, 1940

MARCH ON WASHINGTON PLANNED

WHY SHOULD WE MARCH?



15,000 Negroes Assembled at St. Louis, Missouri
20,000 Negroes Assembled at Chicago, Illinois
23,500 Negroes Assembled at New York City
Millions of Negro Americans all Over This Great
Land Claim the Right to be Free!

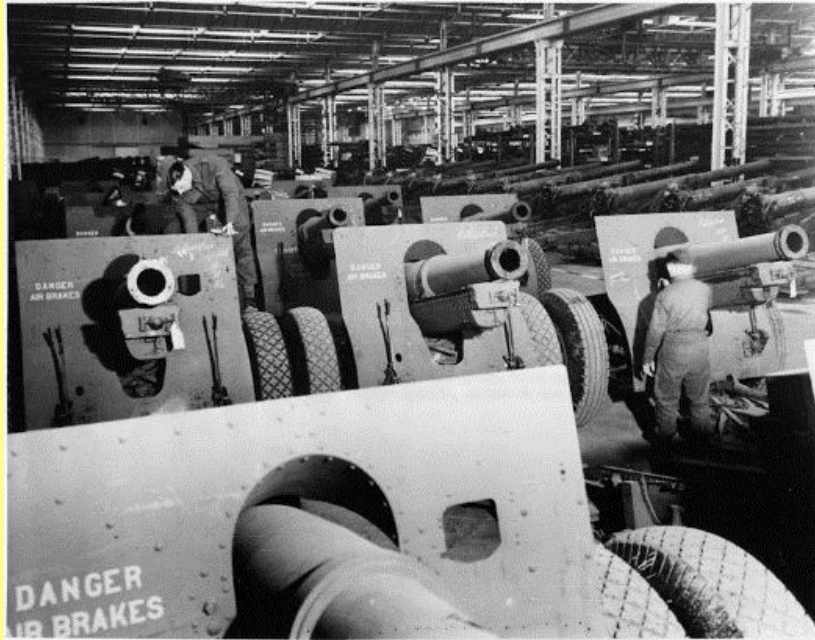
FREE FROM WANT!
FREE FROM FEAR!
FREE FROM JIM CROW!

*"Winning Democracy for the Negro is Winning the War
for Democracy!" — A. Philip Randolph*

- A. Philip Randolph, the head of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, called for Black Americans to organize a protest march on Washington, DC. The Brotherhood was a very influential labor union made up of railway workers, most of whom were Black.
- Randolph wanted to protest the segregation of the defense industry. Many factories building military equipment refused to hire Black workers.
- In June 1941, President Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8802, which prohibited racial and religious discrimination in the defense industry. As a result, Randolph called off plans for the march. Many Black workers continued to face discrimination.

JANUARY 25, 1941

ROOSEVELT SIGNS LEND-LEASE ACT



- Although the United States was officially neutral, and many Americans did not want to fight in World War II, the country supported the Allies. After France was defeated, Great Britain needed American aid to continue to fight Nazi Germany.
- In a speech to Congress in January 1941, President Roosevelt had called on the United States to become “the great arsenal of democracy.”
- Congress passed the Lend-Lease Act, which allowed the United States to “lend” weapons, food, and oil to the Allies.
- Many American factories began manufacturing military equipment instead of the products they had previously made.

MARCH 11, 1941

GERMANY ORDERS US CONSULATES TO CLOSE



- In mid-June 1941, the State Department ordered all German consulates in the United States to close. Officials claimed that German diplomats were planning spying and sabotage operations.
- In response, the German and Italian governments ordered all US consulates to shut down in the parts of Europe controlled by their countries. Dozens of American consulates throughout Europe were forced to close by July 15, 1941. Most US diplomats had to leave.
- People trying to flee Nazi persecution could no longer visit these consulates to apply for US immigration visas. Immigration to the United States became much more difficult. This page is from the passport of Ernestine Beneš, who immigrated to the United States from Vienna in June 1941, right before the consulates closed.

JUNE 19, 1941

GERMANY INVADES THE SOVIET UNION



- Despite the pact between the two countries, Nazi Germany launched a surprise invasion of the Soviet Union. Germany also invaded areas occupied by the Soviet Union, including Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.
- Mobile killing squads, called *Einsatzgruppen*, followed behind the German lines, murdering Jews and other victims by shooting and gassing in gas vans. Approximately two million Jews died this way.
- Although the German military captured millions of Soviet soldiers, the Soviet Union did not surrender. The United States began supplying the Soviet Union through the Lend-Lease Act.

JUNE 22, 1941

CHARLES LINDBERGH GIVES ANTISEMITIC SPEECH



- Charles Lindbergh was one of the most famous Americans in the world. In 1927, he had been the first pilot to fly by himself across the Atlantic without stopping.
- Lindbergh was a spokesperson for the America First Committee. America First was an isolationist organization that opposed any involvement in World War II except for defending the United States.
- During a speech in Des Moines, Iowa, Lindbergh claimed that Jewish people were forcing the country to join the war. He repeated and endorsed antisemitic stereotypes. His speech was criticized throughout the country, including by cartoonist Dr. Seuss (as seen here).

SEPTEMBER 11, 1941

JAPAN ATTACKS PEARL HARBOR



- The United States imposed economic sanctions on Japan and cut off Japan's supply of oil. In retaliation, Japan launched a surprise attack on the US Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The United States declared war on Japan.
- On December 11, Nazi Germany declared war on the United States.
- The United States officially entered World War II and joined the Allies. The America First organization shut down and many members joined the military.

DECEMBER 7, 1941

DOUBLE-V CAMPAIGN BEGINS



- James G. Thompson, a young Black man in Wichita, Kansas, wrote a letter to the *Pittsburgh Courier*, a Black newspaper. He asked “Should I sacrifice my life to live half American?”
- Thompson proposed a “Double-V” campaign, representing “Victory Abroad” against Nazi Germany and “Victory at Home” against racism in the United States.
- The Double-V campaign was popular in the Black community, but many whites claimed that the campaign might endanger the American war effort.
- The US Army was racially segregated. More than one million Black men and women served in the American military during World War II, most of whom volunteered for service.

FEBRUARY 7, 1942

IMPRISONMENT OF JAPANESE AND JAPANESE-AMERICANS



- After Pearl Harbor, President Franklin Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. It declared the western United States to be a military zone. Authorities were permitted to exclude specific people from the zone in the name of national security.
- As a result, approximately 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry living on the west coast were removed from their homes and imprisoned, many of them for the duration of the war. They were sent to so-called “relocation centers” and denied their constitutional rights. At least two-thirds of the people imprisoned were US citizens.
- In this photo from San Francisco, “evacuees” line up to register prior to being sent to a “relocation center.”

FEBRUARY 19, 1942

ALLIED FORCES INVADE NORTH AFRICA



- Allied forces launched several surprise landings on the coast of North Africa.
- They wanted to defeat the military forces of Germany, Italy, and collaborationist France in North Africa. This would prevent the Axis powers from controlling the Mediterranean Sea.
- In retaliation, Nazi Germany occupied southern France.
- American and British troops fought in North Africa for six months before defeating the Axis there.

NOVEMBER 8, 1942

NAZI MASS MURDER PLAN REPORTED

'2 Million Jews In Europe Slain'

State Department Confirms Sources

Washington, D. C. (AP)

Dr. Stephen S. Wise, chairman of the World Jewish Congress, said last night that he had learned through sources confirmed by the State department that approximately half the estimated 4 million Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe had been slain in an "extermination campaign."

Dr. Wise, who also is president of the American Jewish Congress and chairman of a committee com-

- In August 1942, Gerhart Riegner, a lawyer who lived in Switzerland and worked for the World Jewish Congress organization, heard from a German informant that Nazi Germany was trying to murder all Jewish people in Europe. Riegner alerted US and British diplomats.
- The US State Department originally thought Riegner's information was just a "war rumor."
- In November 1942, Rabbi Stephen Wise, the head of the World Jewish Congress, shared the information with the press. Newspapers throughout the country informed readers of the Nazis' plans—and that they had already murdered millions of Jews.

NOVEMBER 24, 1942

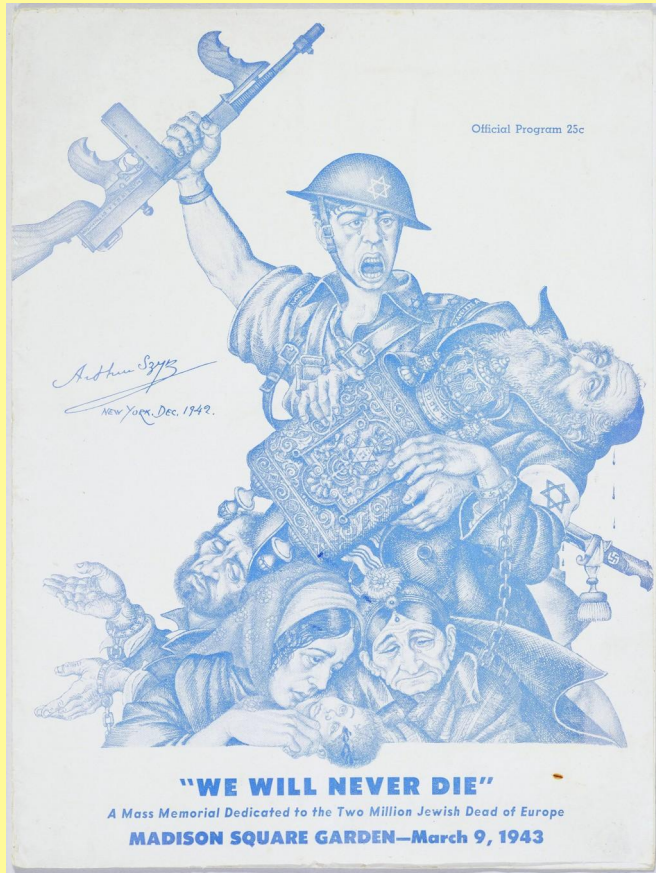
ALLIES CONDEMN MASS MURDER



- The United States, Soviet Union, Great Britain, and eight Allied governments-in-exile (the official governments that had escaped when Nazi Germany occupied their countries) issued a declaration.
- The declaration condemned the Nazi policy of "cold-blooded extermination" and vowed that the perpetrators of the atrocities would not escape punishment after the war.
- The declaration did not promise any efforts to rescue European Jews. Many government officials argued that attempts to rescue Nazi victims might harm the war effort.

DECEMBER 17, 1942

WE WILL NEVER DIE DEBUTS



- The Committee for a Jewish Army organization had been lobbying US officials to establish a Jewish army under Allied command. After learning of the Nazi mass murder campaign, the organization began to pressure the government to try to rescue European Jews.
- Hollywood and Broadway stars joined with the Committee to create *We Will Never Die*, a memorial pageant to mourn the Jewish victims of Nazi persecution. The pageant sold out Madison Square Garden twice, and went on to tour major cities throughout the country.
- When the pageant came to Washington, D.C., in April 1943, the performers specifically pressured government officials in the audience to do something to rescue Jews.

MARCH 9, 1943

BERMUDA CONFERENCE

To 5,000,000 Jews in the Nazi Death-Trap Bermuda Was a "Cruel Mockery"

When Will The United Nations Establish An Agency To Deal With The Problem of Hitler's Extermination of a Whole People?

SOMEHOW, through invisible, underground channels, one ray of shining hope might have penetrated the ghettos of Europe. A rumor might have spread and grown into a whisper among the agonized Jews of Hitler's hell. A whisper telling of deliverance from torture, death, starvation and agony in slaughter-houses. This ray of hope and this whisper were expressed in one word: Bermuda!

The rumor told of representatives of the United States and Great Britain, the leading champions of the United Nations, the protagonists of the Four Freedoms, assembling to save the hunted and tortured Jews of Europe. On the deliberations of this small convention on an Island in the Atlantic were focused all the hopes of the doomed Jews of Europe; those, too, of the free well-meaning people the world over. Men and women of good will everywhere at last believed that the United Nations had decided to do something about the unprecedented disaster of a people put to death.

Wretched, doomed victims of Hitler's tyranny! Poor men and women of good faith the world over! You have cherished an illusion. Your hopes have been in vain. Bermuda was not the dawn of a new era, of an era of humanity and compassion, of translating pity into deed. Bermuda was a mockery, and a cruel jest.

THIS is not our definition. It is the definition of the London Sunday "Observer"—one of the most influential and important newspapers in Great Britain.

Not only were ways and means to save the remaining four million Jews in Europe not devised, but their problem was not even touched upon, put on the agenda, or discussed. More than that—the name "Jews" was banished from the vocabulary of this convention, as *PM's* foreign editor, Alexander Uhl, reports: "It was regarded as almost improper to mention even the word 'Jew.'"

But not only the attention of the victims of Nazi atrocities and of their friends the world over was concentrated on the meeting at Bermuda: Hitler, too, was concerned with the United Nations' reply to his challenge to the extermination of the Jewish population in Europe. Alas! To him Bermuda was again convincing proof that the United Nations were neither ready nor willing to answer his threat with action. They were continuing to give him "carte blanche" in his extermination process, exactly as in the pre-war days they permitted him to deal with Jews in Germany, with Austria and Czechoslovakia, thus paving the way for aggression, invasion, and war.

Can it be possible that the United Nations do not understand that should Hitler succeed in exterminating the Jews as a people, they by their silence will pave the way to the extermination of the Czechoslovak, Polish, Greek or even the French peoples?

Now we are witnessing a variety of attempts to justify the Bermuda failure, to wrap it in secret formulae, such as "no dealing with Hitler," or "not to interfere with the prosecution of

The Jewish Problem Is Not a Refugee Problem

With the Bermuda Conference a thing of the past, not having even discussed the problem of the extermination of the Jewish people in Europe, now, more than ever, it is clear that we are dealing not only with a *refugee problem*, but with the *Jewish problem* of Europe. These two problems should not be confused. They are entirely distinct. Democracy cannot connive with the slaughter of millions of innocent civilian people—the Jews in Europe. There are ways and means to stop Hitler's wholesale murder and to evacuate those who can be evacuated. *But no one has been assigned to deal with this tremendous problem.* What is necessary is that the machinery for action be created. The United Nations, which have uttered so many words of pity must now *do* something if these words of pity are to be more than empty lies. They must create a United Nations Agency composed of military and diplomatic experts, which should have full authority to define and effectuate a realistic and stern policy of action, to save the remaining millions of Jewish people. *This Agency or Commission will deal, not with refugees outside Hitler's reach, but with the Jewish people under his yoke today.*

A Program of Action (. . . Not Pity!)

- Faced with public pressure to rescue Jews and other Nazi victims, the State Department and British Foreign Office agreed to hold a conference in Bermuda to discuss options.
- In advance of the conference, the two governments ruled out any suggestions. They chose not to propose any major changes in policy or plans to rescue Jews. They also claimed that the results of the conference had to be kept secret.
- The Committee for a Jewish Army criticized the conference. They placed this ad in several major American newspapers.

THE VOICE OF AMERICA

"... We shall no longer witness with pity alone, and with passive sympathy, the calculated extermination of the ancient Jewish people by the barbarous Nazis..."

(From the preamble of the Proclamation on the Moral Rights of the Nations and the Victims of the Nazis)

Major Gen. Charles J. Butler
Major-General Charles S. Butler
Major-General Richard S. West
Major-General The General

Major-General William Crozier
Major-General Robert G. Booth
Major-General John B. Starnes
Major-General George B. Starnes
Major-General Charles E. Truett

Major-General Robert C. Fox
Major-General Roy A. Harbo
Major-General A. F. Roberts
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APRIL 19-29, 1943

ROOSEVELT CREATES WAR REFUGEE BOARD



- In response to pressure from Congress, the public, and inside the government, President Roosevelt created a new government agency responsible for trying to rescue and provide aid to European Jews.
- The War Refugee Board streamlined humanitarian aid, helped Jews escape, and tried to protect Jews in Nazi territory.
- By the end of the war, the WRB had saved tens of thousands of lives and helped hundreds of thousands of people.

JANUARY 22, 1944

GERMANY OCCUPIES HUNGARY



- Nazi Germany invaded and occupied Hungary to prevent the country from leaving the Axis and joining the Allies.
- Hungary had the largest Jewish population remaining in Europe.
- Within two months of the invasion, Nazi authorities and Hungarian police began deporting approximately 440,000 Hungarian Jews to Auschwitz. Many of them were murdered as soon as they arrived.
- This photograph shows a transport of Hungarian Jews arriving at Auschwitz.

MARCH 19, 1944

D-DAY INVASION



- American, British, and Canadian naval and air forces invaded the beaches of Normandy, France.
- The opening of the long-awaited “second front” put tremendous military pressure on Nazi Germany and gave a psychological boost to the Allies.
- Although German troops fought back, the D-Day invasion was ultimately successful. By late August, the Allies had liberated Paris.

JUNE 6, 1944

WAR DEPARTMENT REJECTS BOMBING REQUEST



- The War Refugee Board (WRB) received dozens of recommendations about how to save Jews, including pleas for the Allies to bomb either the rail lines that transported Jews to Auschwitz, its gas chambers, or the entire camp.
- The War Department repeatedly refused these requests. Although the US Army Air Force bombed factories near Auschwitz, the War Department told the WRB that bombing the camp or the rail lines would divert the military from its main objective—winning the war as soon as possible.
- This 1944 photo shows US Army Air Force planes flying over the area where Auschwitz is located.

JULY 5, 1944

FORT ONTARIO EMERGENCY REFUGEE SHELTER OPENS



- The War Refugee Board convinced President Roosevelt to open a refugee shelter in the United States. The shelter was located at Fort Ontario, a former military camp in Oswego, New York.
- Nearly 1,000 refugees, most of them Jewish, came to the shelter from Allied-liberated Italy. They were originally from 18 different countries. Some had been in concentration camps, and many had been on the run from the Nazis and their collaborators for years. The refugees were not allowed to live outside the shelter, even if they had family in the US.
- They are the only group of Holocaust-era refugees to enter the United States as a special group, outside of the immigration system.

AUGUST 5, 1944

AUSCHWITZ REPORT PUBLICIZED

Genocide

No human creature can read the report of the War Refugee Board released last Sunday without a sense of shock and shame. The report presents eyewitness accounts of events which occurred at the German extermination camps of Auschwitz and Birkenau. "So revolting and diabolical are the German atrocities," says the WRB, "that the minds of civilized people find it difficult to believe that they have actually taken place. But the governments of the United States and of other countries have evidence which clearly substantiates the facts." The

- The War Refugee Board received a report written by two Jewish men from Slovakia who had escaped from Auschwitz. The men had escaped the camp in spring 1944, after being imprisoned for two years. The report provided first-person testimony of the process of arrival at the camp, the separation of prisoners, and how the gas chambers worked.
- The War Refugee Board shared the report with newspapers nationwide.
- On December 3, 1944, the *Washington Post* printed an editorial entitled "Genocide." The newspaper explained that this was a new word created by Polish Jewish lawyer and refugee Raphael Lemkin to describe crimes like Auschwitz.

NOVEMBER 25, 1944

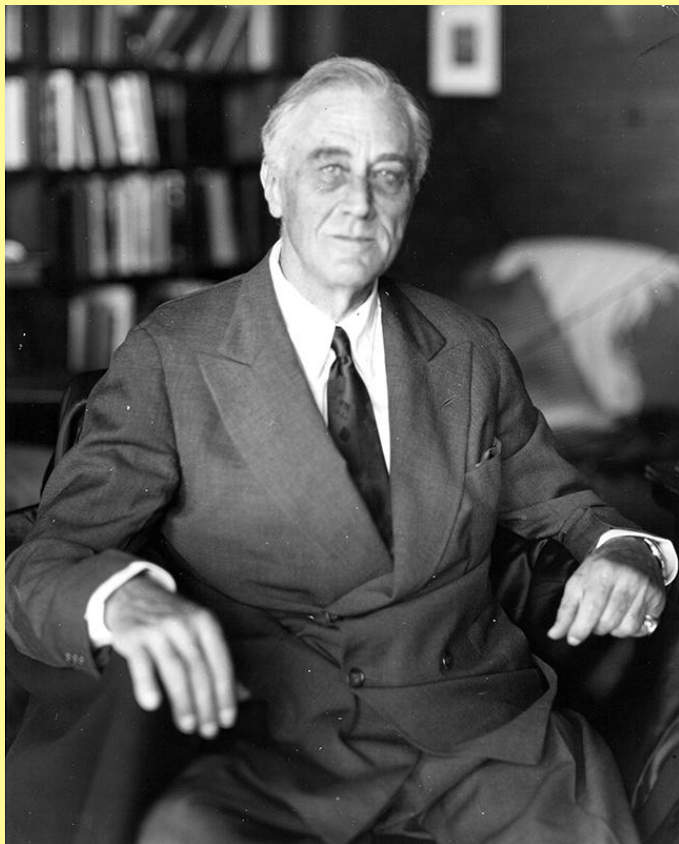
AMERICAN TROOPS LIBERATE BUCHENWALD



- The United States, Great Britain, Canada, and the Soviet Union liberated many concentration camps, including Buchenwald, in April and May 1945.
- On April 12, General Dwight Eisenhower, the commander of the western Allied forces, toured Ohrdruf, a subcamp of Buchenwald (seen here).
- Eisenhower ordered all Allied troops near newly-liberated concentration camps to tour them. He wanted to ensure that the horror of the Holocaust could not be called propaganda.

APRIL 11, 1945

PRESIDENT ROOSEVELT DIES



- After twelve years as president, Franklin Roosevelt died of a cerebral hemorrhage in Warm Springs, Georgia. This portrait was taken the day before he died.
- Harry Truman, Roosevelt's vice president, was sworn in as the 33rd president of the United States.
- Roosevelt died the same day General Dwight Eisenhower toured the Ohrdruf concentration camp. Roosevelt did not live to see any images of newly-liberated concentration camps or to see the end of World War II.

APRIL 12, 1945

GERMAN FORCES SURRENDER



- At the end of April, Soviet forces encircled Berlin, Germany's capital. Adolf Hitler committed suicide on April 30, 1945.
- German officials (seen in this photo) unconditionally surrendered on May 7, 1945. The next day, as the war in Europe formally ended, the Allies celebrated "V-E Day" (Victory in Europe).
- More than two million Europeans, including 250,000 Jews, were displaced persons. The Allies opened camps for them until they could return home or immigrate. The United States did not change its immigration laws.
- In 1948, Congress passed a law to allow more displaced persons into the country. The law discriminated against Jewish displaced persons.

MAY 7, 1945

WORLD WAR II ENDS



- The United States dropped nuclear bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima (on August 6th) and Nagasaki (on August 9th). Hundreds of thousands of Japanese civilians died as a result of the bombing.
- In this photo, American servicemen and women celebrate in the streets of Paris after hearing that Japan planned to surrender.
- Japan signed the official surrender documents on September 2, 1945. This day was called “V-J Day” (Victory over Japan).
- World War II officially ended.

SEPTEMBER 2, 1945

1924

1933

1935

1936

1938

1939

1940

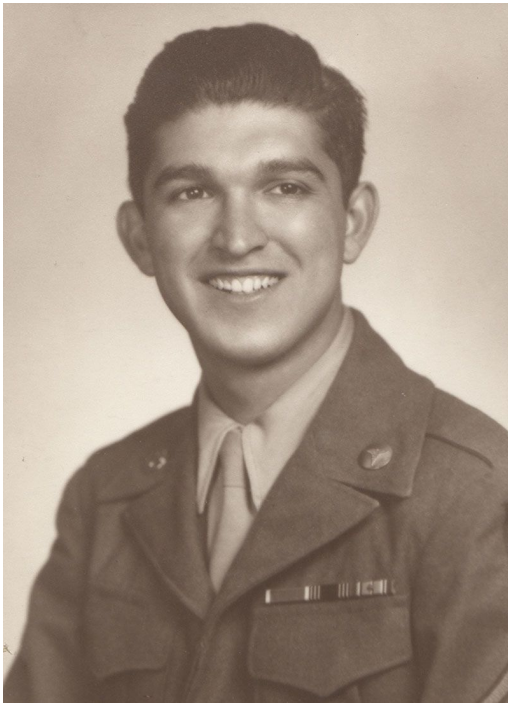
1941

1942

1943

1944

1945



Anthony Acevedo

Born 1924
San Bernardino, California

Anthony (Tony) Acevedo was born in San Bernardino, California, in 1924. His family was Mexican-American and Catholic, and while growing up, he was subjected to prejudice and segregation. During the Great Depression, many Mexican-Americans were targeted by federal and state authorities and encouraged to voluntarily leave for Mexico or risk deportation. In 1937, Tony, his parents, and his siblings, moved to Durango, Mexico.

After the United States entered World War II in December 1941, Tony wanted to return to the US and join the military. He wasn't 18 yet, but his father sent a letter to the US Army granting his permission for Tony to enlist. He trained as a medic. In the fall of 1944, Tony was sent to Europe as part of the 70th Infantry Division of the US Army.

Tony and his fellow soldiers fought in the Battle of the Bulge, trying to push back a German attack. At least 600,000 Americans fought, and tens of thousands were wounded or captured. In January **1945**, German troops surrounded Tony and the other members of his unit and they were forced to surrender. They became prisoners of war (POWs).

The Germans marched the American soldiers through the snow and put them on open train cars. They finally arrived at Stalag IX-B, a camp for political prisoners in Germany. The POWs were tortured and starved, but Tony tried to continue his work as a medic and care for his fellow soldiers.

A month later, Tony and other members of his group were separated from the rest of the American POWs. They believed they were separated because the Nazis considered them racially "undesirable." This group, including Tony, was sent to Berga an der Elster, a forced labor camp that was part of the Buchenwald concentration camp system. Conditions at the camp were horrible. As the Allied armies approached, the Germans sent the POWs on a forced march. They were finally liberated by the American military on April 23, 1945. Approximately 70 of the 350 American prisoners at Berga died as a result of their treatment by the Germans.



Alfred Berg

Born 1924
Vienna, Austria

Alfred Berg was born in 1924 in Vienna, Austria. His father, Julius, had fought for Germany in World War I and worked as a tailor. Alfred's mother, Frieda, took care of Alfred and his younger sister Charlotte.

On March 12, 1938, Nazi Germany occupied and annexed Austria. German officials immediately imposed antisemitic laws on Viennese Jews. Alfred was attacked by other boys for being Jewish. During Kristallnacht in November 1938, Julius was arrested and taken to the police station, but was released only because he had worked as a tailor for one of the Nazi officers. The family began looking for an opportunity to immigrate.

In April 1939, the Bergs learned that an American couple, Gilbert and Eleanor Kraus, had come to Vienna with a plan to help fifty Jewish children immigrate to the United States. In May, Charlotte was selected as one of the fifty children. Right before the group left, one boy got sick, and Alfred was chosen to take his place in the group. The children, who were all between the ages of 5 and 15 years old, left with the Krauses and several chaperones from Hamburg on the SS *President Harding*. They arrived in New York City on June 3, 1939.

After arriving in the United States, Alfred, Charlotte, and the other children lived at a summer camp in Pennsylvania owned by Brith Sholom, a Jewish fraternal organization that had been sponsoring the Krauses' efforts. Soon, though, the children were split up. Some reunited with their parents, who had been able to immigrate to the United States. Others, like Charlotte, were sent to live with relatives, while Alfred was one of the children who lived with foster families.

In December 1939, Julius and Frieda Berg were able to immigrate to the United States, and the family reunited. Alfred served in the United States Navy during World War II.



Gretel Bergmann

Born 1914

Laupheim, Germany

Gretel Bergmann was born in 1914 in Laupheim, Germany. Her family was Jewish. Gretel was very athletic, and by the time she graduated from high school, was well-known nationwide as one of Germany's best young female athletes.

In January 1933, Adolf Hitler, the leader of the Nazi Party, was appointed chancellor of Germany. The Nazis immediately put restrictions on Jews, barring them from jobs and schools. Gretel was excluded from participating in organized sports and from going to college. She traveled to England, hoping to continue her athletic training. By 1934, she was the British high jump champion.

Berlin, the capital of Germany, prepared to host the 1936 Summer Olympics. In the United States, the athletic community debated whether the country should boycott the Olympics and refuse to send athletes as a sign of protest against the Nazi treatment of Jews. Wanting to give the impression that Germany was a fair country, Nazi officials ordered Gretel's father, Edwin, to go to England and persuade his daughter to return to Germany to compete. Gretel agreed, fearing her family would be punished if she refused. But in Germany, she was still forbidden to train with non-Jewish athletes.

Shortly before the Olympics in **1936**, Gretel equaled the German record in the high jump and was ranked number three in the world. Still, just days after the US Olympic team set sail for Germany, Nazi officials informed Gretel by letter that due to her poor athletic performance, she would not be allowed to participate in the Olympics. They offered her standing-room tickets to the track and field events.

Gretel immigrated to the United States in 1937 and began to train for the 1940 Olympics, planning to be part of the American team. The Olympics were canceled due to the outbreak of World War II, and Gretel retired from competition. She changed her name to Margaret Lambert.



Franz Goldberger

Born 1899

Vienna, Austria

Franz Goldberger was born in 1899 in Vienna, Austria. He was Jewish, and worked teaching business courses at a high school. He was not married and did not have children.

On March 12, 1938, Nazi Germany occupied and annexed Austria. German officials immediately imposed antisemitic laws on Viennese Jews. Franz was fired from his job. Desperate to escape, he began writing to total strangers in the United States, in the hopes that someone would agree to act as the financial sponsor he needed in order to immigrate. While he was waiting, he took classes with the Vienna Jewish community, learning how to garden, cut hair, repair shoes, and work as a butler—any skill that would allow him to support himself in another country.

In the spring of 1940, one of Franz’s letters reached Helen Roseland, who worked for the post office in Eagle Grove, Iowa. She believed that her Lutheran faith called her to help Franz, and she filled out the extensive paperwork needed to act as his financial sponsor.

Franz was grateful, but soon after the Nazis arrested him and sent him to a work camp outside of Vienna. By the time he was released in January **1941**, all of Helen’s paperwork had expired. Helen filled out the paperwork again, and even bought Franz a ship ticket he could use to travel to the United States. Unfortunately, he never used the ticket.

Historians do not know whether Franz Goldberger ever received his United States immigrant visa, or whether he was arrested before he could finish the application process. In May 1942, Nazi officials deported Franz from Vienna. He died in the Majdanek camp on August 20, 1942. Helen Roseland spent years trying to find out what happened to him and died without knowing his fate.



Marianne Winter

Born 1921

Vienna, Austria

Marianne Winter was born in 1921 in Vienna, Austria. Her father, Max, was a perfume chemist, and her mother, Anna, worked as a music teacher and took care of Marianne and her younger brother, Stephen. Marianne loved to swim and dance and was involved in the Campfire Girls program. Through the Campfire Girls, she connected with an American pen pal named Jane Bomberger, who lived in Reading, Pennsylvania. Marianne used her letters to Jane to practice English.

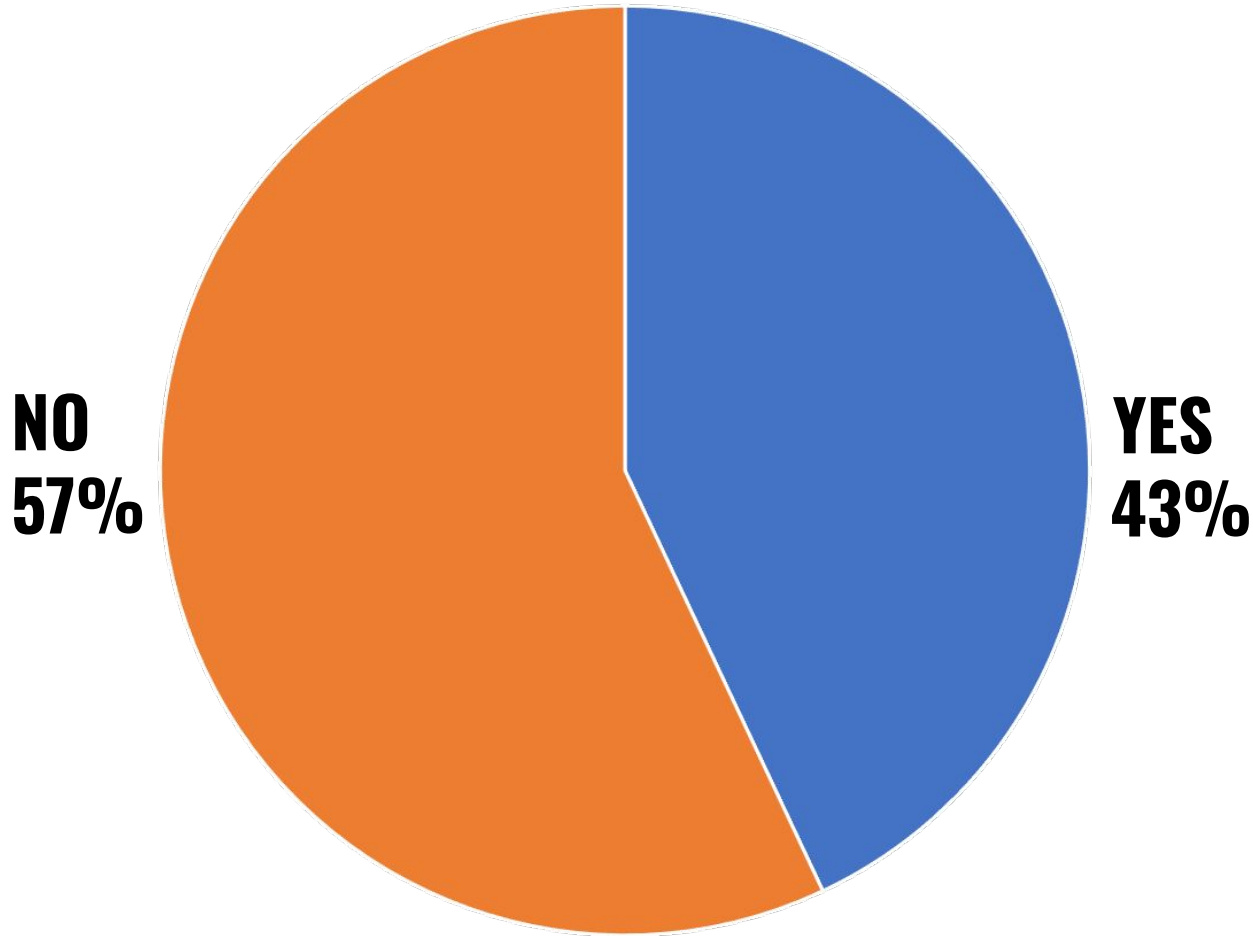
On March 12, **1938**, Nazi Germany occupied and annexed Austria. German officials immediately imposed antisemitic laws on Viennese Jews. Marianne wrote to Jane to explain that her family desperately needed to leave and asked if Jane knew a rich man in the United States who could sponsor her family's immigration to the United States.

In June 1938, Jane Bomberger wrote back. Her father, Joseph Bomberger, offered to sponsor the Winter family. Although he was not wealthy, he was willing to sign the paperwork promising to financially support the Winters.

The Winters managed to leave Austria to live with relatives in Prague. Their initial application for a US immigration visa was unsuccessful, since the US consular officer did not believe that Joseph Bomberger would really support the Winters. Joseph Bomberger sent more financial paperwork, confirming his desire to help. The Winters also needed to get new passports, since Nazi Germany canceled all passports for Austrian Jews.

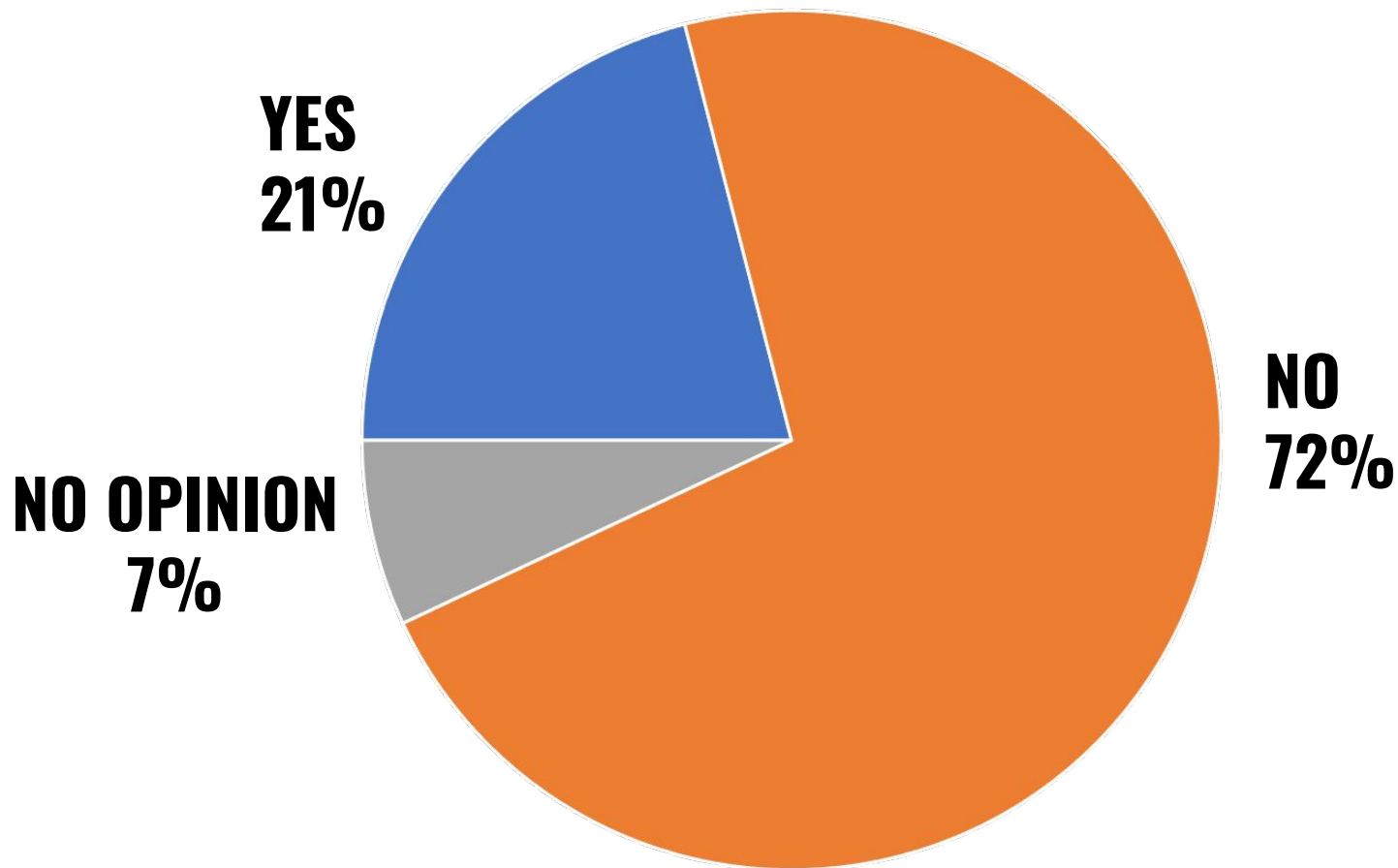
In January 1939, the Winter family flew from Prague to Switzerland and then took a train to Genoa, Italy. They boarded the *Conte di Savoia* and sailed for the United States on January 26, 1939. Upon arrival, they moved to Reading and briefly lived with the Bomberger family.

Should America refuse to participate in the Olympic Games, which are to be held in Germany this coming year?



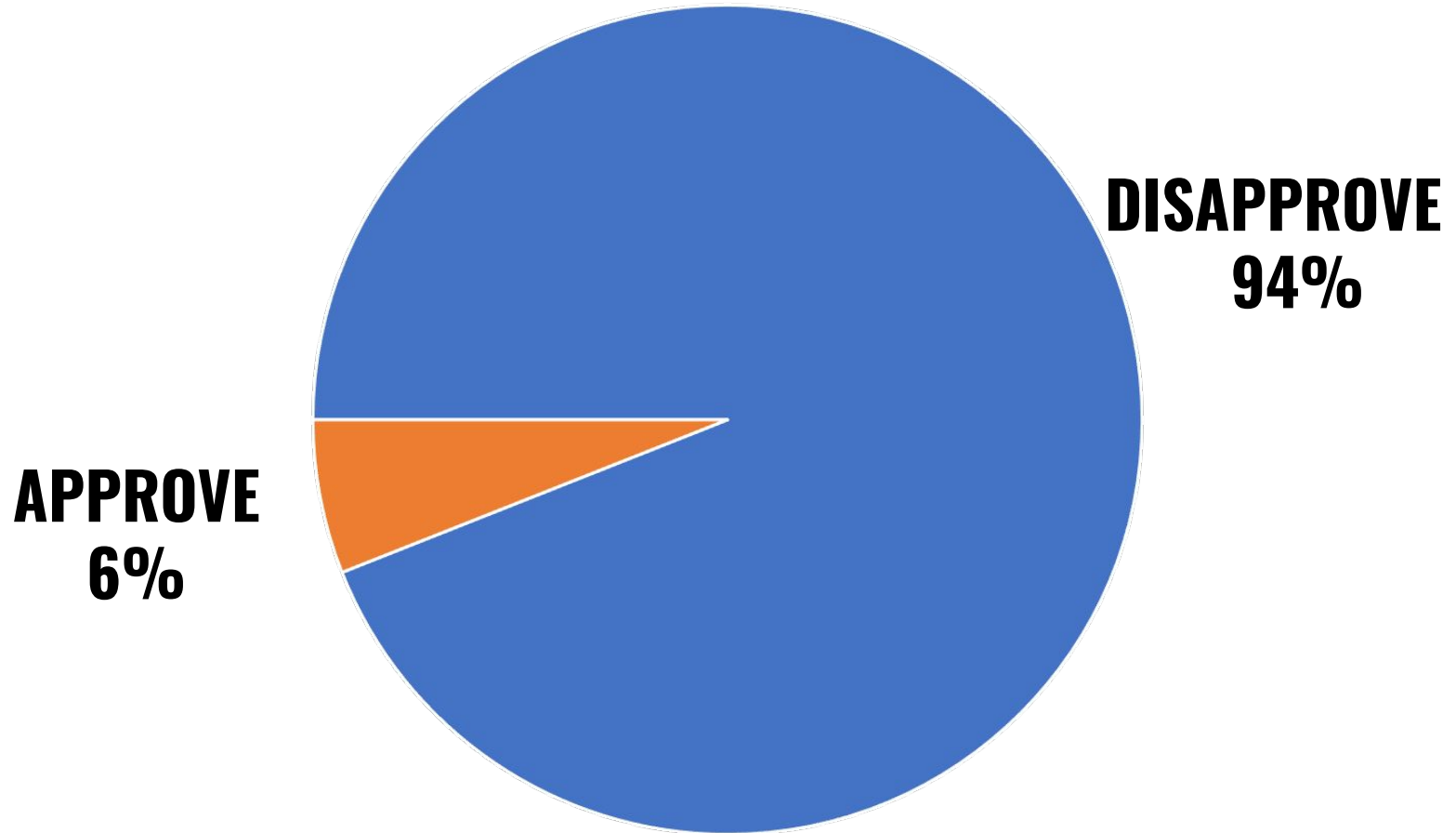
MARCH 23, 1935

Should we allow a larger number of Jewish exiles from Germany to come to the United States to live?



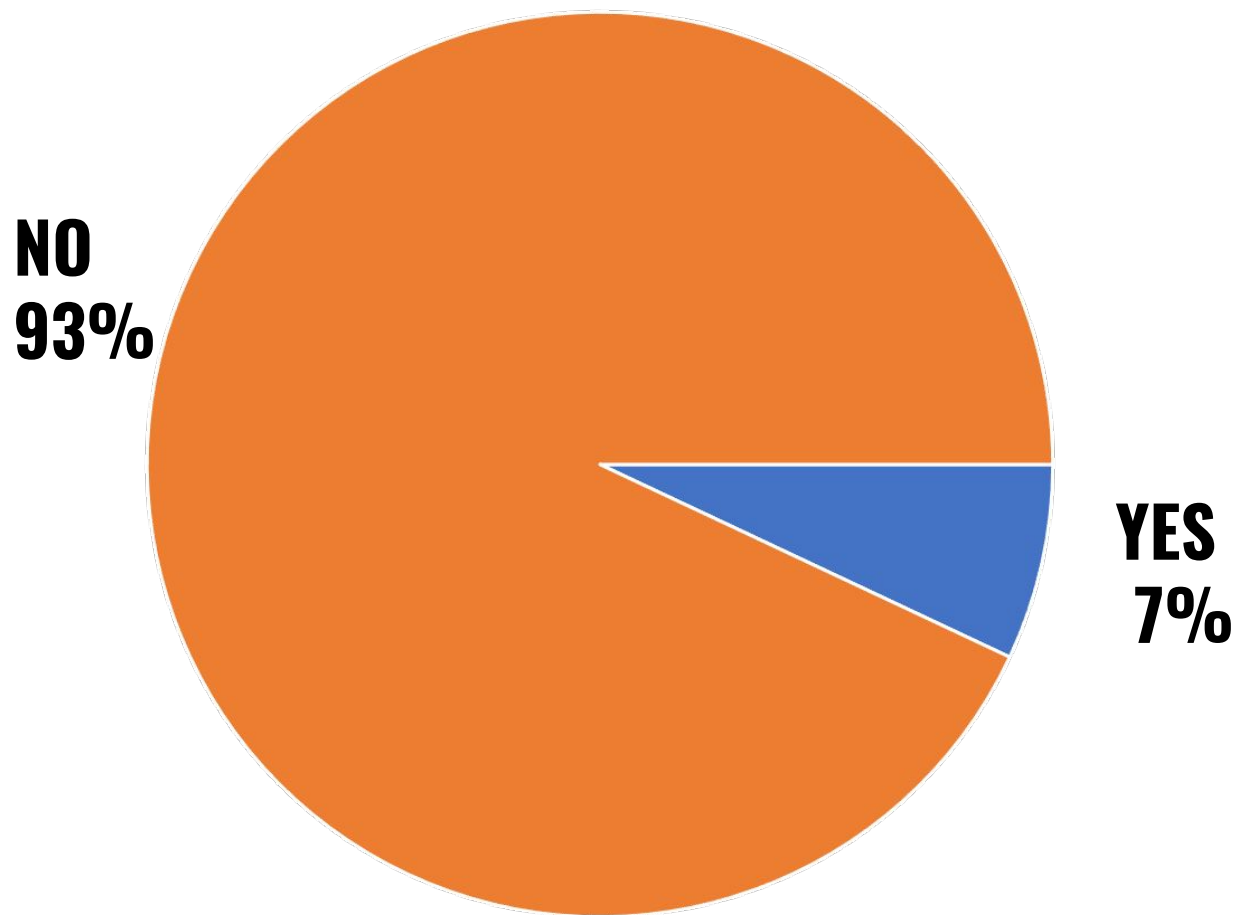
NOVEMBER 24-29, 1938

Do you approve or disapprove of the Nazi treatment of Jews in Germany?



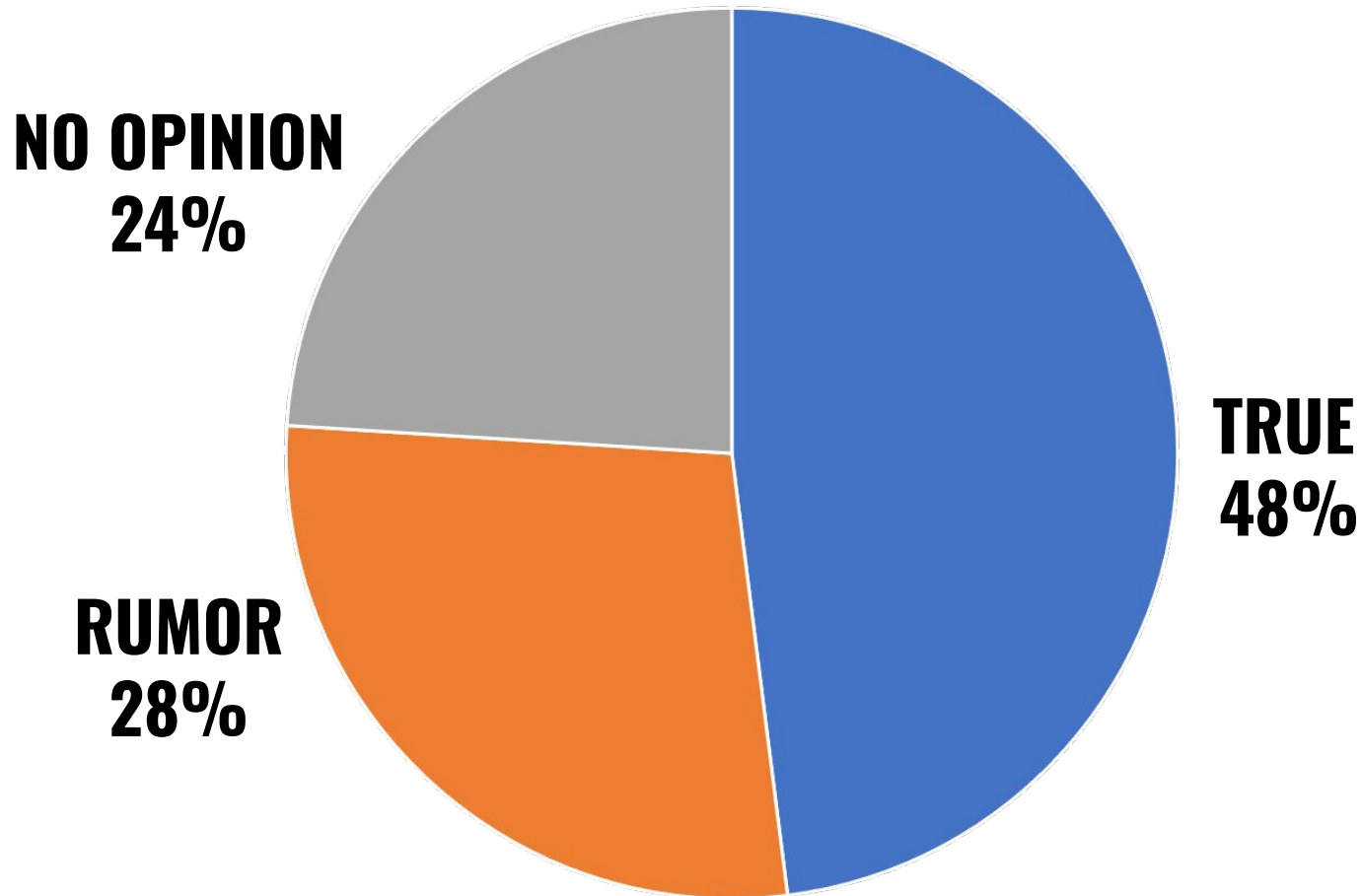
NOVEMBER 24-29, 1938

Do you think the United States should declare war on Germany and send our army and navy abroad to fight?



MAY 18-23, 1940

It is said that two million Jews have been killed in Europe since the war began. Do you think this is true or just a rumor?



JANUARY 9-14, 1943