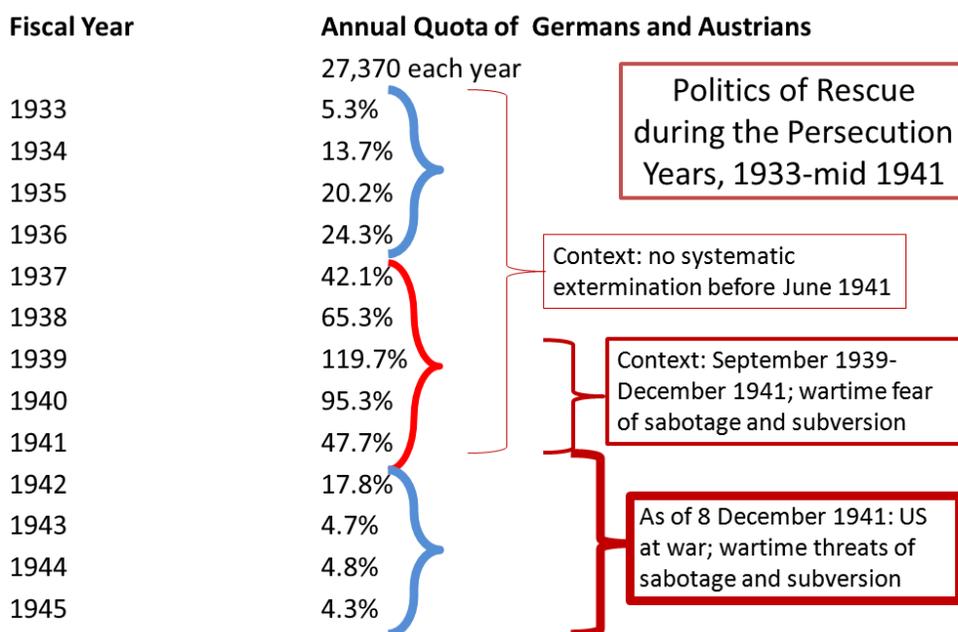


Quotations and Evidence for Politics of Rescue Lecture



Fiscal years run from 1 July to 30 June.

Percentages reveal the amount of quotas filled for German and Austrian Immigrants combined during these years.

No special exemptions were made for victims of racial, religious, or political persecution.

The total quota of immigrants was 153,774.

In an 8 September 1930, the White House press release instructions read: "if the consular officer believes that the applicant may probably be a public charge at any time, even during a considerable period subsequent to his arrival, he must refuse the visa."¹

Document Excerpt A: 13 November 1936 Memorandum, George Messersmith, Foreign Consul, Vienna, wrote:

"Stated briefly, it is to preserve our liberal attitude on immigration and yet at the same time adequately protect the interests of our country and people. The object is not, as some interpret it, to maintain the United States as an asylum or refuge for dissatisfied and oppressed people in other parts of the world irrespective of their capacity to become good and self-supporting citizens of our country. Their object is also not, as some interpret it, to keep out certain classes of persons on account of the race, religion, or political ideas."²

¹ Wyman, *Paper Walls*, 4.

² Quoted by Breitman and Kraut, *American Refugee Policy*, 49.

❖ Breckinridge
Long (April
1940)



Politics of Rescue
during the Persecution
Years, 1933-mid 1941

- ❖ "Certificate of Good Conduct from the German police authorities including two copies... Police dossier, prison record, military record, [and] other government records about the individual"
- ❖ Two sponsors had to provide a copy of their most recent Federal tax return; "affidavit from a bank regarding their accounts"; and affidavits of any other assets.
- ❖ "affidavits of good character from several, responsible disinterested persons" (beginning September 1940)

Document Excerpt B: June 1940 memo from Assistant Secretary of State Breckinridge Long:

"We can delay and effectively stop for a temporary period of indefinite length the number of immigrants into the United States. We could do this by simply advising our consuls, to put every obstacle in the way and to require additional evidence and to resort to various administrative devices which would postpone and postpone and postpone the granting of the visas. ... emphasis must be placed on the fact that discrimination must not be practiced and with the additional thought that in case a suspension of the regulation should be proclaimed under the need of an emergency, it would be universally applicable and would affect refugees from England."³

Document Excerpt C: Study of War Propaganda, Office of War Information, 6 March 1942

"Anti-Semitism has become firmly implanted in Germany and many of the occupied areas. It is therefore inadvisable for Jews to be in conspicuous positions in direct United Nations propaganda or to use them in the preparation or delivery of material which would reveal their race. For the same reason, it is also deemed inadvisable to defend or champion the Jewish cause vigorously. ... If real atrocities occur they should be revealed, but the evidence and proof should be so convincing that there should be no doubt as to their authenticity. In general, I believe it would be better to ignore the atrocity idea because it became quite generally discredited as a result of world war [I] practices."

³ Long, 26 June 1940, Memo to State Department Officials. www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/sources/t/longvisas/html

Document Excerpt D: American Ambassador Leland Harrison to US Secretary of State Cordell Hull, 11 August 1942 regarding the content of Gerhard Riegner's Cable to Rabbi Stephen Wise

"The report has earmarks of war rumor inspired by fear and what is commonly understood to be the actually miserable condition of these refugees who face decimation as result physical maltreatment persecution and scarcely endurable privation malnutrition and disease [sic]."⁴

Document Excerpt E: Howard Elting, Jr., American Vice Consul, American Consulate, Geneva, Switzerland, MEMORANDUM, 10 August 1942

Subject: Conversation with Mr. Gerhart M. RIEGNER, Secretary of World Jewish Congress

"This morning Mr. Gerhart M. RIEGNER, Secretary of the World Jewish Congress in Geneva, called in great agitation. He stated that he had just received a report from a German business man of considerable prominence, who is said to have excellent political and military connections in Germany and from whom reliable and important political information has been obtained on two previous occasions, to the effect that there has been and is being considered in Hitler's headquarters a plan to exterminate all Jews from Germany and German controlled areas in Europe after they have been concentrated in the east (presumably Poland). The number involved is said to be between three-and-a-half and four millions and the object is to permanently settle the Jewish question in Europe. The mass execution if decided upon would allegedly take place this fall.

"Riegner stated that according to his informant the use of prussic acid was mentioned as a means of accomplishing the executions. When I mentioned that this report seemed fantastic to me, Riegner said that it struck him in the same way but that from the fact that mass deportation had been taking place since July 16 as confirmed by reports received by him from Paris, Holland, Berlin, Vienna, and Prague it was always conceivable that such a diabolical plan was actually being considered by Hitler as a corollary."

Document Excerpt F: First Paragraph of 17 December 1942 Joint Allied Declaration

"The attention of the Belgian, Czechoslovak, Greek, Luxembourg Netherlands, Norwegian, Polish, Soviet, United Kingdom, United States, and Yugoslav Governments and also of the French National Committee has been drawn to numerous reports from Europe that the German authorities, not content with denying to persons of Jewish race in all the territories over which their barbarous rule has been extended, the most elementary human rights, are now carrying into effect Hitler's oft-repeated intention to exterminate the Jewish people in Europe."

⁴ Leland Harrison, American Ambassador to Switzerland, to Secretary of State [Cordell Hull], 11 August 1942, forwarding Gerhard Riegner's Telegram to Stephen Wise.
www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/source/Holocaust/riegner1.html.

Document Excerpt G: February 1944 memo by Major General Joseph T. McNarney to Assistant Secretary of War John J. McCloy, 4 February 1944 suggesting a reply to Secretary of Treasury Morgenthau's request that the War Department establish a working relationship with the Secretaries Treasury and State to rescue Jews as part of the President's commission to the War Refugee Board created in January 1944⁵

"With reference to Secretary Morgenthau's letter of January 28, 1944, in which he suggested that the instructions be sent to appropriate theater commanders concerning the creation and responsibilities of the War Refugee Board, I am sure you agree with me that the War Department is at present doing everything within its powers to rescue and relieve not only the Jews of Europe, but all other victims of enemy persecution. Plans have been and are being formulated for the relief and rehabilitation of liberated territories during the period of military control.

"We must constantly bear in mind, however, that the most effective relief which can be given victims of enemy persecution is to insure the speedy defeat of the Axis. For this reason I share your concern over further involvement of the War Department, while the war is on, in matters such as the one brought by Secretary Morgenthau."

Richard Breitman and Alan Kraut, *American Refugee Policy*

"To condemn the Allies for failure to negotiate with Germany for the release of Jews is hollow criticism unless one can demonstrate that negotiations had some chance of success."

Document Excerpt H: Heinrich Himmler and Adolf Hitler

10 December 1942, Note from Himmler to himself (*Vermerk*): "I have asked the Führer with regard to letting Jews go [individual wealthy] in return for ransom. He gave me full powers to approve cases like that, if they really bring in foreign currency in appreciable quantities from abroad."⁶

Henry L. Feingold wrote:

"Viewed through the prism of retaliatory bombing [suggested to Roosevelt in March 1943 in the Madison Square Garden Protest], a deeper reason for Allied reluctance to acknowledge what was happening in the death camps becomes discernible. There was fear that making the fate of Europe's Jews central to the Allied war effort, as Berlin had done, would interfere with the mobilization of the requisite passion in the public mind to defeat the enemy and absorb the loss of lives that required. It is not that the Allied leaders were anti-Semitic, as some would claim; they were probably less so than the general public, in whose mind Jews were not winning medals for popularity. But to allow German propaganda to make points by arguing that it was a Jewish war and that the Allied soldiers were being asked to sacrifice their lives to save the Jews might have had a deleterious impact on the Allied war effort. Instead, the Jewish aspect of the war was fudged. Rescue advocates were repeatedly told that a quick victory would save the Jews, together with all people who suffered under the Nazi heel, and nothing should be done to interfere with that goal. The destruction of European Jewry took its place as merely another

⁵ <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/wrb2.html>

⁶ Quoted by Bauer, *Jews for Sale*, 103.

atrocities in a war full of atrocities. No recognition was made in the Allied camp that the Nazi genocide meant something different was happening to the Jews of Europe, who without some form of intercession, would not survive the war."

"Bombing Auschwitz and the Politics of the Jewish Question during World War II," in *The Bombing of Auschwitz: Should the Allies Have Attempted It*, eds. Michael J. Neufeld and Michael Berenbaum (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas), 196.

Document Excerpt I: McCloy Informs Pehle that War Department Won't Bomb Auschwitz⁷ (November 18, 1944)

Letter from John J. McCloy, Assistant Secretary of War, to John W. Pehle, Director, War Refugee Board:

Mr. John W. Pehle, Executive Director
War Refugee Board
Treasury Department Building, Rm. 3414
Washington, D.C.

Dear Mr. Pehle:

I refer to your letter of November 8th, in which you forwarded the report of two eye-witnesses on the notorious German concentration and extermination camps of Auschwitz and Birkenau in Upper Silesia.

The Operation Staff of the War Department has given careful consideration to your suggestion that the bombing of these camps be undertaken. In consideration of this proposal the following points were brought out:

- a. Positive destruction of these camps would necessitate precision bombing, employing heavy or medium bombardment, or attack by low flying or dive bombing aircraft, preferably the latter.
- b. The target is beyond the maximum range of medium bombardment, dive bombers and fighter bombers located in United Kingdom, France or Italy.
- c. Use of heavy bombardment from United Kingdom bases would necessitate a hazardous round trip flight unescorted of approximately 2,000 miles over enemy territory.
- d. At the present critical stage of the war in Europe, our strategic air forces are engaged in the destruction of industrial target systems vital to the dwindling war potential of the enemy, from which they should not be diverted. The positive solution to this problem is the earliest possible victory over Germany, to which end we should exert our entire means.

⁷ <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/mccloyreply.html> accessed on 22 May 2012

e. This case does not at all parallel the Amiens mission because of the location of the concentration and extermination camps and the resulting difficulties encountered in attempting to carry out the proposed bombing.

Based on the above, as well as the most uncertain, if not dangerous effect such a bombing would have on the object to be attained, the War Department has felt that it should not, at least for the present, undertake these operations.

I know that you have been reluctant to press this activity on the War Department. We have been pressed strongly from other quarters, however, and have taken the best military opinion on its feasibility, and we believe the above conclusion is a sound one.

Sincerely,

John McCloy
Assistant Secretary of War