

**Consequences of Inaction:
United States Foreign Policy During the Holocaust**
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Once the United States emerged from World War II—and embraced the role of world superpower—questions began to arise about the United States’ role in the war and in the Holocaust specifically. This was especially so surrounding the question of whether or not the United States did enough to help those being persecuted by the Nazis. With regards to the United States’ actions, there are three classifications to be made when talking about the United States’ attempt to alleviate the plight of those targeted during the Holocaust: willful inaction, forced inaction, and both successful and unsuccessful grassroots movements. While the United States government proved to be the biggest player in terms of both willful and forced inaction, individual people occupied the center of the grassroots attempts at rescue often without the support of the United States government.

The first category of inaction on the United States government’s part is that of willful inaction, which is to say the United States’ general policy of not acting in a forceful nature along with a failure to provide refuge to those desperately seeking it. The more benign of these is the United States’ failure to act more forcefully when the infringement of the rights of Jews in Europe began. Rather than attempting to convince the Germans to do away with their anti-Semitic rhetoric, the day after Hitler rose to power in Germany—a day which also happened to be Secretary of State Cordell Hull’s second day on the job¹—the United States began advocating a total boycott of Germany.² The boycott instituted by the United States was a commercial boycott and did not affect German Jews attempting to immigrate to the United States or other countries.³ Ultimately the United States, the United Kingdom, and other countries that viewed the Nazis unfavorably accepted this boycott in March of 1933⁴ and continued the boycott to some degree until the United States entered the war in December 1941.⁵ This boycott understandably left a sour taste in the Germans’ mouths, and the German ambassador to the

¹ Cordell Hull, *The Memoirs of Cordell Hull* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1948), 170.

² Hull, *The Memoirs*, 170.

³ There were also several smaller boycotts organized by various Jewish organizations in the United States, these boycotts were smaller in nature and not a part of the United States official foreign policy.

⁴ Hull, 237.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 236.

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United States, Hans Luther, met with Secretary of State Hull numerous times to find a resolution to the boycott.⁶ Each time such a meeting took place, Hull reminded the German ambassador that in order for American citizens to support the repeal of the boycott, Germany need only rescind its policy of discrimination against the Jews.⁷ Based on the fact that these types of meetings continued for months after the boycott began illustrates that the United States' decision to not be more forceful with their demands was a factor in Germany's decision not to stop the discrimination against the Jews.

While the boycott in 1933 began as a result of the initial policies toward the Jews, it set a precedent on the United States' part of not stepping in forcefully to try to alleviate hardships brought on by the German government. Once the Nazis began passing the Nuremburg Laws, the United States continued its policy of talk over action. The Nuremburg Laws, which began in 1935, served as citizenship laws for the Third Reich, and consisted of two parts. The first of these was the Law for the Protection of German Blood and Honor.⁸ This aspect of the Nuremberg Laws forbade intermarriage and sexual relations between "Aryans" – those considered to be the perfect humans by the Nazis and their supporters – and those who were not.⁹ The Nuremberg Laws also consisted of the Reich Citizenship Law which set forth the parameters for defining the Jewish ethnicity in Germany, and thus, German citizenship.¹⁰ Those with three or more Jewish grandparents were considered to be Jewish, whether or not they practiced Judaism themselves.¹¹ A loss of citizenship meant that German Jews were now considered "tolerated" a position that did not entail the same rights afforded to those who were German citizens. The Nuremberg Laws marked the start of the Nazi's efforts to legalize discrimination in order to easily strip Jews of their human rights.

The majority of the United States' response to each new aspect of the Nuremburg Laws shows a higher concern for the safety of American Jews abroad rather than for the specifically targeted European Jews. While this is disconcerting, it makes a great deal of sense in those early years of the Nazi regime, when Secretary of State Hull claimed to have a feeling that Germany would become a major enemy, few people could

⁶ Ibid., 236-237.

⁷ Ibid., 237.

⁸ Doris L. Bergen, *War and Genocide: A Concise History of the Holocaust* (Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2009), 71.

⁹ Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 72.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

have expected the eventual horrors.¹² Further laws passed in 1935 continued to strip German Jews of their rights, such as Jewish children being forbidden from attending German schools in an attempt of “complete elimination of Jewry from German life” and still the United States government continued to send wires to Berlin to ensure that American Jews living in Germany would not be affected by such laws.¹³

Perhaps the best explanation for the United States’ failure to act against these laws was that for many in the United States the segregation of German Jews from the rest of society was no different than the policies in the United States. These policies segregated African Americans from whites in many aspects of life, such as school segregation – since the court case of *Brown vs. Board of Education* was not decided until 1954, almost 20 years after the passage of the Nuremberg Laws. Additionally, the limitation of interactions between Jews and Gentiles in Germany was very similar to policies of discrimination in the Jim Crow era, so many in the United States would not have been surprised to hear of another country implementing similar types of restrictions. What would end up eventually shocking many Americans were the lengths to which the Nazis would go to ensure separation between Jews and non-Jews in Germany, and later the rest of the occupied territories. While many in the United States felt comfortable (to an extent) with segregation, few believed this separation would lead to mass extermination.

The United States missed many warning signs that could have compelled the United States to act sooner and did not think twice about the rights being stripped from Jews in Germany. The phrasing that went with the German declaration forbidding Jewish children from attending German “Aryan” schools – where a complete elimination of Jewishness from German life is referenced¹⁴ – could have raised concerns. Similarly, the fact that German Jews were being denied passports lasting longer than six months beginning in October of 1937¹⁵ – if they were authorized at all – certainly should have raised concerns among those in the United States at all levels.

¹² Hull, *The Memoirs*, 170.

¹³ Ambassador Dodd, “Ambassador in Germany (Dodd) To the Secretary of State,” September 16, 1935, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1935*, Volume I, 382-383.

¹⁴ Dodd, “Ambassador in Germany,” 382-383.

¹⁵ Gilbert, “The Charge in Germany (Gilbert) to the Secretary of State,” October 25, 1937, *Foreign Relations of the United States, British Commonwealth, Europe, Near East, and North Africa*, Volume II, 325-326.

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Perhaps one of the most troublesome new laws passed was the mandate the German Jews take “Jewish names.”¹⁶ This addition to the Nuremberg Laws directed Jews in Germany to take specific “Jewish” names and even gave a list of acceptable names. The law also stated that anyone who failed to follow this directive would have to adopt specific names (Israel if male or Sara if female) and would be subjected to incarceration for failing to comply.¹⁷ Additionally, those who changed their names but failed to notify the proper authorities would also be subject to incarceration.¹⁸ A government demanding that people living within their borders adopt specific, pre-accepted names—for at this time Jews were no longer considered German citizens—is an entirely unprecedented move. The measure’s sole purpose was to further alienate those that the Nazis deemed “other” and would later serve to make singling these people out much easier.

The United States’ failure to recognize these warnings is not limited to the years leading up to World War II but rather continues well into the war even after the United States officially entered in December of 1941. In August of 1942 reports came in to the State Department of Jews being deported to places such as Lorraine, Poland, and Ukraine in “bestial conditions.”¹⁹ The American *chargé d’affaires*—a diplomat temporarily assigned to take the place of an ambassador—in France at the time was a man named Somerville Pinkney Tuck. Chargé Tuck relayed reports coming to him of Jews in France being forced into cattle cars with standing room only and expressed his surprise that it was Jewish “men and women up to age 65” being sent away.²⁰ The “bestial” conditions the Jews faced on these transports combined with the harsh imagery of people loaded into cattle cars like livestock should have caused at least some concern among American government officials. This report demonstrated that occupied countries in Europe no longer held any regard for the lives of the Jews living within their borders. The lack of action by the United States government after the publication of this report suggests the nation was content to look the other way and focus its energies on defeating Hitler and the rest of the Axis Powers rather than saving those being persecuted. While this decision certainly makes sense—if the Germans and their allies could be defeated it would most

¹⁶ Wilson, “Political Report of the Ambassador in Germany,” *Foreign Relations of the United States, British Commonwealth, Europe, Near East, and North Africa 1938*, Volume 2, 389-390.

¹⁷ Wilson, “Political Report of the Ambassador in Germany,” 389-390.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ S. Pickney Tuck, “The Charge in France to the Secretary of State,” August 26, 1942, *Foreign Relations of the United States, Europe, 1942*, Volume 2, 710-711.

²⁰ Tuck, “The Charge in France to the Secretary of State,” 710-711.

assuredly mean the end of the torment for the persecuted minorities – if the United States acted on the warning signs presented early in the Nazi regime, many more Jews could have potentially been saved.

The United States' affinity for willful inaction during World War II extends from not realizing the severity of Nazi laws and actions to actively not intervening even when the atrocities were brought to light. One such failure on this front was the decision to not bomb the gas chambers at Auschwitz. At the time, the United States claimed that bombing the gas chambers at the camp would have diverted resources sorely needed in fighting the Germans, but, an interview with strategic bomber pilot George McGovern tells a different story. McGovern's orders were to bomb the synthetic oil factories that the Germans held.²¹ Some of these factories happened to be fewer than five miles from the Auschwitz death camp – certainly not a mission that would have seriously diverted resources. In fact, one of the most famous Holocaust survivors, Elie Wiesel, was imprisoned at Auschwitz while the United States Air Force was flying over and bombing the factories. As Wiesel recalls in his memoir *Night*, if the bombs from the planes had fallen on the prisoners' barracks instead of the gas chambers it would have killed hundreds instantly. Wiesel writes that the prisoners no longer feared death, and that many would have welcomed the chance to die from a United States attempt to destroy the gas chambers rather than from the gas chambers themselves.²² Wiesel adds at the end of this particular story that the raid on the nearby factories lasted over an hour, and shares his desire for the raid to have lasted "ten times ten hours."²³ McGovern reinforces this recollection by saying that he knew plenty of men he was serving with who would have gladly volunteered to bomb the gas chambers at Auschwitz. This task would have been made even easier if the military had used the drawings of the camps given to them by two prisoners who had managed to escape Auschwitz. If there were so many people willing to destroy the camps, and so many Jews – both prisoners in the camps and not – who were desperate for something to be done to halt the killing process, why did the United States insist that it was not feasible to proceed with bombing the death camp?²⁴ The most probable answer is that the United States simply prioritized winning the war over saving the Jews being killed. This may have stemmed from President Roosevelt's belief that the inability to save every Jew from the Nazis should therefore

²¹ Rafael Medoff, "The Pacifist who Wanted to Bomb Auschwitz," *The David S. Wymann Institute for Holocaust Studies*.

²² Elie Wiesel, *Night* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1958), 60.

²³ Wiesel, *Night*, 60

²⁴ Medoff, "The Pacifist."

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mean no extraneous measures should be taken to save any Jews from their fate.²⁵ as well as a general favor among highly visible Americans, such as Charles Lindbergh and Henry Ford, for the Nazis. The interwar years marked one of the highest points of antisemitism throughout Europe and the United States, and while many in the United States did not want to go to war, they supported – with varying levels – the Nazi ideology of antisemitism²⁶

A further clear example of the United States' willful inaction is that of the government's inability to simply *listen* to the reports they were being given. On multiple occasions, people came forward to United States government officials to try to spread information about the horrors happening to the Jews in Europe. In 1942 Jan Karski, who worked for the Polish underground resisting the Nazi occupation of Poland, was smuggled into the infamous Warsaw Ghetto where he saw Germans committing unspeakable acts such as "Jew hunting" in their free time. In these "Jew hunts" Germans would simply walk through the ghetto and shoot any Jews they happened upon.²⁷ There was also the overall feeling of despair that came from people being shipped to the ever ominous "East" and children starving on the streets.²⁸ From the ghetto, a disguised Karski made his way – to Izbica, a sorting station for deported Jews, where he saw them being robbed of their very last possessions before being sent on their way to one of the six death camps the Germans constructed.²⁹ After seeing what he described as "Hell on Earth," Karski made it his mission to tell the rest of the world what he witnessed, but after hiking over the Pyrenees into Spain and then making it to London, Karski found it difficult to get anyone to listen to him.³⁰ Britain's Foreign Minister Anthony Eden showed little interest in what Karski had to say, and reports claim that Prime Minister Churchill was too busy to meet with him at all.³¹ A bright spot perhaps was Karski's ability to get some of his information disseminated through the BBC.³² Karski did not fare much better when he made the trip across the Atlantic to meet with Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, and eventually President

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Bergen, *War and Genocide*, 6.

²⁷ Rafael Medoff, "Messenger from Hell" *The David S. Wymann Institute for Holocaust Studies*.

²⁸ Medoff, "Messenger."

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

Roosevelt, on July 28, 1943 in the Oval Office.³³ Roosevelt listened to his story, but in the end seemed noncommittal about assisting the suffering Jews.³⁴

Karski was not the only person met with skepticism or outright refusal to do anything as a response to his attempts to spread the word about the horrors facing the Jews of Europe. In 1942 Gerhart Riegner, a Jewish German refugee who managed to enter Switzerland and served as a Swiss representative for the World Jewish Congress, walked in to the United States consulate in Geneva and asked for a message to be sent to both the Roosevelt administration as well as Rabbi Stephen Wise, the most prominent rabbi in the United States at the time. His message detailed the Nazis' plan to gather all the Jews of Europe and exterminate them in one fell swoop with poison gas.³⁵ The United States consulate dragged its feet in sending the message, and when the word finally did go out it was with the disclaimer that it was a rumor based on fear, and potentially unreliable.³⁶ When the message finally arrived in Washington, the Roosevelt administration made the decision to withhold the message from Rabbi Wise, further delaying any assistance to those in need in Europe.³⁷ While the State Department investigated slowly, taking over three months to confirm the fears of Jews around the world, Riegner had also sent a message to the British who acted and managed to get word to Rabbi Wise. Riegner also possessed coded letters from a Jewish man trapped in Warsaw, and while he had given the letters to United States officials in Geneva and Bern, it took almost a month for them to be sent to the State Department.³⁸

Both of these stories illustrate the United States' desire to not act on the information they were presented with. There was also certainly a fear of reporting the persecution of Jews throughout Europe and having the American public fail to believe them. This fear existed because there had been occasions during World War I where stories were grossly exaggerated. However, the United States government's decision to not act on the information given to them for fear of not being believed allowed the Germans to continue persecuting and murdering Jews while the United States stayed on the sidelines. Simply put, this decision by the United States to not act – and in some cases to not believe – doomed

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Rafael Medoff, "70 Years Ago this Week, The Holocaust Revealed," *The David S. Wymann Institute for Holocaust Studies*.

³⁶ Medoff, "70 Years Ago."

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

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countless people to death. Whether or not that was the intention of those within the United States government or not, it is indeed the consequence of their inaction.

In addition to the United States government's policies demonstrating willful inaction, there was a failure of the government to provide a refuge for those desperately in need of one. One well-known instance of this is the United States' failure to raise immigration quotas for countries directly affected by Hitler's power grab. During the 1930s and 1940s the limit for immigrants coming to the United States from Germany and Austria combined was 27,370 people per year. This number fell in line with the two-percent of the United States' foreign-born population as stated in the plan put forth by Senator William P. Dillingham and adopted by the United States.³⁹ Secretary of State Cordell Hull and the State Department supported the League of Nations' plan to find and provide safe homes for Jewish refugees from Germany and occupied territories.⁴⁰ A special refugee committee was set up that decided that no country willing and able to take immigrants from occupied Europe would be forced to take more people than their country could support.⁴¹ The only problem with this, however, is that the United States was not the only country with immigration quotas woefully lower than the demand.

A perfect opportunity to raise the quotas to help even a few Jews in need find safety manifested in the ill-fated journey of the *St. Louis*, a German steam ship that set sail for Cuba on May 13, 1939. The ship carried 930 Jewish refugees. While the trip had started out wonderfully for the refugees, many of whom were going to reconnect with family in Cuba and the United States, they soon learned that Cuba had changed the landing requirements, and that many of them held papers that were no longer going to be accepted.⁴² Sure enough, when the ship docked in Havana, Cuba only allowed twenty-eight passengers to leave the ship. Of those able to disembark, twenty-two were Jewish refugees who had hired lawyers when they had become skeptical of the documents they had been given and were able to obtain acceptable documents. The nine-hundred or so passengers without acceptable documents remained on the ship in the harbor.⁴³ One passenger, Max Loewe, devastated by his inability to

³⁹ "The Immigration Act of 1924," *The Office of the Historian*.

⁴⁰ Hull, *The Memoirs*, 578.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Arthur D. Morse, *While Six Million Died: A Chronicle of American Apathy* (New York: The Overlook Press, 1967), 273.

⁴³ Morse, *While Six Million Died*, 274.

leave the ship slit his wrists before jumping overboard and being rushed to a hospital in critical condition. His family, unable to leave the ship in order to be by his side, stayed in the harbor fraught with worry.⁴⁴ While representatives from the Joint Distribution Committee negotiated with the Cuban government, the 734 passengers aboard the *St. Louis* with United States immigration quota numbers felt that they might be safe and perhaps would be given early entry into the United States.⁴⁵ However, once the Cuban government made it clear that they would not be permitted to enter the country, and the captain of the ship was forced to set sail back toward Hamburg, the refugees realized they would not be permitted to enter the United States.⁴⁶ Even while many in America felt that *something* should be done to help the refugees on the ship,⁴⁷ those same people did not support immigration. Fear continued to dominate the landscape of the country as the effects of the Great Depression lingered.⁴⁸ Thus, the *St. Louis* continued on to Hamburg, pausing to allow passengers off who had been able to find refuge in Great Britain, the Netherlands, Belgium, and France. However, once war broke out in September of that year, only the 288 passengers who had made it to Great Britain remained truly safe.⁴⁹ 620 passengers remained in mainland Europe and only 87 emigrated before Germany took over Western Europe in 1940. 278 of those who remained in mainland Europe were able to survive the Holocaust, but the Germans murdered the other 254.⁵⁰ This is one of the clearest instances where the United States' decision directly led to the deaths of 254 people when they could have easily allowed them to live.

Not all of the United States' decisions that led to Jews perishing in the Holocaust were intentional. There were a few instances where the United States government did its best to provide refuge to Jews, only to have them slip through the cracks. When selecting people to fill immigration numbers, special consideration was given to people who were considered to be "lights of the Jewish church" such as rabbis, rabbinical students, and writers.⁵¹ This extended to five-hundred rabbinical students, deans, and rabbis trapped in Eastern Europe in 1943.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 276.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 278.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 279.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 285.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Voyage of the *St. Louis*," *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum*.

⁵⁰ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Voyage of the *St. Louis*."

⁵¹ Hull, *The Memoirs*, 1538.

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The Orthodox Jews in the United States considered these individuals the “hope and future of Israel” and requested that they be permitted entry into the United States, promising that they would not become a burden to the country.⁵² Eventually, the government agreed that they would be given visas to Mexico, and it appeared that they would be saved.⁵³ However, 2 months later another message is sent to the State Department which describes the difficulties of saving those five-hundred Jews – namely that the lack of addresses and multiple spellings of their names was making it difficult to track down the Jews in order for them to receive their visas.⁵⁴ It is difficult to determine whether these five-hundred Jews were ever given their visas, or able to get out of Europe and to safety.

Another heartbreaking story is that of Jewish orphans in Vichy France. On September 11, 1942, the *chargé d'affaires* in France, S. Pinkney Tuck, sent a message to Secretary of State Hull asking permission for Jewish orphans to immigrate to the United States. Their parents had been deported and Chargé Tuck assumed – as most people did of those who were deported – that they would not return.⁵⁵ Secretary Hull confirmed on September 28 that a thousand visas would be provided for children in this situation, with a further 4000 pending if provided housing could be found for them.⁵⁶ On October 3, 1942, word was sent to Secretary Hull that plans for the children had momentarily fallen through, because Germany wanted to have final say on the children emigrating since they wanted to ensure that the children would not be used in propaganda against the Germans.⁵⁷ However, one final message is sent on October 9 that Germany has approved the emigration and the children will be allowed to leave and go to the United States.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, communication between Vichy France and the United States was cut off on November 8, 1942 after the allied invasion of North Africa, and the Jewish orphans disappear from the radar. A brief mention of them in December of 1943 alludes to the fact that they remained trapped in

⁵² Cordell Hull, “The Secretary of State to the Ambassador in the Soviet Union,” *Foreign Relations of the United States, British Commonwealth, Eastern Europe and the Far East 1943*, Volume 3, 650-651.

⁵³ Standley, “The Ambassador in the Soviet Union to the Secretary of State,” *Foreign Relations of the United States, British Commonwealth, Eastern Europe and the Far East 1943*, Volume 3, 656.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 680.

⁵⁵ Tuck, “The Charge in France to the Secretary of State,” 712.

⁵⁶ Hull, “The Secretary of State to the Charge in France,” 713.

⁵⁷ Tuck, “The Charge in France to the Secretary of State,” 714.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 715.

France.⁵⁹ While solutions were discussed, there was no further communication of whether or not the children are allowed out of Europe, though the likelihood is not high. Both of these instances show the United States' desire to save at least some number of Jews from the horrors awaiting them at the Nazis' hands. While the final outcomes are unknown, and both attempts possibly failed, it was not for lack of trying on the United States' part.

Grassroots types of attempts to save some of the Jews in Europe soon appeared in the United States, the first of which was a bill supported by Senator King, a Mormon Democrat from Utah, to Congress. In May of 1940, Senator King supported a bill that would have opened up Alaska to European Jewish refugees, the thought being that the refugees would have been able to develop the land in Alaska and become vital to the United States.⁶⁰ Unfortunately, the bill was unable to get the popularity to pass, and this avenue of saving Jewish immigrants failed. There had been a previous bill that would have allowed twenty-thousand Jewish children to enter the United States, in addition to the 27,000 Jews of all ages on the quota list, which also failed.⁶¹

Harry Bingham, a United States consular officer stationed in France, carried out a more successful grassroots effort. After Bingham's death in 1987 and the death of his wife in 1996, their son discovered their harrowing tale of heroism via an old box of letters and file folders when going through a closet in their home. After reading over what he had found, Bill Bingham learned that his father, while working for the United States consulate in Marseilles had helped approximately two-thousand Jews escape from France and find safety in Spain or England.⁶² Some of the Jews who had been saved by Harry Bingham's decision to ignore the State Department's instructions to "postpone and postpone and postpone" included painter Marc Chagall, Nobel laureate Otto Meyerhof, and philosopher Hannah Arendt, and countless less-famous Jews.⁶³ For his part in helping those 2,000 Jews to escape, the state department recalled Bingham back to the America where he lost any ability of moving up in the bureaucracy.⁶⁴ Despite the consequences Bingham faced

⁵⁹ Bucknell, "The Charge in the United Kingdom to the Secretary of State," *Foreign Relations of the United States, General, 1943, Volume 1*, 229-230.

⁶⁰ Rafael Medoff, "Saving Anne Frank," *The David S. Wymann Institute for Holocaust Studies*.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Rafael Medoff, "A Dad who Rescued Jews from the Nazis," *The David S. Wymann Institute for Holocaust Studies*.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

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for his actions, his decision to go against orders saved two-thousand Jews who would have otherwise been murdered.

While it would be easy to say that the United States did its best to help those directly affected by the Holocaust while also fighting World War II, the unfortunate reality is that the United States government had many opportunities to save Jews from the gas chambers. Whether because of a lack of belief or lack of capability this inaction directly resulted in the deaths of at least the 254 German Jews who died as a result of the *St. Louis* being turned away. The decisions made not to allow refuge to those seeking it, to not bomb the gas chambers at the most infamous of the death camps, and to not raise the immigration quotas are not alleviated by the United States' attempts to allow five-hundred rabbinical students and rabbis as well as five-thousand Jewish orphans entry to the United States. Especially since the outcomes of such attempts cannot be stated with much certainty.

Of course, the argument could be made that the United States was not the superpower at the beginning of the war that it would emerge at the end of the Second World War. But this does not excuse the actions the United States took that directly led to the deaths of countless Jews. While it is certainly true that the United States was focusing on winning the war with the belief that a quicker end to the war would automatically put an end to the horrors the victims of the Holocaust were suffering, there were certainly cases where both goals could have been achieved. While the Nazis are certainly to blame for the deaths of the six million Jews – not to mention the other groups they sought to eliminate such as Roma and Sinti and the handicapped – the United States did nothing to help when they could have.

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