



Timeline: The U.S. and Nazi Germany (Years of “Peace” 1933-1941)

1933

- January 30 Adolf Hitler becomes Chancellor of Germany.
March 20 The Nazis establish their first concentration camp: Dachau.
March 23 Germany passes the Enabling Act, giving Hitler dictatorial powers.
March 27 Mass anti-Nazi rally held in Madison Square Garden, New York.
April 7 Nazis' first anti-Semitic decree removes all Jews from the civil service.



1935

- September Nazis enact the **Nuremberg Laws**. Among other things they deprive German Jews of the right to vote and hold public office and they outlaw marriages between Jews and non-Jews.

1936

- February Winter Olympic Games in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Bavaria, Germany.
March 7 German troops occupy demilitarized Rhineland between France and Germany.
August 1 **Summer Olympic Games** begin in Berlin. U.S. public wrestles with boycotting games.
October 25 Hitler and Mussolini form Rome-Berlin Axis.
November Landslide re-election victory for President Roosevelt.



1937

- Economic downturn in U.S. Two million new unemployed.
Gallup poll shows two-thirds of Americans have no interest in global events.

Philadelphia Record,
December 7, 1935.

1938

- March 12- **Anschluss**: Germany annexes Austria and creates a new Jewish refugee crisis
April 26 German Jews required to register their property.
April 60% of Americans agree that persecution of European Jews was either entirely or partly the fault of the Jews.
67% of Americans want refugees kept out of the U.S.
July Convened by President Roosevelt, 32 countries meet at the **Evian Conference** in France to discuss refugee problem. Little is accomplished; most Western countries unwilling to accept Jewish refugees.
Sept. 29 **Munich Agreement** is signed. Britain and France accept Hitler's annexation of Sudetenland.
Nov. 9-10 **Kristallnacht**, (“Night of Broken Glass”). Throughout Germany and Austria, the Nazis destroy Jewish property and deport some 30,000 Jews to concentration camps.
Nov. 12 All Jewish retail establishments in Germany ordered to cease business by end of year.
November Great Britain begins *kindertransport* (“child transport”) rescue.



Burning of Siegen synagogue during
Kristallnacht, 9 November 1938.

1939

- Feb. - June **Wagner-Rogers Bill** proposes admitting 20,000 German refugee children to the U.S. The bill dies in committee.
- March 15 Germany occupies Czechoslovakia.
- April FDR combines the German and Austrian quotas and tries to loosen visa restrictions.
- May - June The **S.S. St. Louis**, carrying 930 Jewish refugees, is turned away by Cuba. The U.S. refuses to admit the refugees.
- May British government issues a White Paper which restricts future Jewish immigration to Palestine to 75,000 over the next five years.
- September 1** Germany invades Poland.
- September 3 Britain and France declare war on Germany.
- October U.S. poll shows that 85% of Americans hope Britain and France win.
- November Germans have killed more than 16,000 Polish civilians in first six weeks of war. Five thousand of them are Jewish.



Kindertransport children

1940

- May 10 Germany launches attacks against Holland, Luxembourg, Belgium and France.
- June Germans establish the Auschwitz concentration camp.
- June Breckinridge Long, Assistant Secretary of State in charge of immigration and refugees sends secret memo to European consuls "to put every obstacle in the way" of immigrants.
- June 22 France surrenders to Germany.
- September 7 German begins massive bombing campaign on London.
- September The isolationist America First Committee is established. It opposes entry into the war and or sending aid to Great Britain. It is spearheaded by Charles Lindbergh who expresses vulgar racism and support of Nazi Germany.
- October FDR announces "Lend-Lease" plan to send 50 old destroyers and other supplies to Great Britain.
- November 5 U.S. Presidential election. FDR wins an unprecedented third term.
- November Warsaw Ghetto created.



1941

- June New rules in the U.S. cut refugee immigration to about 25% of the relevant quotas.
- June More than 13,000 Jews have died of starvation in the Warsaw ghetto since January.
- June 22 Germany attacks U.S.S.R. *By the end of 1941: 500,000-800,000 Jews are murdered; two million of the 3.5 million Soviet (Russian) soldiers captured were dead. 416,800 U.S. soldiers will be killed in World War II.*
- July New York Yiddish dailies reveal that thousands of Jewish civilians have been massacred by Nazi soldiers in Minsk, Brest-Litovsk, Lvov and other places.
- July 31 Reich Marshal Hermann Göring instructs Reinhardt Heydrich to organize a "complete solution of the Jewish question."
- October 11 "New York Times" story reports on massacres of thousands of Jews in Galicia.
- September First gassing experiments at Auschwitz.
- Nov. 27 Nazis establish Theresienstadt, "a model ghetto."
- Dec. 7 The Japanese attack the U.S. fleet at Pearl Harbor.
- Dec. 8 First gassings at Chelmno death camp.
- Dec. 11 Hitler declares war on the U.S.

