

AMERICANS AND THE HOLOCAUST

KEY CONCEPTS

■ AMERICANS HAD INFORMATION

Americans could read, see, and hear news about Nazi persecution and murder of European Jews in their newspapers, on the radio, and in newsreels, as well as information about events of World War II.

■ AMERICANS FACED MANY COMPETING PRIORITIES

Despite this information, public opinion polls show that most Americans did not want to accept more Jewish refugees into the country. Racism and antisemitism at home, conditions during the Great Depression, fears of communism and spies, and eventually World War II all competed with the plight of endangered Jews for Americans' attention. Also, even though Americans learned about atrocities, many were skeptical of the reports.

■ AMERICANS DEBATED

Americans debated about their country's role in the world. Topics of debate included immigration policy and whether America should enter World War II.

■ AMERICANS RESPONDED

Some Americans responded to what they learned about the Nazi threat to European Jews. They took action as individuals, members of institutions, or government officials and made different choices depending on the time period and the resources they had available.

■ AMERICANS FOCUSED ON WINNING THE WAR

The United States and other Allied forces prioritized military victory over humanitarian aid during World War II. When the United States entered the war, it became harder to rescue Jews. Although the United States could have done more to aid the victims of Nazi Germany and its collaborators, large-scale rescue was impossible by the time the United States entered the war.