



Bermuda Conference

Conference convened by the United States and Great Britain in Bermuda on April 19, 1943. The purpose of the conference, supposedly, was to deal with the issue of wartime refugees. The real reason the conference was called, however, was to shush the growing public outcries for the rescue of European Jewry without actually having to find any solutions to the problem.

By the end of 1942, reports confirmed that the Nazis intended to exterminate all of European Jewry. Both in the United States and Britain, Jewish groups demanded that their governments take a stand against the atrocities. The two governments then planned the conference to quiet public opinion, but arranged it so that they would not have to actually make a serious effort to save any Jews. They chose inaccessible Bermuda as the conference's venue in order to control the number of reporters and private representatives attending. Members of the Joint Distribution Committee and the World Jewish Congress were not permitted to attend.

The organizers also severely limited the issues that could be discussed. They insisted that the Jewish aspect of the problem not be mentioned, and neither government was willing to discuss the "Final Solution." Furthermore, the Americans refused to consider changing their strict immigration quotas to let in more Jewish refugees, while the British refused to consider Palestine as a safe haven for Jewish refugees. They would not even discuss sending food packages to concentration camp prisoners. The Americans also betrayed their lack of seriousness by not sending a high-ranking delegation with the authority to make decisions.

At the conference itself, the attendees spent much time talking about renewing the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees, which had been created at the 1938 Evian Conference for the purpose of negotiating with the Germans about refugees. However, the point was moot because, as negotiating with the Nazis was no longer an option, no one was willing to fund the committee. No other solution suggested was deemed acceptable by the



two governments, either. Thus, nothing was accomplished, and the Bermuda Conference did not save one Jew.