

WHY DIDN'T THEY JUST LEAVE?

Student Name: _____

In your groups, discuss what kind of paperwork or documents you think it would take to be able to leave (emigrate) the United States to go live in another country today.

List what you think you would need to submit to the United States and what you would need to submit to the country to which you are moving:

Documents submitted to U.S. Government	Documents submitted to new country

Now, take a look at the document about **emigrating from Germany** in the 1930s. List the top three things that you think would have been the hardest to get/do in order to leave the country.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Look now at the document about **immigrating into the United States**. Again, what are the top three obstacles that faced those wishing to come to the United States?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What surprised you the most from what you have learned today about the difficulty of emigrating or immigrating?

Teaching about the Holocaust

Documentation Required for Immigration Visas to Enter the United States

In the years immediately preceding U.S. entry into World War II, potential immigrants were required to file the following documents to obtain a U.S. visa.

- Visa application (Form BC)—Five copies
- Birth certificate—Two copies (country of birth determined applicable quotas)
- Quota number, which established the person's place on the waiting list to enter the United States
- Two sponsors (close relatives of prospective immigrant were preferred). The sponsors had to be American citizens or have permanent resident status, and they had to fill out and provide the following:
 - Affidavit of Support and Sponsorship (Form C)—Six copies, notarized
 - Certified copy of most recent federal tax return
 - Affidavit from a bank about accounts
 - Affidavit from any other responsible person regarding other assets (affidavit from the sponsor's employer or statement of commercial rating)
- Certificate of Good Conduct from German police authorities, including two copies of each of the following:
 - Police dossier prison record
 - Military record
 - Other government records about the individual
- Affidavits of Good Conduct (after September 1940)
- Evidence of passing a physical examination at a U.S. consulate
- Proof of permission to leave Germany (imposed September 30, 1939)
- Proof the prospective immigrant had booked passage to the Western hemisphere (imposed September 1939)

Teaching about the Holocaust

Documentation Required for Emigration from Germany

After 1937, Jews needed the following documents from German authorities to leave the country.

- Passport
- Certificate from the local police noting the formal dissolution of residence in Germany
- Certificate from the Reich Ministry of Finance approving emigration, which required:
 - Payment of an emigration tax of 25 percent on total assets valued at more than 50,000 RM. This tax came due upon the dissolution of German residence.
 - Submission of an itemized list of all gifts made to third parties since January 1, 1931. If their value exceeded 10,000 RM, they were included in the calculation of the emigration tax.
 - Payment of a capital transfer tax of 25 percent (levied only on Jews) of assets in addition to the emigration tax.
 - Certification from the local tax office that there were no outstanding taxes due.
 - Certification from a currency exchange office that all currency regulations had been followed. An emigrant was permitted to take 2,000 RM or less in currency out of the country. Any remaining assets would be transferred into blocked bank accounts with restricted access.
- Customs declaration, dated no earlier than three days before departure, permitting the export of itemized personal and household goods. This declaration required:
 - Submission of a list, in triplicate, of all personal and household goods accompanying the emigrant stating their value. The list had to note items acquired before January 1, 1933, those acquired since January 1, 1933, and those acquired to facilitate emigration.
 - Documents attesting to the value of personal and household goods, and written explanations for the necessity of taking them out of the country.
 - Certification from a currency exchange office permitting the export of itemized personal and household goods, dated no earlier than 14 days before departure.

With the preceding documents, emigrants could leave Germany, if and only if they had valid travel arrangements and entrance visas for another country. After the union of Germany and Austria in March 1938, emigrants from Austria holding an Austrian passport had to apply for a German exit visa before they were permitted to leave the country.

Salvaged Pages: Klaus Langer

Klaus was a teenager in Gleiwitz, Germany. He began his diary after his Bar Mitzvah and recorded the unfolding discrimination against the Jews of his town in the 1930s. In these excerpts, he writes about their efforts to emigrate... (pages 22-32)

November 28, 1938

On November 23, Father came home and immediately began work on the emigration process. The only two countries to which Father's pension could be transferred were Chile and Palestine. By his calculation, his income would not be enough to make a living in Palestine and the question then arose whether he would be able to supplement his pension. There was also the question whether the Nazis would continue to send his pension abroad. As an amateur musician it was almost impossible to make a living in Palestine because of the many other Jewish musicians who had emigrated there. In Chile the situation was somewhat better and it would have been possible to live there on the pension...Father had to give up hope for emigrating to Argentina. He is now hoping to get a business license for Palestine. It would be best if we could all go to Palestine.

December 14, 1938

According to the new law, Jews are allowed to take only essentials with them when they emigrate. The new regulation requires rehabilitation to the German government for the destruction caused over Kristallnacht.

December 19, 1938

Regarding the emigration of my parents, I have the following to report. First came two refusals from Argentina for lack of letters of credit. The rich uncle in America is unable to assume such a financial responsibility. We don't have an affidavit for the U.S. India requires firm employment there, or a contract. Father is now trying to make connections in India to obtain a contract. He also wrote to Peru and he was told to go to the Uruguayan consulate. Allegedly the Dominican Republic would take ten thousand Jews and provide them with visas. However, nothing further is known about that. It probably makes no sense to turn to them. However, with a Dominican Republic visa it is possible to get a half-year visa for Palestine. Shanghai also accepts Jews, even without a visa, but it's questionable how one can live there. The mail also brought no news from Palestine. We had submitted a request for 'commercial certification.'

January 5, 1939

My parents had to all but give up hope for South America. However, India is still an open possibility. If they can get there it would be very good. Their chances for emigrating to the U.S. also are very slim because they have a very high waiting number, 25,000.

January 12, 1939

Regarding their emigration, my parents have not progressed one step. As of January 1, 1939, we are required to have an identity card. In providing personal information the official asked my father's hair color. My father is bald. I must really admire my parents. Despite having been rejected, disappointed, having suffered hardships and daily aggravations, they did not lose their good humor.

July 15, 1939

My parents finally have something that might work with regard to their emigration. A Chilean visa costs about seventy pounds, which my parents somehow obtained. Unfortunately, all the ships for Chile are booked until December. However, that still represents a possibility.

August 19, 1939

My parents are still trying to get papers for Chile. At the moment, it does not look good.

Klaus' parents and grandmother were not able to emigrate from Germany. His mother died of blood poisoning on Sept. 8, 1941, in Essen. His father was deported on April 21, 1942 to the Izbica Libelska camp in Poland. By the end of that year, the local Jews from Izbica and those who came there from other locations had been taken to the death camps at Belzec or Sobibor, or had been shot. Klaus' father was among them. His grandmother was sent to Terezin on July 15, 1942 and only a few months later was deported to Minsk, where she perished. Klaus emigrated to Palestine, arriving in January 1940.