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

FDR begins to modernize U.S. Navy.
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.
August    U.S. passes the Neutrality Act forbidding U.S. citizens and ships to enter war zones or travel on belligerents' ships.

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. First Democratic majority in Congress in 100 years. Democrats no longer dependent on southerners and FDR moves to liberalize the Party.

1937

Economic downturn in U.S. Two million new unemployed. (Unemployment had been cut in half since 1933)
FDR tasks military to begin preparedness for potential war (“Rainbow” Plans)
Gallup poll shows two-thirds of Americans have no interest in global events.
Anti-lynching law (Lynching had decreased since 1933) fails to pass due to Southern Democratic backlash.

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.
July       67% of Americans want refugees kept out of the U.S.
           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.
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.
            FDR works to repeal Neutrality Act and fails.
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.
November 4  Neutrality Act of 1939 passed, allowing for arms trade with belligerent nations (Great Britain and France) on a cash-and-carry basis

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  Warsa 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.”
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.