Choices in Alabama

Reading how people responded to persecution in Europe

SS24.HOS.9c "Describe how Alabamians responded to Nazi persecution of the Jews in Europe.*"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline actions Alabamians took in response to Nazi persecution. Circle limits on their help, and number the responses that happened after the war.

News, Aid, and Silence

1 In November 1938, Alabamians opening a newspaper could read about attacks on Jews across Nazi Germany. During Kristallnacht, Nazi forces and supporters smashed Jewish shop windows, burned synagogues, and arrested thousands of Jewish men. The violence followed years of laws that stripped Jews of rights and jobs. News of these events gave people in Alabama information about the danger facing European Jews. Reading a report, however, was not the same as helping. Alabamians had choices about whether to speak publicly, give aid, support refugees, or look away.

2 Jewish congregations and community groups in Alabama joined wider American efforts to aid European Jews. Through fundraising, donors could support relief agencies that provided food and other help to people fleeing persecution. Some Alabamians also condemned Nazi antisemitism in public or private. These responses mattered, but money and statements could not by themselves open the United States border. Refugees needed permission to enter, and federal immigration quotas restricted how many could come. Alabama families who wished to help refugees faced rules made in Washington, not by local congregations.

3 Other responses were less helpful. Some Alabamians, like Americans elsewhere, opposed expanding immigration even as Jews sought safety. Others did not act. During the war, reports of the Nazi murder of European Jews made the stakes still clearer, although people did not know every detail as events unfolded. After the war, survivors who settled in Alabama shared their experiences with neighbors and students, helping later generations understand the persecution. Alabamians' responses therefore ranged from aid and protest to resistance to refugee entry and silence. To describe that history fairly, consider both the help people offered and its limits.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. After news of Kristallnacht reached Alabama, what choices did Alabamians face about how to respond?

2. Describe two ways Alabamians tried to help European Jews during the persecution.

3. How did Alabamians differ on admitting refugees, and what limited help from families willing to receive them?

4. How did some Alabamians respond after the war, and how was that response different from wartime fundraising?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write one paragraph for a museum label titled “Responses in Alabama.” Describe at least two contrasting responses to Nazi persecution, explain one limit on help, and distinguish a wartime response from one that happened after the war.

ANSWER KEY

Choices in Alabama

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.HOS.9c

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline actions Alabamians took in response to Nazi persecution. Circle limits on their help, and number the responses that happened after the war. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	After news of Kristallnacht reached Alabama, what choices did Alabamians face about how to respond?	**They could speak out, give aid, support refugees, or look away.**
2	Describe two ways Alabamians tried to help European Jews during the persecution.	**Some raised money for relief agencies, and some condemned Nazi antisemitism.**
3	How did Alabamians differ on admitting refugees, and what limited help from families willing to receive them?	**Some opposed expanding immigration, while other families wished to help refugees. Federal immigration quotas limited entry.**
4	How did some Alabamians respond after the war, and how was that response different from wartime fundraising?	**Survivors who settled in Alabama shared their experiences to educate others. Wartime fundraising provided material aid.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Responses in Alabama: During the Nazi persecution of European Jews, some Alabamians raised money for relief agencies or spoke against antisemitism. Others opposed expanding immigration, and some did nothing. Even families willing to help refugees could not admit them on their own because federal quotas restricted entry to the United States. These wartime choices affected whether people received help when they needed it. After the war, survivors who settled in Alabama shared their experiences with neighbors and students. Their accounts helped later generations understand what had happened.

Accept accurate descriptions of aid, opposition to expanded immigration, silence, and survivors' later testimony. Students should distinguish local choices from federal immigration rules.