

Department of State Official's Comments About U.S. Pre-Holocaust Actions Were Disturbing

Holocaust scholars are taking issue with a State Department historian's comments defending 1940s consular officials who rejected visa applications from Jewish refugees.

Melissa Jane Taylor, from the State Department's Office of the Historian, recently claimed in the journal *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* that U.S. officials in Vichy France from 1940-1941, such as William Peck, were "sympathetic" to refugees.

Dr. Rafael Medoff, director of the David S. Wyman Institute for Holocaust Studies; and immigration scholar Prof. Bat-Ami Zucker, of Bar-Ilan University, pointed out in an analysis of Taylor's article that she failed to mention a memo by Peck in which he wrote that he favored immigration only by "old people [who] will not reproduce and can do our country no harm; the young ones may be suffering, but the history of their race shows that suffering does not kill many of them."

Medoff and Zucker also criticized Taylor for trying to minimize the accomplishments of Hiram Bingham IV, a dissident consular official who helped Jews escape France and was punished by the State Department. {eo}

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