Document-Based Question

Suggested reading and writing time: 55 minutes

It is suggested that you spend 15 minutes reading the documents and 40 minutes writing your response.

Note: You may begin writing your response before the reading period is over.

Directions: The question is based on the accompanying documents. The documents have been edited for the purpose of this exercise.

In your response you should do the following.

- **Thesis:** Present a thesis that makes a historically defensible claim and responds to all parts of the question. The thesis must consist of one or more sentences located in one place, either in the introduction or the conclusion.

- **Argument Development:** Develop and support a cohesive argument that recognizes and accounts for historical complexity by explicitly illustrating relationships among historical evidence such as contradiction, corroboration, and/or qualification.

- **Use of the Documents:** Utilize the content of at least six of the documents to support the stated thesis or a relevant argument.

- **Sourcing the Documents:** Explain the significance of the author’s point of view, author's purpose, historical context, and/or audience for at least four documents.

- **Contextualization:** Situate the argument by explaining the broader historical events, developments, or processes immediately relevant to the question.

- **Outside Evidence:** Provide an example or additional piece of specific evidence beyond those found in the documents to support or qualify the argument.

- **Synthesis:** Extend the argument by explaining the connections between the argument and ONE of the following.
  - A development in a different historical period, situation, era, or geographical area.
  - A course theme and/or approach to history that is not the focus of the essay (such as political, economic, social, cultural, or intellectual history).
  - A different discipline or field of inquiry (such as economics, government and politics, art history, or anthropology).
Question: Using the documents and your knowledge of European history, analyze how Nazi Germany escalated its persecution of European Jews throughout the 1930s until the end of the Second World War in 1945.

**Document 1**

**Source:** Storm Troopers, a paramilitary organization of the Nazi party, wearing boycott signs, block the entrance to a Jewish-owned shop. 1 April 1933; Berlin, Germany

*The signs read: “Germans, defend yourself against the Jewish atrocity propaganda, buy only at German shops!” and “Germans, defend yourselves, buy only at German shops!”

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Document 2

Source: Termination of employment letter to Fritz Wolff from employer Rudolf Karstadt, Inc. in Berlin, sent 18 April 1933.

We have tried until now to keep you in your position with us under the terms of your contract or, as the case may be, according to the terms of the laws governing termination of employment. So far we have terminated your employment with the legally required period of notification, even though this move has placed our firm in a most difficult position, because of your Jewish descent.

Unfortunately the current state of affairs forces us to take further action. It is no longer possible for us, under existing circumstances, to allow you to ever take up your position with us. To do otherwise, we would be placing our firm at serious risk.

These grounds force us to the regrettable step of terminating our contractual relationship with you without notice. We understand that this action may leave you in an extraordinarily difficult position, but we have no other choice under the existing circumstances. You would certainly find this step reasonable, if you were in our situation and positions were reversed.

In order to ease your situation, we are prepared to provide you the usual payment, under the terms of our contract, for the current month as well as for the month of May, payable at end of each month.

Respectfully yours,

Rudolf Karstadt
Incorporated
Berlin-Hermannstrasse

In Representation
[Signed illegible]
Document 3

Source: Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor, announced September 15, 1935 in Nuremberg.

Article 1
1. Marriages between Jews and subjects of the state of German or related blood are forbidden. Marriages nevertheless concluded are invalid, even if concluded abroad to circumvent this law.
2. Annulment proceedings can be initiated only by the state prosecutor.

Article 2
Extramarital relations between Jews and subjects of the state of German or related blood are forbidden.

Article 3
Jews may not employ in their households female subjects of the state of German or related blood who are under 45 years old.

Article 4
1. Jews are forbidden to fly the Reich or national flag or display Reich colors.
2. They are, on the other hand, permitted to display the Jewish colors. The exercise of this right is protected by the state.

Article 5
1. Any person who violates the prohibition under Article 1 will be punished with a prison sentence.
2. A male who violates the prohibition under Article 2 will be punished with a jail term or a prison sentence.
3. Any person violating the provisions under Articles 3 or 4 will be punished with a jail term of up to one year and a fine, or with one or the other of these penalties.

Article 6
The Reich Minister of the Interior, in coordination with the Deputy of the Führer and the Reich Minister of Justice, will issue the legal and administrative regulations required to implement and complete this law.

Article 7
The law takes effect on the day following promulgation, except for Article 3, which goes into force on January 1, 1936.

Nuremberg, September 15, 1935
At the Reich Party Congress of Freedom

The Führer and Reich Chancellor
[signed] Adolf Hitler
The Reich Minster of the Interior
[signed] Frick
The Reich Minister of Justice
[signed] Dr. Gürtner
The Deputy of the Führer
[signed] R. Hess
**Document 4**

*Source:* Illustration from a children’s primer book, Trau keinem Fuchs auf gruner Heid, und keinem Jud bei seinem Eid (Trust No Fox in the Green Meadow and No Jew on his Oath); Germany, 1936

*The sign reads, “Jews are not wanted here.”*

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Document 5

Source: Klaus Langer, age 14, German-Jewish boy; diary entry after Kristallnacht (the Night of Broken Glass)

November 11, 1938 [Essen]

The past three days brought significant changes in our lives. On November 7 a German legation member [diplomat] was assassinated in Paris. He died two days later. The day following, on November [sic], came the consequences. At three o'clock the synagogue and the Jewish youth center were put on fire. Then they began to destroy Jewish businesses. During the morning, private homes also were being demolished. Fires were started at single homes belonging to Jews. At six-thirty in the morning the Gestapo came to our home and arrested Father and Mother [ . . . ] Mother returned after about one and a half hours. Dad remained and was put in prison. [ . . . ] We [ . . . ] We returned to our neighborhood by two o'clock. Not far from us we saw a gang vandalizing a home, throwing things out of the window. When I went around the corner and looked up my street there was nothing to see. It looked peaceful. I, therefore, returned directly to our house. When I turned into the front yard I saw the house was damaged. I walked on glass splinters. [ . . . ] I ran into our apartment and found unbelievable destruction in every room. It was the same in the apartment of the caretaker below us. [ . . . ] My parents instruments were destroyed, the dishes were broken, the windows were broken, furniture upturned, the desk was turned over, drawers and mirrors were broken, and the radio smashed. The kitchen and bathroom were untouched. The upstairs room was left alone, including my father’s cello. The cellar was also not disturbed. The apartment of the caretaker, Bachrach, was in much worse condition.

In the evening, Mother brought gold and other valuables for safekeeping to Christian acquaintances. We wanted to spend the night at home, but the caretaker, Frau Bachrach, urged us to go to her relatives, the Herzfelds, where we spent the night. I read until late. In the middle of the night, at 2:30 am, the Storm Troopers [Sturmabteilung, or SA, also known as the Brownshirts] smashed windows and threw stones against the store shutters. After a few minutes they demanded to be let into the house. Allegedly they were looking for weapons. After they found no weapons they left. After that no one was able to go back to sleep. Everyone sat in one room. I tried but could not sleep. [ . . . ] The time passed terribly slowly. Then we thought there was still another person in the house who was making a noise. Finally, at 5 a.m. I saw a policeman outside who walked back and forth. I shall never forget that night.

[ . . . ] Books could be written about all that had happened and about which we now begin to learn more. But, I have to be careful. A new regulation was issued that the Jews in Germany had to pay one billion Reichsmarks for restitution. What for? For the damage the Nazis had done to the Jews in Germany. [ . . . ] I now want to get to Ere[t]z Israel as quickly as possible, maybe with the first Youth Aliyah [immigration]. [ . . . ]

Document 6

**Source:** Entrance of the Lodz Ghetto, Poland, 1940–1941

*The sign reads, “Jewish residential area—entry forbidden.” The smaller sign reads, “For Pedestrians Only.”* © United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of Antoni Marianowicz

Document 7

**Source:** Shortly after their arrival, Hungarian Jews line up for selection on the entrance ramp at Auschwitz-Birkenau. Poland, May 1944.

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