I. An American Soldier's reaction to Nazi Death Camps

Leon Bass was an African American soldier who visited the Buchenwald camp in April 1945, shortly after it had been liberated by the Allies.

"Then we saw the crematorium where the dead bodies were outside, stacked up like cordwood, and we went into the crematorium and you could see the residue in the ovens—the rib cages, the skulls. And it was so hard to believe—to understand why. What did these people do that merited this kind of treatment? And it boggles the mind when you think that it had gone for almost ten years before we got into the war! Why wasn't it dealt with? Why did nobody scream and shout, 'Stop'! They never did."

II. A Gestapo Officer's Justification

Maximilian Grabner was the head of the Gestapo, or secret police, at the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp. After the war's end, he tried to explain his actions.

"To kill three million people is in my view the greatest crime of all. I only took part in this crime because there was nothing I could do to change anything. The blame for this crime lay with National Socialism {the Nazi Party}. I myself was never a National Socialist. Nevertheless, I still had to join the Party."

"...I only took part in the murder of some three million people out of consideration for my family."

III. A German Witness

Herman Graebe was a German engineer working in the Ukraine. On October 5, 1942, he accidentally discovered a Nazi mobile killing unit executing Ukrainian Jews. He later described what he saw.

"I heard rifle shots in quick succession from behind one of the earth mounds... I walked around the mound and found myself confronted by a tremendous grave. People were closely wedged together and lying on top of each other so that only their heads were visible. Nearly all had blood running over their shoulders from their heads. Some of the people shot were still moving. Some were lifting their arms and turning their heads to show that they were still alive. The pit was nearly two-thirds full. I estimated that it already contained a thousand people. I looked for the man who did the shooting. He was an SS {Nazi military police} man, who sat at the edge of the narrow end of the pit, his feet dangling into the pit. He had a tommy-gun on his knees and was smoking a cigarette."
IV. An American Learns about Hitler's Plan

Howard Elting, Jr., was an American official stationed in Switzerland. The document below is from a letter he wrote to the U.S. secretary of state on August 10, 1942.

"This morning Mr. Gerhart M. Riegner, Secretary of the World Jewish Congress in Geneva, called in great agitation. He stated that he just received a report from a German business man of considerable prominence, who is said to have excellent political and military connections in Germany and from whom reliable and important political information has been obtained on two previous occasions, to the effect that there has been and is being considered in Hitler's headquarters a plan to exterminate all Jews from Germany and German controlled areas in Europe after they have been concentrated in the east (presumably Poland). The number involved is said to be between three-and-a-half and four millions and the object is to permanently settle the Jewish question in Europe. The mass execution if decided upon would allegedly take place this fall."

1. In Passage I, what does Leon Bass find most difficult to believe? RH.9-10.2
   a. The fact that ovens had been able to cremate so many bodies.
   b. The crimes that prisoners had committed in order to be executed.
   c. The length of time which the camp had been in operation.
   d. The fact that no one had done anything to prevent/stop the situation.

2. What is the effect of the use of a series of questions in passage 1? RH.9-10.5
   a. The questions detract from the credibility/reliability of the source.
   b. The questions are rhetorical questions, which the speaker will then answer.
   c. The questions highlight the speakers amazement at the magnitude of the crime.
   d. The questions present a focus for discussion.

3. In passage 2, what does the phrase, "out of consideration for my family" imply? RH.9-10.1
   a. Maximilian Grabner's family approved of the killings, and he wanted to make them proud
   b. Maximilian Grabner wanted to give his family Lebensraum (living space)
   c. Maximilain Grabner was doing a job in order to support his family financially
   d. Maximilian Grabner feared for the safety of his family if he did not support the killings
4. How would Maximilian Grabner (passage II) respond to Leon Bass' (passage I) final question?

RH.9-10.6

   a. It is a duty to kill the enemies of one's country.
   b. Protesting the actions would have changed nothing.
   c. No one had any knowledge of the crimes except for Nazi officials.
   d. To kill an "inferior" race is no crime, merely Social Darwinism.

5. In passage III, what led Herman Graebe to discover the slaughter of Many Jews?

   a. He heard rifle shots, and went to investigate
   b. He accidentally uncovered bodies
   c. A Nazi officer gave him details
   d. He heard the moans of the victims

6. In passage III, what point is Herman Graebe emphasizing when he states that the officer was smoking a cigarette?

   RH. 9-10.2

   a. The weather was cold, and he was smoking to help keep warm
   b. This officer had not done the shooting, because he was occupied at something else
   c. The officer was breaking a military regulation
   d. The officer was unmoved by the killings

7. The central idea of passage 4 is:

   RH.9-10.2

   a. The Secretary of the World Jewish Congress is worried
   b. The Allies have reliable spies within Germany
   c. Information indicates that Hitler is planning to exterminate the Jews
   d. It is the U.S./Allied responsibility to stop the Holocaust