DEFYING THE NAZIS: THE SHARPS’ WAR Name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

*“Eighteenth century philosopher David Hume noted that our sense of empathy diminishes as we move outward from the members of our family, to our neighbors, our society, and the world. Traditionally, our sense of involvement with the fate of others has been inverse proportion to the distance separating us and them.” Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, in “The Dignity of Difference: How to Avoid the Clash of Civilizations”, (London:Bloomsbury Publishing, 2002), 30.*

1. Before viewing the documentary, what do you know about the Holocaust?
2. Have you ever wanted to take action against injustice? What factors did you weigh before taking action? If you didn’t act, what stopped you? If you did act, what propelled you to move from thought to action?
3. What was the Sharps purpose in travelling?
4. Describe the beliefs of the Unitarian Church.
5. The film looks at religious persecution and racism most centrally: how does sexism also affect the Martha Sharp’s decision to go to college and be an activist?
6. In 1933, Waitstill Sharp becomes a minister, FDR becomes President, and Hitler becomes the German Chancellor: describe how life changes for the Jewish population in the early years.
7. What help for refugees do the Sharps need to arrange before a visa can be obtained?
8. What event does Martha see at the airport that so affects her life?
9. How do the activists feel about the nations that are not willing to accept refugees? Why do these nations take this position?
10. How does Martha think miracles are possible?
11. Why do the Nazis stop allowing refugees to depart? What do they do to potential candidates?
12. Why are the Sharps allowed freedom of movement? How do they split their efforts?
13. The letters the Sharps write to each are moving: what is your reaction? Earlier in the class we examined the role of letters as primary source documents, after the documentary, what is your opinion now?
14. Civil disobedience is the idea that breaking the law is just if the law you are breaking is unjust-what do you think of Waitstill’s position on civil disobedience?
15. When the Sharps return to America, what is the prevalent public opinion about the war in Europe?
16. Why do the Sharps resist returning to Europe? How affect their relationship? How affect the entire family?
17. When does the US become involved in the plight of one author? What happens to the intellectuals?
18. Why does Martha place her emphasis on helping children? Why does she view it as her duty to personally lead the Children’s Immigration Project? What is the American response to the arrival of the children refugees?
19. According to one of the testimonials, Martha said that “anyone would have done that”, she did not see her actions as extraordinary (meaning acting to save the children): do you agree?
20. Why does Martha feel the call to enter politics? How did Waitstill respond? How are gender expectations again playing a role? What was the result?

 *“I know that if I asked you to do something that you knew just a little of your effort, and a little of your contribution, would make it possible for you to really aid a family to live, let’s say for a week, I’ll bet you’d do it.” Martha Sharp*

*In the next few weeks we will engage in roundtable discussions examining ethical issues in historical research, decision making, personal identity, and responsibility: all crucial aspects of developing your own learner profile. Return to question #2: after watching the video, do you think your answers might change in the future?*