



The following is an interesting piece of evidence about the unfortunate behavior of the Roosevelt administration toward Jews during WW II.

Secretary of State Colin Powell gave a posthumous award for "constructive dissent" to Hiram (Harry) Bingham IV.

For over fifty years, the U.S. State Department resisted any attempt to honor Bingham. For them he was an insubordinate member of the US diplomatic service and a dangerous maverick who was eventually demoted.

Now, after his death, he has been officially recognized as a hero.

Hiram Bingham came from an illustrious family. His father (on whom the fictional character Indiana Jones was based) was the archaeologist who unearthed the Inca City of Machu Picchu, Peru in 1911.

Harry entered the US diplomatic service and in 1939 was posted to Marseilles, France as American Vice-Consul.

The USA was then neutral and, not wishing to annoy Marshal Petain's puppet Vichy regime, President Roosevelt's government ordered its representatives in Marseilles not to grant visas to any Jews.

Bingham found this policy immoral and, risking his career, did all in his power to undermine it.

In defiance of his bosses in Washington, he granted over 2,500 US visas to Jewish and other refugees, including the artists Marc Chagall and Max Ernst and the family of the writer Thomas Mann.

He also sheltered Jews in his Marseilles home and obtained forged identity papers to help Jews in their dangerous journeys across Europe.

He worked with the French underground to smuggle Jews out of France into Franco's Spain or across the Mediterranean and even contributed to their expenses out of his own pocket.

In 1941, Washington lost patience with him. He was sent to Argentina, where later he continued to annoy his superiors by reporting on the movements of Nazis there.

Eventually, he was forced out of the American diplomatic service completely.

Bingham died almost penniless in 1988.

Little was known of his extraordinary activities until his son found some letters in his belongings after his death. He has now been honored by many groups and organizations including the United Nations and the State of Israel.

