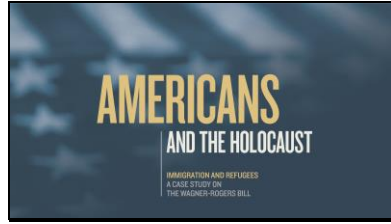
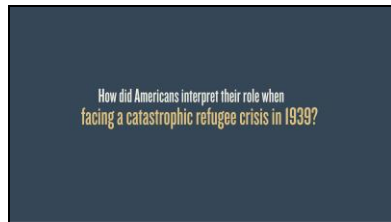


Slide 1

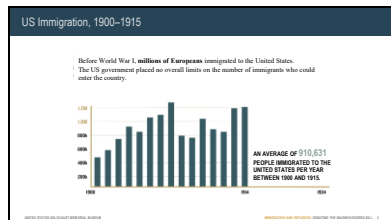


Slide 2



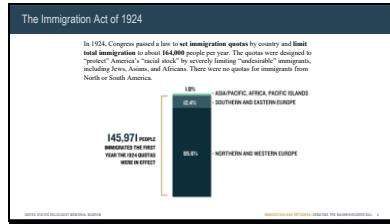
In order to answer this question, students need to learn a little bit about the history of immigration law in the United States during the first third of the 20th century.

Slide 3



A large number of the “new” immigrants during the first quarter of the 20th century were Jews and Catholics from southern and eastern Europe.

Slide 4



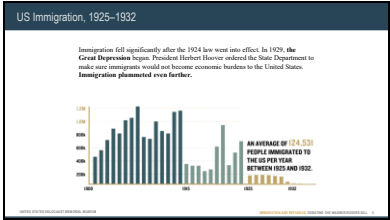
Based on racist eugenic ideas, the Immigration Act of 1924 represented a backlash against new immigrants whom lawmakers considered religiously, racially, ethnically, and economically undesirable. The law privileged immigration from the United Kingdom, Germany, and Ireland, and it heavily restricted immigration from most other countries, outright barring immigration from many countries in Asia and Africa.

This immigration law -- which remained largely unchanged in 1939 -- established quotas based on country of birth, not nationality; almost half of the immigration quota was reserved for people born in the UK and Ireland - 65,721 (UK), 17,853 (Ireland). Germany had the second largest quota at 25,957 (in 1939, the German quota was combined with the Austrian quota to total 27,370).

In 1939, US immigration law did not differentiate between refugees and regular immigrants. Those fleeing racial or religious persecution and violence had to follow the same rules as everyone else. Quota immigrants were subjected to literacy and medical tests, and had to submit extensive paperwork attesting to financial resources, identity, and moral conduct. They were also subjected to a ruling as to whether they could support themselves financially during the Depression, or whether they were likely to become public charges (LPC).

Immigration was controlled by Congress, which set national origins quotas and laid out the qualifications for various types of immigrants. Immigration laws were largely enforced by the State Department. President Franklin Roosevelt was not legally able to adjust immigration law unilaterally, and rarely dictated the State Department's interpretation of the law.

Slide 5



Slide 6

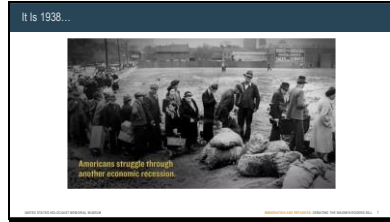
Immigration from Germany to the United States, 1933-1937

1933
Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany. The Nazi regime immediately started discriminating against German Jews, and thousands sought to leave.

The 1924 US quota law set a yearly limit of 25,397 immigration visas for people born in Germany. In 1933, the State Department issued visas to only 1,241 Germans. Although 62,787 people were on the German waiting list for a US visa, most did not have enough money to qualify for immigration.

1934-1937
From 1934 through 1937, there were between 80,000 and 100,000 Germans on the waiting list for a US immigration visa. Most were Jewish. Although the State Department slowly began to issue more visas, the German quota was not utilized.

Slide 7



In 1938, Americans—who had not fully recovered from the Great Depression of 1929—were beset by a new serious economic recession. Unemployment jumped to 20 percent. Many in the country were deeply suspicious of foreigners and minorities in the United States, particularly African Americans, who struggled for equal rights in the face of official discrimination and the threat of racial violence.

It was in this context that Nazi Germany annexed Austria and the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia, sparking a massive refugee crisis.

Slide 8



In 1938, Americans—who had not fully recovered from the Great Depression of 1929—were beset by a new serious economic recession. Unemployment jumped to 20 percent. Many in the country were deeply suspicious of foreigners and minorities in the United States, particularly African Americans, who struggled for equal rights in the face of official discrimination and the threat of racial violence.

It was in this context that Nazi Germany annexed Austria and the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia, sparking a massive refugee crisis.

Slide 9

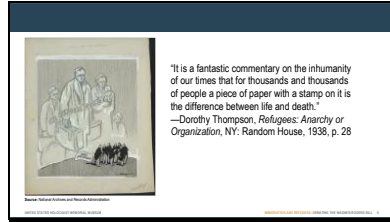


Image: "Still no solution." January 1939.
Library of Congress

Quote: Dorothy Thompson, *Refugees: Anarchy or Organization*, NY: Random House, 1938, p. 28.

Slide 10



Shattered storefront of a Jewish-owned shop destroyed during Kristallnacht in Berlin, Germany, November 1938.
National Archives and Records Administration

Los Angeles Examiner, November 23, 1938

In a nationwide pogrom known as Kristallnacht, which took place on November 9–10, 1938, members of the Nazi party and other Nazi formations burned synagogues, looted Jewish homes and businesses, and killed at least 91 Jews. Kristallnacht was on the front page of American newspapers for weeks. There were plenty of full-page articles and multi-page spreads. Americans were horrified by the violence.

Slide 11



Though Congress determined the immigration laws of the United States, in the aftermath of Kristallnacht, President Roosevelt chose to exercise his executive power to aid Germans (most of them Jewish) who were temporarily in the United States as tourists by extending their visitor visas. He also recalled the US ambassador to Germany as a sign of protest.

“The news of the past few days from Germany has deeply shocked public opinion in the United States. Such news from any part of the world would inevitably produce a similar profound reaction among American people in every part of the Nation. I myself could scarcely believe that such things could occur in a twentieth-century civilization. With a view to gaining a first-hand picture of the situation in Germany, I asked the Secretary of State to order our Ambassador in Berlin to return at once for report and consultation.” —President Roosevelt’s statement on Kristallnacht

New York Times, November 19, 1938, 1.

Slide 12



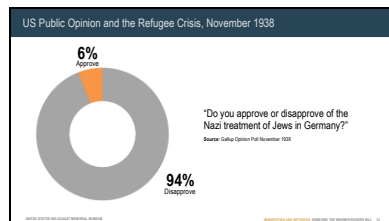
The Refugee Crisis of 1939

By the end of January 1939, Adolf Hitler had been in power for six years, and the German government had severely disenfranchised, segregated, and isolated the country’s Jews. The previous March, Germany had annexed Austria and immediately instituted a reign of terror against political opponents and the Jewish population. That, combined with the anti-Jewish violence of *Kristallnacht* in November 1938, spawned a flood of refugees from the Greater German Reich. In response, President Roosevelt combined the German and Austrian

quotas, and for the first and only time during the 1930s and 1940s, the United States admitted the full German quota: 27,370 Germans and Austrians, mostly Jewish refugees. By this time, however, with hundreds of thousands of Reich Jews desperately clamoring for a US visa, the quota was not nearly adequate to meet the demand.

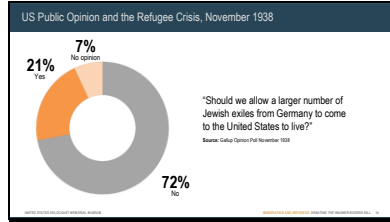
In the United States, there were no special laws at this time distinguishing “refugees” from regular immigrants. All people seeking to enter the United States, including those fleeing persecution and violence, had to follow the same procedures under the same onerous restrictions and quotas. Quotas were not targets to be met; rather, they represented the maximum limit of people allowed to immigrate each year. Every year from 1933-1938, the German quota was not filled, despite a growing waiting list of refugees trying to come to the United States.

Slide 13



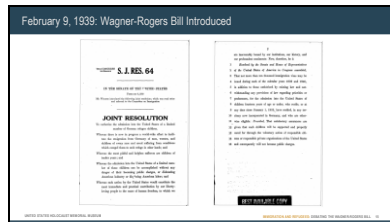
The vast majority of Americans were horrified by the wanton violence and destruction of Kristallnacht.

Slide 14



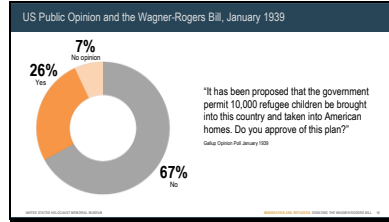
Nonetheless, a large majority of Americans opposed allowing Jews from Germany to immigrate to the United States.

Slide 15



On February 9, 1939, Democratic senator Robert Wagner of New York and Republican congresswoman Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts sponsored identical bills in the US Senate and House of Representatives to admit 20,000 German refugee children under the age of 14 over a two-year period. The bills, written by Pickett and his interfaith colleagues, specified that 10,000 children each fiscal year (1939 and 1940) would enter the United States and **not be counted against the existing immigration quota**. Although the bill did not indicate that the “German refugee children” would mostly be Jewish children, the realities of the refugee crisis in Europe made this an obvious and understood fact. The bill specified that when the refugee children reached the age of 18, they would either be counted against that year’s German immigration quota or would return to Europe.

Slide 16



The public debate on the Wagner-Rogers Bill mirrored a broader debate about Americans' responsibilities to refugees during the crisis brought about by Nazi Germany's persecution of Jews. In January 1939, weeks before the Wagner-Rogers Bill was introduced, a public opinion poll asked Americans whether they would favor a proposal to "permit 10,000 refugee children from Germany to be brought into this country and taken care of in American homes." Only 26% of respondents favored this idea; 67% opposed it. Senator Wagner and Representative Rogers faced an American public that remained largely opposed to any expansion of immigration to the United States -- even a limited exception for child refugees.

Slide 17

- Learn about your individual or group by reading the relevant biography.
- Review the documents in your packet. They include:
 - A copy of the Wagner-Rogers Bill
 - A document that illustrates your individual's or group's position on the bill
 - If your document is lengthy, a printed excerpt is attached. It is not necessary to read the long-form documents.
- Summarize your position. Prepare to present your argument.

Use this slide to introduce the small group student activity.

Slide 18

- What group or individual did you read about?
- What was this person's or group's stance on the Wagner-Rogers Bill?
- How does your individual justify his or her stance?

Pause here, and leave this slide up during the small group student activity.

Slide 19

The Wagner-Rogers Bill is Withdrawn, July 1939

BILL TO SHUT OUT ALIENS IS REPORTED
Senate Measures Would Stop Quotas for 5 Years but Admit 50,000 British Young

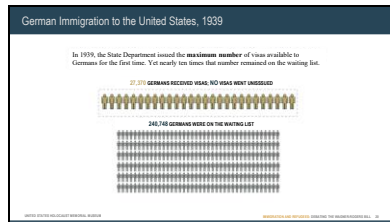
IF SUPPORT IS GUARANTEED
Requires Registration of All Aliens Here—Another Clasp-don's Bill Also Reported

Senators Put Quota Limits On Child Exiles
Reynolds Bill Opposes War's Impact On Immigrant Program Substitutes

Once students have had a chance to present their positions and discuss the proposed Wagner-Rogers Bill, reveal what actually happened to the bill.

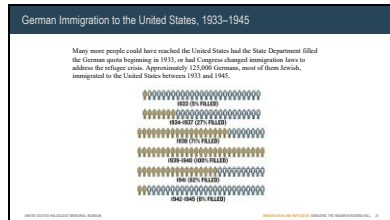
In late June 1939: Congressional opponents of the Wagner-Rogers Bill, led by Senator Robert Reynolds, introduced legislation that would reduce, rather than increase, the quota. In fact, Reynolds amended the bill to count refugee children against the existing German quota and to halt all further immigration for five years, thus reversing the original bill's intent. Roosevelt remained silent, and after several months of public and Congressional debate, Senator Wagner withdrew his bill and it effectively died in the Senate Immigration Committee during the first week of July 1939. Though the House version of the bill was not amended, a poll of members found that it did not have sufficient votes to make it out of committee, and it was never brought to a floor vote. By the end of summer 1939, the Wagner-Rogers Bill was dead. Within a month, Germany invaded Poland and, with the onset of World War II, immigration to the United States became increasingly more treacherous and difficult. After US entry into the war on December 8, 1941, immigration became nearly impossible.

Slide 20



In 1939, for the first and only time during the 1930s, the United States issued the maximum number of visas allowed under the German quota. However, the national origins quota system remained in effect despite a massive waiting list of refugees attempting to flee Nazi persecution. Under the quota, by the end of 1939, it would have taken eleven years to admit every applicant on the list.

Slide 21



In 1939, for the first and only time during the 1930s, the United States issued the maximum number of visas allowed under the German quota. However, the national origins quota system remained in effect despite a massive waiting list of refugees attempting to flee Nazi persecution. Under the quota, by the end of 1939, it would have taken eleven years to admit every applicant on the list.

