

Handout

# Station 3: The Quota System

**Directions:** As you examine the charts that follow, consider these questions.<sup>1</sup>

- How were German and Austrian Jews caught between American and German bureaucracies?
- What trends do you notice, and what could account for those?
- What correlations exist between the number of visas issued and the waiting list?

In your journal, complete an S-I-T reflection with one thing that **surprises** you, one thing you find **interesting**, and one thing that **troubles** you.

1933

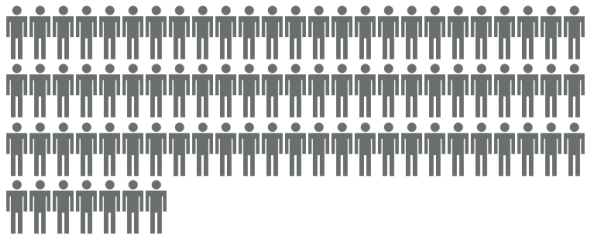
Adolf Hitler became chancellor of Germany. The Nazi regime immediately started discriminating against German Jews, and thousands sought to leave.

The 1924 US quota law set a limit of 25,957 immigration visas for people born in Germany. In 1933, the State Department issued visas to **only 1,241** Germans. Although **82,787** people were on the German waiting list for a US visa, most did not have enough money to qualify for immigration.

1,241 GERMANS RECEIVED VISAS. 24,716 VISAS WENT UNISSUED



82,787 GERMANS WERE ON A 3-YEAR WAITING LIST



<sup>1</sup> All charts are reproduced from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum exhibition *Americans and the Holocaust*.

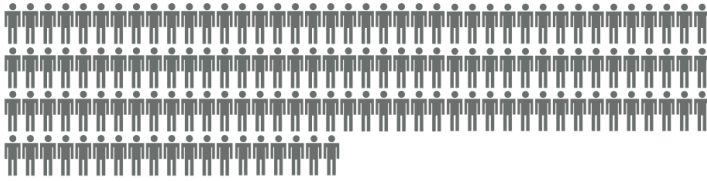
## 1938

After Germany annexed Austria in March 1938, President Franklin Roosevelt combined the German and Austrian quotas, making 27,370 visas available each year for people born in these countries, who were now all considered "German." As antisemitic persecution increased and Germany began to expand its territorial holdings in Europe, **the waiting list grew.**

**19,552 GERMANS RECEIVED VISAS. 7,818 VISAS WENT UNISSUED**



**139,163 GERMANS WERE ON THE WAITING LIST**



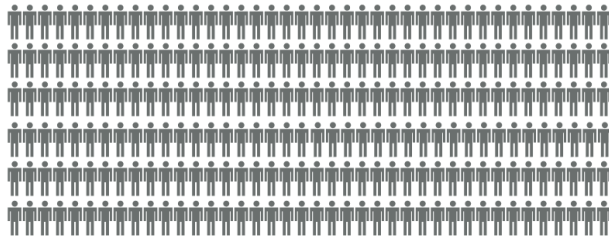
## 1939

In 1939, the State Department issued the **maximum number** of visas available to Germans for the first time. Yet nearly ten times that number remained on the waiting list.

**27,370 GERMANS RECEIVED VISAS. NO VISAS WENT UNISSUED**



**240,748 GERMANS WERE ON THE WAITING LIST**



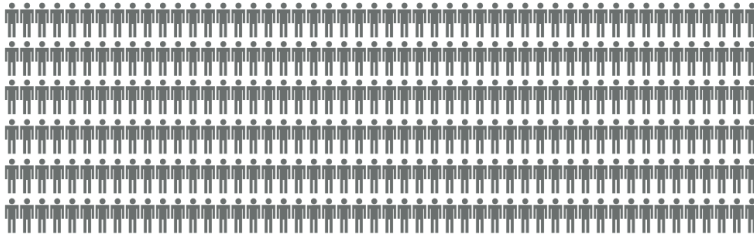
## 1940

After World War II began in September 1939, it became **more difficult** for people to emigrate from Europe. **More than 300,000** people, most of them Jewish, were on the waiting list. The State Department **almost filled** the German quota in 1940.

**27,355** GERMANS RECEIVED VISAS. **15** VISAS WENT UNISSUED



**301,935** GERMANS WERE ON THE WAITING LIST

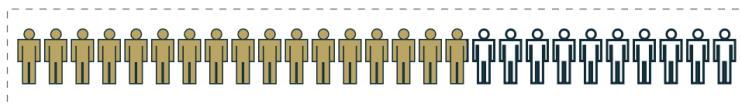


## 1941

With Europe at war, the State Department implemented new restrictions designed both to protect the nation's security and further limit immigration. In July 1941, Nazi Germany ordered US consulates in Nazi-occupied territory to close, trapping potential immigrants. Only German refugees who had already escaped Nazi territory could obtain US immigration visas.

Immigration became **almost impossible**, and the State Department **canceled the waiting list**. The United States entered World War II in December 1941.

**16,994** GERMANS RECEIVED VISAS. **10,376** VISAS WENT UNISSUED



**THERE WAS NO WAITING LIST**