

US Immigration Policy and Attitudes towards Refugees during World War II and Today

Overview

In this lesson, students will be exposed to the moving story of Hal Myers, a young Jewish boy who lived in Germany with his family until 1938, when his town's entire Jewish community was rounded up and deported to the Gurs concentration camp in France. Unlike the millions of children who were murdered during the Holocaust, young Hal was rescued from Gurs and was taken in by a family in America. As students learn about Hal's story and how he managed to survive by viewing the short documentary, *Over the Mountains to Safety: Hal Myers' Story*, teachers will provide context regarding US immigration policy during the period of World War II, which ultimately highlights just how lucky Hal was to be allowed into America. Throughout the film, Hal discusses Hitler's rise to power in 1933, his experience in the camp and his subsequent rescue, and his eventual arrival in the United States. After learning about key aspects of the Holocaust through Hal's testimony (see key words below) and examining American policies throughout those same years, students will examine current American policies and attitudes towards refugees and compare them to those of the 1930s-1940s.

Teacher Note Regarding Lesson Length: So that teachers have multiple options for integrating this material in their classroom, this packet includes details regarding numerous aspects of the Holocaust, with particular focus on the keywords below that relate to or intersect with the story of Hal Myers and US immigration policy. Teachers should ***edit*** the accompanying PPT, discussion questions, and activities provided to best match classroom time constraints and to focus on whichever elements are most in line with individual curricular goals. The lesson procedure/instructions can be found on Pages 1-21; the remainder of this file contains handout options.

Grades

Middle & High School

Keywords

American Friends Service Committee/Quakers
Anti-Semitism
Displaced persons (DP)
Citizenship
Civic Action
Dachau
Final Solution
Immigration
Immigration quotas
Kindertransport
Kristallnacht
Nuremberg Laws
Refugees
Truman Directive
U.S. War Refugee Board (WRB)
United Nations
UNICEF/UNCHR
Wagner Rogers Bill
Passport
Syrian Refugees

Visa
Xenophobia

Essential Questions

- Why is America often referred to as a “nation of immigrants?”
- Who is Hal Myers and what was his experience during the Holocaust?
- What was the immigration policy of the United States like before, during and after World War II?
- What impact did America’s policies have on individuals attempting to flee Europe during World War II?
- What was the Wagner Rogers Bill and the various debates surrounding it?
- How do America’s policies and general attitudes towards refugees today compare to the 1930s-1940s?
- Why can civic action on the part of a citizenry be a very strong catalyst for change?
- What examples of civic action and of apathy occurred throughout the story of Hal Myers?
- Who are the American Friends Service Committee (Quakers) and how did they aid victims during the Holocaust such as Hal Myers?
- After the war, what actions did the United States and other governments take to try and prevent another catastrophe like the Holocaust from occurring again?
- How does the number of refugees seeking refuge in today’s world compare to past situations such as the Holocaust?
- What debates have the American government and the American people waged regarding refugees today and how do such debates compare to the period of World War II?
- How should our understanding of the Holocaust and Jewish refugees during the 1930s-1940s inform and/or impact our actions and attitudes regarding refugees from Syria and other conflicts today?
- Why is important to speak out against racism, prejudice, antisemitism today, and not stand by during situations when a person’s rights are being violated?

Duration

- Up to three 60-90 minute periods
- Teachers should edit the various PPT slides, discussion questions and activities provided based on their time constraints and lesson goals. Thus, final lesson duration will vary.

Materials

- “US Immigration Policy and Attitudes Towards Refugees During World War II and Today,” accompanying Power Point; available in Carolina K-12’s Database of K-12 Resources by clicking <https://k12database.unc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2016/03/Hal-Myers-Refugee-Immigration-Policy-PPT.pdf>
 - To view this pdf as a projectable presentation, save the file, click “view” in the top menu bar of the file, and select “full screen mode”
 - To request an editable PPT version of this file, send a request to CarolinaK12@unc.edu
 - Slides as written are very text heavy and meant to be edited. Ideally, your final PPT will be edited and used as a basis for interactive class discussion and not just lecture.
 - Prior to this lesson, teachers should determine what format they would like students to utilize for taking notes
- Short documentary: “Over the Mountains to Safety: Hal Myers’ Story,” available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_RXmKlaMfA&list=PL_fMIWKr6Jjb7cRD1ZlcB6pYCO11gVovm
- A Debate Over Rescue: North Carolina and the Holocaust, reading and worksheet, attached
- OPTIONAL: “It Seems to Me,” by Heywood Broun
- “Quakers and the American Friends Service Committee,” reading and questions attached
- American Friends Service Committee primary source, attached and available on slide 18 of the accompanying PPT
- “What Americans Thought of Jewish Refugees on the Eve of World War II,” reading and questions attached

- Attitudes/Policies Regarding Refugees Then & Now, worksheet attached
- OPTIONAL: The Syrian Refugee Crisis and U.S. Policy: A Civil Conversation, activity available from Constitutional Rights Foundation - www.crf-usa.org/images/pdf/SyrianRefugeeCrisis_Package2.pdf
- OPTIONAL: Refugee Policy & Infographic Project, attached
- OPTIONAL: Viewing Guide for “Over the Mountains to Safety: The Hal Myers Story,” attached

Preparation

- Teaching Holocaust history demands a high level of sensitivity and keen awareness of the complexity of the subject matter. Teachers are encouraged to read the “Guidelines for Teaching About the Holocaust” by the US Holocaust Memorial Museum before broaching this subject matter: <http://www.ushmm.org/educators/teaching-about-the-holocaust/general-teaching-guidelines>
- To effectively study sensitive history such as the Holocaust and controversial current events and topics such as refugees, a firm foundation of respect and tolerance must be present in the classroom. See Carolina K-12’s “Activities” section of the Database of K-12 Resources for assistance: <http://k12database.unc.edu/activity/> (Search by topics such as “Classroom Management/Setting Expectations,” “Character Education” and “Discussing Controversial Issues”)
- Students should have a basic understanding of Holocaust history before engaging in this lesson. See Carolina K-12’s additional lessons available at <http://k12database.unc.edu/lesson/?s=&lesson-topic=holocaust>
- Before beginning your study of the Holocaust, prepare students that this is a very difficult period of history to examine. Let students know that they may find themselves feeling upset at various points and that this is understandable. Explain to students that even though the material is difficult, it is still critical that we learn about this past to honor those who suffered and ensure history does not repeat itself. Encourage students to debrief their feelings throughout the lesson, either in discussion (class, small group, or partner), journaling, artistic responses, etc.
- Teachers should be mindful as to whether any students may be uncomfortable with a discussion of immigration and refugees. Discuss any situation like this privately and prepare for ensuring the student isn’t made uncomfortable during the lesson.

Day 1

Immigrant vs. Refugee

1. As a warm up, project [slide 2](#) and ask students to consider the word “**immigrant.**” Instruct students to take a few minutes and jot down everything that comes to mind. (Their responses can address immigration during the World War II era, immigration today, or both – whatever comes to mind.) Prompt student thinking by further asking:
 - What words, thoughts, feelings, issues, people, and places come to mind when you think about this word?
2. After a few moments, allow students to share some of their brainstorming out loud, noting their responses up front (and grouping similar responses together as possible.) Let students know up front that while they have the right to their own opinions regarding immigration, it’s important their opinions are informed, based on facts, and expressed in respectful ways. Ask students why they think people immigrate, then share a definition of immigration (available on [slide 3](#)). Discuss with students that the United States has a legal process for immigrants to seek legal residency and eventually citizenship. Immigrants who do not have such legal status are considered undocumented and as such, they are subject to “removal” or deportation from the United States. (Source: <http://www.cnn.com/2014/07/15/us/immigrant-refugee-definition/>)
3. Further discuss:
 - What periods of history do you most strongly relate to immigration?
 - What do you hear about immigration in the news today?
 - Why is America often referred to as a “nation of immigrants?” Who living here in America is not or did not come from a background of immigrants?

- Teachers can briefly discuss with students the fact that a good number of US citizens can trace their lineage back to immigrants from other countries (i.e., colonization), or to people who were forced to come here (i.e., those of us with enslaved ancestors.) Many argue that the only people in this nation who are not immigrants or the ancestors of immigrants are American Indians who were indigenous to this land.
 - Why is immigration such a hotly debated issue today?
 - Even though many of us, other than those of us who are considered indigenous people, are immigrants or the ancestors of immigrants, why is the issue so contentious?
 - Do you think this has always been the case throughout history, or were immigrants welcomed more in the past?
 - What do you think is difficult about being an immigrant?
 - It is likely that some students are immigrants themselves. Teachers should have a conversation with such students before class to see if they feel comfortable being part of this discussion. While hearing their first hand experiences can be a great learning opportunity for the class, this will only be successful if the students feel comfortable, respected and safe.
4. Next, project slide 4 and ask students to consider the word **refugee** and what comes to mind regarding this word. Again, allow students to share their thoughts (respectfully) while correcting any inaccuracies. Share the information on slide 5 and further discuss:
- Have you heard anything about refugees in the news recently? (i.e., events in Syria, Iraq, Central America, etc.) Explain.
 - Whether or not to accept refugees, and if so, how many to accept, has also been a hotly debated issue. Even though many refugees are small children, why do you think this is such a contentious issue?
 - Unless you have been a refugee, it's difficult to truly imagine what this experience would be like. What are some of the difficulties you imagine a refugee would face fleeing their country to a new one? If you were in this situation, what do you imagine would be most difficult for you personally?
 - When considering immigration, do you think refugees are given different consideration or viewed differently by the public? Or, are people from other countries, regardless of why they are here, lumped together? Explain.

Over the Mountains to Safety: Hal Myers' Story

5. Next, ask students to share examples throughout history that have resulted in large amounts of refugees. Students should consider periods and events when people have been violently persecuted and forcibly removed from their homes (i.e., Holocaust.) Tell students that they are going to be learning about issues of immigration and refugees first through the lens of the Holocaust as they learn about one man's experience – Hal Myers. Tell students that Hal Myers was a child during the Holocaust who luckily was rescued and sent to America. Let students know that they will later compare Hal's experience to modern day situations involving refugees.
6. Project slide 6 and tell students that they will be watching a brief documentary about Hal Myers and his experiences as a child during the Holocaust, as told by him. Explain to students that Hal was born in **Karlsruhe, Germany** in 1930. At age ten, like thousands upon thousands of Jewish people in Europe in the 1930s & 40s, he was forcibly removed from his home, put on a train, and sent to a concentration camp – Camp DeGurs - in Southern France. In October 1941, the Quakers rescued Hal and brought him to America. He lived in Shaker Heights, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland until 2009. He now lives [as of 2016] in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, with his wife, Nora.
7. Play **Chapter 1: Life in Karlsruhe Started to Change – “Life went on”** (3 min., 10 sec). At the conclusion of the clip, discuss as a class:

- Hal starts by explaining what took place in 1933. Summarize his explanation regarding Hitler’s rise to power.
- Hal mentions the **Nuremberg Laws of 1935**. What were these laws and how did they pave the way for the Holocaust?
- Hal details how Jews were stripped of their citizenship. What is citizenship and why is it important? In what ways are you at risk without it?
 - The requirements for citizenship vary by country. Generally, the benefits of a citizen include: the ability to vote, the right to residence (not to be deported) and to obtain a job, access to schools and other government services, the right to due process, etc. (*for more on the citizenship, see <http://www.latimes.com/opinion/editorials/la-ed-citizenship-part-1-20141005-story.html#page=1>*).
- What choices did Hal and other Jews have at this point?

Kristallnacht: A Violent Turning Point in 1938

8. Continue on to **Chapter 2: My Kristallnacht - “I could see flickering flames inside the synagogue”** (3 min., 11 sec.) After viewing the chapter, begin the discussion with a focus on Kristallnacht:
- Hal talks about witnessing Kristallnacht. What do you already know about Kristallnacht? What happened November 9-10, 1938? What did Hal witness during *Kristallnacht*? How do you imagine he felt seeing and experiencing these events?
 - Why were synagogues in particular targeted? Why do you think shops were destroyed?
 - What happened to Hal’s father? What do you already know about the **Dachau concentration camp**? How does Hal describe his father after he returned (4 months later) from Dachau in April or May of 1940?
9. Discuss the additional information about Kristallnacht with students on slides 7 – 8 of the accompanying PPT. (*For more information about Kristallnacht, see <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005201>*.) Let students know that after *Kristallnacht* escalated **deportations** began, as shared in Hal’s testimony. Further discuss:
- What instructions did the gestapo give Hal’s family when they knocked on their door?
 - While it is impossible to really know what this experience was like, how do you imagine Hal felt having only one hour to decide which of his belongings to take with him (and only those he could carry?)
 - What do you think happened back in Karlsruhe while Hal and other Jews were being deported?
 - Back in Karlsruhe, many ethnic German neighbors remaining in the city looted the homes of those who were deported. Homes that weren’t destroyed were sold to other ethnic German families.
 - Remind students of the definitions the lesson started with. Could Hal and his family be considered refugees? If so, what were their options before being deported?

Why Didn’t the Jews Just Leave???

10. Project slide 9 and ask students to ponder the question: Why didn’t Hal, his family, and other Jews just get out of Germany? Why didn’t more of these people escape to other countries, such as the United States? Allow the class some time to ponder what they think they would have done. Would you run and hide? Where to? Would you try to flee to another country? If so, where would you go, how would you get there, and what would you need to flee successfully? As students ponder and discuss, additional information to share includes:
- While discussing options, some students might say that they would have left the country. Explain to students that even before Nazi Germany started World War II in 1939, “antisemitic legislation in Germany served to ‘encourage’ and ultimately to force a mass emigration of German Jews. The government did all it could to induce the Jews to leave Germany. In addition to making life miserable, the German authorities reduced bureaucratic hurdles so those who wanted to leave could do so more easily.” (*Source: USHMM*)
 - In Karlsruhe in particular, there were around 3200 Jews living there in 1933. After the Nazis came to power and Hitler stripped the Jewish people of their citizenship, 2,000 people would immigrate. To leave, however, Jewish-Germans usually had to sell all of their possessions for almost nothing and pay outrageous fees to the Nazis for exit **visas**. They rarely could take money with them. Nonetheless, around

66% of the population left the country (both legally and illegally). *For more information about the Jewish community in Karlsruhe, see <http://www.tisharon.org/karlsruhe/>*

- Explain to students that it's very easy for us to say we would just take off for America, or another country, but in reality, that was incredibly difficult. There were many reasons Jews and other targeted individuals were unable to flee before, during, and even after the war. Not everyone had the resources necessary to do this (i.e., the money, the documentation, the understanding of how and what to do, people to assist them, etc.) While the Nazis may have initially allowed Jews to leave, they "viewed the Jews' belongings and their financial capital as German property, and they had no intention of allowing refugees to take anything of material value with them. Most of those who fled had to relinquish their titles to homes and businesses, and were subject to increasingly heavy emigration taxes that reduced their assets. Furthermore, the German authorities restricted how much money could be transferred abroad from German banks, and allowed each passenger to take only ten reichsmarks (about US \$4) out of the country. Most of the German Jews who managed to emigrate were completely impoverished by the time they were able to leave. (Source: <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007455>) And, even if an individual was lucky enough to have the means to escape, another huge obstacle were the immigration policies at the time. Only a handful of applications for flight were accepted by other countries. Most families, unless they had family abroad and money in their pockets were unable to leave Germany.

American Immigration Policy During the 1930s-1940s

11. Tell students that the immigration policy of the United States was very limited before, during and after World War II. While it allowed for some individuals, such as Hal, to come to America and start a new life after the Holocaust, it also prevented thousands upon thousands of individuals from escaping to America. Project slide 10 and discuss:
 - What happened in the 1920s to cause America to enact such restrictive immigration quotas?
 - After the stock market crash of 1929, rising unemployment caused anti-immigration sentiment to grow – why do you think this was the case?
 - The president from 1929-1933 was Herbert Hoover, who ordered vigorous enforcement of visa regulations. Why do you think he responded in this way?
 - President Roosevelt was inaugurated in 1933. If you were his advisor at this time, what would you tell him to do about the immigration quotas? What do you think he actually did?
12. Move on to slide 11 and discuss with students that despite the worsening persecution of Jews, the United States did not budge on their immigration measures, largely due to lingering fear after the **Great Depression**. Take a moment to review related vocabulary with students on slide 12. Discuss:
 - What do you think caused some Americans to be xenophobic during this time?
 - While things in America were never on the same scale as the extreme **antisemitism** in Germany, why were some Americans nonetheless anti-Semitic during this period?
 - What are the reasons for **xenophobia** and anti-Semitism today? Are the reasons similar to the causes during the 1930s-40s? Explain.
 - Consider the ideas of **nativism** and **isolationism**. What are the pros and cons of such a political stance?
 - Do you see nativist and isolationist attitudes in American government/policy and/or in public opinion today? Explain.

The Debate Over Rescue in North Carolina and the Wagner Rogers Bill

13. Discuss with students how the Nazis escalated their persecution, and between 1933 and 1941, aimed to make Germany *judenrein* (cleansed of Jews) by making life so difficult for them that they would be forced to leave the country. However, despite escalating danger, many Jews were still unable to find countries willing to take them in. Many who tried to come to the United States often could not obtain the **visas** needed to enter. Even though news of **Kristallnacht** was widely reported, Americans remained reluctant to welcome Jewish

refugees. In the midst of the Great Depression, many Americans debated whether America should help the refugees, some fearing refugees would compete with them for jobs and overburden social programs set up to assist the needy.

14. Project slide 13 and tell students that they will return to Hal's story later to find out what happened next, but first they are going to read an example of the refugee debate that waged, specifically in North Carolina between an attorney from Asheville and US State Senator who represented the state, **Robert R. Reynolds**, and UNC-Chapel Hill president, **Dr. Frank Porter Graham**. Provide students with the attached reading, "A Debate Over Rescue: North Carolina and the Holocaust," as well as the accompanying worksheet. Instruct students to partner up, read the article then discuss and fill out the chart provided.
15. Afterwards, project slide 14. Each pair of students should discuss how they think each of the two men would answer the following question: *Thousands of innocent Jews are suffering at the hands of Hitler and the Nazis. What, if anything, should the American government do to assist those trying to escape?* After deciding on a concise answer for each political figure, students should write the two opposing answers in the thought bubble. Teachers should post two pieces of chart paper up front, one with each man's name written in the middle, and instruct students to cut and post their thought bubbles on the corresponding chart paper. After students are finished, discuss the reading and their responses as a class:
 - What were Reynold's arguments against the immigration of Jewish refugees to America? (Create a "T" chart up front and note these in a list under the left column.)
 - What were Dr. Graham's arguments in favor of immigration? (Note these in a list under the right column.)
 - The article mentions the **Wagner Rogers Bill**, a refugee aid bill introduced in the Senate by Senator Robert F. Wagner (D-New York) in February, 1939, calling for the admission of 20,000 German refugee children under the age of 14 to the United States over the next two years, in addition to the immigration normally permitted per year.
 - What was Reynolds' issue with this bill?
 - Does it surprise you to hear that the bill, after months of debate, was defeated, even though it could have saved thousands of German Jewish children?
 - What does this bill suggest about anti-Semitism and apathy toward Jewish refugees?
 - Should exceptions and/or distinctions in immigration policy have been made based on age (such as it was with the Wagner Rogers Bill)? Why or why not?
 - What debates surrounding immigration today particularly apply to children and youth? (For example, education funding, the Dream Act, citizenship rights for those who had no choice when their parents brought them here or gave birth to them here, etc.)
 - How did you respond for each man to the question of what the government should do for Jewish refugees? (Review the various responses, discussing any similarities or outliers.)
 - What do you think led each man (and those who thought similarly) to feel the way they felt? How do you bridge such a gap in opinions in order to move forward?
 - Which of these arguments (on both sides) can still be heard in today's immigration debate? Why do you think this is?
 - While Americans and the government debated what to do, what was happening to hundreds of thousands of innocent individuals (including children such as Hal?)
 - Despite widespread criticism for his speaking out against racism and anti-Semitism, Dr. Graham stood by his principals and beliefs. How would you characterize him based on this fact? What can be difficult about taking a stance like this, and going against the majority?
 - Why is the willingness to be brave in this way so important? In what ways did the refusal to stand up to Nazi ideals contribute to the Holocaust? (What role does apathy and indifference play in allowing hate to take root and grow?)

16. Let students know they will learn more about America's actions during the Holocaust, as well as Hal's story, during the next class.

Day 2

Warm Up: Civic Action During the Holocaust

17. As a warm up, project [slide 15](#) and ask students to examine the image and jot down a few thoughts regarding what they are looking at. (Teachers may also want to make copies of the document and have students examine it then discuss in partners in a "Think – Pair – Share" activity.) Prompt student thinking by asking:
- What do you see and first notice about this document?
 - What information is provided?
 - Who do you think created this document and for what purpose? What does it hope to accomplish?
 - Where might this have been found?
 - How do you think Americans would have responded to seeing this in the late 1930s?
 - Remind students that while some Americans were trying to raise awareness regarding what was taking place in Germany, antisemitism and xenophobia also caused other Americans to at best remain apathetic and worse, speak against assisting Jews.
18. After students have had time to process individually or in partners, allow them to share their thoughts on the image. Next, project [slide 16](#) and let them know what they are looking at. Remind students that while we may look back and be frustrated with the government for not acting, it is and has always been critical that citizens be involved and pressure their government to take the action they believe is right. When the government doesn't respond, people can take other civic actions. Discuss:
- Why can civic action on the part of a citizenry, such as boycotts, be a very strong catalyst for change?
 - What additional civic actions can people take to let their opinions be known and attempt to bring about change?
 - Can you think of other periods throughout history when similar actions were taken and eventually pressured the government into action?
 - While the government let in additional refugees at this point, was it enough?

Hal Myers Deportation

19. Let students know they will learn more about what took place in future years with America's immigration policies throughout the Holocaust, but that they are now going to return to Hal Myers' story. Ask students to share a few comments regarding the first two chapters that they viewed in class previously (What happened thus far? What most struck them?)
20. Move on to **Chapter 3: Deportation to Camp de Gurs - "Nobody took any action. Nobody helped us. Nobody offered anything"** (5 min., 45 sec.) After viewing, discuss:
- We started class by discussing the importance of civic action. As all of these innocent people, around 900, were marched from their homes up the streets, how did non-Jews respond? Why do you think no one took action or helped in any way? How do you think this makes Hal and the others being deported feel?
 - Teachers might want to discuss the concepts of neighbors and community with students, discussing whether there is a responsibility to help those in need in such circumstances. For further exploration, see the USHMM's "Some Were Neighbors: Collaboration and Complicity in the Holocaust": <http://somereneighbors.ushmm.org/#/exhibitions>
 - What do you imagine was going through the minds of Hal and the thousands of others being evicted from their homes as they walked with their belongings to the train station?
 - Hal discusses how men were separated from women and children. (Return to the image at 2:20 that includes multiple children unloading into the camp.) How do you imagine it would feel to be the parent of a child, or the older sibling of a child, during this situation? Does it surprise you that no mercy was shown to children or the elderly? Why or why not?

- Based on Hal’s description of his mother, how would you describe her? Why does Hal say they were the “lucky ones?”
- Hal says that it was his mother’s efforts that enabled him to survive. What do you think happened to other children?
- What is a normal amount of calories for a day? How many calories were people in the camp provided per day? How do you think this impacted the health and energy of those imprisoned?
- What does Hal say he remembers most about Gurs? How did the extreme amount of mud prove to be dangerous?
- How many people died each day at Gurs, which wasn’t even considered a **death camp**? What type of care was provided at the infirmary?
- Based on the images shown of Gurs, what does it appear conditions were like there? (Teachers might want to consider replaying the chapter with no sound, instructing students to write down visual observations as they examine the images.)
- What do you think happens to a person as they and those they love are ripped from their everyday lives and imprisoned in such terrible and dangerous conditions, for no reason at all? What do you think it would take to not only survive the physical difficulties, but the extreme mental anguish?

Refuge Denied: The Voyage of the *St. Louis*

13. Tell students that while Hal and his family were being deported, thousands upon thousands of other people were as well. Some people who had the means attempted to avoid the terrible fate of being sent to camps such as Gurs. One example occurred in Hamburg, Germany in 1939, where over 900 **Jewish refugees** hoped to escape to America aboard the ship, the **St. Louis**. Project [slide 17](#) and explain to students that the refugees had applied for US visas and made arrangements to stay in Cuba until the visas came through. However, right before the ship left, Cuba altered its policies and voided these temporary visas. Once the ship made it to Cuba, only 26 passengers were allowed to disembark. (One of those was a survivor of a concentration camp who attempted to commit suicide rather than be brought back to Germany. While he was taken off the ship and sent to a hospital, his family had to stay onboard.) Full of desperate passengers, the ship continued on to Florida in hopes the United States would allow them to disembark. The U.S. denied the passengers and the ship was forced to return to Europe. Thankfully, Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Belgium all accepted some of the refugees that America refused, but many were still returned to Europe and at least 254 of those people were killed in the Holocaust. Thus, despite a small step forward with the German-Austria quota, America ultimately held fast to its refusal to budge on allowing additional immigrants in. Discuss:
- Does it surprise you to hear that the US refused to allow any of the refugees into the country? Why do you think the government made this decision? What alternative choices did the US government have? What would you have advised the President to do? (See optional assignment below.)
 - What do you think this journey was like for the 938 passengers, people with stories like Hal’s, as various countries denied them safe haven as refugees?
 - In what way does the story of the *St. Louis* illustrate the importance of knowing the decisions your government is making, and expression your educated and informed opinion regarding such decisions?
 - If you were alive at this time, what are some ways you might express your support for admitting the refugees and encourage the government to assist? Why is this type of involvement important, both then and now?
- **OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT:** Explain to students that another way active citizens in the US tried to influence the government was through writing editorials. Provide students with a copy of the attached “It Seems to Me,” by Heywood Broun.
- Why does Broun say that it would have been better for the passengers had the *St. Louis* been in a collision?
 - He later says it would even be better had an accident led to the ship sinking. Why does he believe an end like this would have been more merciful for the passengers?

- What do you think the goal of Broun’s editorial was? Who is he talking to and what does he want them to do?
 - What emotions do you infer Broun was feeling based on his writing?
 - On whom do you think Broun blamed the Holocaust? What lines in the reading make you think this?
 - Broun says: “And so the whole world stuffs its ears and pays no attention to any wireless [news]. There is a ship. And almost two thousand years have elapsed since the message of universal brotherhood was brought to earth. What have we done with that message? After so many years we have no yet put into practice those principles to which we pay lip service. Nine hundred are to suffer a crucifixion while the world passes by on the other side.” What does he mean? What hypocrisies is he highlighting here and throughout his editorial?
 - What various adjectives might Broun have used to describe Americans and the American government at the time he wrote this editorial?
 - Can you draw any parallels to Broun’s thoughts on 1940s society and society today?
- **OPTIONAL ASSIGNMENT:** Another optional assignment is to tell students to imagine they are an advisor to President Roosevelt in 1939 and to write a short memo advising him on what to do regarding the refugees onboard the St. Louis (i.e., convince him why they should be allowed to stay in the United States or offer other alternatives.)

Additional information about the St. Louis can be accessed at <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005267>.

Quakers/The American Friends Service Committee

14. Tell students that while such actions like these can be very disheartening to think about, you want them to now focus on people who were making a difference and saving lives during the Holocaust. Tell students to again consider the chapter they just viewed and discuss:
 - Who was **Alice Resch** and how does Hal describe her? How do the actions of her and those working with her compare to the people who silently watched Hal be deported?
 - Do you know anything about the **American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)** & **Les Secours Quakers**, with whom Alice worked in order to provide aid to the children?
 - What do you think Hal means when he says that Alice Resch “made us feel like children?”
 - This chapter ends with Hal saying that Alice then “managed the first convoy out of the camp of the children.” What do you think it took on her part to make this happen?
15. Tell students that ultimately, Alice Resch escorted 48 boys and girls from Gurs to the Maison des Pupilles de la Nation, an orphanage in Aspet, about 50 miles south of Toulouse in February 1941. Alice had convinced the Vichy authorities that the Quakers would care for these children and relieve the French from any further responsibility. Because one boy refused to be parted from his parents, Hal took his place and became number 48 on the list. The Maison des Pupilles was located on a beautiful hilltop overlooking the Garonne River Valley and the Pyrenees Mountains. Hal’s journey from imprisonment to freedom takes him over mountains (figuratively and literally). The title of his documentary short refers to these mountains.
16. Tell students they are going to take a moment to learn more about Quakers and the AFSC before continuing Hal’s story. Provide the attached reading, “Quakers and the American Friends Service Committee” and questions to students, for completion individually or in reading partners. Discuss the questions together once students have finished:
 - How would you describe the Quaker religion?
 - Why were Quaker activities on behalf of refugees limited in the early years of the Nazi regime? What is your opinion of this strategy?
 - Why do you think Kristallnacht prompted Quakers to become more active in the refugee cause?

- Why did the Nazis allow Quakers to provide welfare services to Holocaust victims? How does this differ than most of the stories of assistance provided to and rescue of Jews and other victims that we learn about?
- What does “**interfaith**” activity mean? Why can this be such a successful strategy? Are there examples of interfaith activity today that you can identify?

10. Tell students they are going to learn more about the amazing work of the AFSC as Hal continues his story. Play **Chapter 4: Life in Aspet Orphanage - “My mother was hard not to miss”** (3 min., 7 sec.) and afterwards discuss:

- What happened when the children arrived at the orphanage?
- While the children were in a nicer environment, and received showers, sheets to sleep on and treatment for their lice, what would still be difficult and frightening about this change of environment for them?
- How did Alice stay involved with the children at the orphanage?
- How do you think ten-year-old Hal and the other 100 children he was with felt when hearing that the Quakers had arranged travel to the United States for them? What various emotions would children experience during the long voyage, without any of their family accompanying them? What questions do you think they might ask?
- What do you think it took for these children to be allowed into the United States? If these children had not been allowed into the U.S., what might have happened to them? Why weren’t all children threatened during the Holocaust rescued and allowed to come to countries such as the U.S.?
- What other situations throughout history and in current events have massive numbers of innocent children been in danger? What is the world’s responsibility when innocent children are in danger such as this?

American Friends Service Committee Primary Source Think – Pair - Share

17. Discuss with students that Alice and the Quakers teach us that despite the indifference of most Europeans (such as those who watched Hal being deported from their windows) and the collaboration of others in the murder of Jews during the Holocaust, there were also individuals in every European country and from all religious backgrounds that risked their lives to help Jews. Rescue efforts ranged from the isolated actions of individuals to organized networks both small and large, such as the American Friends Service Committee. Tell students you’d like them to examine a primary source related to the Quakers and the Holocaust. Have students partner up and provide each pair with a copy of the attached “American Friends Service Committee” document. Students should examine the document together and discuss the questions provide on slide 18.

18. After 5-6 minutes, bring the class back together and allow various partners to share their thoughts regarding the document. Let students know that this is an identification tag issued to Kurt Moses by the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) for his voyage to the United States on board the Mouzinho. In all, 103 children sailed to New York aboard the Mouzinho, a Portuguese liner. The transport was sponsored by the American Friends Service Committee, and representatives of several Jewish organizations met the children in New York. Marseilles, France, 1941. (Source: http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_da.php?ModuleId=10005212&MediaId=6194; an additional identification tag is also available at this site.) Once students know the background of the document, further discuss:

- Why do you think the AFSC attached this identification tag to the 103 children it rescued and sent to America? What does this tell you about the reality of the Holocaust years?
- These children were rescued from horrible situations, but they were being rescued without their adult family members (i.e., parents, grandparents, etc. had to remain in the camps.) What mixed emotions do you imagine these children felt? What do you think would be best for them, given the complexity of their situation?
- Even though they may have left the horrors of camp life behind, what difficulties still face rescued children such as Hal?

- Think back to our opening discussion regarding immigration and refugees. These children escaping labor and concentration camps were refugees. Had America not let the 103 children into the country, what would have happened to them?
- Based on what you have learned thus far, how would you describe the AFSC, and people like Alice Reche?
 - Optional: A few minutes of historical film footage regarding Quaker activity in France can be shown to students: http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/media_fi.php?ModuleId=10005212&MediaId=224

19. As a homework assignment, provide students with the attached article “What Americans Thought of Jewish Refugees on the Eve of World War II” and accompanying questions. Let students know that they will be utilizing this information during the following day’s class as they move to comparisons between the Holocaust and situations of modern day refugees.

Day 3

Hal Escapes to America

20. Begin class with a review of the main points covered in the previous lesson and ask students to summarize where they left off in Hal’s story. Tell them that they will be completing the film today and move on to show **Chapter 5: Reflections: The Move to America - “Genocide is a disease of humankind”** (6 minutes, 45 seconds.) Discuss:
- What is Hal’s first impression of Mr. and Mrs. Myers?
 - How did Hal communicate with the Myers? What is **Yiddish** and have you ever heard it spoken?
 - Why do you think the Myers insisted Hal and his brother learn English as quickly as they could, and without an accent?
 - Why do you think the Myers took Hal and his brother in? What does it say about their character to give these boys a second chance at life, when they had never even met them?
 - While Hal and his brother were sent to America to live with the Myers family, what happened to their sister, Ruth? What do you already know about the **Kindertransport**?
 - Hal was able to communicate with his sister and parents via letters until Sept. 1942, at which point the letters from his parents stopped. Why? How had things escalated and worsened by this time?
 - Remind students that throughout 1941 – 1942, Hitler carried out what the Nazis referred to as “**The Final Solution**.” The **genocide**, and total annihilation, of the Jews, which was the culmination of a decade of increasingly severe discriminatory measures. (To read more about the Final Solution, go to <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005151>.)
 - If Hal had been unable to immigrate to America, how might his life have been different after the war?
 - Hal comments that “Genocide is a disease of human kind, and I don’t think it will ever go away. I don’t think it’s stoppable.” What is genocide? Why do you think Hal feels this way? Do you agree or disagree and why?
 - Why is important to speak out against racism, prejudice, anti-Semitism today, and not stand by during situations when a person’s rights are being violated?
 - Now that you’ve heard Hal’s testimony, what words would you use to describe the experiences he endured?

America’s Immigration Policies as Hitler Escalates into the “Final Solution”

21. Tell students that even after America learned of Hitler’s Final Solution, it still failed to act. Largely due to pressure placed on the government by the public and civically engaged citizens the United States provided aid to a small number of refugees. Share the information about activist actions on [slides 19-20](#) and discuss:
- Based on the actions described, how would you describe Peter Bergson? What can be effective about rallies, marches, newspaper advertisements, etc. in persuading the public and the government to act in a particular way?

- How do you imagine it would have felt to be an American Jewish citizen during World War II, aware of the nightmare happening to your Jewish family overseas, but not being able to save them since your country wouldn't allow them in?
 - How do you predict the government responded to this added pressure?
22. Project slide 21 and explain to students that the **War Refugee Board** was ultimately charged with rescuing "the victims of enemy oppression who are in imminent danger of death and otherwise to afford such victims all possible relief and assistance consistent with the successful prosecution of the war." Discuss:
- The WRB is estimated to have rescued 200,000 people. What is your opinion of this number? Was it enough?
 - Point out to students that while some of the persecuted lived, such as Hal, by the end of World War II in 1945, six million Jews were dead. (As many as 1.5 million of them were children.) Additionally, five million other individuals lost their lives as a result of Nazi ideology, including the physically and mentally disabled, Russians, Poles, dissidents, Roma, Sinti, political prisoners, homosexuals, and Jehovah's Witnesses. Many believed America could have done more to rescue and save refugees. Yet, despite the civic action of some Americans to pressure the government, antisemitism, racism, and fear was also still at play.
23. Move on to slide 22 and discuss the one **refugee shelter** that America provided at the end of the war. Discuss:
- Why do you think President Roosevelt made it clear the refugees would not have permanent citizenship and also that the camp would be surrounded by a fence? What does this tell you, despite some Americans advocating for helping Jews, about antisemitism, racism, and fear in American society at this time?
24. Let students know that Germany surrendered on May 6, 1945, twenty-four days after President Roosevelt's death. The question of what to do with the camp became a pressing issue at this point. Internment was becoming increasingly difficult to support. The problem was whether to return the refugees to their home countries or to admit them into the United States. Most of the refugees wanted to stay. In fact, 60% of them had active immigration cases pending. A subcommittee voted to close the camp, and the shelter was closed in February 1946. Some refugees chose to return to Europe, whether to find family members, or under the impression that their homes and businesses still remained as they had left them. Some were desperate to remain in the United States and not return to a country where they believed they had no future. Many were granted permanent or temporary status and allowed to stay in the country, sometimes ending up in the homes of family or friends.
- (Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Ontario_Emergency_Refugee_Shelter)

Aftermath of the Holocaust

25. Explain to students that while the war may have ended, survivors now faced the daunting task of rebuilding their lives. Share slides 23 – 24 with students and discuss:
- When we study the Holocaust, we often overlook the fact that the end of the war did not equal automatic renewed life for surviving victims. What were the various challenges they faced? What do you think would be most difficult to overcome?
 - What do you already know about **Displaced Persons Camps (DPs)**?
 - From 1945 to 1952, more than 250,000 Jewish displaced persons (DPs) lived in camps and urban centers in Germany, Austria, and Italy. Read more about DPs here: <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005462> and <http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007066>
 - Does it surprise you to hear that opportunities for immigration to the United States were still limited, even after the full extent of the Holocaust were known? Explain. Why do you think this was the case?

Post-War Immigration & Jewish Refugees in North Carolina

26. Continue through slides 25 – 26 and further point out to students that while they typically hear about Jewish refugees having arrived at Ellis Island, many made their way to North Carolina. In fact, North Carolina became one of the foremost southern states in offering opportunities to European refugees. Information that students might find interesting includes:
- Leaders at UNC-Chapel Hill, such as Dr. Frank Porter Graham (president of the University from 1930-1949) advocated an open-door policy for admission of new immigrants in 1938, arguing that, because of the South's stagnant economy, "an infusion of new blood would be one of the greatest blessings" in the region. Dr. Graham even placed an advertisement in the *New York Times* in 1938 inviting refugees to the state.
 - Many NC university professionals, including Dr. Graham, were active in the **Emergency Committee in Aid of Displaced German Scholars**. The committee arranged American college faculty positions for German refugee scholars, most of whom had been dispelled from their jobs in Germany because they were Jews. Several refugees were given positions at UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke University.
 - In 1933 the experimental Black Mountain College was established near Asheville and invited a host of artists and scientists from all over Europe to join its faculty.
27. Discuss:
- After everything you have learned, how would you summarize America's immigration policies during and after World War II?
 - What impact did America's policies have on individuals attempting to flee Europe (such as Hal, who was able to come to America, and the thousands of others who were not allowed entry)?
 - What should America have done differently?
 - What do you think our country learned about immigration and refugees after the Holocaust?

Refugees Today

28. Remind students that at the very beginning of this lesson, they began by brainstorming the terms immigrant and refugee. They also talked about what they have heard about refugees in the news today. Tell the students that one of the things the United States and other governments did to try and prevent another catastrophe of this level based on what was learned was to create the **United Nations** and its subgroups, including **UNCHR** & **UNICEF**. Move to slide 27 and share the information provided. (*For additional information about the creation of UNCHR & UNICEF see:*
- <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646cbc.html>
 - http://www.unicef.org/about/who/index_introduction.html.)

Discuss:

- What does **repatriation** mean?
 - The process of returning a person to their place of origin or citizenship. This includes the process of returning refugees or military personnel to their place of origin following a war.
- What does "local integration" mean?
 - In cases where voluntary repatriation is not a viable option, finding a home for refugees in the country of **asylum** and integrating into the local community could offer a durable solution to their plight and the opportunity of starting a new life.
- What does "**resettlement** overseas" mean?
 - UNHCR Washington supports field offices around the world in finding new homes for refugees who have been identified as particularly vulnerable. They work closely with government agencies and **Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)** in the U.S. that are involved with resettlement. They provide information to partners and the general public about refugees around the world who are in need of resettlement, and promote their acceptance by the U.S. resettlement program.
- Where does the funding come for these organizations?

- Funding comes from various governments around the world, government organizations, private donations, and corporations. The top five donors for the UNCHR in 2012 were the United States, Japan, the European Commission, Sweden and the Netherlands. The top five for UNICEF in 2011 were the US, UK, Norway, the European Commission, and Japan.
- Why are organizations like this important?

Worldwide Displacement Hits All Time High as War & Persecution Increase

29. Despite the creation of organizations such as UNHCR and UNICEF, the number of refugees and people fleeing conflict today is higher than it has ever been. Go through the information on [slides 28-30](#) and discuss:
- How does hearing this information make you feel? Does anything you heard surprise you?
 - Read more at <http://www.unhcr.org/558193896.html>.
 - Why do you think children make up the greatest population of refugees?
 - Do you know what the process is for becoming a refugee and seeking asylum in the United States?
 - Share the information on [slide 31](#) with students. Then further discuss:
 - How would you describe the process for becoming a refugee that was just described?
 - Do you think most people are educated about refugees and the conflicts they are fleeing? Do you know anything about refugees in North Carolina?
 - Share the information on [slide 32](#). (Detailed spreadsheets about refugee resettlement in North Carolina are available via the Office of Refugee Resettlement at <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resource/refugee-arrival-data>.)
 - How would you describe the percentage of refugees living in North Carolina compared to other states? Why do you think there are so few refugees here?
 - Are most people sympathetic regarding refugees? Why or why not? If they are sympathetic, are they doing anything to help?

Refugees Then and Now

30. Next, ask students to return to the article they read for homework, “What Americans Thought of Jewish Refugees on the Eve of World War II.” Allow them to share their thoughts to the questions as a class:
- What was the overall attitude towards refugees from the Holocaust coming to America during the 1930s-1940s?
 - What factors contributed to this attitude?
 - In the author’s opinion, in what ways does public sentiment about refugees today, such as those from Syria, echo attitudes during the Holocaust?
 - The author says that “Today’s 3-year-old Syrian orphan, it seems, is 1939’s German Jewish child.” What does he mean?
 - Overall, what message do you think the author is trying to convey regarding refugees and what should be done about them? Do you agree or disagree with his message and why?
31. Next, tell students you want them to start synthesizing some of this information by comparing how refugees were viewed during World War II to how they are viewed today. Solicit a few comments by asking:
- What debates has the American government and the American people waged regarding refugees?
32. As students begin to think about this, provide them with the attached “Attitudes/Policies Regarding Refugees Then and Now” chart. Instruct them to partner up and spend around 5-6 minutes working together to fill in both columns with all of the information they can think of. Tell students to remember what they have learned throughout learning about Hal’s story, related U.S. Immigration policy during the Holocaust, as well as from the information they’ve started to explore regarding refugees today. Have partners report out some of their thoughts after around five minutes, adding their responses to the class chart at the front of the room. Further discuss:

OPTIONAL: The Syrian Refugee Crisis and U.S. Policy: A Civil Conversation

33. To deepen students understanding of the Syrian refugee crisis and ongoing debates surrounding it, teachers can implement the activity “The Syrian Refugee Crisis and U.S. Policy: A Civil Conversation,” available from Constitutional Rights Foundation at www.crf-usa.org/images/pdf/SyrianRefugeeCrisis_Package2.pdf. This activity involves having students read a brief and balanced article providing an overview of the crisis and surrounding debate, then utilizing the specific format described, discussing the article in either small groups or as a whole class. Teachers can vary the amount of class time provided for completion of the reading, accompanying worksheet, and civil conversation – at least 30 minutes will likely be needed. If implementing the civil conversations, teachers should also have students add any new information to the “Attitudes/Policies Regarding Refugees Today” column of their worksheet.
34. Discuss (after the Civil Conversation):
- What should U.S. policy be regarding Syrian refugees? Should the screening process for Syrian refugees be stronger, or is it strong enough now? Should there be more or fewer refugees than what the president has proposed? In your opinion, are American values at stake in this crisis? If so, what are those values and how can they be protected?
 - President Obama has condemned more than half of the US’s governors as ‘un-American’ for saying they will no longer provide placement for Syrian refugees. Governors often sigh security reasons for not allowing refugees into their states. Who is right in your opinion? What evidence do you have to back up your opinion?
 - Optional: Show the video at the top of the article, “Syrian Refugees: Separating Fact From Fiction,” available here: <http://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2015/nov/19/syrian-refugees-in-america-fact-from-fiction-congress>
 - How should our understanding of the Holocaust and Jewish refugees during the 1930s-1940s inform and/or impact our actions and attitudes regarding refugees from Syria and other conflicts today?
 - Think back to the debate between Frank Porter Graham and Robert Reynolds regarding the Wagner Rogers Bill. What do you think each man would argue regarding Syrian refugees today?
 - If Hal Myers were a Syrian refugee today, do you think his story would end in a similar way? Why or why not?

Culminating Activity: Write to be Heard!

35. Ask students to think back through everything covered throughout this lesson and to again reconsider all of the different forms of civic action they can think of that have been addressed, both during the Holocaust and related to refugees today. Ask students to consider:
- What are additional forms of civic action you can employ today to make your opinion known and influence decision makers about issues such as whether to allow refugees into the US, and/or to assist refugees (if that is something that interests you) both abroad and upon arrival? (students might consider writing letters to government officials and the press; volunteering for community organizations; organizing a petition; utilizing a social media campaign; organizing a donation drive; etc.)
36. Project [slide 33](#) and tell students that their final assignment is to write a letter to voice their opinion on the Syrian crisis noting compelling ideas regarding what can be done to help the thousands of people who’ve been displaced because of the conflict. Students should:
- Think about what can and should be done to help. Do you want to impact policy at the state or federal level, do you want to fundraise for the local agency assisting refugees, do you want to collect supplies to be sent to refugee camps, etc.?
 - Decide who best to send your letter to by brainstorming who you think could help make a difference in this situation in some way (a state or federal politician, such as a congressman or the President? someone in the United Nations, such as the UN Secretary? a celebrity? a service organization? a local religious leader (such as your priest, rabbi, pastor, etc.?)

- Consider how you will be persuasive with your words. Why should someone care and help? What evidence can you note regarding the situation of refugees? How might you cite lessons supposedly learned from the past (i.e., the Holocaust) to help spur action today?

37. Final letters should:

- Be written in persuasive language with an introduction, details and inspiring conclusion
- Be no longer than a page
- Be written as a formal letter, using an appropriate layout
- Show knowledge of the refugee crisis and cite evidence that backs up any points raised in the letter
- Share a clear opinion on the current crisis and describe a realistic suggestion(s) for making a positive difference

38. Teachers should let students know when their work is due and how it will be shared with classmates. For example, all students can pass their letters to the right for other students to read and comment on (this can be done one or more times), students can read and discuss their letters in small groups, etc.

Additional OPTIONAL Sources and Activities for Syrian Refugees

- **Refugee Policy & Infographic Project:** Provide students with the attached group assignment, which explains that in 2015, President Obama directed his administration to admit at least 10,000 Syrian refugees to the United States in 2015 and 2016. Students are to imagine that North Carolina has been selected to receive 1,000 of these displaced persons and that unlike previous refugee resettlements, the government has decided to create a new refugee settlement program by soliciting different proposals from various organizations. Tell students that their job is to create an organization and develop a policy to resettle those 1,000 refugees throughout North Carolina. Go over the assignment details and let students know when their work is due and how they should expect to share it with the class (i.e., presentation to the entire class, gallery walk, etc.)
- **Where Would 10.8 million displaced Syrians fit?** To provide further context for the scope of the Syrian refugee crisis, visit the website, “Where Would 10.8 million displaced Syrians fit?” at <http://projects.aljazeera.com/2013/syrias-refugees/index.html>. Share the following information. The site notes that “Since the start of the Syrian conflict in 2011, at least 4 million refugees have fled the country and more than 6.5 million have been displaced internally. But what does that number look like? Using U.S. Census data, this interactive map shows where 10.8 million people live in your area to illustrate the scope of this regional humanitarian crisis.” Teachers can have students view the site in partners or project it for the entire class. Discuss:
 - If there was a war or natural disaster that occurred near your town in North Carolina, where could people flee to avoid it?
 - Why might it be easier for people to flee from North Carolina to South Carolina than it is to flee from Syria to the United States? (Encourage students to think of political and natural barriers.) Despite NC and SC being close, what would still be difficult about fleeing?
 - Do you think the number of refugees affects Americans willingness to accept refugees?
 - Does the United States government have an obligation to help Syrian refugees? Why or why not?
 - If you think the US should accept refugees, how many should be allowed in the country?
- **Fleeing War, a Syrian Family Makes a New Home in North Carolina.** In February 2015, National Geographic featured a profile of one of the first families of Syrian refugees to settle in North Carolina. Although it was too long to be included in this lesson plan, it is worth assigning to students as an outside reading assignment to give them the sense of the refugee experience in North Carolina. The article is available here: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/02/150227-syria-refugees-resettlement-north-carolina-cultures-war/>

It Seems To Me

By Heywood Broun

THERE is a ship. It is called the St. Louis. If suddenly the vessel flashed an S. O. S. signal to indicate that the crew and the 900 passengers were in danger every other steamer within call would go hurrying to the rescue. That is the rule of the sea.



BROUN

And no vessel which got the flash would pause to inquire the economic, political, religious or national position of those in distress. It would want no more than the position of the ship.

And the captain on the bridge, according to the prevailing tradition, would ask the engineer to give all speed possible so that the work of rescue could be completed as expeditiously as possible. And this would be true of the skipper of a totalitarian merchantman, one from a democratic nation or a ship flying under the flag of a monarchy, liberal or otherwise.

Many fine things in international civilization have gone under, but on the surface of the ocean there is still a functioning fraternity in which all nations are agreed upon complete unity against the perils of the deep.

But there is a ship. It carries 900 passengers—men, women and small children. This is a group of God-fearing people guilty of no crime whatsoever. And they are in peril.

In Deepest Danger

Their danger is greater than that which could be brought upon them by any gale or any fire or collision. They are in peril which threatens not only their lives but their very souls and spiritual freedom. It would be better for them by far if the St. Louis had ripped its plates in a collision with some other craft, or if an impersonal iceberg had slashed the hull below the water line.

Then there would be not the slightest hesitation in a movement of all the allied fleets to save these members of the human race in deep and immediate distress.

But this is not an iceberg or a plate which has been ripped away. The passengers—men, women and children—are Jewish. It is not an ac-

cident of nature but an inhuman equation which has put them in deadly peril. It is quite true that when the St. Louis gets back to Hamburg these 900, with possibly a few exceptions, will not die immediately. They will starve slowly, since they have already spent their all. Or they will linger in concentration camps—I refer to the men and women. God knows what will happen to the children.

And so the whole world stuffs its ears and pays no attention to any wireless.

There is a ship. And almost two thousand years have elapsed since the message of universal brotherhood was brought to earth.

What have we done with that message? After so many years we have not yet put into practice those principles to which we pay lip service. Nine hundred are to suffer a crucifixion while the world passes by on the other side.

Payment of Lip Service

At any luncheon, banquet or public meeting the orator of the occasion can draw cheers if he raises his right hand in the air and pledges himself, his heart and soul to the declaration that he is for peace and amity and that all men are brothers. He means it, generally, and so do the diners who pound the table until the coffee cups and ice cream dishes rattle into a symphony of good feeling and international sympathy.

But there is a ship. If one were to look upon it with cold logic it would be better for every one of the 900 if the vessel suddenly buckled and went down in forty fathoms. That would be more merciful.

Against the palpable threat of death we can muster brotherhood. But against the even more plain sentence of life in death we pretend to be helpless.

Our answer is, "We must look after ourselves. What can we do about it?"

A crew will man a lifeboat and launch it through heavy seas. Men will gladly volunteer for such a task. Why, then, should we hold back against a condition brought about wholly through the folly, the malice and the hatred of mankind?

Life is greater than death. We agree. Here is our test. What price civilization? There is a ship. Who will take up an oar to save 900—men, women and children?

Quakers and the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)

The Quaker movement, also called the Society of Friends, was founded in England during the middle of the 17th century. The group took its name from the "quaking" that is sometimes associated with the agitation of religious feeling.



Within a few decades the Quaker philosophy spread from the British Isles to northwestern Europe and the British colonies. The Quakers adopted a simple congregational style that consisted of local meetings for worship and meetings for church business. The early Quakers were often persecuted, fined, and put in jail for violating religious and civil laws. They refused to attend established churches, to take oaths of office, to pay tithes, or to bear arms. They insisted on holding meetings of their own and in proselytizing even where it was forbidden.

During and after World War I the **American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)**, a US-based Quaker aid society, was instrumental in providing relief services in Germany and later throughout Europe. These activities created a great deal of good will in Germany and elsewhere. In the early years of the Nazi regime, however, AFSC activities on behalf of **refugees** were limited. This has been attributed to the dilemma faced by Quakers who feared that speaking out against the persecution of Jews would compromise their reputation in Germany, which they had built up over many years.

After *Kristallnacht* (the "Night of Broken Glass") the AFSC, under the leadership of Rufus M. Jones and the chairmanship of Clarence E. Pickett, became more active in the refugee cause. In 1939, they championed the ultimately unsuccessful **Wagner-Rogers extra-quota child refugee bill**. Such activities were, however, inhibited by the refusal of the Quaker rank and file to assist actively in relief, either financially or by taking in refugee families.

The AFSC became the main source of support for the non-sectarian **Committee for Refugee Children** and its successor, the non-sectarian **Foundation for Refugee Children**. Both were established in 1940 to help refugees—primarily Jewish children—resettle from Europe to the United States.

Because of the involvement of the AFSC in relief services throughout Europe before World War II, the Nazis treated the Quakers with respect and permitted them to continue welfare activities in southern France during the occupation. The AFSC cooperated closely with Jewish welfare agencies, including the **American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee**, and provided assistance to Jewish refugees in France, Spain, and Portugal.

During 1941 and 1942, the AFSC chose Jewish children from children's homes and refugee camps in southern France for transfer to the United States under the auspices of the **US Committee for the Care of European Children**. The actions of the AFSC showed that interfaith activity on behalf of European Jews could be successful.

Discuss:

1. How would you describe the Quaker religion?
2. Why were Quaker activities on behalf of refugees limited in the early years of the Nazi regime? What is your opinion of this strategy?
3. Why do you think Kristallnacht prompted Quakers to become more active in the refugee cause?
4. Why did the Nazis allow Quakers to provide welfare services to Holocaust victims? How does this differ than most of the stories of assistance provided to and rescue of Jews and other victims that we learn about?
5. What does "interfaith" activity mean? Why can this be such a successful strategy? Are there examples of interfaith activity today that you can identify?

THE AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE

29, Boulevard d'Athènes - MARSEILLE

20 South 12 th Street, Philadelphia, Pa U. S. A.

MY NAME IS
JE M'APPELLE

Kurt MOSES

MY NUMBER IS
JE PORTE LE N°

40

I am sailing for the
United States on

Je m'embarque pour
les États-Unis sur

S/S MOUZINHO

SAILING FROM
PARTANT DE

Lisbonne

In case of emergency, cable to one of the above addresses, either at Marseille or at Philadelphia, according to place. Kindly give my name and number and describe my case. Do not fail to give your full address. A reply will reach you immediately and your expenses will be refunded in full.

THANK YOU !

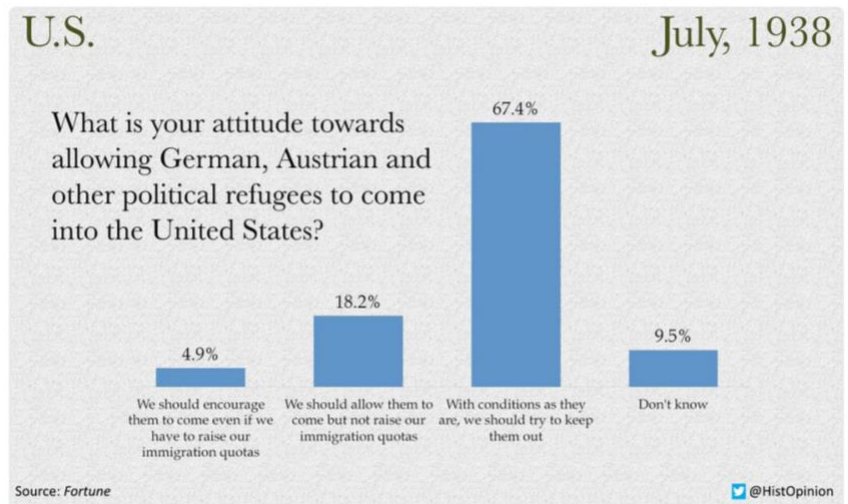
En cas de besoin, télégraphiez ou cablez à une des adresses ci-dessus soit à Marseille, soit à Philadelphie, suivant le cas. Donnez mon nom et mon numéro et décrivez ce qui m'arrive, N'omettez pas de donner votre adresse. Vous recevrez immédiatement une réponse et vous serez remboursé sans délai de toutes vos dépenses.

MERCI !

What Americans thought of Jewish refugees on the eve of World War II

By Ishaan Tharoor, *Washington Post*
November 17, 2015

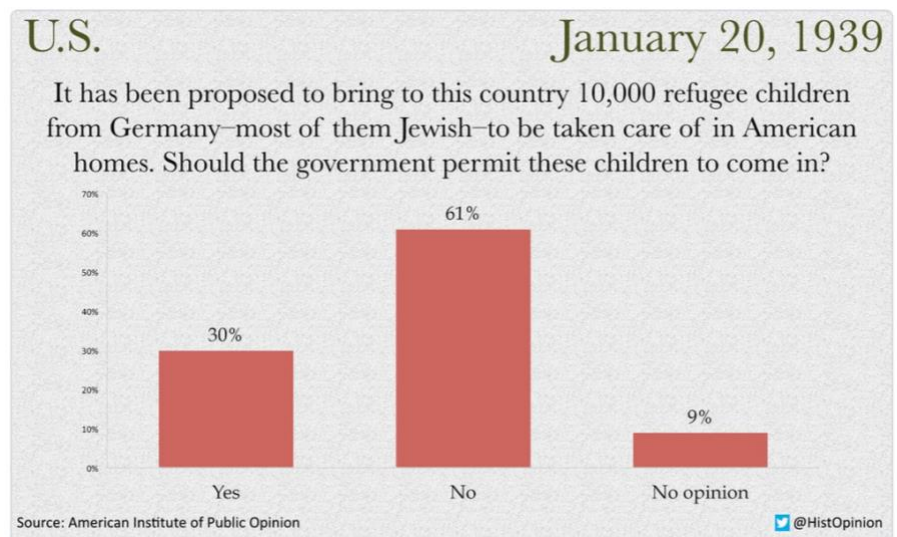
The results of a poll asking about attitudes towards refugees were published in the pages of *Fortune* magazine in July 1938. (The picture to the right is a recreation of that poll tweeted by @HistOpinion.) Fewer than 5 percent of Americans surveyed at the time believed that the United States should raise its immigration quotas or encourage political refugees fleeing fascist states in Europe — the vast majority of whom were Jewish — to voyage across the Atlantic. Two-thirds of the respondents agreed with the proposition that "we should try to keep them out."



To be sure, the United States was emerging from the Great Depression, hardly a climate in which ordinary folks would welcome immigrants and economic competition. The events of Kristallnacht — a wave of anti-Jewish pogroms in areas controlled by the Nazis — had yet to take place. And the poll's use of the term "political refugees" could have conjured in the minds of the American public images of communists, anarchists and other perceived ideological threats.

But look at the next chart, also tweeted by @HistOpinion. Two-thirds of Americans polled by Gallup's American Institute of Public Opinion in January 1939 — well after the events of Kristallnacht — said they would not take in 10,000 German Jewish refugee children.

As WorldViews detailed earlier this year, most Western countries regarded the plight of Jewish refugees with skepticism or unveiled bigotry (and sympathy followed only wider knowledge of the monstrous slaughters of the Holocaust):



No matter the alarming rhetoric of [Adolf] Hitler's fascist state — and the growing acts of violence against Jews and others — popular sentiment in Western Europe and the United States was largely indifferent to the plight of German Jews.

"Of all the groups in the 20th century," write the authors of the 1999 book "Refugees in an Age of Genocide," "refugees from Nazism are now widely and popularly perceived as 'genuine,' but at the time German, Austrian and Czechoslovakian Jews were treated with ambivalence and outright hostility as well as sympathy."

It's worth remembering this mood when thinking about the current moment, in which the United States is once more in the throes of a debate over letting in refugees. Ever since Friday's terror attacks in Paris, the Republicans, led by their presidential candidates, have sounded the alarm over the threat of jihadist infiltration from Syria — even though it now appears that every single identified assailant in the Paris siege was a European national. The Republicans have signaled their intent to stop Syrian refugee arrivals, or at least accept only non-Muslim Syrians.

GOP presidential candidate Chris Christie of New Jersey was one of the many governors who said Monday that they would oppose settling Syrian refugees in their states; Christie insisted that he would not permit even a "3-year-old orphan's" entry.

Today's 3-year-old Syrian orphan, it seems, is 1939's German Jewish child.

Of course, there are huge historical and contextual differences between then and now. But, as Post columnist Dana Milbank notes, it is hard to ignore the echoes of the past when faced with the "xenophobic bidding war" of the present:

"This growing cry to turn away people fleeing for their lives brings to mind the SS St. Louis, the ship of Jewish refugees turned away from Florida in 1939," Milbank writes. "It's perhaps the ugliest moment in a primary fight that has been sullied by bigotry from the start. It's no exaggeration to call this un-American."

Source: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/11/17/what-americans-thought-of-jewish-refugees-on-the-eve-of-world-war-ii/>

After reading, please think about and answer:

1. What was the overall attitude towards refugees from the Holocaust coming to America during the 1930s-1940s?
2. What factors contributed to this attitude?
3. In the author's opinion, in what ways does public sentiment about refugees today, such as those from Syria, echo attitudes during the Holocaust?
4. The author says that "Today's 3-year-old Syrian orphan, it seems, is 1939's German Jewish child." What does he mean?
5. Overall, what message do you think the author is trying to convey regarding refugees and what should be done about them? Do you agree or disagree with his message and why?

Name(s): _____

Refugee Policy & Infographic Project

In 2015, President Obama directed his administration to admit at least 10,000 Syrian refugees to the United States in 2015 and 2016. North Carolina has been selected to receive 1,000 of these displaced persons. Unlike previous refugee resettlements, the government has decided to create a new refugee settlement program by soliciting different proposals from various organizations. **Your job is to create an organization and develop a policy to resettle those 1,000 refugees throughout North Carolina.** Once you have created your policy, your group must create an infographic that explains your policy to the citizens of North Carolina.

Roles:

- **Project Manager's** jobs are to lead the discussion and keep everyone focused, to keep track of time, and to assist any other group member who needs help.
- **Researcher's** job is to research any questions that may arise. Use the links provided and any resources available to you to research the questions.
- **Artist/Graphic Designer's** job is to design & draw the final infographic with input from your group mates. You can draw it by hand or use a computer to create the infographic.
- **Note Taker's** job is to take notes during the discussion, record any interesting information from the researcher, and to assist the artist/graphic designer create the infographic.

1. Begin developing your policy by discussing the following questions as a group. Be prepared to explain your choices:

Your Organization

- What is your organization's mission regarding refugees?
- What are your organization's values?
- Choose a name for your organization. (How does your organization's name reflect your mission/values?)

Screening:

- How will you determine who is a refugee?
- Who will you let in? (Children only? Families? Women and children?)
- Will you add screening procedures in addition to the ones the federal government already requires?

Location:

- Where will you settle the refugees in North Carolina? Urban area? Rural area? What cities?
- What are some challenges with placing the refugees?
- Where will you house the refugees? Camps? Vacant buildings? Build new houses? Place them with American families?
- If you're placing refugees in camps, should they be allowed to move freely in and out of the camps?
- Will you ask the local community for assistance? How will you get the local community to buy into the idea of resettling refugees in their community?

Human Services:

- Will you provide healthcare? For whom (children only, etc.)?
- Refugees are granted special work permits from the federal government when they arrive. Where will you find jobs for the refugees?
- Will you provide clothing for the refugees?
- How will you educate the children? In local schools? At home? Build new schools?
- If you're placing the refugees in camps, will you provide police/fire protection and services?

- Will you work with non-profit organizations to help? Private organizations? Religious organizations?
- Will the refugees be allowed to become US citizens? How long will they have to live here before they're eligible to become citizens?

Costs:

- How will you pay for your plan? Federal government, state government, private charities, a combination? Use specific percentages when talking about funding. For example, 100%
- How will the refugees contribute? Financially? Volunteering?

Links for Research

- US Department of Health & Human Services – NC Office of Refugee Resettlement: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resource/state-of-north-carolina-programs-and-services-by-locality>
- Carolina Refugee Resettlement Agency: <http://carolinarefugee.org/>
- US Committee for Refugees North Carolina: <http://www.refugees.org/about-us/where-we-work/north-carolina/contact/faqs.html>
- Lutheran Services Carolinas: <http://www.lscarolinas.net/services-for-refugees/refugee-resettlement/>
- North Carolina Refugee Assistance Program: <http://www2.ncdhhs.gov/dss/refugee/>
- Fleeing War, a Syrian Family Makes a New Home in North Carolina: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/2015/02/150227-syria-refugees-resettlement-north-carolina-cultures-war/>
- Church World Service RDU <http://cwsrdu.org/>

2. After you have discussed the above questions and developed your plan, you must create an interesting and visually engaging way to convey your plan to the public using an infographic. Your infographic must address/include:

- Organization's name and a logo or tagline.
- The four categories above: **screening, location, human services, and costs.**
- It should also include a map of North Carolina indicating where the refugees will be living.
- It should include information about refugees in North Carolina.
- Two additional items that you want the citizens of North Carolina to know about the refugees or your plan.

3. Once you have completed your infographic you will compare your plan with proposals from other groups and the class will vote on the best plan.

Due Date: _____

Viewing Guide for "Over the Mountains to Safety: The Hal Myers Story"

Overview:

Hal Hanauer Myers was born in Karlsruhe, Germany in 1930. At age ten, he was deported to Camp DeGurs in Southern France. In October 1941, the Quakers rescued Hal and brought him to America. He lived in Shaker Heights, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland until 2009. He now lives [as of 2015] in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, with his wife, Nora.

Available for viewing at:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7_RXmKlaMfA&list=PL_fMIWkr6Jjb7cRD1ZlcB6pYCO11gVovm

Chapter 1: Life in Karlsruhe Started to Change – "Life went on"

- Hal starts by explaining what took place in 1933. Summarize his explanation regarding Hitler's rise to power.
- Hal mentions the Nuremberg Laws of 1935. What were these laws and how did they pave the way for the Holocaust?

Chapter 2: My Kristallnacht - "I could see flickering flames inside the synagogue"

- What happened on *Kristallnacht* (November 9-10, 1938)? What did Hal witness during *Kristallnacht*? How do you imagine he felt seeing and experiencing these events?
- Why were synagogues in particular targeted? Why do you think shops were destroyed?
- What happened to Hal's father? What do you already know about the Dachau concentration camp? How does Hal describe his father after he returned (4 months later) from Dachau in April or May of 1940?
- What instructions did the Gestapo give Hal's family when they knocked on their door?
- While it is impossible to really know what this experience was like, how do you imagine Hal felt having only one hour to decide which of his belongings to take with him (and only those he could carry?)

Chapter 3: Deportation to Camp de Gurs - "Nobody took any action. Nobody helped us. Nobody offered anything."

- As all of these innocent people, around 900, were marched from their homes up the streets, how did non-Jews respond? Why do you think no one took action or helped in any way? How do you think this made Hal and the others being deported feel?
- What do you imagine was going through the minds of Hal and the thousands of others being evicted from their homes as they walked with their belongings to the train station?
- Hal discusses how men were separated from women and children. (Return to the image at 2:20 that includes multiple children unloading into the camp.) How do you imagine it would feel to be the parent of a child, or the older sibling of a child, during this situation? Does it surprise you that no mercy was shown to children or the elderly? Why or why not?
- Based on Hal's description of his mother, how would you describe her? Why does Hal say they were the "lucky ones?"
- Hal says that it was his mother's efforts that enabled him to survive. What do you think happened to other children?
- What is a normal amount of calories for a day? How many calories were people in the camp provided per day? How do you think this impacted the health and energy of those imprisoned?
- What does Hal say he remembers most about Gurs? How did the extreme amount of mud prove to be dangerous?
- How many people died each day at Gurs, which wasn't even considered a death camp? What type of care was provided at the infirmary?

- Based on the images shown of Gurs, what does it appear conditions were like there? (Teachers might want to consider replaying the chapter with no sound, instructing students to write down visual observations as they examine the images.)
- What do you think happens to a person as they and those they love are ripped from their everyday lives and imprisoned in such terrible and dangerous conditions, for no reason at all? What do you think it would take to not only survive the physical difficulties, but the extreme mental anguish?
- Who was Alice Resch and how does Hal describe her?
- Do you know anything about the American Friends Service Committee & Les Secours Quakers, who Alice worked with in order to provide aid to the children?
- What do you think Hal means when he says that Alice Reche “made us feel like children?”

Chapter 4: Life in Aspet Orphanage - “My mother was hard not to miss”

- What happened when the children arrived at the orphanage?
- While the children were in a nicer environment, and received showers, sheets to sleep on and treatment for their lice, what would still be difficult and frightening about this change of environment for them?
- How did Alice stay involved with the children at the orphanage?
- How do you think ten-year-old Hal and the other 100 children he was with felt when hearing that the Quakers had arranged travel to the United States for them? What various emotions would children experience during the long voyage, without any of their family accompanying them? What questions do you think they might ask?
- What do you think it took for these children to be allowed into the United States? If these children had not been allowed into the U.S., what might have happened to them? Why weren’t all children threatened during the Holocaust rescued and allowed to come to countries such as the U.S.?
- What other situations throughout history and in current events have massive numbers of innocent children been in danger? What is the world’s responsibility when innocent children are in danger such as this?

Chapter 5: Reflections: The Move to America - “Genocide is a disease of humankind.”

- What is Hal’s first impression of Mr. and Mrs. Myers?
- How did Hal communicate with the Myers? What is Yiddish and have you ever heard it spoken?
- Why do you think the Myers insisted Hal and his brother learn English as quickly as they could, and without an accent?
- Why do you think the Myers took Hal and his brother in? What does it say about their character to give these boys a second chance at life, when they had never even met them?
- While Hal and his brother were sent to America to live with the Myers family, what happened to their sister, Ruth? What do you already know about the Kindertransport?
- Hal was able to communicate with his sister and parents via letters until Sept. 1942, at which point the letters from his parents stopped. Why?
- If Hal had been unable to immigrate to America, how might his life have been different after the war?
- What is genocide?
- Hal comments that “Genocide is a disease of human kind, and I don’t think it will ever go away. I don’t think it’s stoppable.” Why do you think Hal feels this way? Do you agree or disagree and why?
- Why is important to speak out against racism, prejudice, Anti-Semitism today, and not stand by during situations when a person’s rights are being violated?

Hal went on to live a long, happy life in the United States. He currently lives in Chapel Hill, NC with his wife, Nora, where he continues to educate and inspire people with his story.