

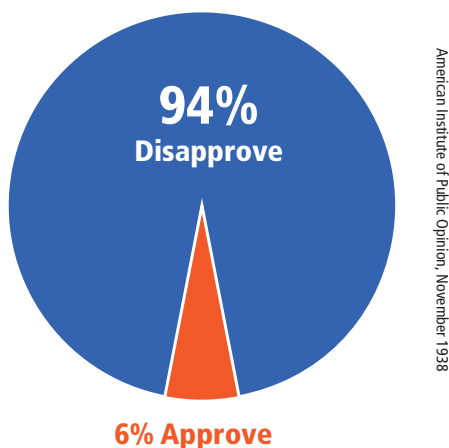
Handout

Station 1: Polling Data / Roosevelt's Response

Polling Data, Part 1

Directions: Read this November 1938 polling result of the American people following the events of Kristallnacht. Then respond to question 1 independently. Discuss your response to question 1 as a group before moving on to Part 2 of this handout.

Poll: *Do you approve or disapprove of the Nazi treatment of Jews in Germany?*

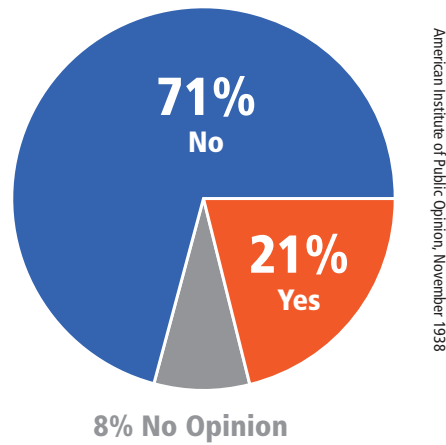


1. In 1938 poll, respondents were asked a follow-up to the question above: *Should we allow a larger number of Jewish exiles from Germany to come to the United States to live?* What percentage of Americans do you predict answered yes? Write your prediction and an explanation in the space below. Then examine the results on Part 2 of this handout to see if you were correct.

Polling Data, Part 2

Directions: Compare your prediction from Part 1 to the actual poll results below. Then answer question 2.

Poll: *Should we allow a larger number of Jewish exiles from Germany to come to the United States to live?*



2. Was your initial prediction accurate? Explain the thinking behind your initial prediction. What conclusions can you draw by comparing the poll above with the poll from Part 1?

Roosevelt's Response

Directions: Read and annotate the following document, and then answer the question that appears below the reading.

As Nazi persecution of German Jews intensified throughout the 1930s, leading to a refugee crisis, President Roosevelt took limited action to respond to the humanitarian emergency.

After Germany annexed Austria (the Anschluss) in March 1938, tens of thousands of desperate potential immigrants added their names to the waiting lists for entrance to the United States. Shortly after the Anschluss, Roosevelt merged the German and Austrian immigration quotas, so that a maximum of 27,370 quota immigrants born in Greater Germany could immigrate to the United States each year.

The quota was filled for the first time in 1939 and nearly filled in 1940 (27,355 visas were issued of an available 27,370). Yet by June 1939, more than 300,000 Germans were on the waiting list for American immigrant visas, and they anticipated a wait of up to ten years. The United States did not have a refugee policy at this time, only an immigration policy.

After the Kristallnacht attacks in Germany in November 1938, Roosevelt gave a press conference to the American people. During this, he said: "I myself could scarcely believe that such things could occur in a twentieth-century civilization."

Later in the press conference, a reporter asked: "Would you recommend a relaxation of our immigration restrictions so that the Jewish refugees could be received in this country?" President Roosevelt responded: "This is not in contemplation; we have the quota system."

1. How do Roosevelt's remarks during the press conference after Kristallnacht illustrate a gap between his shock concerning the attacks on German Jews and a willingness to act? Based on what you've learned thus far about this historical period and on your own personal experience, what are some factors that may have contributed to this gap?