

## ***Among the Huddled Masses at the Golden Door***

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### **Body**

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There is no doubt that many immigrants to the United States were driven by economic imperatives, as Roberto Suro noted in his July 5 Outlook [commentary](#) about the Statue of Liberty. But that fact did not justify the conclusion reflected in the headline "She Was Never About Those **Huddled Masses**."

I was one of those "**huddled masses** yearning to breathe free" as I stood on the deck of the ship Nieuw Amsterdam on the morning of Dec. 15, 1938.

Also standing on the deck were hundreds of other passengers who were fleeing the Nazis, as I was. We gazed at the Statue of Liberty as our ship brought us to the **golden door**. Admittedly, the **door** was no longer wide open, but it had not been "slammed shut" in 1924, as Mr. Suro contended. There were tens of thousands of us whose lives were saved because we found refuge in the United States in the 1930s.

Mr. Suro was also mistaken when he said that the **door** remained shut after World War II. Under the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, hundreds of thousands of those who lost their homes during the war were allowed to enter the United States. And hundreds of thousands have entered under the Refugee Act of 1980.

Our immigration laws undoubtedly need review and revision, but that does not change the fact that no other country has been as willing to open its **doors** to victims of persecution as has the United States. The Statue of Liberty should indeed continue to symbolize that lifting of the lamp beside the **golden door**.

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Bethesda

### **Graphic**

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IMAGE; By Andrew Harrer -- Bloomberg News

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