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DATE _____

AMERICANS AND THE HOLOCAUST

IMMIGRATION AND REFUGEES: DEBATING THE WAGNER-ROGERS BILL Document Analysis Worksheet Answer Key

Directions

1. Read the text of the bill before Congress.
2. Review background information about the bill.
3. Examine the document assigned to you and answer the questions below.

Which group or individual did you read about?

The Non-Sectarian Committee for German Refugee Children. Headed by Clarence Pickett of the American Friends Service Committee (a Quaker group). Co-chairs included George Cardinal Mundelein, the Archbishop of Chicago, New York Governor Herbert Lehman, and Frank Graham, the president of the University of North Carolina.

Summarize this person's or group's stance on the bill (list two to three main points of the argument):

They helped draft the Wagner-Rogers Bill as an emergency response to the violent persecution of Jews in Germany. The main points of their argument included an appeal to American democratic values and the humanitarian impulse to protect endangered children.

Refugee children would become thankful patriotic Americans and contribute to the economy as consumers rather than as competitors for jobs.

The children would not become a "public charge," because only children who cleared all existing immigration requirements and who were sponsored by families who could vouch for their financial support would be allowed into the country under the Wagner-Rogers Bill.

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Document Analysis Worksheet Answer Key (continued)

What evidence (if any) does your individual or group provide to support the argument?

- The bill would not alter existing immigration quotas. It is an emergency measure allowing in a defined number of children from Germany (in excess of the quota) during the years 1939 and 1940.
- The bill would not hurt American workers. Children would not enter the workforce for several years. As consumers they would boost the economy. Organized labor supports this bill.
- The bill would not hurt needy American children. Leading child-welfare workers support this bill and believe that sympathy aroused by German children will open new channels of support for work being done to help American children.
- The bill wouldn't tear German families apart. German government policies are breaking up families, not the bill; the bill seeks to save children from families that already have been devastated and who are eager to send their children.
- The children brought to America would not constitute a threat to traditional American cultural or social values. The children would be carefully selected and would have to meet all immigration requirements set under US law.
- The children would not present a burden to the American taxpayer. Only children who had a sponsoring family or institution who could vouch for their financial support and well being would be allowed into the United States. A large number of American households already have volunteered to take in the children.

What external factors might have shaped this perspective and how it was received by the intended audience?

In 1938, the United States was experiencing a major recession. Many Americans were out of work or struggling financially. In addition, most Americans did not want to become entangled in European affairs; many Americans were suspicious of foreigners, and most Americans opposed any perceived increase in allowable immigration to the United States. In addition, racism and antisemitism permeated large segments of American society.