Business and Brutality

Examine how company decisions aided Nazi goals.

SS24.HOS.16a "Analyze how corporate complicity aided Nazi goals.*"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one choice made by each company, circle the Nazi goal each choice supported, and give each choice and its linked goal the same number.

Companies at Auschwitz

1 When Nazi Germany expanded the Auschwitz camp complex in occupied Poland, IG Farben built a nearby factory at Monowitz to make synthetic rubber for the German war effort. Company leaders chose the site partly because the SS could supply prisoners as laborers. IG Farben paid the SS for their work, but prisoners received no wages. Many faced hunger, beatings, and deadly conditions. The factory never produced synthetic rubber before Germany's defeat. Still, the project aided Nazi goals by exploiting forced labor and providing payments to the SS, which ran the camp system.

2 Another German firm, Topf & Söhne, supplied cremation ovens for Auschwitz-Birkenau. Its engineers also worked on ventilation for gas chambers there. These were not ordinary sales to an unknown buyer: employees visited the camp and adapted equipment to SS requests. The ovens helped the SS dispose of victims' bodies after mass murder. Ventilation helped clear poison gas between killings. The firm did not make Nazi policy, but its technical work helped the SS carry it out. Unlike IG Farben's factory project, this equipment directly aided the operation of a killing center.

3 These cases show more than businesses operating under a dictatorship. IG Farben's managers sought a controlled workforce for a wartime factory; Topf & Söhne's staff used engineering skills to meet SS needs at a killing center. Nazi officials controlled the camps and directed the crimes, but company decisions supplied payments, labor arrangements, and specialized machinery. Profit or access to contracts could motivate such choices without proving that every employee shared Nazi beliefs. To analyze complicity, ask what a company knew, what it chose to provide, and how that choice made a specific Nazi goal easier to achieve.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did IG Farben's choice of location connect its factory plans to the SS camp system?

2. Why did the failure to produce synthetic rubber not erase IG Farben's role in aiding Nazi goals?

3. How did each type of equipment supplied by Topf & Söhne help the SS operate Auschwitz-Birkenau as a killing center?

4. How did the Nazi goal aided by Topf & Söhne's work differ from the goals aided by IG Farben's project? Use one detail about each firm.

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a museum label of 70 to 100 words judging this claim: “A company that worked for profit could not be complicit in Nazi crimes.” Use a detail about each firm, explain how its choices aided Nazi goals, and distinguish those actions from what the passage proves about every employee's beliefs.

ANSWER KEY

Business and Brutality

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.HOS.16a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one choice made by each company, circle the Nazi goal each choice supported, and give each choice and its linked goal the same number. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did IG Farben's choice of location connect its factory plans to the SS camp system?	**Leaders chose a site near Auschwitz partly to obtain prisoners as laborers from the SS.**
2	Why did the failure to produce synthetic rubber not erase IG Farben's role in aiding Nazi goals?	**The project still exploited prisoners' forced labor and paid the SS, which ran the camp system.**
3	How did each type of equipment supplied by Topf & Söhne help the SS operate Auschwitz-Birkenau as a killing center?	**The ovens helped dispose of victims' bodies, and the ventilation helped clear poison gas between killings.**
4	How did the Nazi goal aided by Topf & Söhne's work differ from the goals aided by IG Farben's project? Use one detail about each firm.	**Topf & Söhne supplied equipment used at a killing center. IG Farben planned wartime rubber production and used prisoners as forced laborers while paying the SS.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The claim is false. A company could seek business while making choices that helped the Nazis. IG Farben built near Auschwitz partly to obtain prisoners as laborers, then paid the SS rather than the prisoners. Topf & Söhne adapted ovens and ventilation equipment to SS requests at Auschwitz-Birkenau, helping the killing center operate. These actions aided forced labor and mass murder, whatever profits the firms hoped to gain. The evidence does not show that every employee shared Nazi beliefs, but shared beliefs are not required to identify the harm their companies' choices enabled.

Accept answers that connect a specific company choice to a Nazi goal supported by the passage. For the museum label, look for a reasoned judgment that separates evidence of complicity from claims about every employee's beliefs.