Policies and Lives

Trace how Nazi government actions affected targeted groups.

SS24.HOS.19a "Evaluate the effect of Nazi policies on other groups targeted by the government of Nazi Germany, including the Roma, Sinti, and people with disabilities.*"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two Nazi policies against Roma and Sinti people and two against people with disabilities, then circle one effect of each policy.

When Prejudice Became Policy

1 In Nazi Germany, persecution did not begin at a camp gate. Government offices first turned prejudice into rules and records. Officials labeled some people a threat to the nation because of ancestry or disability. A name on a form could lead to police surveillance, loss of work, forced removal, or worse. These policies did not affect every targeted group in the same way, but they gave authorities the power to control ordinary decisions: where people lived, whether families stayed together, and what happened to their bodies. Looking at each policy alongside its effects reveals how official decisions reshaped lives.

2 Roma and Sinti families had long lived across Europe, including Germany. Under Nazi rule, officials recorded people they classified as Roma or Sinti, often using racist ancestry claims rather than anything a person had done. Registration made it easier for police to find families, restrict movement, and carry out arrests. Many lost homes and livelihoods when authorities sent them to camps. At Auschwitz-Birkenau, Nazis imprisoned Roma and Sinti families together in a segregated camp section; disease, hunger, and killings devastated them. In August 1944, the SS murdered many of those still held there. These measures attacked both individual lives and the survival of communities.

3 People with disabilities faced a different set of policies rooted in the false idea that their lives had less value. A 1933 law allowed the forced sterilization of people diagnosed with certain conditions, denying them the choice to have children. Beginning in 1939, Nazi authorities also organized the murder of disabled people in institutions through a program later known as Aktion T4. Families were often given false explanations for their relatives' deaths. Although public protest helped end the program's centralized gas killings in 1941, the killing of disabled people continued by other methods. Both groups faced state violence, but the policies targeted different aspects of their lives.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did registering Roma and Sinti people increase the government's power over their lives?

2. How did sending Roma and Sinti families to camps harm both individuals and communities?

3. What choice did forced sterilization take from people with disabilities, and why was that a serious effect?

4. Why would it be inaccurate to say the killing of people with disabilities ended in 1941?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 4- to 5-sentence museum label explaining why these policies were connected government actions, not isolated acts of cruelty. Include one policy and its effect for Roma and Sinti people, one policy and its effect for people with disabilities, and one important difference between those effects.

ANSWER KEY

Policies and Lives

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.HOS.19a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two Nazi policies against Roma and Sinti people and two against people with disabilities, then circle one effect of each policy. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did registering Roma and Sinti people increase the government's power over their lives?	**Registration helped police find Roma and Sinti families, restrict their movement, and arrest them.**
2	How did sending Roma and Sinti families to camps harm both individuals and communities?	**People lost homes and livelihoods, and many suffered or died from hunger, disease, and killings. These losses also threatened the survival of their communities.**
3	What choice did forced sterilization take from people with disabilities, and why was that a serious effect?	**It took away their choice to have children and gave the government control over their bodies and futures.**
4	Why would it be inaccurate to say the killing of people with disabilities ended in 1941?	**The centralized gas killings ended in 1941, but the killing of disabled people continued by other methods.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Nazi persecution used government rules and offices to turn prejudice into harm. Recording Roma and Sinti people helped police find and arrest families, putting their homes and communities at risk. A law permitting forced sterilization denied people with disabilities the choice to have children. Both policies gave the state power over people it had labeled as threats. Registration helped authorities remove families, while sterilization directly controlled whether individuals could have children.

Accept other passage-supported effects when students clearly connect a policy to its consequences. In the museum label, look for a supported comparison and an explanation of the government's role.