Shops and Stories

How public actions advanced Nazi exclusion

SS24.HOS.7a "Explain the motivations behind the boycott of Jewish businesses and Nazi book burnings."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline the Nazis' stated reason for the boycott, circle phrases that reveal deeper goals, and number two details showing how these actions made exclusion visible to the public. Use your marks to explain why the Nazis carried out each action.

A Shop Door, a Public Square

1. On April 1, 1933, Nazi storm troopers stood outside Jewish-owned shops in Germany. They painted slogans on windows and urged customers to stay away. The Nazi government called this nationwide boycott a response to criticism of its treatment of Jews in other countries. That claim hid a broader purpose. Nazi leaders wanted to blame Jews for Germany's troubles, separate Jewish families from their neighbors, and push them out of economic life. By making shopping a public choice, the Nazis pressured ordinary Germans to take part in antisemitism. The boycott lasted one day, but it announced the regime's willingness to target Jews openly.

2. In May 1933, university students in many German cities carried books into public squares and set them on fire. The students and their Nazi allies called the targeted writing "un-German." Their lists included works by Jewish writers and by people who opposed Nazi ideas, including pacifists and socialists. Nazi leaders supported the burnings and used them as public spectacles. The goal was not to heat a bonfire or clear library shelves. The fires sent a warning: ideas that challenged Nazi beliefs, and voices the regime defined as outsiders, could be pushed out of public life.

3. These two actions targeted different parts of daily life. A boycott tried to cut Jewish business owners off from customers and income, while a book burning attacked access to writers and ideas. Both turned exclusion into public theater. A person could see guards at a shop or flames in a square and learn what the regime wanted people to reject. Neither action stood alone: Nazi propaganda falsely portrayed Jews as a threat and treated disagreement as dangerous. The boycott and burnings helped make discrimination visible and encouraged people to accept a society with fewer Jewish neighbors and fewer independent voices.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. What reason did the Nazi government give for the boycott, and what deeper goals does the passage identify?

2. How did the boycott try to involve ordinary shoppers in Nazi antisemitism?

3. Why did students and their Nazi allies burn works by both Jewish writers and people who opposed Nazi ideas?

4. Why did Nazi leaders support public book burnings rather than simply remove books from shelves?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a 65 to 85 word caption for a museum display about these two events. Explain a different goal of each action, describe one thing a bystander could have seen at each, and explain why making both actions public served the Nazis' goals.

ANSWER KEY

Shops and Stories

HIGH SCHOOL · SS24.HOS.7a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline the Nazis' stated reason for the boycott, circle phrases that reveal deeper goals, and number two details showing how these actions made exclusion visible to the public. Use your marks to explain why the Nazis carried out each action. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	What reason did the Nazi government give for the boycott, and what deeper goals does the passage identify?	**The government claimed it was responding to criticism from other countries. Its deeper goals were to blame and isolate Jews and push them out of economic life.**
2	How did the boycott try to involve ordinary shoppers in Nazi antisemitism?	**By urging people to avoid Jewish-owned shops, the Nazis pressured shoppers to participate in excluding Jewish neighbors.**
3	Why did students and their Nazi allies burn works by both Jewish writers and people who opposed Nazi ideas?	**They wanted to remove voices they labeled outsiders and suppress ideas that challenged Nazi beliefs.**
4	Why did Nazi leaders support public book burnings rather than simply remove books from shelves?	**Public fires made the rejection of targeted writers and ideas visible and warned others that disagreement was dangerous.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In April 1933, a shopper might have seen storm troopers outside a Jewish-owned store. The boycott aimed to cut Jewish owners off from customers and pressure neighbors to join in. Weeks later, a bystander might have watched students burn books in a public square. The fires targeted writers and ideas the Nazis wanted excluded. Making both actions visible showed people whom the regime expected them to reject. These spectacles helped turn Nazi prejudice into pressure on everyday choices.

Accept answers that distinguish the government's stated excuse for the boycott from its antisemitic goals. For the caption, look for accurate evidence from both events and an explanation of how public visibility increased pressure to exclude people or ideas.