Prejudice Into Policy

Trace how the Nazis used older antisemitism to cast Jewish people as enemies.

SS24.WH.11a "Describe how the Nazis built upon historical antisemitism to dehumanize Jewish people and frame them as the enemy of the German people."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two older false claims about Jewish people, circle two ways the Nazis spread or used those claims, and number two consequences. Your marks should show how prejudice led to exclusion.

How a Lie Became Law

1. On a Berlin street in 1933, a Nazi poster could turn an old prejudice into a political message. For centuries, some Europeans had falsely blamed Jewish communities for disasters and accused them of being disloyal. These claims were antisemitism, hostility toward Jews because they were Jewish. In the nineteenth century, some writers added false racial theories, pretending Jewish identity was a biological trait. Nazis inherited these lies rather than inventing hatred of Jews from nothing.

2. After taking power in 1933, Nazi leaders repeated older lies in newspapers, posters, radio broadcasts, and classrooms. Their propaganda portrayed Jewish people as a single dangerous group, not as neighbors with different lives and beliefs. It falsely blamed them for Germany's defeat in World War I and for economic hardship. By calling Jews an enemy within Germany, the Nazis offered a scapegoat for complex problems and encouraged other Germans to view their Jewish neighbors with fear instead of empathy.

3. Nazi policy turned this manufactured fear into exclusion. In 1935, the Nuremberg Laws stripped German Jews of citizenship and banned marriage between Jews and people classified as having "German blood." Nazi officials defined Jewish identity through ancestry, even when a person did not practice Judaism. These rules treated people as a threat by birth, not by anything they had done. Propaganda and law worked together: false stories made discrimination seem justified, while discrimination reinforced the false idea that Jews did not belong.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which older false claims did the Nazis build upon?

2. How did Nazi propaganda portray Jewish people as enemies rather than neighbors?

3. How did the Nuremberg Laws treat Jewish identity as something a person could not change?

4. How did propaganda and the Nuremberg Laws reinforce each other?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A classmate claims that German Jews lost citizenship because of something they had done. Write four sentences that challenge this claim by connecting older prejudice, Nazi propaganda, and the Nuremberg Laws.

ANSWER KEY

Prejudice Into Policy

GRADE 9 · SS24.WH.11a

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two older false claims about Jewish people, circle two ways the Nazis spread or used those claims, and number two consequences. Your marks should show how prejudice led to exclusion. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which older false claims did the Nazis build upon?	**They built upon false accusations that Jews caused disasters or were disloyal, as well as false racial theories.**
2	How did Nazi propaganda portray Jewish people as enemies rather than neighbors?	**It portrayed Jews as one dangerous group and falsely blamed them for Germany's defeat in World War I and economic hardship.**
3	How did the Nuremberg Laws treat Jewish identity as something a person could not change?	**Officials used ancestry, even for people who did not practice Judaism, to identify Jews and deny them rights.**
4	How did propaganda and the Nuremberg Laws reinforce each other?	**Propaganda made discrimination seem justified, while the laws reinforced the false idea that Jews did not belong.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Long before the Nazis, some Europeans spread false accusations that Jewish people were disloyal. Nazi propaganda recycled those lies and blamed Jews for Germany's troubles, making neighbors seem like enemies. Officials then used ancestry to classify people as Jewish, regardless of their beliefs or actions. The Nuremberg Laws took away their citizenship because of that classification, not because they had done anything wrong.

Accept accurate explanations that connect an older false belief to Nazi claims about an enemy and to exclusion by law. Students need not use the passage's exact wording.