From Power to Genocide

Trace how Nazi rule escalated into mass murder.

MWH.C.6.6.B "Describe the National Socialist Party's (Nazi) seizure of unchecked power, its dehumanization of the Jews and other victims (e.g., people with physical disabilities and homosexuals), and the mass genocide of Jews and the Roma."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline two steps toward unchecked Nazi power, circle two dehumanizing policies or messages, and write 1 beside Jewish genocide and 2 beside Roma genocide.

How Persecution Escalated

1. In January 1933, Adolf Hitler became Germany's chancellor. After the Reichstag building burned in February, his government used an emergency decree to suspend freedoms of speech and assembly and arrest political opponents. In March, the Enabling Act let Hitler's cabinet make laws without parliament's approval. Nazi leaders then banned rival parties and crushed independent unions. These steps turned a government with legal checks into a dictatorship that could persecute people without effective opposition.

2. The regime used laws and propaganda to decide who supposedly belonged in Germany. The 1935 Nuremberg Laws stripped Jews of citizenship and banned marriage between Jews and people classified as having "German blood." Nazi newspapers and posters falsely portrayed Jews as dangerous, making exclusion seem acceptable. Officials also labeled Roma as racial outsiders, forced sterilization on many people with disabilities, and persecuted gay men. These policies denied people their rights and humanity before mass killing began.

3. During World War II, Nazi persecution escalated into genocide. German forces and their collaborators shot Jewish communities across eastern Europe. The regime also deported Jews from across Europe to killing centers, including Auschwitz-Birkenau, where many were murdered in gas chambers. About six million Jews were killed. Nazi authorities and their collaborators also murdered hundreds of thousands of Roma through shootings, starvation, and killing centers. Disabled people were murdered in a separate Nazi killing program, while many gay men were imprisoned in concentration camps.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did the emergency decree and Enabling Act each help Hitler gain unchecked power?

2. How did laws and propaganda work together to dehumanize Jews?

3. How did the regime target people with disabilities and gay men?

4. What methods of mass murder did the Nazis use against both Jews and Roma? What additional method does the passage name for Roma?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Write a four-sentence museum label explaining how unchecked power and dehumanization helped enable genocide. Include Jews, Roma, and one other targeted group.

From Power to Genocide

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline two steps toward unchecked Nazi power, circle two dehumanizing policies or messages, and write 1 beside Jewish genocide and 2 beside Roma genocide. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did the emergency decree and Enabling Act each help Hitler gain unchecked power?	**The decree suspended freedoms and allowed opponents to be arrested. The Enabling Act let Hitler's cabinet make laws without parliament's approval.**
2	How did laws and propaganda work together to dehumanize Jews?	**The Nuremberg Laws took away Jews' citizenship and restricted marriage, while propaganda falsely portrayed Jews as dangerous.**
3	How did the regime target people with disabilities and gay men?	**It forced sterilization on many people with disabilities and murdered disabled people in a separate program. It persecuted gay men and imprisoned many in concentration camps.**
4	What methods of mass murder did the Nazis use against both Jews and Roma? What additional method does the passage name for Roma?	**Both groups were murdered through shootings and at killing centers. The passage also names starvation as a method used against Roma.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

The emergency decree and Enabling Act removed checks on Nazi leaders. Nazi propaganda cast Jews as dangerous, officials labeled Roma racial outsiders, and the regime forcibly sterilized many people with disabilities. With opposition crushed, the regime and its collaborators murdered about six million Jews through shootings and at killing centers. They also committed genocide against Roma, murdering hundreds of thousands through shootings, starvation, and killing centers.

Accept accurate explanations that connect the loss of legal checks and the dehumanization of targeted groups to genocide. Students may choose gay men instead of people with disabilities as their third group.