Silencing the Page

How the Nazi regime limited opposing views

TOT.C.4.5.C "elimination of opposing views through book burnings, censorship, and state control over the media"

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail about a public book burning, circle one detail about restricting books, and write 1 beside one detail about controlling news or radio. Use your marks to compare how the three methods limited opposing views.

The Views People Could Not Hear

1 On May 10, 1933, crowds gathered in public squares in German university towns to watch books burn. Student groups organized many of the burnings, and Nazi officials supported them. They threw works by Jewish writers, political critics, and others the Nazis called "un-German" onto fires. In Berlin, propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels spoke to the crowd. The fires did not erase every copy of those books. They made a public threat visible: ideas that challenged the regime could be treated as dangerous, and people who shared them might face punishment.

2 A fire could frighten readers, but it could not control every shelf. The Nazi government also used censorship to restrict what could reach the public. Authorities banned or removed books they opposed from libraries and shops. Writers and publishers faced pressure to avoid criticism of the regime. This worked differently from a public burning: it limited access before readers could encounter a text. A person who found no dissenting book in a library might never know that another account existed. Censorship could make enforced silence appear to be agreement.

3 The regime also shaped what people heard each day. Its Propaganda Ministry directed radio broadcasts and supervised newspapers, while independent reporting faced harsh limits. Radio carried speeches by Nazi leaders into homes, and newspapers repeated approved messages. A listener might hear praise for a policy without hearing from someone harmed by it. Unlike removing a book, controlling news could repeat one view day after day. Together, the fires, bans, and directed broadcasts reduced chances to hear opposing arguments. They did not make all Germans agree, but they helped the government present its position as the only acceptable one.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. The fires did not destroy every copy of the targeted books. How could the burnings still discourage opposing views?

2. How did removing books from libraries and shops limit opposing views differently from a public burning?

3. How could control of both radio and newspapers shape what people thought about a government policy?

4. Why might book bans and directed broadcasts be more effective together than either method alone?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

Imagine a fictional government wants to hide a student newspaper report about unsafe drinking water. In four sentences, describe two different methods from the passage it could use to suppress the report, then predict how those methods might affect what residents believe.

ANSWER KEY

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HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.C.4.5.C

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail about a public book burning, circle one detail about restricting books, and write 1 beside one detail about controlling news or radio. Use your marks to compare how the three methods limited opposing views. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	The fires did not destroy every copy of the targeted books. How could the burnings still discourage opposing views?	**They publicly signaled that challenging ideas were dangerous and that people who shared them might face punishment.**
2	How did removing books from libraries and shops limit opposing views differently from a public burning?	**Removal kept readers from encountering those views at all, while a public burning made a visible threat.**
3	How could control of both radio and newspapers shape what people thought about a government policy?	**Both could repeat approved praise for the policy while leaving out accounts from people harmed by it.**
4	Why might book bans and directed broadcasts be more effective together than either method alone?	**Bans reduced access to opposing accounts, while directed broadcasts repeatedly supplied the government's view. Together, they made that view seem like the only one.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

In this fictional town, student reporters discover that the drinking water is unsafe. Officials block the report from publication, so residents cannot read the evidence. Government-controlled radio then repeats that the water is safe and gives the reporters no airtime. Without the report or a competing voice on the radio, many residents may believe the official claim.

Accept answers that accurately distinguish public intimidation, restricted access to texts, and repeated official messages. For Your Turn, look for two distinct methods applied to the fictional report and a plausible effect on residents' beliefs.