Records and War Work

Trace how business decisions supported Nazi goals.

TOT.C.7.5 "Explain how corporate complicity aided Nazi goals, including identification and record keeping, and the use of slave labor for war production."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one business action involving records and one involving forced labor, then draw an arrow from each action to the Nazi goal it helped serve.

From Census Forms to Factories

1. A name on a census form could become part of a system of persecution. Nazi officials collected information about people's ancestry and religion to identify Jews and others they targeted. The German subsidiary of IBM, called Dehomag, leased punch-card machines and provided services that helped officials sort large sets of records. In the 1939 German census, questions about ancestry helped the regime identify people classified as Jewish under Nazi law. Machines did not decide policy, and records alone did not cause arrests. Yet businesses that supplied data-processing tools made it easier for the regime to organize information for discriminatory policies.

2. At Auschwitz-Monowitz, IG Farben built a factory complex intended to make synthetic rubber for Germany's war effort. The SS supplied prisoners as forced laborers, especially to build the plant. Prisoners endured hunger, exhaustion, and dangerous work; many died. The factory did not produce synthetic rubber before the war ended, but its construction consumed immense amounts of forced labor. Elsewhere, the arms manufacturer Krupp used forced laborers to make war materials. These arrangements gave companies workers they had not hired freely, while the Nazi state gained industrial work without protecting the people compelled to do it.

3. The two forms of cooperation served different needs. Records could help officials identify people targeted under Nazi racial laws and manage policies against them. Forced labor could increase the workforce available for war industries while stripping prisoners of freedom and safety. The SS controlled the camps and directed imprisonment, but company managers made decisions about equipment, contracts, and labor. Some firms sought benefits from those arrangements. Explaining corporate complicity does not mean claiming machines or businesses alone caused the Holocaust. It means tracing how business actions helped the Nazi state carry out persecution and sustain its war effort.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. How did Dehomag's machines and services make census information more useful to Nazi officials?

2. Why did IG Farben's project aid Nazi goals even though its factory did not produce synthetic rubber before the war ended?

3. How did Krupp's use of forced labor connect to the Nazi war effort?

4. How did the roles of the SS and company managers differ in the use of prisoner labor?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A museum visitor says, "Companies were just bystanders; only Nazi officials were responsible." Write a 70 to 100 word reply that evaluates this claim using one example involving records and one involving forced labor. Explain the different roles of officials and businesses without claiming that either acted alone.

ANSWER KEY

Records and War Work

HIGH SCHOOL · TOT.C.7.5

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one business action involving records and one involving forced labor, then draw an arrow from each action to the Nazi goal it helped serve. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	How did Dehomag's machines and services make census information more useful to Nazi officials?	**They helped officials sort large sets of records, making it easier to identify people classified as Jewish under Nazi law.**
2	Why did IG Farben's project aid Nazi goals even though its factory did not produce synthetic rubber before the war ended?	**Building the factory used large amounts of prisoner labor for a project intended to support Germany's war effort.**
3	How did Krupp's use of forced labor connect to the Nazi war effort?	**Krupp used forced laborers to make war materials.**
4	How did the roles of the SS and company managers differ in the use of prisoner labor?	**The SS controlled camps, imprisoned people, and supplied prisoners as laborers. Company managers made decisions about labor and used prisoners for industrial work.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

Nazi officials set policies, and the SS controlled the camps, but companies were not simply bystanders. Dehomag provided machines and services that helped officials sort census records used to identify people targeted under Nazi law. IG Farben used prisoners supplied by the SS to build its planned synthetic rubber plant, exposing them to deadly conditions. These are different kinds of complicity: helping organize information and exploiting captive workers. Neither machines nor companies created Nazi policy alone, but business decisions helped the regime carry out persecution and pursue its war effort.

Accept answers that distinguish a company's action from the Nazi goal it supported. For the open task, look for accurate examples of both record keeping and forced labor, along with a clear distinction between state authority and business decisions.