



German police guard a group of Roma (Gypsies)
German police guard a group of Roma (Gypsies) who have been rounded up for deportation to Poland, Germany, 1940-45.
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Non- Jewish Victims of Nazi Persecution

Subject: Multidisciplinary

Time Required: 1-2 class periods

Rationale:

To teach that the Holocaust was a genocide involving the state-sponsored systematic persecution and annihilation of European Jewry by Nazi Germany and its collaborators between 1933 and 1945. Six million Jews were murdered, as well as millions of non-Jews, including Roma/Sinti, people with disabilities, Slavic peoples (especially Poles and Russians), gay men, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others for political and ideological reasons.

To understand that the Holocaust, like other genocides, was fueled by prejudice, hatred, and intolerance.

To critically analyze the actions taken by Nazi Germany and to understand how and why the Holocaust happened, it is essential to understand the racist ideology of the regime.

Essential Questions:

In addition to the Jews, who were the various groups of people persecuted by the Nazi regime between 1933-1945?

What role did Nazi racist ideology play in identifying their victims?

Educational outcomes:

To understand why non-Jewish victim groups were targeted by the Nazi regime.

Identify what non-Jewish targeted groups experienced under the Nazi regime.

Critically analyze the link between Nazi ideology goals and their persecution of targeted groups.

Teacher Preparation:

Review and adhere to the [Guideline for Teaching the Holocaust](#)

Teacher utilizes the [Pyramid of Hate activity](#) with students and defines key terms (optional)

Read/Preview the following:

- [Who Were the Victims](#) (USHMM article)
- [Hitler's Ideology: Race, Land and Conquest](#) (Facing History and Ourselves Video)

For more information and resources about Nazi persecution of the queer community, see the [THE PINK TRIANGLE LEGACIES PROJECT](#)

Materials:

Internet access

Projector/Classroom Screen

Other Victims of The Nazis Handout (attached at the end of this lesson plan)

[Introduction Slide Deck](#)

[United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Online Encyclopedia](#)

Procedure:

This lesson deals with the concept of *ideology*, which can be a complicated concept to understand.

Part 1 Introducing Nazi Ideology

Post the following questions and have students discuss them with a partner or write a journal reflection addressing the questions:

- **What is ideology? When is ideology beneficial? When is it dangerous?**
- Ask students to share their responses as a class.
- Go over the definition of ideology on the [slide deck](#).

Ideology is a set of beliefs or principles, especially one on which a political system, party, or organization is based.

Explain to students that the Nazis' actions and choices were guided by their ideology. Tell students the fundamental parts of Nazi ideology can be described simply as "race and space." Show them the video "[Hitler's Ideology: Race, Land, and Conquest](#)" in which historian Doris Bergen explains Nazi ideology.

Discuss the film, and consider the following questions to check for understanding:

- Why does Bergen use the terms race and space to describe Hitler's ideology?
What does she mean by each term?

- How was Hitler's belief in the superiority of the Aryan race related to his desire for conquest of new land?
- How did this ideology make war necessary, in Hitler's view?

Remind students that Nazi ideology is fundamentally racist. In their worldview, there is a hierarchy of races, and while the Nazis identified Jewish people as the lowest on the hierarchy and their chief enemies, they also targeted other groups that they viewed as either racially inferior or politically dangerous.

Part 2 Investigating the experience of non-Jewish groups under the Nazi Regime

Begin by reminding the students of the definition of the Holocaust.

Post and read out loud:

- The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. During the era of the Holocaust, German authorities also targeted other groups because of their perceived "racial inferiority": Roma (Gypsies), the disabled, and some of the Slavic peoples (Poles, Russians, and others). Other groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioral grounds, among them Communists, Socialists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and gay men.

Give each student a copy of the "Other Victims of the Nazis" Handout.

- Explain to the students that they will be studying the Non-Jewish groups who were also targeted by the Nazi regime.
- Remind the students to keep the basic ideas of Nazi ideology in mind as they study the experiences of these different groups.
- Instruct the students to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/> to find information to complete the chart. This will be the most accurate and vetted information for their work.

Ask the students to discuss the question and answer question #1 on their handout (they will answer #2 later in the lesson.) Share out responses with the class.

Options:

- (Jigsaw) Put students into groups of 6. Explain that this will be their home group. Have the students count off by 6 and move to their expert groups based on the number they were assigned. Assign each expert group one group of victims to investigate. Once they have completed their work, have students return to their home group. In their home groups, students share what they learned about the targeted group they studied, while their home group fills in the information on their handout.
- Have students complete the chart independently.

- Have students work in pairs to complete the chart.

Part 3 Testimonies

Students watch testimony clips of [Lina Jackson](#) , [Albrecht Becker](#), and [Victor Schnell](#) and read an account by Hans-Jurgen Massaquoi (see below) describing their experiences under the Nazi regime. These can also be found on the [lesson plan slide deck](#). Ask students to complete the testimony chart on their handout as they watch/listen to the accounts.

- Have students discuss with a partner what they learned from the testimonies.

Options (pick 2 of the testimonies to cover)

Part 3

Ask students to answer question #2 on the “Other Victims of the Nazis” Handout on their own.

- What are some examples of influential ideologies in the world today? Choose one that you have encountered in your own life or have read about in the news and write about how it influences people’s choices and experiences, positively or negatively.
- Have students share their responses with a partner and discuss them as a class.

End the lesson by reminding students that the Nazi ideology is fundamentally racist and, in their worldview, there is a hierarchy of races. While the Nazis identified Jewish people as the lowest on the hierarchy and their chief enemies, they also targeted other groups that they viewed as either racially inferior or politically dangerous. The Nazis' dangerous and racist ideology led to the murder of at least 6 million Jews, between 250,000 and 500,000 Sinti and Roma, approximately 250,000 Germans with mental and physical disabilities, as well as thousands of Poles, political opponents, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and gay men.

Hans-Jurgen Massaquoi’s Account:

“It was not until I reached my teens that the awful truth struck home. Until then, instead of putting the blame for my problems with racists where it belonged, I blamed myself. More than anything, I blamed my appearance--especially my African hair, which I had come to loathe. Although I had vowed not to let (hateful teacher) Wriede get the better of me, his and other teachers’ (and schoolboys’) all-out psychological warfare against me had taken its toll. Under the steady barrage of the hated word ‘Neger’ (derogatory word for Black person) and the equally offensive ‘Mischling’ (half-breed), my self-esteem had plunged to a frightening low.” (from *Destined to Witness Growing up Black in Nazi Germany* pp. 91-92)

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Other Victims of Nazi Persecution 1933-1945
Student Handout

Task:

Use the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Encyclopedia (<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/>) to research your assigned group. Complete the chart for your assigned group. Be prepared to teach your classmates what you have learned.

Group	Why did the Nazis target them	3-4 examples of what the group experienced under the Nazi Regime
Roma/Sinti		
Afro-Germans		
People with disabilities		

Group	Why did the Nazis target them	3-4 examples of what the group experienced under the Nazi Regime
Communist		
Gay Men		
Jehovah Witnesses		

Testimony Chart

Survivor's Name	Summarize what the survivor is speaking about in your own words. What was especially meaningful to you about this clip/testimony?	What is your response after watching/hearing the testimony? Include any questions you still have after watching this clip, as well as your own emotional response. How do you feel after watching the clip?

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