

5. Other Victims

Total Deaths from Nazi Genocidal Policies	
GROUP	DEATHS
European Jews	5,600,000 to 6,250,000
Soviet prisoners of war	3,000,000
Polish Catholics	3,000,000
Serbians (Croat Ustasa persecution)	700,000
Roma, Sinti and Lalleri	222,000 to 250,000
Germans (political, religious and Resistance)	80,000
Germans (handicapped)	70,000
Homosexuals	12,000
Jehovah's Witnesses	2500

Source: "The Holocaust Chronicle":
holocaustchronicle.org/HolocaustAppendices.html

Suggested Activities and Discussion

(Written and developed by Dr. Larry Blades, professor at Highline Community College and member of the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center's Education Advisory Committee.)

- It is often productive, with more mature students, to consider the question of whether or not it is acceptable to dislike certain groups in our society. The immediate response, of course, is that it isn't. Further discussion, though, can lead to the conclusion there are designated groups that one can safely ridicule. Breaking the students into groups and having them identify groups that are consistently stereotyped and made to look foolish in ads or in television sitcoms can be entertaining and educational. The students will usually come up with a long list: gays and lesbians (swishy and butch); overweight people (can't control their appetites); old people (senile, forgetful); men (big babies when they are sick); lawyers (sleazy); etc.
- The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is always a good place to look for material (ushmm.org). The museum's site provides literally hundreds of links to other useful sites.
- Ina R. Friedman's "The Other Victims: First-Person Stories of Non-Jews Persecuted by the Nazis" provides stories by members of groups seldom treated in other material: Catholic clergy, intellectuals, political dissidents, etc. The style might be a bit too simplified for more mature students, but the personal accounts are nicely detailed and often quite moving.
- Having each student write for 20 minutes or so about "diversity" can also lead into an active discussion. This should probably be preceded by a consideration of what diversity is. Then the students can write about an experience they had that showed them the value of diversity.

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- Many of the students will probably want to know what an "Aryan" actually is. Having someone do a report on what the term means according to a source like the "Oxford English Dictionary" can fit into a discussion of how propagandists like Hitler gain an advantage by not clearly defining terms.

Quotes and experiences from those who survived

Roma & Sinti

Rosa [an Austrian Gypsy] says she first became aware of Nazi policies against Gypsies when she was just 10 or 11 years old — in 1934 or 1935 — soon after Hitler came to power in Germany. The Nazis had just passed laws classifying non-Europeans, including Gypsies, as second-class citizens in Germany. 'In Europe, only Jews and Gypsies are of foreign blood,' the legal commentaries stated.

— "Shared Sorrows: A Gypsy family remembers the Holocaust."
 Toby Sonneman. *Great Britain: Univ. of Hertfordshire Press, 2002.* p. 50

The family camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau was the only concentration camp where Gypsies were treated differently from other prisoners, and why families were not separated is still a matter of speculation ... Whatever the reason, this difference in treatment only postponed their inevitable murder. Altogether, some 23,000 Sinti and Romani Gypsies were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau, and 20,000 of them were killed there.

— "Shared Sorrows: A Gypsy family remembers the Holocaust."
 Toby Sonneman. *Great Britain: Univ. of Hertfordshire Press, 2002.* p. 68

Margrette, an Austrian Gypsy

In 1943, we went to Auschwitz ... One sister, my older sister, was gassed in Auschwitz, with her six children. And Mama. And my brother was killed in Dachau ...

At Auschwitz, the doors of the cattle car were flung open.

Schnell, schnell!! They beat us in the direction of the barracks. In all my life, I will never forget what I saw there. All the dead bodies, a pile as high as a house, all the dead, Jews and Gypsies, all lay there. I said to my husband: "We will never get out of here. We will die here."

— "Shared Sorrows: A Gypsy family remembers the Holocaust."
 Toby Sonneman. *Great Britain: Univ. of Hertfordshire Press, 2002.*
 p. 149 – 150

Homosexuals

Paragraph 175 of Germany's criminal code was originally written in 1871. Paragraph 175 outlawed homosexuality. When the Nazi party came to power, they revised and strengthened this law. Paragraph 175 was not repealed until 1969.

Gay men who were imprisoned in camps were often forced to wear the identifying symbol of a pink triangle.

A pink triangle meant harsher treatment in the camps ... Many were given the hardest work, and died within a few months of arrival. Sometimes gay men were segregated in special 175 barracks ...

Although the pink triangle has become an international emblem of the gay and lesbian community today, we still know little about the individual fate of those who suffered wearing it ... This is understandable,

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given the world into which they were released in 1945. Unlike other survivors, the gay prisoners soon discovered that their persecution had not ended. Their concentration camp imprisonment became a part of their police record ... Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, German courts convicted homosexual men at a rate as high as that of the Nazi regime.

— Dr. Klaus Muller, in an introduction to *"The Men with the Pink Triangle"* by Heinz Heger. NY: Alyson Books, 1994. p.13

The pink triangle, however, was about 2 or 3 centimeters larger than the others, so that we could be clearly recognized from a distance.

Jews, homosexuals and Gypsies, the yellow, pink and brown triangles, were the prisoners who suffered most frequently and most severely from the tortures and blows of the SS and the Capos. [The commandant and his SS subordinates often described us] as the scum of humanity, who had no right to live on German soil and should be exterminated ... But the lowest of the low in this 'scum' were we, the men with the pink triangle.

— *"The Men with the Pink Triangle"* by Heinz Heger. NY: Alyson Books, 1994. p. 32

Resources

For suggested resources and Web sites on victims of the Holocaust, please visit wsherc.org and click on "Suggested Resources by Topic."