

The “Other” Victims of the Holocaust:
a brief overview of the non-Jews persecuted by the Nazi’s.

Over 5 million victims of the Holocaust were not Jewish. Frequently these victims are overlooked and overshadowed. The following is a brief overview of some of the other groups that were targeted by the Nazi’s. This list is by no means comprehensive but is meant to serve as a starting point for discussion.

- Citizens who aided in the rescue of Jews
- Poles
 - Nazi’s considered them as racially inferior, and slated them for enslavement and forced labor.
 - They implemented a policy of physical obliteration of the political, intellectual, and cultural elites of Poland and the Soviet Union.
 - German occupation authorities murdered tens of thousands of members of the Polish elite classes (including intellectuals and Catholic priests) in an operation known as Ausserordentliche Befriedungsaktion.
 - It is estimated that the Germans killed at least 1.9 million non-Jewish Polish civilians during World War II.
- Physically and Mentally Handicapped
 - In 1939 Hitler sanctioned a euthanasia program, officially titled the “T-4” program after the address of the headquarters at Tiergarten 4. The intent of the program was to rid the country of people he felt were a threat to the gene pool.
 - By the time Hitler ended the T-4 program in 1941 it is believed that about 200,000 people had been killed as a result.
- Homosexuals
 - In the end, 60,000 males were “convicted” of being homosexuals.
 - Individuals convicted of homosexuality were given two options: castration or performing hard labor in a concentration camp.
 - Once in the camp, they were marked with pink triangles and “re-educated” as to be “cured” of being homosexual or having “homosexual tendencies.”
 - They were subjected to terrible work conditions and awful “pseudo-medical experiments.” The death rate in these camps reached 60%.
 - Survivors were never compensated as gays were considered perverted by society.
 - In 1943 special criminal police force was created to fight homosexuality and a secret order was issued to execute all SS and police found to be gay or even guilty of "homosexual intent".
- Jehovah’s Witnesses
 - If Jehovah’s Witnesses renounced their faith, they were able to escape persecution— an option not given to Jews – though very few did.
 - Of the 19,268 Jehovah’s Witnesses living in Germany, 10,000 were arrested and nearly half of those individuals were killed.
 - The adults were sent to concentration camps where they were marked with purple triangles.
 - There were nearly 2,000 deaths in the camps.

- Prisoners of War
 - The Nazi's saw the war against the Soviet Union as a war of annihilation between German fascism and Soviet communism as well as a racial war between German "Aryans" and subhuman Slavs and Jews.
 - Approximately 5.7 million Soviet army personnel fell into German hands during World War II.
 - By the end of the war 3.3 million, or about 57 percent of Soviets taken prisoner, were dead.
 - Next to Jews, Soviet prisoners of war were the second largest group of victims of Nazi racial policy.
- Roma/Gypsies
 - Were among the groups singled out on racial grounds for persecution by the Nazi regime.
 - The Nazis judged Roma to be "racially inferior," and the fate of Roma in some ways paralleled that of the Jews.
 - Roma were subjected to internment, forced labor, massacre, and deportation to extermination camps.
- Criminals
 - Tens of thousands of so-called "a-socials" as well as real or perceived repeat criminal offenders, even though they had not committed a new crime or violation.
 - Thousands of these so-called "criminal" prisoners were murdered in the camps.
- Communists, Socialists, Social Democrats, and trade union leaders.

This information was extracted from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website.

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Web resources

United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: www.ushmm.org

The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum website is a comprehensive site with articles on all aspects of the Holocaust. Their Holocaust Encyclopedia (<http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/>) includes entries for all of the targeted victims of the Holocaust under the "Mosaic of Victims" article.

A Teacher's Guide to the Holocaust: <http://fcit.usf.edu/Holocaust/default.htm>

This website Produced by the Florida Center for Instructional Technology, College of Education, University of South Florida, provides brief overviews of the people and events of the holocaust. This website includes a section on Holocaust victims.

Further Reading

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