

# **NAZI PERSECUTION of the JEWS**

**Humiliation**

**Identification**

**Segregation**

**Concentration**

**Extinction**

## SEGREGATION/GHETTOS

*A new law was passed...All the Jews must move into the ghetto...One morning German and Lithuanian soldiers and police banged loudly on our door and the doors of all the Jewish houses and shouted 'Get out! Get out! You have 15 minutes to gather what you want to take with you...'*

Sima, age 17, Poland

*People started to talk about the ghetto. I had no idea what it meant. I had never even heard the word. After a few weeks it became clear.*

Liliana, age 13, Poland

*I feel as if I am in a box. There is no air to breathe. Wherever you go you encounter a gate that hems you in... I feel that I have been robbed, my freedom is being robbed from me, my home, and the familiar Vilna streets I love so much. I have been cut off from all that is dear and precious to me.*

Yitskhok, age 15, Vilna, Lithuania

*I have learned here to appreciate ordinary things. Things that, if we had them when we were still free, we didn't notice at all. Like riding a bus or train, or walking free along the road to the water, or going to buy ice cream. Such an ordinary thing and it's out of our reach.*

Charlotte V, age 14, Czechoslovakia



*Pedestrian walkway in the Lodz Ghetto*

# SEGREGATION/GHETTOS



From Autumn 1939 onwards, the Nazis established ghettos in Poland and, gradually, throughout Nazi-occupied Europe. A ghetto usually comprised a number of streets, often in a poor and run-down area of a city, into which Jews were moved from their homes and surrounding towns and villages and from which they were not allowed to leave. The purpose of the ghetto was to segregate the Jews from the rest of the population and to make it easier to control their lives and to transport them somewhere else without disrupting the rest of the city.

## Lesson plan (History, Geography, CSPE, RE +)

Age appropriate: 13 years and over

- Describe what Jewish ghettos were like in Nazi-occupied Europe
- Explain where ghettos were established and why
- Describe how ghettos were administered, controlled and organised
- Explain what happened to the ghettos and the people in them

## Individual activities (English, Drama +)

- Read a story about life in the ghettos during World War II
- Write an essay from the point of view of a ghetto dweller?
- Describe the restrictions and hardships of living in the ghettos
- What happened in the Warsaw Ghetto?
- Why was the Terezín Ghetto unusual?



Entrance to the Lodz Ghetto: the sign reads 'Jewish residential district, entry forbidden'

## Classroom activities (Drama, CSPE +)

**Note to the teacher:** This activity can *only* be carried out with the full co-operation and understanding of all of the students in the class and should not be enacted for more than one day. It can work very well in a controlled and co-operative way but if any student is uncomfortable about it or is at all uneasy, do not do it. In some classes, it is enough to consider the effects of segregation, isolation and the feelings of vulnerability without enacting them.

- Mark out a section of the classroom. Call it the *ghetto*. Ask for volunteers to 'live' in the ghetto. Ask them to make badges to show that they belong to that *ghetto*
- Carry on with the day's lessons. Include or exclude the *ghetto* students
- How does everyone feel about this activity? Those inside the *ghetto* and those outside? Open a class discussion about ghettos, restrictions, clandestine activities

## Reflection

- Why was it important for Jews in the ghettos to continue to study and practise their culture and religion?
- Describe fears, hopes and dreams of young people living in the ghettos
- How would you feel if you learned you could no longer associate with your friend or visit him or her in the area of town where he or she lived?
- What could you do to change the rules? How would you go about it?
- What would be the best way to prevent rules of segregation ever being formulated? What would be the best way to prevent ghettos, even those that develop organically, from becoming acceptable in our society today?

*Find out more:* [www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)

**Consider: SEGREGATION, ACCEPTANCE,  
TOLERANCE and INTEGRATION**

## Yellow Star



- What is this?
- Who wore it?
- Would you wear one?

*Find out more:* [history1900s.about.com/od/holocaust/a/yellowstar.htm](http://history1900s.about.com/od/holocaust/a/yellowstar.htm)

## Badges of Hate

The yellow Star of David imprinted with the word 'Juif' – the French word for 'Jew' – is typical of the badges the Nazis forced Jews to wear.

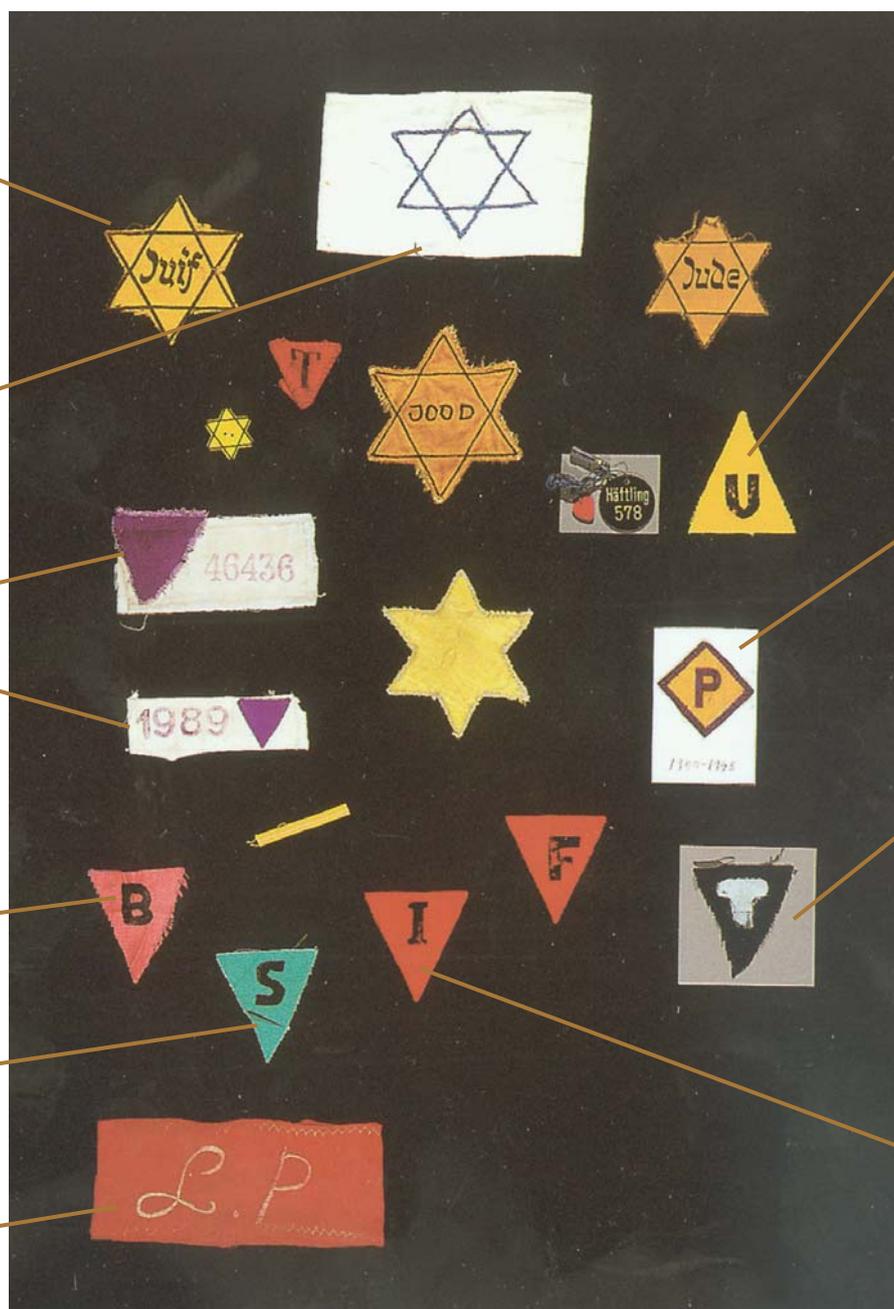
Jews also wore Star of David armbands.

Jehovah's Witnesses, whose religion prevented them from swearing an oath of loyalty to Hitler, had to wear purple triangles.

Pink triangles were for homosexuals and those accused of homosexual acts.

Criminals wore green triangles.

This armband was worn by a labour-camp prisoner.



Jews who were in concentration camps often wore yellow triangles like this one marked with a 'U', indicating that the prisoner who wore it was from Hungary.

This patch identified a Polish person living under Nazi control.

Black triangles were worn by those classified as 'antisocial' including Gypsies, lesbians and prostitutes.

Political prisoners wore red triangles.

Markings used by the Nazis to identify their victims

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- Who else wore identifying badges?
- Find out what happened to other prisoners of the Nazis

**Find out more:** [www.ushmm.org](http://www.ushmm.org)