

Nazi Laws vs. Jim Crow Laws

The Nazi legal assault on the Jews was not unique in its racial character nor in its segregationist aims. As with many Nazi attacks against the Jews, they took ideas and practices that were common in their own and other cultures and radicalized them to suit their needs. The American Jim Crow Laws were part of that inspiration.

Lesson Plan:

Run copies of each of the following:

- Jim Crow laws by state (<http://www.jimcrowhistory.org/geography/geography.htm>)
- Nazi laws 1933-1939 (available at www.mchekc.org/NaziLawsversusJimCrowLaws.htm)

Assign small groups of students to each packet. In the Jim Crow group, assign 1-2 students a state such that you are able to cover 3-5 states within the group.

Instructions for Classroom Exercise (could be expanded for a homework exercise):

1. Students are broken into equal groups and read one of the following selections to identify the policy goals of the laws and how they were implemented. Students take notes to report to the group later.
 - Nuremberg Laws from 1935
 - Other Nazi Laws propagated between 1933-1939
 - Jim Crow Laws covering multiple states
2. Small groups move into two larger groups based on their readings:
 - Nuremberg Laws join with other Nazi Laws
 - All Jim Crow states join
 - Each group compiles a large post-it sheet of their findings – again focusing on policy and implementation.
3. Analysis of Nazi Laws versus Jim Crow Laws
 - Determine how the laws are similar based on policy and implementation (See bottom of Teacher Notes – Discussion Key)
 - Determine how they are different based on policy and implementation (See bottom of Teacher Notes – Discussion Key)
 - Teacher compiles results on large post-it sheet based on Teacher Notes – Discussion Key

Special Notes for Teachers:

1. Remember the USHMM Guideline which tells us to avoid comparisons of suffering and pain. This includes both individuals and groups. The activity is based on an analysis of policy and implementation **ONLY!**
2. Overall statement on policy goals of the two sets of laws:
 - The Nazi Laws were about isolation, expropriation of assets, and emigration.
 - The Jim Crow Laws were about isolation.