

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Poland's Important Role in World War II

LESSON PLAN 1

Title: *German Nazism and Russian Communism: The destructive ideologies that caused World War II.*

Learning Objective: Students will be able to describe Hitler's and Stalin's ideologies that were used to justify their invasion of Poland to start World War II.

Learning Standards Addressed: As determined by Teacher.

Materials: Computer projector; PowerPoint slides, Teacher's Guide

Procedure:

1. Introduction:

- a. Inform students that Lessons 1 through 5 will highlight the importance of what Poles, Jews, and Romani endured during World War II and will also point out Poland's vital contributions to the Allied defeat of Germany.

2. Direct Instruction:

a. VIDEO IMPRESSIONS:

- b. Present the IPNtv video "The Unconquered" at www.theunconquered-movie.com

i. Video Introduction:

1. *This 4-and-a-half-minute video presents important information about Poland that is absent in most school curricula. It focuses on World War II but also shows the viciousness of Soviet communist rule for 45 years after the war. It concludes with Poland defeating communism and forming a new democratic government.*

- c. **Instruct** students to jot down the numbers of the video's slides that interest them because new facts are presented or because they need clarification or amplification.

i. After presenting the video:

1. **Ask students** to identify new facts that they learned.
2. **Ask students** if any of these facts change or add to their knowledge of World War II and Poland's actions in it.

- d. **DESCRIBE THE TWO NAZI IDEOLOGIES OF LEBENSRAUM AND RACIAL PURITY THAT HITLER USED TO JUSTIFY GERMANY'S INVASION OF POLAND.** *NOTE: These ideologies can also be summarized as "Space and Race".*

i. DISPLAY SLIDE 2 (Lebensraum).

1. Read the Lebensraum summary paragraph below.

- a. *Lebensraum means "living space" and it meant taking new territories for German colonization. In order for the German "Master Aryan race" to survive, Hitler believed it must expand eastward into new territory. The Germans must therefore conquer territories in the east from the Slavs, starting with Poland. Hitler also believed that, by virtue of*

their racial superiority, Germans have the right and the duty to exterminate the Slavs, starting with Poland. In Hitler's new Lebensraum empire, the few remaining Slavs would raise the crops needed to feed a growing German population that would then become a leading world power.

2. Summarize Lebensraum's main points on Slide 2.

- a. *In order to survive as a race, the Germans must expand eastward.*
- b. *The Germans must therefore conquer territories from the Slavs, starting with Poland.*
- c. *Because they are racially superior, Germans have the right to exterminate the Slavs, starting with Poland.*
- d. *The few remaining Slavs will raise the crops needed to feed an expanding German population.*

ii. DISPLAY SLIDE 3 (Map of Hitler's Empire under Lebensraum)

1. Read the summary paragraph below.

- a. *This slide shows the modern-day European countries that would have made up Hitler's German Empire if he had successfully carried out Lebensraum.*

2. Have students identify some of the countries that are listed.

iii. DISPLAY SLIDE 4 (Nazism's Racial Ideology)

1. Read Nazism's Racial Ideology summary paragraph below.

- a. *The German race, which Hitler called the "Aryan race", was the master race. Slavs, Romani, and Jews, which Hitler called "Untermenschen" (subhumans) were inferior races. For the Aryan race to survive, racial purity was crucial because intermixing with inferior races would contaminate it to the point of extinction. Aryans therefore had the duty to exterminate and enslave the inferior races.*

2. Summarize Nazism's Racial Ideology main points on Slide 4.

- a. *The German "Aryan race" is the master race.*
- b. *Slavs, Jews, and Romani ("Untermenschen" subhumans) are the inferior races.*
- c. *Intermixing with inferior races would contaminate the Aryan race to the point of extinction.*
- d. *To prevent this, Aryans had the duty to exterminate and enslave the inferior races.*

iv. DISPLAY SLIDE 5 (Nazism's Racial Hierarchy).

1. Read the racial groups as shown.

2. Emphasize Nazism's four inferior racial groups.

- a. *NOTE: Although Hitler believed Slavs were an inferior race, only Poles were targeted for extermination. He used Slavs from other countries to help exterminate Jews. These*

included Ukrainians, Slovaks, and Croats. Lesson 5 provides further details.

e. DESCRIBE THE COMMUNIST IDEOLOGY THAT STALIN USED TO JUSTIFY HIS ATTACK ON POLAND.

i. DISPLAY SLIDE 6 (Communism’s Main Beliefs).

ii. Read Slide 6’s main points.

- 1. Classless society – Eliminate capitalists who “oppress” the working class.*
- 2. State owns all property – factories, buildings, land, etc.*
- 3. Personal property is prohibited – homes, farms, livestock, etc.*
- 4. State controls all communications, media, and transportation.*
- 5. Single political party – opposition to Communist party is not permitted.*
- 6. State sets the wages of workers and prices of goods.*

iii. DISPLAY SLIDE 7 (Soviet Communist Anti-Polish Propaganda Poster).

iv. Read introductory paragraph to Slide 7 below.

- 1. Stalin wanted to annex the eastern half of Poland, install a communist regime, and have it act as a buffer against German invasion. Stalin believed that Polish factory owners “oppressed” their workers and Polish landowners “oppressed” the villagers who farmed their large estates.*
- 2. This Soviet propaganda poster shows three Polish landowners being driven away by “oppressed” Russians. The title of the poster is: “How it will end for the ‘Pans’” (чем кончится панская зтя). Although “Pan” means “Mister” or “Sir” in Polish, it was the equivalent of the English “Lord”, which under the feudal system meant the lord of a manor or estate. The red flag in the left background says: “Hello Soviet Poland” (да здравствуйте советская польша). Here you see local Russians welcoming the Russian Army as it frees them from the “tyranny” of the Polish “Pans”.*

f. EXPLAIN THE SECRET PROTOCOL IN THE MOLOTOV-RIBBENTROP NONAGGRESSION PACT THAT DIVIDED THE EASTERN EUROPEAN STATES BETWEEN HITLER AND STALIN.

i. DISPLAY SLIDE 8 (Map showing eastern European border states divided between Hitler and Stalin).

ii. Read summary paragraph on Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact below.

- 1. Hitler and Stalin secretly planned to attack Poland together.*
- 2. Nine days before Hitler attacked Poland, his Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop and Stalin’s Foreign Minister Molotov signed the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact. The pact said that Hitler and Stalin would not attack each other and would not help an enemy of the other.*

3. *A secret protocol in the pact specified how they would divide Poland in half between them. It also required Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Finland to remain in Stalin's sphere of influence.*
 4. *On September 1, 1939, Hitler attacked Poland. On September 17, Stalin attacked Poland.*
3. **Guided Practice:**
 - a. Have students name one of the Communist beliefs on Slide 6 and describe how this would affect their daily lives if subjected to Communism.
 4. **Independent Practice:**
 - a. Have students select one of Nazism's two ideologies (Lebensraum and Aryan Racial Purity).
 - i. If Lebensraum is selected, have students describe how Hitler used this ideology to justify his invasion of Poland.
 - ii. If Aryan Racial Purity is selected, have students describe how Hitler used this ideology to justify his genocide of Poles, Jews, and Romani.
 5. **Teacher Assessment:** As applicable.
 6. **Teacher Reflection:** As applicable.
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Reference information for Lesson 1 Slides

SLIDE 2: Nazism's Lebensraum (Living Space)

"Lebensraum was one of the leading motivations Nazi Germany had in initiating World War II and it would continue this policy until the end of World War II." Wikipedia citation: Woodruff D. Smith. *The Ideological Origins of Nazi Imperialism*. Oxford University Press. p. 84.

SLIDE 3: Hitler's German Empire under Lebensraum

This is a map of the Greater German Reich, which was to be achieved by implementing the policies of Lebensraum. Graphic downloaded from Wikipedia; article titled "Lebensraum". Source of graphic: "Utopia: The 'Greater Germanic Reich of the German Nation'". Munich and Berlin: *Institut für Zeitgeschichte*. 1999.

SLIDE 4: Nazism's Racial Ideology

Hitler's views on race and people are found throughout his autobiographical manifesto book *Mein Kampf* but more specifically, they are found in chapter 11, the title of which is "Nation and Race". From Wikipedia; article titled "Nazi racial theories".

SLIDE 5: Nazism's Racial Hierarchy

From Wikipedia; article titled "Nazi racial theories"; paragraph titled "Racial hierarchy". Wikipedia citation: Childs, Harwood L. (2007) [1938]. *The Nazi Primer: Official Handbook for Schooling the Hitler Youth [Handbuch für die Schulungsarbeit in der HJ.: vom deutschen Volk und seinem Lebensraum]*.

SLIDE 6: Communism – Main Beliefs

Communism evolved as a philosophical, social, political, and economic ideology. Before Stalin, leading figures who shaped Communism were Karl Marx, Vladimir Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and Friedrich Engels. Communism under Stalin was called “Stalinism” and included the creation of a one-party totalitarian police state, rapid industrialization, collectivization of agriculture, intensification of class conflict, a cult of personality, and subordination of the interests of foreign communist parties to those of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Stalin considered himself to be the leader of communist revolutions in the world at the time. From Wikipedia; article titled “Stalinism”.

SLIDE 7: Soviet Communist Anti-Polish Propaganda

As indicated at the bottom of the slide, this is an anti-Polish propaganda poster created around the time of the 1920-21 Polish-Soviet War. It shows the Soviet Army’s removal of three wealthy Polish landowners who, according to communist dogma, oppressed the workers on their landed estates. Following the defeat of Germany in World War I, Lenin saw the newly independent Poland (formed in November 1918) as the bridge that his Red Army must cross to help other communist movements carrying out their revolutions in Western Europe. The Soviets advanced westward to Warsaw but were defeated and pushed back all the way to Kiev. Stalin fought in the 1920-21 Polish-Soviet War and was bitter about being defeated by a recreated Poland.

SLIDE 8: The Secret Protocol in Hitler’s and Stalin’s Nonaggression Pact

The following is information derived from various sources. On August 20, 1939, Hitler sent a personal message to Stalin that said war with Poland was imminent. If Hitler sent his foreign minister to Moscow for a vitally important discussion, would Stalin receive him? Stalin said yes. On August 22, 1939, German foreign minister Joachim von Ribbentrop flew from Berlin to Moscow, where he met with Stalin and Soviet foreign minister Vyacheslav Molotov. Ribbentrop carried a proposal from Hitler requiring both countries to commit to a nonaggression pact that would last 100 years. Stalin replied that 10 years would be sufficient. The proposal also specified that neither country would aid any third country that attacked either signatory. The proposal contained a secret protocol that specified how they would divide Poland between them. Hitler would take the western half of Poland and Stalin would take the eastern half along with Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia. The secret protocol also required Finland to remain in Stalin’s sphere of influence. On September 1, 1939, Hitler attacked Poland. On September 17, 1939, Stalin attacked Poland. England declared war on Germany on September 3rd but did not declare war on Germany as it was thought that Stalin could later be convinced to join in its fight against Germany. This became a reality after Germany attacked the Soviet Union in June 1941.