

# Part 1

## Anti-Semitism in Europe up to 1945

Teaching materials on the history of Jews and anti-Semitism in Europe  
Anne Frank House, OSCE/ODIHR



Lithuanian  
Sample



# 1 Jewish?

**Jews have a long history in Europe and have contributed to all aspects of European culture. However, there is also a long history of hatred against them. Another word for this hatred is anti-Semitism. But first let us find out what it means to be Jewish.**

According to religious rules, you're Jewish if your mother is Jewish. Some people believe that you can also be Jewish if only your father is Jewish. You can become Jewish, but in that case you have to learn a lot about the Jewish holy books: the Torah and the Talmud.

The reasons why people think of themselves as being Jewish

differ from person to person. Religious Jews observe the rules of their faith. Others don't do this but do feel a connection with other Jews because of the history of their ancestors. They celebrate Jewish holidays and occasionally go to the synagogue, the house of prayer for Jews. Other people do not have any connection with their Jewish background.



**Olga Bliumezon, 23, Vilnius, Lithuania**

I ♥ travelling and sports

Grandparents: Russia

*Jewish? It's not something I knew about as a child, perhaps because of the specific historical period of Soviet times. However, I try to remain open, to get to know more about Jewish culture, ideas that are and will always be a part of me.*



**Julijus, 16, Vilnius, Lithuania**

I ♥ music and sports

Grandparents: Plunge, Lithuania

*Jewish? That's the way I live. My mother tongue is Yiddish. I study in a Jewish school. In my family, we keep Jewish traditions. I like learning the history of my nation. I am proud to be a Jew.*

## Your card

Fill in your own visiting card.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Where you live: \_\_\_\_\_

Grandparents come from: \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_

I love: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

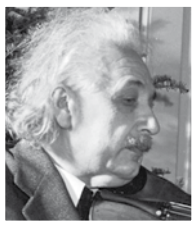
This religion, belief or culture appeals to me most:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

The most important things in my life are:  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

# Assignments

## 1. Who decides who you are?

Read the following statements about identity and answer the question below.



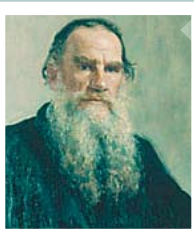
- A.**  
 "If my theory of relativity is successful, Germany will say that I am a German and France will call me a citizen of the world. But if my theory proves to be wrong, France will say that I am a German and Germany will call me a Jew."  
 Albert Einstein, physicist (1879-1955)



- B.**  
 "More attention should be devoted to understanding and respect between people of different cultures, beliefs and political views. This is very important."  
 Valdas Adamkus, President of the Republic of Lithuania



- C.**  
 "I love acting, but I don't like all of the other stuff associated with it: the interest in celebrities, the press, the Internet, when your identity becomes mixed up in the way people are perceiving you."  
 Nicole Kidman, actress



- D.**  
 "Everyone lives and acts partly in accordance with their own, and partly in accordance with other people's, ideas."  
 Leo Tolstoy, Russian writer (1828-1910)

Which one most appeals to you? Explain why.



## 2. Your grandparents

**A.** List the birthplaces of the grandparents of all the students in the class. Think of how to show their migration on a map.

**B.** Imagine that your (grand-) parents come from another country. Give one advantage and one disadvantage of moving to another country.

**C.** Make a list of the reasons why people leave their home country nowadays.



## 2 Why are Jews spread throughout the world?

**Judaism originated about three thousand years ago. The Jews believed in one God, becoming the first monotheistic religion. Foreign rulers exiled Jews from the country. This was the beginning of the dispersal of Jews in many countries, including Mesopotamia (Iraq), Turkey, and Spain.**

In 70 AD, the Romans destroyed the centre of Jewish life, the Temple in Jerusalem. They captured many of the Jews who had rebelled against the Romans, who had been in power for more than a hundred years. Jews fled to countries around the Mediterranean Sea, such as Turkey, Greece, and Spain. This was the start of the Jewish Diaspora, the settlement of Jews outside the territory of the Holy Land. Diaspora is a Greek word that means dispersal or spreading out.

In Europe in the Middle Ages, Jews formed their own communities, living as a minority

surrounded by Christians. Although Jesus was Jewish and Christianity developed from Judaism, the Church resented the Jewish faith. Laws were passed in some countries forbidding Christians and Jews from socializing together, sometimes forcing Jews to live in separated streets, called ghettos. This hatred was inflamed by accusations that the Jews killed Jesus, although in fact he was put on the cross by the Roman governor. This and other false accusations (including the alleged need of Jews to have Christian blood for rituals) fueled centuries of violence against Jews.



The Western Wall in Jerusalem. This wall is the only part that has survived of the Temple that was destroyed. Jews come from all over the world to pray here. The Al-Aqsa mosque, a sacred place for Muslims, is a little higher up.



Moses Maimonides

### Cordoba, for example

Many Jews ended up in Spain, where their freedom was increasingly restricted by the Christian rulers. Things improved when Muslims from North Africa entered Spain in 711 AD and took power. In the following centuries, a rich culture was established under their rule. Beautiful palaces were built in Spanish cities. Cordoba became the most modern city in Europe, with street lighting, water mains, and public baths. Artists and scientists from all over the world met there, including Muslims, Jews, and Christians. In this climate of tolerance, they read and translated Arabic, Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. Torahs, Bibles, and Korans were produced with great care. If you needed an operation, Cordoba was the best place to be.

After 1100 AD, the Islamic rulers became less tolerant of other faiths. At the same time, Christian leaders gained control of more and more regions. In the end, the whole of Spain was Christian. During the Inquisition, Jews and Muslims were persecuted and were forced to convert to Christianity. In 1492, all the Jews and the Muslims had to leave the country, even those who had converted. Most of the Jews fled to North Africa, Greece, and Turkey. Others went to Italy, Eastern Europe, or the Netherlands. The synagogue in Cordoba became a hospital and the mosque became a cathedral.

Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) was one of the most influential rabbis in Jewish history. He was a philosopher who spoke and wrote in Arabic and Hebrew. As a teenager, he and his family fled his hometown of Cordoba to avoid a forced conversion to Islam. The family moved to Fez, Morocco. As they couldn't stay there either, his family emigrated to Cairo, Egypt, where Maimonides worked as a tradesman and as a rabbi, and eventually became the personal doctor of the Sultan. He died in Cairo, but his grave is in Israel. This is his statue in Cordoba.

North America  
5,600,000

South America  
400,000

Europe  
1,100,000

Africa  
80,000

Russia + Ukraine  
300,000

Israel  
5,200,000

Asia  
40,000

Australia  
100,000

## Assignments

### 1. No exact numbers

Before the Holocaust, most Jews lived in Europe. Now Jews live mainly in Israel and the United States.

The diagram shows estimates of the number of Jews living in different parts of the world. Explain why you cannot know the exact numbers.

### 2. Cordoba between 711 and 1100

This period is known as the Golden Age.

A. List at least three achievements of this period.

B. What was the key to success for Cordoba?

In 1885, Dionisio Baixeras painted this scene of wise men being received in the palace of the caliph Abd ar-Rahman III, near Cordoba. Although they did not always live in peace, it was remarkable that Jews, Muslims, and Christians lived side by side for centuries.



### 3 Escaping persecution

**In the early Middle Ages, there were flourishing Jewish communities in Western and Central Europe with traders, physicians, apothecaries, silversmiths, and goldsmiths. The Christian Crusades put an end to this.**

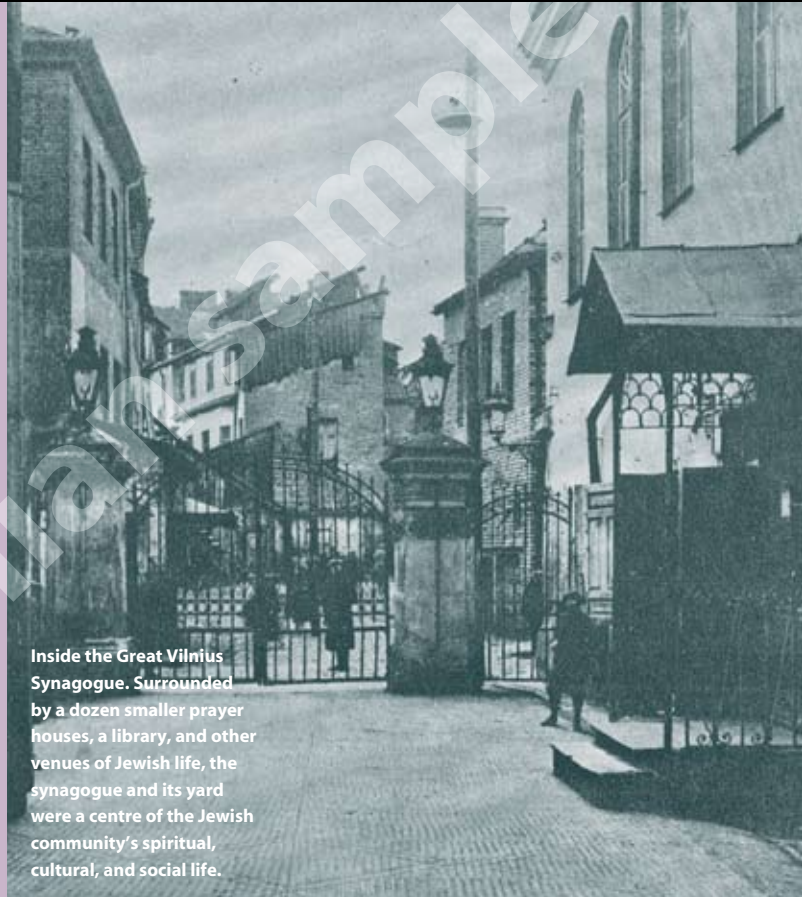
In about 1100 AD, armies of Christians crossed Europe. The Pope had told them to drive the Muslims out of Jerusalem. On the way there, they attacked any "unbelievers" and in Europe the Jews were their main target. The Crusader army swept through Jewish communities, looting, raping, and murdering Jews.

In the 14th century, the Black Plague ravaged the whole of Europe. No one could explain why so many people were smitten with this disease. Fear, superstition, and ignorance prompted the need to find someone to blame and the Jews were a convenient scapegoat because of myths and stereotypes that already existed about

them. Although Jews also died from the Plague, they were accused of poisoning wells and spreading the disease. Jews were mistreated and burned at the stake. More than sixty Jewish communities were burned to the ground and their residents killed. The persecution turned many Jews into vagabonds and beggars.

Following the Crusades and the persecution in Western Europe, many Jews sought refuge in the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania, where the rulers granted them religious, cultural and — to a great extent — juridical autonomy. In the 16th century, a Jewish parliamentary body was established in Lublin, which became the autonomous

Crusaders killing Jews, illustration of a French edition of the Bible, around 1230. The Jewish men are recognizable by their hats. In some parts of Europe, Jews had to wear a special hat, or they were obliged to wear a yellow ring on their clothes.



Inside the Great Vilnius Synagogue. Surrounded by a dozen smaller prayer houses, a library, and other venues of Jewish life, the synagogue and its yard were a centre of the Jewish community's spiritual, cultural, and social life.

### Vilnius, for example

Throughout its five-hundred-year history, Vilnius developed into a Jewish religious centre, reaching the peak of its influence in the 18th century, when the famous Jewish scholar the Vilna Gaon lived in the city. Later, in the 19th century, Vilnius became the cradle of Jewish secular movements. Various social, academic, religious, and political movements were launched in Hebrew and Yiddish. All this was destroyed by the Nazis during the Holocaust. This might explain why the city is famous among Jews as the Jerusalem of Lithuania but this is practically unknown outside the Jewish world.

Nowadays, some street names in Vilnius's Old Town and historic plaques on former Jewish houses remind us of the city's Jewish heritage. Today, Jewish life and culture can be experienced at institutions such as the Vilnius Jewish Community, the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum, the Vilnius Yiddish Institute, and the Sholom Aleichem Vilnius Jewish School.

A Yiddish concert organized by the Vilnius Yiddish Institute was held in the Russian Drama Theatre of Lithuania, 2003.



representation of Polish-Lithuanian Jewry. In the 18th century, the Polish-Lithuanian Jewish community was the largest in the world. Religious and economic life flourished.

But this was also a time that witnessed an immense Jewish tragedy. In 1648, during the Chmielnicki uprising against Polish feudal lords in Ukraine, tens of thousands of Jews were murdered by Cossacks. However, the Jewish communities in Eastern Europe survived. With the partition of Poland and Lithuania at the end of the 18th century, most of the Lithuanian Jews became subjects of tsarist

Russia. Under this regime, Jews were forced to live in restricted areas and were not free to travel around the country.

The Zionist movement emerged at the turn of the 20th century. Many Jewish social and political organizations became active after World War I. Between the wars (1918-1940), Jews represented a large minority (17 per cent) in Lithuania. On the eve of the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941, there were approximately 240,000 Jews in Lithuania. Around 94 per cent did not live to see the end of World War II.



## Assignments



Illustration from a Saxon Legal Act dating from about 1235, the so-called *Sachsen Spiegel*. The Emperor promises peace to the Jews (left), women, and monks. In Central Europe, they did not have the right to carry arms; therefore, they were granted special protection by the Emperor.

### 1. Special status of the Jews

A. Provide two examples of the special status of Jews in medieval Europe.

B. Describe the way the Jew is portrayed in the illustration above.

C. Why do you think that Jews, in some parts of Europe, had to wear a specific type of hat or a special ring on their clothes?

### 2. The Catholic Church and Jews in the 18th-century Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania

A book published in Vilnius in 1728 forbade Christians to eat "Jewish *kugel* and other Jewish dishes". A bishop's decree (1743) prohibited Jewish celebrations, specifically banning "making music, singing or otherwise making a noise during weddings...".

A. Why do you think the Catholic Church wanted to keep Christians and Jews apart?

B. What dishes do you know that have been adopted from other nations that are common in Lithuania today?



## 4 Moving northwards

**In 1492, Jews were expelled from Spain. Some Jews fled to Portugal, where the community was expelled in 1497. Even Jews who had been christened were no longer safe. Many of them moved to new homes in northern Europe.**

Throughout Europe, there were many professions that Jews were not permitted to practise because they had to be a member of a guild. A guild is a group of people with the same profession: barbers, carpenters, smiths, and bakers all had their own guilds, but only Christians could be members. Jews were not accepted. Jews could become doctors, traders, or diamond cutters. These professions did not have guilds.

There was also another way for Jews to make a living: money-lending. In fact, this was forbidden for Christians for a long time. For this reason, rulers in Spain and Poland often had Jewish financial advisors. Some Jews became rich but most were simple tradesmen. Later, when Christians were allowed to become bankers, they tried to get rid of their Jewish competitors by accusing them of extortion. Among the most obstinate prejudices against Jews are myths relating to money, for instance, that all Jews are rich, extort money from others, and are magically drawn to money and gold.



Prior to World War II, the Sunday markets of the Jews in Amsterdam were very popular. Postcard, 1908.

### Amsterdam, for example

At the end of the 16th century, Amsterdam was very popular with refugees. Like other minorities, the Jews were fairly free there. In other European towns, Jews had to live in a ghetto, an area that could be sealed off by the town council, but there was no ghetto in Amsterdam. Portuguese Jews were welcome in Amsterdam. They were able to supply products from Portugal and the colonies. Ships with sugar, wood, coffee, tobacco, and cotton arrived. In this way, Portuguese Jews contributed to the prosperity of the city in the 17th century. Many poor Jews from Eastern Europe and Germany also came to Amsterdam, fleeing the atrocities of war and massacres. They were more numerous than the Jews who spoke Portuguese. These Jews spoke Yiddish, a language that incorporated German, Polish, and Hebrew words. In Lithuania, Yiddish words such as *bachur*, *chala*, and *kugel* also became part of the language.

In those days, Amsterdam was sometimes called the Jerusalem of the West. There were several synagogues and there was a Hebrew printer. Nevertheless, there were restrictions on Jews. For example, they were not allowed to practise as many professions as Christians were. It was only in 1795 that Jews acquired equal rights in Amsterdam, and a year later in the whole of the Netherlands. Jews were spread throughout the Netherlands, but Amsterdam continued to be the most important place for them. In 1939, 10 per cent of the population of Amsterdam was Jewish.



In 1650, Portuguese Jews were permitted to build a synagogue in Amsterdam. The synagogue for the Jews from Germany and Eastern Europe was built next to it.



# Assignments



## 1. Prejudice

This picture from a German children's book dating from 1938 shows a Jew sitting on a bag of money in front of the stock exchange.

**A.** What prejudice against Jews is illustrated here?

**B.** Explain how this prejudice arose.

**C.** Why is this a prejudice?



The synagogue of Joniskis.

Former Jewish houses on Vilnius Street, Zasliai, 2003.



## 2. In your neighbourhood

**A.** What buildings or places do you know in your neighbourhood that are connected with Jewish life? Make a list. Find a picture of them or take photographs or make your own drawings.

**B.** Find out the significance or history of what you found. Describe this in your own words.

**C.** Together with three other pupils, make a collage of what you found.

## 5 Fighting for equality

**Freedom and equality were among the ideals prevalent in the 19th century. At this time, Jews were also given equal rights. Guilds were no longer exclusively for Christians. Ghettos were abolished. Jews were allowed to attend university. For the first time, Jews could take an active role in society, contributing to the modernization of Europe. Cities across Europe have benefited greatly from the presence of Jewish citizens, who have helped to shape these cities.**

The ideals of freedom and equality propagated in the French Revolution spread quickly throughout Europe. The secular notion of citizenship, emphasizing the rights of the individual, changed the lives of Jews. However, despite the fact that Jews attained equal rights in many countries, discrimination and old prejudices did not end. In the 19th century, pseudo-scientific books propagated the idea that Jews were an inferior race who wanted to rule the world. In about 1880, this hatred of the Jews was even given a special name in Germany: anti-Semitism.

For example, the Anti-Semitic Movement was the name of a German pressure group against Jews. Its followers were against

giving Jews equal rights and blamed Jews for the economic crisis that arose in 1873. In their opinion, the Jews were the greatest enemies of the Germans.

In 1894, Captain Alfred Dreyfus was tried in France. He was accused, on the basis of false evidence, of giving top-secret information about the French army to the German Empire. During his trial, it became clear that the motivation for the charges was that he was Jewish. The trial led to an increase in anti-Semitism in France, but it also created a front of intellectuals who openly opposed anti-Semitism. Two years after Dreyfus was sentenced, the French author Emile Zola published an open letter called "J'accuse" (I accuse), which

The Jewish German Levi Strauss (1829-1902) emigrated to the United States from southern Germany with his mother and two sisters. Like many others, he hoped to build a better life there. His jeans are now world-famous.



The Litvak (Lithuanian Jew) Ludwig Lejzer Zamenhof (1859-1917) was the creator of Esperanto, a universal language. His pseudonym, Dr. Esperanto (Dr. Hopeful), provided the name for this language, which he and his followers believed could be a bridge between people, encouraging tolerance, humanism, and intercultural respect.



### Albert Einstein

The Nobel Prize-winning physicist Albert Einstein (1879-1955) was one of Germany's leading scientists and best-known personalities. Tourists attended his lectures at the university in Berlin, and women went to the synagogue when he played the violin there. After experiencing Nazi persecution, Einstein became outspoken on the subject of anti-Semitism. Like many other German intellectuals, he fled his home in the 1930s, expecting the worst of the political changes.







The Viennese journalist Theodor Herzl had heard about people chanting “Death to the Jews” during the Dreyfus trial. Herzl was Jewish but not religious. He had had enough of anti-Semitism and believed that Jews should have their own state. This became the aim of the movement he founded, known as Zionism. The first meeting of the Zionist movement was held in 1897 in Basel.

led to a new trial in 1899. After getting a lesser sentence, Dreyfus was pardoned and later, in 1906, fully rehabilitated. Anti-Semitism as an anti-modern political movement experienced a significant decline in France, but nevertheless continued to exist.

Meanwhile, at the end of the 19th century, life for Jews in Eastern Europe was becoming increasingly difficult. Anti-Jewish campaigns grew in strength after the assassination of Russian Tsar Alexander II in 1881. Jews were blamed for this, and soon afterwards regular pogroms were organized in the Russian Empire. Pogroms were large-scale attacks on Jews and their possessions, organized by the tsar’s authorities. Jews were murdered or expelled. They moved west, like the Jews who wanted to escape poverty. Many Jews boarded ships and sailed to the United States. Others stayed in the ports of Europe or went to the territory of Palestine. In the end, two million Jews from Russia and other Eastern European countries started a new life in the United States between 1880 and 1917.

The involvement of many Jews in Russian revolutions and various socialist movements led to an emergence of a new anti-Jewish stereotype of Jewish communism that became one of the most powerful political myths in 20th-century Europe.

Around 1900, the anti-Semitic book *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* was published in Russia. This forged document alleged that the Jews were planning to take over the world. The book was published in many languages and became very popular. One of its readers was Adolf Hitler, and he incorporated this myth, and many other negative ideas about Jews, into his political programme. Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933 and immediately started to implement his anti-Jewish programme.



## Assignments



Gabriel Weinreich, his father Max, at the typewriter, and his older brother Uriel, around 1932, Vilnius.

### 1. Memories of a Jewish boy from pre-war Vilnius

Gabriel Weinreich: “Once, when I was perhaps 8 years old, I was on my way home from a visit to my grandmother. I was walking along Zavalne Street [modern-day Pilies], contemplating the world around me... I saw a group of young men with spades. They were taking a break from digging a ditch and smoking cigarettes. The men called me and we started — it seemed to me, as I felt — a very pleasant conversation. ... Then suddenly, unexpectedly, an incomprehensible stab of pain really made me jump. The men were laughing... I looked down and saw a red spot on my calf where one of them, while chatting with me, had casually ground his cigarette. They had had their fun with a little Jew. I turned and ran, as though I wanted to outrun history and catch up with time before this horrible event had happened, so that it need not have happened at all.”

Playing as a child with his friends, Gabriel Weinreich suffered worse injuries. What was so horrible about the event described above?

### 2. The Protocols

*The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* has been published in many languages. In the United States, the car manufacturer and tycoon Henry Ford published an anti-Semitic book in 1920 with the title *The International Jew: The World's Foremost Problem*, based on *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

What are Jews accused of in the Protocols? Use the cover of the French edition in your answer.

## 6 The Holocaust



World War II started in 1939. Nazi Germany attacked and conquered a large part of Europe. With the beginning of the war, anti-Semitism reached a new level. The exclusion and persecution of the Jews – the official policy of the German Government from 1933 – increased and dominated the policy of all the occupied territories.

When Hitler came to power with his Nazi party in 1933, the Jews were immediately confronted with discrimination and violence. New laws were passed in 1935, the so-called Nuremberg laws. Jews were no longer allowed to be Germans, they could no longer marry non-Jews, their passports were marked with a "J", they had to wear a star, and they had to live in separate districts. Jews were increasingly isolated from the rest of the population. This happened in most of the countries occupied by Nazi Germany.

In 1941, the German army attacked the Soviet Union. The mass killing of the Jewish population started during the war. The Nazis embarked on what they called the "Final Solution of the Jewish Question". In less than six months, seven hundred thousand Jews were murdered by the so-called *Einsatzgruppen* and local collaborators. Jews were taken from towns and villages and shot in the neighbouring woods, Jewish cemeteries, and other sites. During the two days of the Babi Yar slaughter, 33,771 Jews from Kyiv, Ukraine, were murdered.



Itsik Rudashevsky was 13 years old when he began to keep a diary in Nazi-occupied Vilnius. Itsik perished with his family in Paneriai, the largest Holocaust site in Lithuania, located about 10 kilometres from Vilnius.



Sofija Binkiene (writer Kazys Binkis' wife) with her daughters. Sofija helped rescue Jews that fled from the Kaunas ghetto by hiding them in her house.

### Itsik Rudashevsky

Itsik wrote about the pogroms he witnessed in the streets of Vilnius before 6 September 1941, when all Vilnius Jews were imprisoned in one area, the ghetto: "Our hearts are crushed, witnessing the shameful scene where [Jewish] women and older people are beaten and kicked in the middle of the street by petty [Lithuanian] bandits. Germans stand and look... I stand at the window... tears come to my eyes: all our helplessness, all our loneliness lies in the streets. ... There is no one to take our side. And we ourselves are so helpless. So helpless!! We are exposed to mockery and humiliation... "

Later, in the ghetto, he wrote: "Today I am 15 ... I thought a lot and have decided not to waste my time in the ghetto; I feel happy that I can study, read, train myself ... a broken-spirited youth will not rise from the ghetto. A strong, tough, and well-intentioned youth shall arise from the ghetto."



Jewish women surrounded by Lithuanian collaborators. In the summer of 1941, about three thousand Jews were rounded up in the streets, driven from home and work, to be tortured and murdered in the Kaunas VII Fort.



In 1942, Nazis from the top levels of the German government came to a meeting at the Wannsee, near Berlin. There they discussed the details of how to systematically kill all the Jews in Europe in extermination camps. Deportations started. Trains full of Jews from all the occupied countries travelled to different extermination camps.

By the end of the war, six million Jewish men, women, and children had been killed. This enormous mass murder is usually known as the Holocaust, which means sacrifice. Another word for this is *Shoah*, which is the Hebrew for total destruction.

After the war, some Jews tried to build a new life in their own countries. Others left Europe behind and went to the United States or to Palestine, then under British Rule.



Hungarian Jewish women and children waiting before being sent to the gas chamber, after arriving in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

More than one million people were murdered in the Auschwitz-Birkenau extermination camp, in occupied Poland. The vast majority of victims were Jewish (90 per cent). They had been brought there from all over Europe.



## Assignments

### 1. Itsik

Read the quote from Itsik Rudashevsky's diary. Write down what strikes you most.

### 2. Holocaust or Shoah?

If you could choose between the two terms *Shoah* and *Holocaust*, which one would you use? Explain why.

### 3. Individuals

The victims of the Holocaust lived in a world in which you can distinguish three groups: perpetrators, rescuers, and bystanders. These were all people making individual decisions to collaborate with the Nazis, to help the victims, or to distance themselves as much as possible from the persecution. Look at the two photos on this page taken in Lithuania.

**A.** Think of some reasons why some people collaborated with the Nazis to murder Jews.

**B.** Think of some reasons why others helped Jews to escape persecution.

**C.** Describe what it means to be a bystander. Give examples of this position.

# Assignments

## 1. The Diaspora of the European Jews

Complete these sentences:

- A** The Jews fled from Jerusalem in 70 AD because \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_.
- B** Once, the Spanish city of \_\_\_\_\_ was the most modern city in Europe. Muslims, Christians, and Jews lived together in relative peace. This changed in the year \_\_\_\_\_.
- C** In the Middle Ages, Jews had to flee anti-Semitic violence during the \_\_\_\_\_ and when the \_\_\_\_\_ began. Many Jews fled to \_\_\_\_\_ and Lithuania.
- D** About 1900, there was a mass emigration of Jews in Eastern Europe. They feared for their lives because of the \_\_\_\_\_. Many tried to flee by ship to \_\_\_\_\_.
- E** After the end of the Holocaust and World War II, many surviving Jews left Europe. They tried to build a new life in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

## 2. Other letters

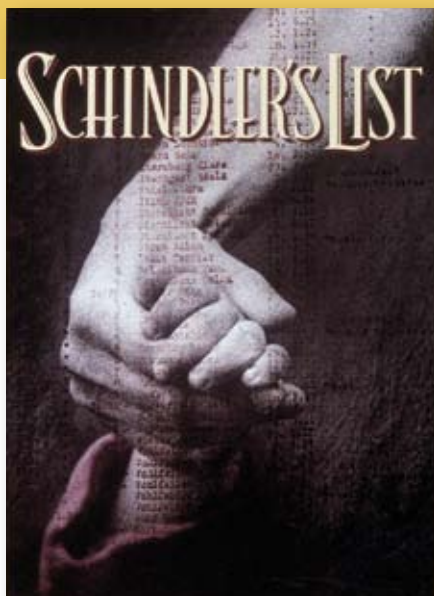
Write your first name in Hebrew letters. In Hebrew, you write from right to left. Attention: vowels are not written in Hebrew. You can use א for an (A), ו for (O) and (U), and י for (I).

Do you know another alphabet? You can use this space to write your name in different letters.

-	א
b	ב
v	ב
g	ג
d	ד
h	ה
v	ו
z	ז
ch	ח
t	ט
j	י
k	כך
l	ל
m	מם
n	נן
s	ס
'	ע
p	פף
f	פף
c	ץץ
k	ק
r	ר
š	ש
s	ש
t	ת







Steven Spielberg



### 3. Schindler's List

The film director Steven Spielberg chose Krakow for shots in the film *Schindler's List*. This film shows how, in World War II, Oscar Schindler managed to prevent hundreds of Jews from being murdered in an extermination camp. Spielberg recounted: "We were not very religious at home and only ate kosher meals with my grandparents. I did not have any Jewish friends. I didn't really want to know that I was Jewish. I was only able to make *Schindler's List* when I was no longer ashamed of being Jewish."

**A.** How can you tell what the film is about from the poster?

In an interview, Steven Spielberg talked about his youth: "Sometimes children called me and my family 'dirty Jews'. Now I know why people can turn against you. It's simply because they don't know you and don't know what's going on in your head."

**B.** Explain why you agree or disagree with him.

**C.** What other films about the Holocaust do you know?

This booklet is part of a package of teaching materials covering three main themes:

1. The history of Jews in Europe and anti-Semitism until 1945;
2. Contemporary anti-Semitism in Europe today;
3. Prejudices, discrimination, racism, and anti-Semitism.

The materials have been adapted for use in schools in several countries and are available in the official language of each partner state. In each case, the materials were prepared by the OSCE/ODIHR and the Anne Frank House in co-operation with experts from the countries concerned.

#### OSCE/ODHIR

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe is a security organization with 56 participating States from Europe, North America, and Central Asia. Its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights supports the implementation of initiatives in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination, human rights, and democracy. For more information, please visit [www.osce.org/odihr](http://www.osce.org/odihr).

#### Anne Frank House

The Anne Frank House preserves Anne Frank's hiding place as a museum. It also promotes Anne Frank's ideals, not only in relation to the times in which she lived, but also in terms of their contemporary significance. Educational projects are developed to combat present-day forms of anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia and to encourage tolerance and respect for others. For more information, please visit [www.annefrank.org](http://www.annefrank.org).

#### Vilnius Yiddish Institute

The Vilnius Yiddish Institute, founded in 2001 at Vilnius University, is dedicated to the continued survival and study of the unique Eastern European Jewish cultural heritage. It provides courses for academics and for the wider public, conducts and publishes research, organizes international programmes and educational projects.

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# 7 Uncle Chatzkel

Rodney Freedman in his grandmother's hometown, Papile, 1997.

Filmmaker Rod Freedman lives in Australia. In 1997, looking for his roots, he came to Lithuania, where he met his grandmother's brother Chatzkelis Lemchenas. Inspired by friendship and his uncle's dramatic life, he made a film about him.



Chatzkelis Lemchenas, Vilnius, 1997.

"My documentary film, Uncle Chatzkel, began as a journey from Australia to meet Chatzkelis Lemchenas, the last of my family in Lithuania. He was 93 when I made the film. I wanted to explore my own relationship to the land of my ancestors and my Jewish roots. I filmed for three weeks, meeting his former colleagues and students, members of his Jewish community and historians. The most emotional experience was visiting Zagare, where my great-grandparents had lived.

"Making the film has been an enriching experience. I returned to Lithuania to show the film and still stay in touch with Lithuanian friends. The experience has deepened my sense of identity and, although I live in Australia, has connected me with my Lithuanian roots."

Rodney Freedman, Sydney 2006



The family of Rod's grandmother, Gita, in about 1914. Chatzkelis was the only one of the seven children who remained in Lithuania. He lived through both World Wars and survived the Kaunas ghetto and Dachau concentration camp. He died in 2001.

Through his friendship with his uncle, Freedman got to know more about the seven-hundred-year Lithuanian Jewish history. The former Jewish quarter in downtown Vilnius serves as a witness to this history.



## Assignments

1. Why did Rodney Freedman come from Australia to Lithuania to make his film?
2. Is it important to know your family roots. Why?
3. In the film, Rodney Freedman says: "Now I know what I was so close to losing by not returning to my family history." What did he mean?