

Handbook for teaching the  
**Holocaust**



SHKOLLAT E MËSIMNIMETVE TE HISTORIS SE KOSOVES  
HISTORY TEACHERS ASSOCIATION OF KOSOVA



forumZFD





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**Holocaust**

## **HANDBOOK FOR TEACHING THE HOLOCAUST**

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# Preface

## Why this publication?

The objective of this dedicated publication on the Holocaust and its teaching in Kosovo is to enhance Kosovo teachers' capacity and foster their direct involvement in the development of teaching materials and textbooks. It is hoped that publishers and educational institutions will recognize this structure as one to be followed.

The lesson plans included in this publication have been developed with the following aims:

- 1 To promote multiperspectivity in history teaching so that students learn to empathize with and understand the perspectives of others;
- 2 To include primary and secondary sources so that students learn how to assess and interpret them. These are very important skills for their own critical analysis thinking, particularly important in the age of "fake news";
- 3 To include pictures and graphics as learning tools;
- 4 To include interactive exercises to foster active-learning, critical thinking, and teamwork.

These lesson plans, therefore, demonstrate how the shift from knowledge-based to skill-based learning can be accomplished, as envisioned by the Framework Curricula.

As a result, history teaching is conceived as a fundamental tool also to understand the present. Critical learning about the past and its understanding enables students to analyze, question and comprehend the current reality.

## For whom is this publication?

This publication on Holocaust Education is intended to be used by history teachers in Kosovo as a supplementary, good quality teaching resource.

The lesson plans form a resource for history teachers in lower and upper secondary education. In accordance with the Framework Curricula adopted by the Ministry of Education and Science in Kosovo (2016), the three lesson plans target students of IX and XII grade, as the topic of the Holocaust is covered at those stages of the educational process.

## What can be found in this publication?

Three lesson plans are included in this publication; each of them consists of a narrative part and an interactive part:

**Lesson Plan 1:** The History of Antisemitism

**Lesson Plan 2:** The Holocaust

**Lesson Plan 3:** Kosovo and the Holocaust

The narrative parts offer students the information needed to understand the Holocaust, its origins, developments and consequences, with a specific focus on Kosovo and the western Balkans.

The interactive parts offer teachers several exercises for students aimed at fostering critical reflection and active learning. These exercises are related to the content of the narrative part. Instructions for teachers, the required time, as well as the material (Annexes) needed for the exercises are provided. Based on the level of difficulty of the exercises and complexity of the discussions, the tasks are recommended to be proposed to students of IX grade only, XII grade, or both.

In addition to the lesson plans, a glossary can be found at the end of the publication.

### How to use the publication?

The lesson plans are supposed to serve as a supplement to the history textbooks normally used. Each lesson plan can be used for one or more hours of history teaching, depending on needs and available time.

The narrative parts should be given to students, analyzed in the classroom or provided as homework, while the interactive exercises are to be used by teachers as reference during the classes (and not be distributed to students). Teachers should select the most appropriate exercise(s) to be carried out with the students, explain them based on the provided instructions, and give the Annexes to the students, according to their needs. The exercises will mainly be performed by students divided in groups. It is recommended to plan a brief discussion time after each exercise, facilitated by the teacher, in order to clarify the key messages and learning objectives of the lesson.

It is important to understand that the methodology suggested for the exercises is flexible, and is meant to be a reference for teachers, who will adapt the exercises based on their students' abilities and available resources.

Although the three lesson plans are meant to be complementary to each other, teachers shall assess the feasibility of applying the proposed material and the relevance of the specific sections, based on their teaching process and time available.

### How was this material developed?

In 2015, the Ministry of Education and Science in Kosovo approached forumZFD with the request to cooperate on improving Holocaust Education in Kosovo. The Kosovo History Teachers Association was involved in the project. Its members participated in a training at Yad Vashem (Israel) and a number of workshops organized in the following years in cooperation with Yad Vashem, the Center for Historical Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Berlin, New Perspektiva, and the Haus der Wannseekonferenz in Berlin. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum also provided support for this project.

As a result, the participants increased their knowledge about the Holocaust and their capacities in textbook-writing were initiated. With the aim of creating teacher-friendly suitable material, the original plan of writing a textbook chapter was subsequently moved towards the development of lesson plans.





# Chapter 1

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## The history of Antisemitism

Antisemitism is an old phenomenon, which emerged in ancient times and has continually re-emerged throughout history. This phenomenon appeared in various forms and ways. Originally, through many centuries it was mostly manifested in the religious anti-Jewish resentments of the non-Jewish majority toward Jewish communities. After the second half of the 19th century it was supplemented with racist and ideological narratives. How did religious antisemitism (anti-Judaism) change into racial antisemitism? What phenomena in Europe and modern history have contributed to its development?



**Ruins of a Synagogue in Saranda, 6th century AD**

Source: <https://www.world-archaeology.com/world/europe/albania/synagogue-in-saranda-albania/>

## The Origins and Development of Anti-Judaism

The first signs of hatred against Jews go back to ancient times. They particularly rise to the surface after the 6th century AD when the Jews, expelled from their homelands in the Middle East, had to live as a minority in non-Jewish environments dispersed in more distant territories (Diaspora). Anti-Jewish sentiments had been expressed in ancient Greece and Rome. Likewise, anti-Judaism appeared in early Christianity, when it became apparent that the Jews would not accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah and were consequently accused of plotting against what Christians considered to be the “Saviour of humanity”. Therefore, Anti-Judaic sentiments remained prevalent in many Christian communities throughout the Middle Ages. Between 15th and 18th century attacks on Jews continued in Europe. These ranged from verbal abuse to killings. The false accusation that Jews would murder Christian children and use their blood for ritual purposes, began spreading across Christian communities, as did accusations that Jews desecrated Christian churches. Hundreds of innocent Jews were arrested and tortured and, in some cases, executed.

## Jews in the Region

The first Jews settled in Illyrian lands after the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 AD. The story of their arrival is told as a legend according to which a ship sailing for Rome with slaves, Jews from Palestine, met a storm and had to change course for

### What do we mean by antisemitism?

#### 1: Description of antisemitism by the US Holocaust Memorial Museum:

Prejudice against or hatred of Jews--known as antisemitism--has plagued the world for more than 2,000 years. The Holocaust, the state-sponsored persecution and murder of European Jews between 1933 and 1945 by Nazi Germany and its collaborators, is history's most extreme example of antisemitism. Yet even in the aftermath of the Holocaust, antisemitism remains a continuing threat. Manifestations of this hatred appear in literature, art, film, speeches, legislation, and on the Internet, as well as in acts of violence.

Source: <https://www.ushmm.org/collections/bibliography/antisemitism> (accessed 25.02.2020)

#### 2. German historian about the distinction between antisemitism and anti-Judaism:

The word “anti-Semitism” serves on the one hand as a generic term for every type of hostility towards Jews. More specifically on the other hand, as a term formed in the final third of the 19th century, it characterizes a new, pseudo-scientific anti-Jewish prejudice that no longer argued religiously but employed qualities and characteristics associated with “race”. A distinction needs to be drawn between the older religiously-motivated anti-Judaism and modern anti-Semitism. (...) In modern language usage the term anti-Semitism covers the sum total of anti-Jewish statements, trends, resentments, attitudes and actions, irrespective of the religious, racist, social or other motivation behind them. (...) Anti-Semitic theoreticians agreed in their claims that every “racial characteristic” of the Jews was negative, and the feature distinguishing it from the older anti-Judaism was the conviction that “racial characteristics” were, unlike religious beliefs, immutable.

Source: Wolfgang Benz, Anti-Semitism and Anti-Semitism Research, [https://docupedia.de/zg/Benz\\_antisemitismus\\_v1\\_en\\_2011](https://docupedia.de/zg/Benz_antisemitismus_v1_en_2011) (accessed 25.02.2020)

the coast of Illyria. According to archaeological research, it is believed that commercial and economic relations existed in ancient times between people living in today's Kosovo and today's Israel. During the Middle Ages, a large number of the Jews who settled in Kosovo were persecuted Jews who had been driven out of Spain. The Jews in Kosovo had different professions, such as precious metal workers and traders, and they primarily lived in the areas of current days Novo Brdo/Novobërda (Artana) and Prishtinë/Priština.

## The Jewish Diaspora in Europe

The native homeland of the Jews is in the Middle East. However, they were repeatedly expelled from there by foreign conquests and rulers. This is how the Jews came to Europe. Historically, the Jews in Europe have been divided into two main groups. The Ashkenazi Jews who spoke Yiddish and were mainly concentrated in Germany and further east, and the Sephardic Jews, who spoke a language called Ladino. The Sephardic Jews had originally lived in Spain and Portugal on the Iberian Peninsula under Arab rule. The 720 Pact of Umar provided for a vassal status both for Christians and Jews who were not allowed to raise their voices at prayer times nor build new churches or synagogues. However, from 8th to 11th century, in the Iberian Peninsula under Arab rule, Jews were accepted by the society and greatly contributed to its economy, science and culture (sometimes referred to as "Golden Age of Jewish Culture in Spain").

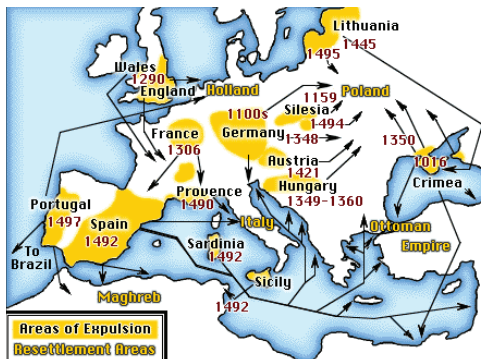
In medieval Europe Jewish communities were frequently treated by the majority as a "scapegoat" and were sometimes obliged to wear an identity badge. In the wake of the crusades and the bubonic plagues outbreaks (the so-called Black Death after 1348), the Jews were persecuted and expelled from England (1290), France (14th century) as well as from Spain and Portugal and some Italian and German territories (15th/16th century). Many of the Ashkenazi Jews found refuge in the Polish-Lithuanian state where they made up the most populous Jewish community in Europe, while most of Sephardic Jews spread through Arabic and Ottoman Empires.



### Expulsion of the Jews from Spain

After the fall of the Emirate of Granada in 1492, the last Arab stronghold on the Iberian Peninsula, the Sephardic Jews refusing to convert to Christianity were banished from Spain and from Portugal. Those who refused to convert were persecuted or forced to migrate.

Source:  
<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/mjwa6gf4>



## Areas and dates of the expulsion of Jews

Source:  
<https://fcit.usf.edu/holocaust/PEOPLE/displace.htm>

## Jews in the Ottoman Empire

Many Jews who faced persecution elsewhere settled in the Ottoman Empire, and a considerable number found refuge in the Balkans. Sultan Beyazid II (1481-1512) was particularly friendly to them. The Ottoman authorities recognized Jews' rights to practice their religion and rituals and develop their unique culture. A particularly large number of Jews were concentrated in Thessaloniki (Greece) where they constituted up to 68% of the entire population of the city. One of the largest Jewish communities lived in Istanbul. The Jews in the Ottoman Empire carried out various occupations, e.g. bankers, traders, doctors etc., and made a great contribution to the progress of the cities. They succeeded in occupying important positions in politics, diplomacy, and science.

## Toleration, Emancipation or Assimilation?

For the most part, Jews who lived in Europe were tolerated by the respective majority society. Despite this toleration, anti-Jewish or anti-Semitic prejudices prevailed and turned into physical violence (such as pogroms) or anti-Jewish policies (such as their expulsion from Spain). During the Middle Ages, many countries granted Jews fewer rights than the majority population.

A major change took place in the wake of the French Revolution: the Jews were granted equal civic rights with other citizens in France in 1791, and later in other European countries during the 19th century. This development is called "Jewish emancipation". It was gradually supported by the adoption in most European states of modern constitutions that guaranteed equal rights and freedoms to all citizens regardless of their religion. One consequence of the Jewish emancipation was the emergence of a movement called "Haskalah" ("the Jewish Enlightenment"). Particularly well-educated and affluent Jews living in Europe, mainly in Germany and other European countries, supported this movement that encouraged Jews to learn European languages and accept some of the habits of the majority population among whom they lived. This led to an assimilation of a large part of this Jewish population into their respective country of residence. At the beginning of the 20th century, many of those Jews would rather identify as "German", "French", "Austrian", "Hungarian", etc. than as "Jew".

This development took place mainly among the Jewish elite in western and central Europe, but the majority of Jews in this area still remained more conservative or traditional. Most of the European Jews lived in eastern Europe. Here, the situation was very different.

## Pogroms against Jews in the Russian Empire

Until the turn of the 19th century, the majority of the Jewish Diaspora lived in eastern Europe. After the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian state at the end of the 18th century, masses of Jews living in its former territories came under Russian rule. The Russian authorities began to impose many legal restrictions on those Jews, including establishing special areas where they were forced to live. The suppression of the Jewish population under Russian rule increased after the assassination of the Russian Emperor Alexander II (1881) when Russian authorities, using Jews as scapegoats for the assassination, imposed anti-Jewish legislation and staged a wave of pogroms against the Jews. This resulted in a mass exodus of the Jews to the United States, and the western areas of Europe. Many Jews from the Russian Empire migrated to and settled in the Ottoman Empire.

## The Life of Jews between the Two World Wars

Between the two World Wars nearly nine million Jews lived throughout most European countries. The situation of the Jews varied greatly between fully assimilated, well-educated, urban at one end of the spectrum and segregated, orthodox religious and rural at the other.

Most Jews lived in eastern Europe: in Poland, the Soviet Union, Hungary, Romania etc. Here, many Jews lived segregated from the mainstream society in villages or small towns called “shtetl”, which in fact were a unique socio-cultural model. These communities kept the tradition and the faith, wore characteristic clothing, and were led by a council. Their members were engaged in various jobs, mainly trade and handicrafts. They spoke Yiddish, which is a combination of elements mainly from German and Hebrew; they read books in Yiddish and went to theatre and cinema with performances in Yiddish. However, in bigger cities many Jewish youth assimilated into the way of life and dress of the majority population.

### Jewish life in Russia

Mary Antin about her life as a little girl in Russia, 1890

The czar was always sending us commands (...) till there was very little left that we might do, except pay tribute and die. (...) On a royal birthday every house must fly a flag, or the owner would be dragged to a police station and be fined twenty-five roubles. A decrepit old woman, who lived all alone in a tumble-down shanty, supported by the charity of the neighbourhood, crossed her paralyzed hands one day when flags were ordered up, and waited for her doom, because she had no flag. The vigilant policeman kicked the door open with his great boot, took the last pillow from the bed, sold it, and hoisted a flag above the rotten roof. (...) There was one public school for boys, and one for girls, but Jewish children were admitted in limited numbers---only ten to a hundred; and even the lucky ones had their troubles. (...) There was a special examination for the Jewish candidates, of course: a nine-year-old Jewish child had to answer questions that a thirteen-year-old Gentile was hardly expected to answer. But that did not matter so much; you had been prepared for the thirteen-year-old test. You found the questions quite easy. You wrote your answers triumphantly---and you received a low rating, and there was no appeal.

Source: <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/mod/1890antin.asp> (access 26.02.2020)

## Anti-Judaism turns into antisemitism

German historian Ulrich Wyrwa wrote:

Over the course of the 19th century the Jewish population had achieved a rapid social-economic rise in large parts of Europe. The majority of Jews no longer formed a predominately impoverished group on the very margins of society; now they represented a socially and economically successful segment of society. The Jews owed their social advancement not only to the symbolic capital of education, but in the first instance to their business competence in trade, the very section of the economy that was of less significance in the preindustrial world and into which Jews were forced into, not least due to the negative stigmatization attached to trade. In the historical moment when through industrialization and urbanization trade became a key sector of the economy, the marginalization of the Jews turned dialectically into an advantageous position in the burgeoning consumer society. Anti-Semitism targeted not least this economic success and social advancement of the Jewish population in a period that other segments of society felt to be one of upheaval; at the same time, Jews were blamed for all the social turmoil and uncertainties pervading everyday life coupled with industrialization.

Source: <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-377395> (access 26.02.2020)

The life of Jews in European countries such as France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Denmark, Belgium etc., was different. In these countries, the Jews were more integrated, and even assimilated into the predominant culture. They dressed and spoke the same language as their non-Jewish neighbours. The traditional religious life and Yiddish culture played a less important role and was not so visible in these environments.

In Germany, at the beginning of the 1930s, there were some 500,000 Jewish inhabitants, i.e. 0.8% of the general population. Around 70% of them lived in bigger cities, such as: Berlin, Frankfurt, Breslau etc. In general, the Jewish population was integrated in German society. Here, the majority of the Jews considered themselves as loyal patriots, connected with the German way of life through language and culture. They excelled in sciences, literature, arts and business enterprises. Their success was notable through the fact that 24% of the Nobel Prize winners from Germany were Jews.

# Chapter 1: EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS

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## 1

### LEARNING OUTCOMES AND KEY MESSAGE

Understanding and defining the concepts of “stereotype”, “prejudice” and “discrimination”, by connecting anti-Judaism and antisemitism to other discriminatory/racist narratives. Highlighting the escalation from stereotype to prejudice to discrimination and potential violence.

#### Key message:

Jews have been (and still are) depicted in a stereotypical way, and therefore often treated based on generalized simplified images. Stereotypes (received ideas, generalizations) and prejudice (general judgements) often lead to discrimination (marginalization, different treatment), which implies violence (physical and psychological damage).

We all have stereotypes and prejudices: it is important to recognize them and challenge them by being open towards “the other”.  
*For definitions, please refer to Glossary*

### METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONS

Students work divided in groups (3 to 5 members). Each group is provided with a copy of caricatures of Jews. At the end of part c. (or at the end of each part), each group presents its answers in plenary.

In this lesson, we looked at anti-Judaism and antisemitism as forms of prejudice and discrimination. Based on what you learned, discuss the following questions:

- Look at the caricature(s): How do Jews look? What does this mean? Why, in your opinion, are they depicted in this way?
- Think about comments that you have heard about Jews: Where do these comments originate from? Do you think these comments are stereotypes? Would you define them as “anti-Semitic”?
- Can you find other examples of prejudice and stereotypes towards other groups? Which are their causes? Which can be the consequences? Should we have a single generalized opinion about a group?

### MATERIAL AND TIME

ANNEX 1: Two caricatures of Jews (one for each group of students)

Glossary: definitions of stereotype and prejudice

**35 min** a: 10 min b: 10 min c: 15 min

### DIFFICULTY/GRADE

a: IX and XII b: XII

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## 2

### LEARNING OUTCOMES AND KEY MESSAGE

Critically analyzing and understanding “anti-Judaism” and “antisemitism”, and identifying similarities/differences with other forms of racism.

#### Key message:

Anti-Judaism and Antisemitism are forms of prejudice, which progressively led to the racist Nazi ideology underlying the Holocaust.  
For definitions, please refer to Glossary

### METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONS

Students work divided in small groups (or couples). Each group is provided with the definitions of “anti-Judaism” and “antisemitism” (in the text). At the end of part b., each group presents its answers in plenary.

Based on the definitions provided in the text, discuss the following questions:

- Compare the definitions of “anti-Judaism” and “antisemitism”. What are the differences? Which are the common elements?
- Think of other forms of racism: How do anti-Judaism and antisemitism compare to those?

### MATERIAL AND TIME

Definitions of anti-Judaism and antisemitism (in the text)

**25-30 min** a: 10-15 min b: 10-15 min

### DIFFICULTY/GRADE

a: IX and XII b: XII

## 3

### LEARNING OUTCOMES AND KEY MESSAGE

Understanding which forms can be taken by the process of “meeting” of different cultures/religions, while analyzing different individual and social positions, their consequences, as well as the complexity of these dynamics.

#### Key message:

Jews experienced different treatment in different places during the Middle Ages. The policies adopted towards them had a strong impact on migration flows and the degree of integration of Jewish communities in other societies.

The “meeting” and “mixing” of different cultures implies complex dynamics and long-term processes determined by many factors. Within this framework, is it essential to ensure respect of rights and wellbeing of all groups and communities (cultural diversity).

For definitions, please refer to Glossary

### METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONS

Students work divided in groups (3 to 5 members). At the end of part c. (or at the end of each part), each group presents its answers in plenary (if enough time).

Based on the acquired knowledge about Jews in Europe, discuss the following questions:

- How was the situation of Jews different in different places in the Middle Ages and during Modernity?
- What can happen when different cultures or religions meet? What are the differences between “toleration”, “assimilation”, “emancipation”, and “integration”?
- Which other examples can you provide while thinking about these phenomena? For example, do you know someone who emigrated to other countries? What happened to him/her? (ex. Kosovars in Switzerland/Germany)

Share experiences of family members or friends.

### MATERIAL AND TIME

No material needed

**40 min** a: 10 min b: 15 min c: 15 min

### DIFFICULTY/GRADE

a: IX and XII b: XII c: XII



## 4

**LEARNING OUTCOMES AND KEY MESSAGE**

Critically analysing the contrasting policies adopted towards Jews in the Middle Ages and their consequences.

**Key message:**

The position towards Jews in the Middle Ages varied from place to place (ex. Kingdom of Spain VS Ottoman Empire).

As in the case of Jews in the Middle Ages, political systems and decisions have a strong impact on the life and conditions of individuals (both citizens and foreigners).

*For definitions, please refer to Glossary*

**METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONS**

Students work divided in groups (3 to 5 members). At the end of part b., each group presents its answers in plenary.

Based on the texts, analyze and compare the two policies (Edict of the Expulsion of the Jews and policy of Sultan Bayezid II).

Discuss the following questions:

- What do you understand from the texts? How were the two positions different? Why?
- Which were, in your opinion, the consequences of the two policies on Jews? What did Jewish families do when these policies were adopted? Discuss both possibilities.

**MATERIAL AND TIME**

ANNEX 2: Texts of Expulsion Edict and Sultan's policy

**20-25 min** a: 10-15 min b: 10 min

**DIFFICULTY/GRADE**

a: IX (and XII) b: IX (and XII)

## 5

**LEARNING OUTCOMES AND KEY MESSAGE**

Understanding the concept of "scapegoat" and its consequences.

**Key message:**

Scapegoating is an incorrect, unjust and simplistic way to explain a certain problem or reality. It is important to analyze the situation, recognizing its causes and acknowledging the responsibilities of all actors involved (including ourselves).

*For definitions, please refer to Glossary*

**METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONS**

The text mentions that the Jews were used as "scapegoats" on various occasions in the past.

Based on what you learned, discuss the following questions:

- What does this term/concept mean? Where does it originate from?
- Can you think of other examples of "scapegoating"? Can you connect this concept with other traditional stories you heard?
- What are consequences of "scapegoating"?

**MATERIAL AND TIME**

No material needed, internet connection for research about the term/concept

**30 min** a: 10 min b: 10-15 min c: 5-10 min

**DIFFICULTY/GRADE**

a: IX and XII b: IX and XII c: IX and XII

# ANNEX 1:

## Caricatures of Jews



Source: <https://opensiddur.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/jewstereotype.jpg>



Source: [www.myjewishlearning.com/article/what-were-pogroms](http://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/what-were-pogroms)

## ANNEX 2:

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### Extract from Edict of the Expulsion of the Jews (1492)

“...Therefore, we, with the counsel and advice of prelates, great noblemen of our kingdoms, and other persons of learning and wisdom of our Council, having taken deliberation about this matter, resolve to order the said Jews and Jewesses of our kingdoms to depart and never to return or come back to them or to any of them. And concerning this we command this our charter to be given, by which we order all Jews and Jewesses of whatever age they may be, who live, reside, and exist in our said kingdoms and lordships, as much those who are natives as those who are not, who by whatever manner or whatever cause have come to live and reside therein, that by the end of the month of July next of the present year, they depart from all of these our said realms and lordships, along with their sons and daughters, menservants and maidservants, Jewish familiars, those who are great as well as the lesser folk, of whatever age they may be, and they shall not dare to return to those places, nor to reside in them, nor to live in any part of them, neither temporarily on the way to somewhere else nor in any other manner, under pain that if they do not perform and comply with this command and should be found in our said kingdom and lordships and should in any manner live in them, they incur the penalty of death and the confiscation of all their possessions by our Chamber of Finance, incurring these penalties by the act itself, without further trial, sentence, or declaration. And we command and forbid that any person or persons of the said kingdoms, of whatever estate, condition, or dignity that they may be, shall dare to receive, protect, defend, nor hold publicly or secretly any Jew or Jewess beyond the date of the end of July and from henceforth forever, in their lands, houses, or in other parts of any of our said kingdoms and lordships, under pain of losing all their possessions, vassals, fortified places, and other inheritances, and beyond this of losing whatever financial grants they hold from us by our Chamber of Finance.”

Source: <http://www.sephardicstudies.org/decree.html> (Translated from Castilian by Edward Peters)

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### Policy of Sultan Bayezid II

During the years 1490 to 1497 Sultan Bayezid II accepted the exiled Jews from Italy, Spain and Portugal. In 1492 Kemal Reis and his fleet were sent to Cadiz to take the Jews in charge. During the reign of Bayezid II, the king and queen of Spain, Ferdinand and Isabella, signed an edict of expulsion for the Jews. The edict was issued under the pressure of the church on the 31st of March 1492 and the Jews had to leave the country until the 2nd of August 1492. The last lot of Jews gathered in the port of Cadiz faced a dilemma: Those who left port were attacked by the pirates, those who went on land were burned at the stake by the inquisition. About a thousand people waited in anguish. At the last minute arrived a small fleet manned by the Turkish admiral Kemal Reis who took the refugees under his protection. Thus organizing a convoy of Jewish immigrants towards the Ottoman empire. Of the approximately 600,000 Spanish Jews, half were baptized, 100,000 went to Portugal, some went to the Netherlands, Italy, North Africa and the New World. But, the biggest lot reached the Ottoman Empire, numbering about 150,000 people. When the Jews who went to Portugal were exiled too in 1497, a big majority of them found refuge in the Ottoman Empire. Whereas the migration of forcibly converted Jews to Ottoman lands lasted several decades. In 1501 he accepted the Jews who fled from France. At a later period, the Jews of Spanish and Portuguese origin who went to Brazil were tracked by the inquisition who persecuted and compelled them to emigrate to New Amsterdam, today's New York.

Source: <http://www.sephardicstudies.org/sultans1.html>



# Chapter 2

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## The Holocaust

The term “Holocaust” comes from two Greek words that roughly translate as to “sacrifice to God by fire”. The word was later applied to describe the extermination against the Jews committed between 1941 and 1945. However, various institutions define this term differently to include also other victim groups or the persecution that took place before 1941. Jews themselves generally prefer using the term “Shoah”, which is a biblical Hebrew word for “disaster”. It is estimated that about 6 million Jews, about two thirds of all European Jews, were annihilated - a crime that caused immense collective trauma for many Jews and changed world history. How could anti-Semitism have reached this scale of persecution and extermination? Could the Holocaust have been prevented or stopped?

## Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour of September 15, 1935

Moved by the understanding that purity of German blood is the essential condition for the continued existence of the German people, and inspired by the inflexible determination to ensure the existence of the German nation for all time, the Reichstag has unanimously adopted the following law, which is promulgated herewith:

### Article 1

1. Marriages between Jews and subjects of the state of German or related blood are forbidden. Marriages nevertheless concluded are invalid, even if concluded abroad to circumvent this law.
2. Annulment proceedings can be initiated only by the state prosecutor.

### Article 2

Extramarital relations between Jews and subjects of the state of German or related blood are forbidden. [...]

### Article 5

1. Any person who violates the prohibition under Article 1 will be punished with prison with hard labour.
2. A male who violates the prohibition under Article 2 will be punished with prison or prison with hard labour. [...]

Source: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/nuremberg-laws>

## The Rise of the Nazis in Germany

Germany's defeat in the First World War, the ensuing Treaty of Versailles requiring Germany to pay massive reparations as compensation for the war and the economic crisis that affected almost the entire world left Germany in a state of despair and unrest. Extremist parties achieved good election results, government coalitions did not last long, and coups d'état were attempted. One of the radical parties was the Nazi Party. In an effort to form a stable government, the Nazi leader Adolf Hitler was appointed as the Chancellor (Prime Minister) of Germany in January 1933 after his election victory.

The Nazi Party quickly proceeded to take total control of all state institutions, consolidate its power and propagate its ideology. The core of that ideology was described in Hitler's book "Mein Kampf" ("My Struggle"). In it, Hitler claimed that the Germans belonged to the "Aryan" races, superior to all others and, therefore, deserved to rule the world. Consequently, the Nazis expanded the German Reich, by annexing Austria in 1938, which was greatly supported by many Austrians, and parts of Czechoslovakia where ethnic Germans made up a large minority. This was initially opposed by the Czechoslovak government but agreed to by France and Great Britain in the "Munich Agreement".

In the Nazi racist ideology, people that were defined as Slavs were designated as being inferior to the Aryans and those considered to be Jews were least valued. The Nazis put the blame for Germany's dire situation on a Jewish conspiracy, making them enemies that needed to be persecuted.

## The Nuremberg Laws

In what could be considered to be the first stage of this persecution, the legal ground was prepared to treat Jews differently from all other German citizens. On 15 September 1935, the "Nuremberg Laws" were passed serving the purpose of segregating the German society into Jews and non-Jews. They defined a Jew as any person with at least one Jewish grandparent. This was contrary to the fact that many of these people identified themselves as German and to Jewish religious tradition by which a Jew is always born from a Jewish mother. Furthermore, these laws stripped Jews of their German citizenship. Subsequent decrees further restricted the freedom of Jews, discriminated against them and limited their access to public services and life. Similar laws of varying degrees of discrimination were adopted in the following years by other countries that sided with Germany. After the war broke out, these laws were enacted in the territories occupied by or incorporated into Germany and its allies.

## The “Kristallnacht”

After the Jews had been segregated from the rest of society, the Nazis started to legitimize and trivialize physical violence against them. On 7 November 1938, a German diplomat was assassinated in Paris by a Jew. This event was used by the Nazis as a pretext for organizing a pogrom against the Jews throughout the Reich on 9 and 10 November 1938, which the Nazi propaganda called “Kristallnacht” (“The Crystal Night”). It was named after the pieces of broken glass that covered the streets resulting from the breaking of the windows of synagogues, Jewish businesses and homes. They were plundered, destroyed and burnt. Within two days, without any significant opposition from the German population, about 99 Jews had been killed, 267 synagogues destroyed, some 7500 Jewish houses, businesses and commercial premises demolished, and cemeteries desecrated by Nazi Party affiliates. Some 30,000 Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps.

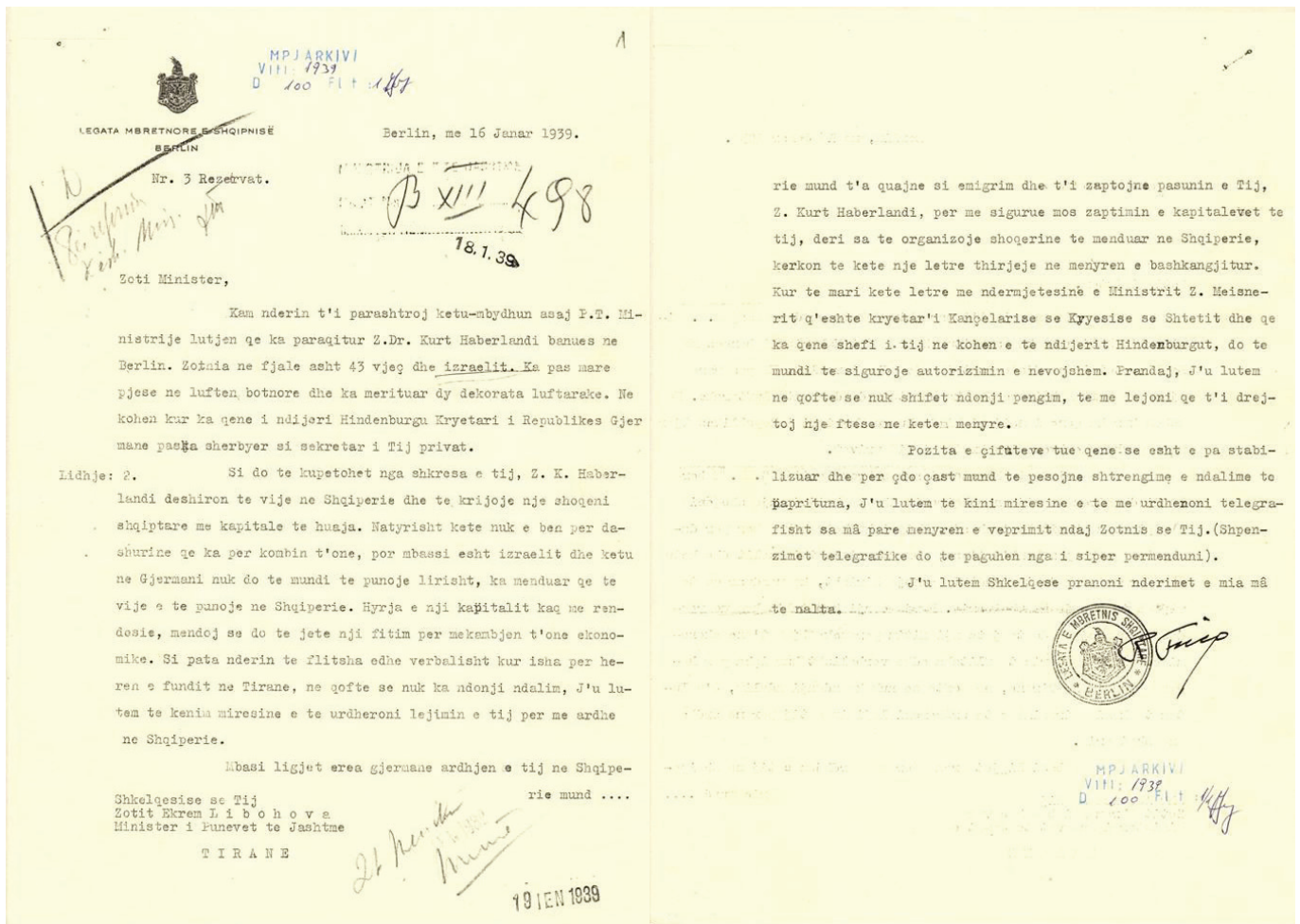
The “Kristallnacht” demonstrated to many Jews in the German Reich that they were no longer safe, and, as a result, over 100,000 Jews emigrated to save themselves. Some escaped to Yugoslavia, and some of them found rescue in Albania. In the case of Albania, documents such as the letter that the Royal Legation of Albania in Berlin sent shortly after the “Kristallnacht” on behalf of a Jewish businessman, suggest that King Zog I welcomed Jewish refugees to come to his country for shelter and protection. Unfortunately, there are not a lot of documents available that clarify his motivation for doing so. In the case of this letter, it seems possible that there was also an economical interest in seeking qualified refugees and their successful businesses to immigrate to Albania.



Germans passing by the broken shop window of a Jewish-owned business that was destroyed during Kristallnacht

Source:

<https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa16792>



Letter from the Royal Legation of Albania in Berlin sent to Mr. Ekrem Libohova, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Albania, January 16, 1939

## The Outbreak of World War II and the Intensification of Anti-Semitic Policies

The Second World War broke out on 1 September 1939 when Poland was invaded and defeated by the Germans. The war was driven by the same racist ideology based on the belief that the “superior German race” deserved the right to rule over all other races and needed more “Lebensraum” (“living space”). Consequently, German forces occupied large parts of Europe and beyond. The German army was supported by the “Axis forces”, namely Italy and Japan, combatting the “Allied forces” of Great Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States. The governments of European states either joined one of these blocs or remained neutral. When those countries were occupied by the Axis, they were governed either by leaders in favour of the Axis powers or by Germany or Italy directly. The anti-Semitic policies that had been implemented in Germany spread to all those territories where the Axis was in power, where they were implemented to varying degrees.



## The Ghettos

Only a month after the war had started, the first ghetto was established in October 1939. During World War Two, the term “ghetto” started to be used for all neighbourhoods where Jews were forced to live separately from the rest of the population, in isolation like prisoners. In that sense, this was an extension of Nazi policy of excluding Jews from the rest of the population as initiated under the Nuremberg Laws. Jews from many territories under German rule were deported to the ghettos. The largest ghetto in Europe was created in Warsaw (Poland) in November 1940. There were no ghettos in Albania and Kosovo.

The living conditions in the ghettos were unbearable. Thousands of Jews died in them from hunger, disease, forced labour and killings. As concentration and extermination camps were opened, the function of the ghettos became that of an interim waiting space before deportation to the camps.

## Massacres and the “Final Solution”

Following the German invasion of Poland, military units called “Einsatzgruppen” (“deployment groups”) were tasked to find and kill Jews in the newly occupied territories. After invading the Soviet Union, these units committed massacres on a larger scale, such as the one at Babi Yar in Ukraine where about 33,000 Jews were murdered. Instead of being concerned that hundreds of thousands of innocent men, women and children had been murdered, the Nazi leadership was worried that this development would put too much strain on its army and would compromise Germany’s success in the war which had become more entrenched by the end of 1941. Consequently, they considered alternative solutions regarding the elimination of the Jewish population of Europe. The one they found was a policy called the “Final Solution” that was adopted in January 1942. It aimed at the systematic annihilation of all Jews in Europe. This was to be accomplished by deporting the Jews to concentration and death camps, where they would be murdered in an industrial way that would put less stress on their murderers.



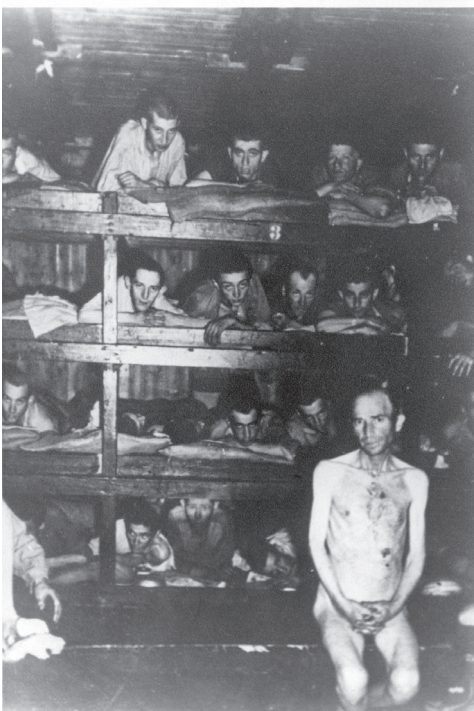
Theresienstadt, Czechoslovakia, 1944,  
Food distribution in the ghetto

Source:  
[https://photos.yadvashem.org/photo-details.html?language=en&item\\_id=101771&ind=0](https://photos.yadvashem.org/photo-details.html?language=en&item_id=101771&ind=0)



Warsaw, Poland, A starving child in a  
ghetto street, 1941

Source:  
[https://photos.yadvashem.org/photo-details.html?language=en&item\\_id=23294&ind=0](https://photos.yadvashem.org/photo-details.html?language=en&item_id=23294&ind=0)



Buchenwald, Germany, Prisoners in a barracks after the liberation, April 1945

Source:  
[https://photos.yadvashem.org/photo-details.html?language=en&item\\_id=100049&ind=0](https://photos.yadvashem.org/photo-details.html?language=en&item_id=100049&ind=0)

## Concentration and Extermination Camps

In March 1933, the first concentration camp had been opened in Dachau, Germany. It initially served mainly to apprehend political opponents of the Nazi Party, “re-educate” them or put them to force labour in horrible conditions, under which many of the camp inmates died. Later, more concentration camps were created, especially in Poland and Jews, Roma, homosexuals and others were also sent to them. In 1942, as a result of the “Final Solution” policy, some concentration camps had gas chambers and crematoria installed. At the same time, additional “extermination camps” were opened in Belzec, Sobibor and Treblinka which were exclusively established for mass murders. In these three camps alone, some 1.6 million Jews were murdered. The Auschwitz-Birkenau camp became one of the largest and most infamous extermination camps.

Most of the deportees, once they arrived at Auschwitz-Birkenau, were sent to the gas chambers right away, whereas a few of them were chosen for hard labour. In the spring of 1943, the camp had 4 functional gas chambers using poisonous gas Zyklon B. Over 1.1 million Jews and tens of thousands of Roma, Poles, Soviet prisoners of war and others were killed in Auschwitz-Birkenau.

Concentration camps also existed in the Balkans. Most importantly, in August 1941, Jasenovac was opened in Croatia, which is also known as “the Auschwitz of the Balkans”. The German Nazis gave control of the camp to the quisling Croatian Government, led by the “Ustaše” (Croatian fascist organization). In the camp, Serbs, Jews, Roma, Croats and others were murdered. In October 1941, the Sajmište concentration camp was opened near Belgrade where thousands of Jews were killed. Moreover, another concentration camp was the one in Banjica run jointly by the German Nazis and the Serbian puppet government of Milan Nedić.

### Story of a Jewish Family from Warsaw – In 1943, Franciszka Rubinlicht wrote to her sisters who were living in hiding outside the Ghetto:

“Our stay in the camp [in the Ghetto] is a nightmare. [...] I sat in the factory at night, worked 16 hours for 160 grams of mouldy bread and a bowl of dishwater instead of soup. That was the food for the whole day as well as our wage. That was too much to let us die, but the hunger oedema deformed the humans and made them animal-like. [...] We couldn’t leave work, as there would have been severe consequences, therefore there were no sick people in the camp. I went to work with a temperature of 39°, others dragged themselves semi-consciously ridden with Typhoid and pretended to be healthy because the sick were immediately shot dead in order to contain the disease.”

Source: Archiwum Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego [Archiv des Jüdischen Historischen Instituts], Sign. 301/485, S. 7–8, bearb. d. Verf.

**Testimony deportation to camp:**

Primo Levi was born in Torino, Italy in 1919. In December 1943, the Italian Fascist Militia captured him and he was sent to Auschwitz. On January 27, 1945, with the liberation of the camp, he returned to Italy. Author of many books on the Holocaust, in 1987 he died most probably by committing suicide.

“The doors had been closed at once, but the train did not move until evening. We had learned our destination with relief. Auschwitz: a name without significance for us at that time, but at least implied some place on earth... Through the slit, known and unknown names of Austrian cities [...], then Czech, finally Polish names. On the evening of the fourth day the cold became intense: the train ran through interminable black pine forests [...] The snow was high... During the halts, no one tried anymore to communicate with the outside world: we felt ourselves by now ‘on the other side.’”

Source: Primo Levi, *If This Is A Man*, (New York: Orion Press, 1958, pp. 8-10), from *The Auschwitz Album - A curriculum for High Schools*, Yad Vashem, The International School for Holocaust Studies, Israel 2009, p.24

## The Liberation of Auschwitz and the End of World War II

The Holocaust ended because the Allied forces won the war. As the Allied forces were advancing towards Germany from the east and west, they liberated camps and ghettos. Many camp guards tried to murder the remaining inmates, march them to other camps closer to Germany, destroy evidence of their crimes or flee and hide themselves from future prosecution. On 27 January 1945, the Soviet army entered Auschwitz. For this reason, 27 January continues to be commemorated worldwide as International Holocaust Remembrance Day. Germany surrendered on 8/9 May 1945.

By the end of WWII, nearly 6 million Jews had been murdered, as well as millions of others, including Slavs, Roma, homosexuals, “asocial persons”, Jehovah’s Witnesses, political dissidents, people with disabilities, and other groups considered “inferior”. Yad Vashem (the World Holocaust Remembrance Center), together with its partners, has collected and recorded the names and biographical details of millions of victims.

# Chapter 2: EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS

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## 1

### LEARNING OUTCOMES AND KEY MESSAGE

Analyzing the Nuremberg Laws and the Holocaust from a Human Rights perspective.

**Key message:**

Nazi policies against Jews and other groups are a violation of fundamental Human Rights and moral values. The Nuremberg Laws legalised discrimination against Jews.

*For definitions, please refer to Glossary*

### METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONS

Students work divided in groups (3 to 5 members). Each group is provided with a copy of Nuremberg Laws (Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour, 1935). At the end of part b., each group presents its answers in plenary.

For this task, we will analyze the Holocaust as gross violation of fundamental Human Rights. Based on what you learned and what you can research online, discuss the following questions:

- a. Look at the Nuremberg Laws: Why are these Laws discriminatory? What did this mean for a Jew living in that period?
- b. Which fundamental rights are denied by the Laws?

### MATERIAL AND TIME

ANNEX 1: Nuremberg Laws (one copy for each group)

**40 min** a: 20 min b: 20 min

### DIFFICULTY/GRADE

a: IX and XII b: IX and XII

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## 2

**LEARNING OUTCOMES AND KEY MESSAGE**

Analysing the impact and meaning of the “Kristallnacht” and exploring possible reactions by individual citizens and relevant stakeholders and institutional actors.

**Key message:**

The “Kristallnacht” marked a key point in the escalation of violence against Jews promoted by Nazism: during that night, Jews became aware of the extent of the danger and the deterioration of the situation.

**METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONS**

Students work divided in groups (3 to 5 members). Each group is provided with pictures of the “Kristallnacht” (1938) and the letter written by Arnold (Aharon) Rosenfeld. At the end of part b., each group presents its answers in plenary.

- a. Look at the picture and put yourself into the shoes of the passersby: What would you have thought or done in that situation?
- b. Read the letter: What could have been possible reactions of the American ambassador or president?  
Which would have been the consequences?

**MATERIAL AND TIME**

ANNEX 2: Pictures of Kristallnacht and letter by Rosenfeld (one copy for each group)

**20-25 min** a: 10 min b: 10-15 min

**DIFFICULTY/GRADE**

a: IX and XII b: IX and XII

## 3

**LEARNING OUTCOMES AND KEY MESSAGE**

Understanding the meaning and relevance of ghettos and camps in the escalation towards the Holocaust and Final Solution; reflecting on how past events shape today’s societies.

**Key message:**

Ghettos were used by Nazi to segregate Jews and other groups separating from the rest of the society and denying their rights. Camps, shortly after, served the Nazi plan to systematically exterminate them through forced labour and physical elimination. Places where past atrocities were committed are part of cities we live in today: in some cases, their past is remembered, in others it is forgotten or unknown to new generations.

*For definitions, please refer to Glossary*

**METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONS**

Students work divided in groups (3 to 5 members). Each group is provided with pictures of ghettos and camps during Nazi regime and today. At the end of part b., each group presents its answers in plenary.

Based on the pictures, and other examples of memory sites you know, discuss the following questions:

- a. Look at the pictures of ghettos and camps “during” Nazi regime: What can you see? What did these places represent for Jews? Why were they used by Nazis?
- b. Focus on ghettos: can you think of other examples of ghettos and segregation existing today?
- c. Look at the “after” pictures: what do these places represent today? How do people deal with these places today?

**MATERIAL AND TIME**

ANNEX 3: Pictures of ghetto and concentration camp during Nazi regime and of the same places today (one copy for each group)

**35 min** a: 15 min b: 10 min c: 10 min

**DIFFICULTY/GRADE**

a: IX and XII b: XII c: XII

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# 4

## LEARNING OUTCOMES AND KEY MESSAGE

Understanding migration, its causes, and the impact of the destination country's policies; connecting the experience of Jews in the late '30s with recent migration waves.

### Key message:

The Kingdom of Albania has been considered a safe place for Jews, thanks to welcoming policies: for this reason, many Jews migrated from European countries to Albania in the late '30s and '40s.

*For definitions, please refer to Glossary*

## METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONS

Students work divided in small groups (2 or 3 members). Groups are provided with the letter written by the Royal Legation of Albania in Berlin on behalf of Mr. Kurt Haberland requesting refuge in Albania (1939).

Students write an answer to the letter, each group takes a different position (*see instructions below for role-play*). Once they finish writing their answers, groups exchange the letters and discuss the different positions.

- a. Groups write an answer to the letter, taking previously assigned positions:
  - Group 1: write a positive answer, allowing the Jewish German businessman to move to Albania. Highlight the reasons for your decision.
  - Group 2: write a negative answer, refusing the request for asylum. Highlight the reasons for your decision.
- b. Do you know something about currently ongoing migration flows? Which regulations are in place? (ex. Balkan Route, or emigration from Kosovo/Western Balkans towards EU countries)

## MATERIAL AND TIME

ANNEX 4: Letter by Haberland (one copy for each group)

**30 min** a: 20 min b: 10 min

## DIFFICULTY/GRADE

a: IX and XII b: XII

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# 5

## LEARNING OUTCOMES AND KEY MESSAGE

Critically analysing the steps and dynamics leading to the Holocaust, including the role of different actors; through this, understanding the meaning and value of civic responsibility.

### Key message:

Many different actors played a role in allowing (promoting, or just not contrasting) the rise of Nazism and the Holocaust. Independently from our status (employment, economic status, social background), we all have a civic responsibility as citizens. Our choices and decisions have an impact on the society we live in. Active and aware citizens play a crucial role in protecting democratic values.

*For definitions, please refer to Glossary*

## METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONS

Students outline and analyse the steps of the development of the Holocaust. Parts a. and c. are discussed in plenary. For part b., students work divided in groups (3 to 5 members - see instructions below).

In this lesson, we looked at how Nazism and the Holocaust developed. Based on what you learned, discuss the following questions:

- a. Discuss in plenary: Which elements led towards Nazi power and the Holocaust? Outline the main turning points, fixing them on a timeline (from 1933 to 1945). Who were the main actors involved? Make a list.
- b. Students are divided in 4 groups (or more), focusing on different actors in each group:
  - Group 1: what was the position and role of German politicians?
  - Group 2: what was the position and role of foreign governments?
  - Group 3: what was the position and role of German citizens?
  - Group 4: what was the position and role of Jews in Germany and in Europe?
- c. Discuss in plenary: Based on the discussion so far (points a. and b.), at which stage could the Holocaust have been prevented? How? By whom?

## MATERIAL AND TIME

No material needed

**45 min** a: 15 min b: 15 min c: 15 min

## DIFFICULTY/GRADE

a: IX and XII b: XII c: XII

# 6

## LEARNING OUTCOMES AND KEY MESSAGE

Understanding the meaning of Holocaust as gross Human Rights violation and genocide, and compare it to other events (in history and current times);

Discovering UN and UDHR as world-wide reaction to the Holocaust and willingness to ensure no-repetition.

### Key message:

Despite different definitions have been given to the term, the Holocaust has been universally condemned as gross and systematic violation of Human Rights and recognized as genocide. Human Rights, as defined and protected by UDHR, are universal, and cannot be overstepped by any political system.

*For definitions, please refer to Glossary*

UDHR:

English: <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>

Albanian: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/udhr/pages/Language.aspx?LangID=aln>

Serbian: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/UDHR/Pages/Language.aspx?LangID=src3>

## METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONS

Students work divided in groups (3 to 5 members). Each group is provided with two definitions of the Holocaust. At the end of part c. (or at the end of each part), each group presents its answers in plenary (if enough time).

Based on the provided definitions and what you learned, discuss the following questions:

- Look at the definitions of "Holocaust": Which are the main elements defining the Holocaust? Can you identify any difference in the two approaches?
- Research about the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR): when was it adopted? By whom? Why was it especially important at that moment? Which relevance does it have today?
- The Holocaust has been defined as "genocide": Which other genocides do you know? Who defines, which atrocities qualify to be described as "genocide"? What about the Holocaust is unique and what is common to those events?

## MATERIAL AND TIME

ANNEX 5: Definitions of Holocaust (one copy for each group); internet connection for online research (or copy of UDHR, articles selected by the teacher)

**35-40 min** a: 10 min b: 15 min c: 10-15 min

## DIFFICULTY/GRADE

a: IX and XII b: XII and XII c: XII



# ANNEX 1:

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## **Nuremberg Laws, Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honour, 1935**

Moved by the understanding that purity of German blood is the essential condition for the continued existence of the German people, and inspired by the inflexible determination to ensure the existence of the German nation for all time, the Reichstag has unanimously adopted the following law, which is promulgated herewith:

### **Article 1**

1. Marriages between Jews and citizens of German or related blood are forbidden. Marriages nevertheless concluded are invalid, even if concluded abroad to circumvent this law.
2. Annulment proceedings can be initiated only by the state prosecutor.

### **Article 2**

Extramarital relations between Jews and citizens of German or related blood are forbidden.

### **Article 3**

Jews may not employ in their households female citizens of German or related blood who are under 45 years old.

### **Article 4**

Jews are forbidden to fly the Reich or national flag or display Reich colours.

They are, on the other hand, permitted to display the Jewish colours. The exercise of this right is protected by the state.

### **Article 5**

Any person who violates the prohibition under Article 1 will be punished with prison with hard labour.

A male who violates the prohibition under Article 2 will be punished with prison or prison with hard labour.

Any person violating the provisions under Articles 3 or 4 will be punished with prison with hard labour for up to one year and a fine, or with one or the other of these penalties.

## ANNEX 2:

### Kristallnacht (9-10 November 1938)



Germans passing by the broken shop window of a Jewish-owned business that was destroyed during Kristallnacht

Source: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa16792>



A man surveys the damage to the Lichtenstein leather goods store after the Kristallnacht pogrom

Source: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa6191>

### Letter written by Arnold (Aharon) Rosenfeld from Vienna to his son, a few days after the Kristallnacht:

The Synagogue was attacked, all the windows were shattered, the pews were smashed, the curtain of the Ark torn into pieces and a Torah scroll thrown outside. The entire contents of the synagogue were destroyed, Torah scrolls were thrown to the ground and torn and three scrolls were removed together with the Ark. The black memorial plaques on the walls were smashed. [...] Throughout the night until one o'clock the screams of people being attacked could be heard. Last night we visited Eugen Hess and the alleyway looked the way it does after a snowfall. Everything was covered with feathers that had been thrown from the apartments. [...] Is there a chance that Wilson [US ambassador to Germany] will get involved when he hears what has happened? How can we hope for help if this is not made public?

(Source: <https://www.yadvashem.org/gathering-fragments/stories/clouds-of-war/kristallnacht-letter.html>)

## ANNEX 3:

### Pictures from the Past and from the Present

Concentration and extermination camp Sajmište, Belgrade, Serbia (Yugoslavia)



A group of prisoners in the concentration camp

Source: [https://photos.yadvashem.org/photo-details.html?language=en&item\\_id=98979&ind=37](https://photos.yadvashem.org/photo-details.html?language=en&item_id=98979&ind=37)



Main entrance of the camp and control tower

Source: <https://www.holokaust.arhiv-beograda.org/concentration-camp-at-sajmiste/?lang=en>



The location of the Sajmište Camp today / Sajmište Concentration Camp Memorial

Source: <https://www.kathmanduandbeyond.com/visiting-site-sajmiste-concentration-camp-new-belgrade/>



### Jewish ghetto, Warsaw, Poland



A destitute woman and her children on a street in the Warsaw ghetto, September 1941

Source: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa2380>



The wall separating the ghetto from the Aryan zone, May 1941

Source: [https://photos.yadvashem.org/photo-details.html?language=en&item\\_id=100882&ind=14](https://photos.yadvashem.org/photo-details.html?language=en&item_id=100882&ind=14)



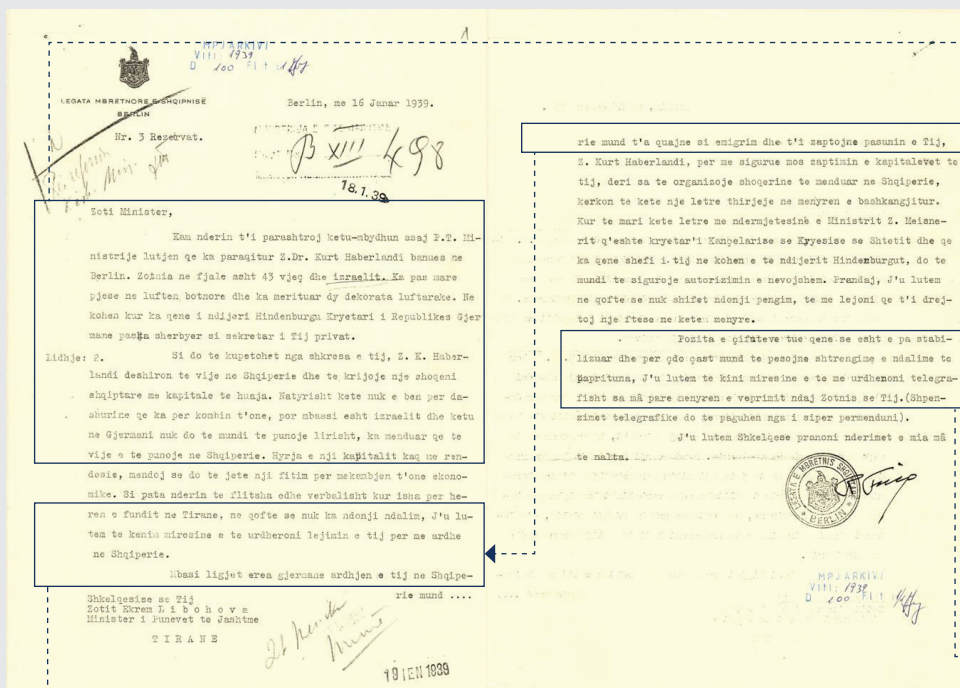
A fragment of the former Warsaw Ghetto wall in Sienna street, February 2018

Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/parts-of-warsaw-ghetto-wall-to-become-historic-monuments/>

# ANNEX 4:

## Letter from the Royal Legation of Albania in Berlin sent to Mr. Ekrem Libohova, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Albania, January 16, 1939

[Letra e Legatës Mbretërore të Shqipërisë në Berlin dërguar z. Ekrem Libohovës, Ministrit të Punëve të Jashtme të Mbretërisë së Shqipërisë, më 16 janar 1939]



Mr. Minister,  
 I am honoured to submit to the Ministry the request presented by Mr. Dr. Kurt Haberland, a resident in Berlin. The mentioned gentleman is 43 years old and an Israeli [...]. At the time of the late Hinderburg, the President of the German Republic, he served as Hinderburg's private secretary.

As it can be seen from his letter, Mr. K. Haberland would like to come to Albania and establish an Albanian company with foreign capital. Of course, he is not doing it for the love of our nation, but being an Israeli, he cannot work freely here in Germany, he thought of coming and working in Albania....

... Please have the kindness to order to permit him to come to Albania, as the new German laws may qualify his arrival in Albania as emigration and confiscate his wealth.

The position of Jews, being unstable, at any moment, they could suffer unexpected restrictions and detention, please have the kindness to order me through the telegraph as soon as possible on how to proceed with the gentleman...

## ANNEX 5:

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### Definitions of “Holocaust”

#### DEFINITION 1: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum

The Holocaust was the systematic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its allies and collaborators. The Nazis came to power in Germany in January 1933. They believed that the Germans belonged to a race that was “superior” to all others. They claimed that the Jews belonged to a race that was “inferior” and a threat to the so-called German racial community.

(Source: <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/introduction-to-the-holocaust>)

#### DEFINITION 2: Yad Vashem

The Holocaust was unprecedented genocide, total and systematic, perpetrated by Nazi Germany and its collaborators, with the aim of annihilating the Jewish people. The primary motivation was the Nazis’ anti-Semitic racist ideology. Between 1933 and 1941 Nazi Germany pursued a policy that dispossessed the Jews of their rights and their property, followed by the branding and the concentration of the Jewish population. This policy gained broad support in Germany and much of occupied Europe. In 1941, following the invasion of the Soviet Union, the Nazis and their collaborators launched the systematic mass murder of the Jews. By 1945 nearly six million Jews had been murdered.

(Source: <https://www.yadvashem.org/holocaust/about.html#learnmore>)

# Chapter 3

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## Kosovo and the Holocaust

The Holocaust reached the Balkans after they were occupied first by Italian and later by German forces. Puppet states were created, and collaborative governments installed. In most territories that were directly or indirectly controlled by the Axis, Jews were discriminated against and concentration camps were opened. Apart from Jews, people deemed by the Nazis to be Slavs, Roma, and other groups considered racially inferior were also persecuted and murdered. Under Italian occupation, the racist laws that were proclaimed were not fully implemented. This resulted in Jews from the Balkans and Europe fleeing to Albania via Kosovo. Why was Albania a safe haven for Jews? What was the situation in Kosovo?

## Albanian policy towards Jews

The press informed of granting the Albanian citizenship and passports to Jews who sought professional or political asylum in Albania. This fact is attested by the European press of that time. On 10 June 1935 the daily newspaper "Moment" published by the Jewish community in Poland (...) stated that the Government of Albania brought such decision at a special meeting, and called out to all Jews in Czechoslovakia and Germany to regard this country as their salvation. (...) Such news was shared with the foreign press also by the Albanian consul in London. In his comments to the "Jewish Telegraphic Agency" and "Jewish Chronicle" he is represented as the spokesperson of the Government. The public statement of the Albanian consul was published in other publications of the Jewish community, granting the security that Albania was a reliable country offering success to the assets of the Jews.

## The Occupation of the Western Balkans

In April 1939, Italy invaded Albania and King Zog went into exile. From a military perspective, Albania was a strategically important country for Italy, because from there it could control the entire Adriatic Sea. Albania served Italy as a bridge to cross into the Balkans. From an economic perspective, Albania possessed vital natural resources, in particular oil and chromium, which were important for the war industry.

The Italian invasion of Greece was launched from Albania in October 1940, but was quickly pushed back by the Greek army, supported by Great Britain. As the war became entrenched, Hitler decided to come to the aid of the Italian army as he feared that the British support of the Greek forces could become a threat to the German advancement into Eastern Europe. In April 1941, German forces joined by the Italians and the Bulgarians invaded Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia and Greece surrendered to the Axis forces. The Axis Powers divided these conquered territories among themselves: most of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina became the "Independent State of Croatia", a puppet state of the Axis powers; most of Serbia was occupied by the Germans; most of Macedonia was annexed by Bulgaria and most of Montenegro came under Italian occupation.

## The Split-up of Kosovo between Germany, Italy and Bulgaria

After the defeat of Yugoslavia large parts of Kosovo and some of Macedonia were incorporated into Albania, under Italian control. This was done, because the Germans and Italians had witnessed the interethnic violence in Kosovo and hoped to use it to their advantage. By favouring the Albanian Kosovars, the Germans in particular hoped to receive their support in oppressing Serbian Kosovars. By inciting further interethnic violence in this manner, the Germans believed this would keep the local population "busy" with each other instead of rising up against their occupiers. As the Germans had an economic interest in the area surrounding Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, due to its mineral resources needed by the armament industry, this part of Kosovo was added to Serbia that was under the direct control of the Third Reich. Subsequently, up to 40-50% of the entire lead used by the German war industry was provided by Trepça/Trepča. Furthermore, the area around Kaçanik/Kaçanik was added to Bulgaria. To sum up, the division of Kosovo shows that the Axis powers acted for their own strategic and economic interests and not on behalf of Albanians.



## Jews in Kosovo and Albania under Italian Occupation

During the Italian occupation of Albania and Kosovo between 1939 and 1943, the Italians were not directly hostile to the Jews, but did attempt to pressure the Albanian Government to register and even banish the Jews. Albania had a small Jewish community whose numbers had been augmented following the invitation of King Zog in the mid-1930s to open his country's borders to Jews facing Nazi persecution. Hundreds of Jews from different European countries, including Yugoslavia and Greece, escaped to Albania. The Albanian Government argued that those Jews who had entered Albania as tourists were awaiting permission to move to the USA or that they could not return to their countries of origin, which were under German occupation, as they would be persecuted. The Italians did not pursue this policy further but agreed to these Jews being transferred to Berat, an Albanian city with a historic Jewish community. It is believed that the majority of Jews living in Kosovo were forced to move to Albania. This transfer was supported by the Albanian Government and the Pristina mayor who was a Kosovo-Albanian. Most of them settled in Berat: 94 families and 87 single people.

## Jews in Kosovo and Albania under German Occupation

The situation of Jews under Nazi occupation in Kosovo was much worse. Jews were persecuted and arrested and made to do forced labour or sent to concentration camps, including Bergen-Belsen, where many of them died. For example, in August 1941 all Jewish men and in February the remaining women and children in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica were arrested. In March 1942, all the detained Jews were sent to Sajmište, a concentration camp near Belgrade. Out of 113 Jews who lived in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, 25 survived as they could escape to the Italian occupation zone.

In September 1943, Italy surrendered to the Allied forces. German forces then occupied the territories of Kosovo and Albania previously held by the Italians. The German arrival caused fear amongst the Jews in those areas as they feared they would be persecuted as the Jews in Mitrovicë/Mitrovica under German occupation had been. In order to hide from the Germans, some moved to more secure locations such as the Albanian mountains. Those fears became reality as the Germans stepped up efforts to find and deport Jews. At the beginning of 1944, a small concentration/holding camp was opened in Prishtinë/Priština,



Two tanks advancing in Durrës (Albania) followed by Italian troops, 7 April 1939

Source: <https://patrimonio.archivioluca.com/luca-web/detail/IL0010035772/12/due-piccoli-carri-armati-avanzano-strada-durazzo-seguiti-soldati-italiani.html>

### Oath Besa

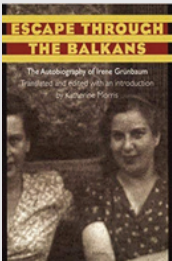
Marco Menachem,  
a rescued Jew said

"There is an Albanian word 'besa' which means the word of honor. There is nothing holier for an Albanian than his besa. When he gives it, he'll go through hell and fire, but he'll keep his word of honor. Besa was the key which saved the Jews."

Source: <https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/resources/rescue-of-jews-in-albania-through-yadvashem-files.html>

which held political prisoners, communists, as well as Jews. Some of those detainees were deported to other camps, including Bergen-Belsen.

Besides Jews, Roma were also massacred by the Germans because of their ethnicity. To this date, it is unclear how many Roma were killed in or deported from Kosovo; in Serbia, a few thousands were murdered. Serbs were also viewed as racially inferior according to Nazi ideology, being classified as Slavs. Therefore, the German occupation of Serbia was particularly harsh (e.g. to avenge partisan attacks on German soldiers, over 2000 civilians in each Kraljevo and Kragujevac were massacred by the German army).



### Irene Grünbaum

Born and raised in Germany, later married a Serbian Jew and moved to Belgrade. In 1941, following the Nazi occupation of Yugoslavia and the implementation of its anti-Semitic policies, she escaped to Macedonia and later Albania where she spent the next four years of her life. In her autobiography, she recalls her life and experiences as a Jewish escapee in Albania.

*The Germans now had a firm hold on Albania (after July 1943). Every day new orders and decrees rained the "higher" and the "highest" positions above. [...] The approximately three hundred Jews who were still in Albania searched for protection and a place to hide. Almost without exception, the populace of Albania, regardless of social status or political persuasion, gave them help. Their sense of justice wouldn't allow them to refuse the right of asylum to innocent men, women, and children. We all had friends in Albania: one found a place to hide at a cobbler's, another at a teacher's, a third at a minister's....*

Source: Irene Grünbaum, 1996, "Escape through the Balkans: The Autobiography of Irene Grünbaum", University of Nebraska Press, p. 99



### Gavra Mandil

Was born in Belgrade. Following the German occupation in 1941, the family, who had taken refuge in Pristina, found themselves imprisoned, along with other Jews, in the municipal prison. Its members are then deported to Albania by the Italians. During the autumn of 1943, after the German invasion of Albania, they found themselves forced to go into hiding. Refik Veseli, a Muslim Albanian, who would later become the first Righteous among the Nations of Albania, protects and hides them. In 1948, Gavra and his family immigrated to Israel and settled in Haifa.

*I was born in Belgrade Yugoslavia in 1936. When the Germans invaded, I was four and a half years old. My father refused to register his family with the Germans as the law required and as many other Jews did, and with the help of Serb friends we escaped with forged papers to southern Yugoslavia, to the area under Italian rule. Shortly afterwards Jews were being arrested and put in the town jail of Pristina, that in part became a concentration camp for Jews. My father, mother, my young sister [...] and I were one of some one hundred Jewish families that were incarcerated in that camp. During the time we stayed there – for almost a year – groups of Jewish families were taken to be killed, allegedly to alleviate the crowded conditions. In June 1942, [...] a group of 120 Jews was exiled to Albania, which was also under Italian occupation. In Albania the Jewish families from Yugoslavia were dispersed in different towns. [...] Thus we lived in relative comfort until Italy's surrender in the middle of the Second World War in autumn 1943. Then the Germans came to Albania the Jews had to escape to the mountains, to the forests and remote Albanian villages. In those difficult times the Albanian people revealed themselves in their full glory and greatness. There was not one Jewish family that failed to find shelter within the Albanian local population, whether with poor villagers or with owners of estates and manor houses. No Jew remained without the protection of an Albanian. In many cases, like our own, the hiding of Jews involved the danger of death and required colossal self-sacrifice! [...] Most of Albania's survivors emigrated to Israel and live here today.*

Source: Gavra Mandil's letter to Yad Vashem, June 1987 (<https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/stories/veseli/mandil-letter.html>)

## SS Division “Skanderbeg”

As the Germans required greater numbers of soldiers to fight Soviet forces advancing on the eastern front, it created new divisions consisting of local recruits in occupied countries to fight under German command to control those territories. This meant better trained German army forces could be moved to the Eastern front.

In February 1944, German Minister of the Interior and Head of the paramilitary organization “Schutzstaffel” (short: “SS”) Heinrich Himmler received direct approval from Hitler to create the SS Division “Skanderbeg” in occupied Kosovo and Albania. When recruiting the locals, the Nazis focused on Kosovo and not Albania for a number of reasons: in Kosovo, interethnic resentments and fighting meant that many Kosovo-Albanians were interested in being armed and trained to fight Kosovo-Serbs whom they viewed as invaders and oppressors; the Second League of Prizren initially promised to support the recruitment efforts; a significant portion of the population held anti-communist attitudes; a large part of the population lived of agriculture, which is why the Nazis hoped to find recruits among the strong and fit farmers who worked in the fields. To provide further incentives for the local population to join the SS Division, the Nazis used the name of the national hero Skanderbeg and fostered the hope of an independent Albanian state after the war (a promise that the Nazis made only in order to gain support from the Albanians and it is not document that they intended to kept it). Soldiers in the division received warm clothes, good boots and a small salary, so the poor population was particularly attracted. Additionally, many Nazis had a positive attitude towards the Albanians as they viewed them, within their racist ideology, as a people close to Nazi ideals and as brothers-in-arms in their anti-Slav, anti-communist fight. However, this positive attitude faded as the war progressed.

Initially, the Germans had planned to establish a formation with ten to twelve thousand men, but the number of actual recruits reached about 6500. The division was under direct German command. It was formed with former prisoners of war, Kosovo-Albanians who had served in the Yugoslav army, recruits from the Bosnian SS Division “Hadschar”, Albanian volunteers – especially from Kosovo – and former members of the military and gendarmerie in Albania. The Nazis’ initial enthusiasm was quickly quashed because of the large number of desertions. By October 1944, about 3,500 soldiers, more than half of the initial forces, had deserted. The division was officially dissolved in November. According to German documents, the SS Skanderbeg Division was responsible for guarding the concentration/holding camp in Prishtinë/Priština, and arresting between a few dozen and a few hundred Jews, which were brought to the camp.



Propaganda photo to recruit more Albanians

Source: [www.kriegsberichter-archiv.com](http://www.kriegsberichter-archiv.com)  
Photo: US National Archives & Records Administration (NARA)



Group portrait of the children of Jewish refugee families incarcerated in the Prishtinë/Priština prison, 1942

Source: <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/pa1086708>

## The Rescue of the Jews in Albania and Kosovo

By the end of 1944, the Partisans and Allied forces had driven the German forces out of Kosovo and Albania. The collaborationist government in Albania had withstood Italian and German demands regarding the persecution of the Jews in the country. Albania was one of the few countries that had offered shelter and protection to Jews arriving from other European countries. It is believed that about 2000 Jews were saved, compared with only some 200 Jews that had lived in Albania before the war.

Not only did the government play a role in the protection of Jews. Hundreds of Jewish people and families were protected by Albanian families, who changed their guests' names and dress, in order to make them look to outsiders like family members, as which they often treated them. Based on the account of many Jewish survivors, their hosts related the protection of the Jews to the institution of the "Besa" oath from the Albanian code of honour and hospitality, found in the expression "The house belongs to God and the guest".

In Kosovo, networks of people organized shelter and transport to Albania to find accommodation for them with families there. Among others, part of this network was the Rezniqui family headed by Arslan Mustafa Rezniqui, which saved over 40 Jewish families. The families of Hasan Remë Xërxa, Halim Spahia, Arif Aličkaj, Spiro Lito, Hysen Prishtina, Prenk Uli were also amongst those hiding and protecting Jews.



Standing from right to left Arslan Rezniqui, Dr. Chaim Abravanel and Mustafa Rezniqui son of Arslan; sitting from right to left: Dr. Reni Levi – Abravanel, Berta Abravanel, wife of Arslan Rezniqui, unknown woman and baby Rahel Levi

Source: <https://righteous.yadvashem.org/?search-Type=all&language=en&itemId=6360449&ind=24>

## Life after the Holocaust

After the end of the war, most of the Jews who managed to survive in Kosovo and Albania left. Many moved to Palestine and the newly founded state of Israel, others returned to where they originally came from or began a new life elsewhere (e.g. the USA and Brazil).

A small number of Jews remained in Kosovo, mainly in Prizren. Today, the Jewish community in Kosovo is around 10% of its size before the war. The precise number of Jews living in Kosovo is unknown: according to different sources, a few dozen families. Some relics of Jewish life survived the German occupation, such as the Jewish cemeteries and the likely former location of a Jewish school in Prishtinë/Priština. Other places, such as the Jewish synagogue are only remembered by a memorial in front of the government building, as the Jewish life in Kosovo was almost completely destroyed during the Nazi occupation and the subsequent socialist regime.

In Albania, the memory and record of Jews saved by Albanians was suppressed and hidden because of the fear generated by the policies of the Enver Hoxha regime. This means that much of the history and knowledge has been lost.

## Righteous Among the Nations

Yad Vashem (World Holocaust Remembrance Center) is a museum, research and educational institution in Israel that was established to perpetuate the memory of the six million Jewish victims of the Holocaust. One of Yad Vashem's principal roles is to convey the gratitude of Israel and the Jewish people to non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust by granting those people the title of "Righteous Among the Nations". This recognition underlines the principle that each individual is responsible for his or her deeds. The programme aims at finding from amongst the nations of perpetrators, collaborators and bystanders, individual people who defied the general trend and helped the persecuted Jews. Till now, seventy-five Albanian individuals or families have been awarded the title "Righteous Among the Nations". From Kosovo, this title is held by 7 families or individuals, from Albanian, Serbian and Croat communities. Moreover, as the only Roma in the world, the title has also been awarded to Hajrija Imeri-Mihaljić.

Nora Sheko in her letter to the Department of the Righteous, 21 November 1992

"I am sorry to say that I have no more their letters and addresses, because during 45 years we have suffered too much under the Communist regime, so we have burned every letter that came from other countries, sure to be treated as agents and propaganda, and that was at least ten years of prison. My husband was three years in prison only because we were very rich."

Source: <https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/resources/rescue-of-jews-in-albania-through-yadvashem-files.html>

## Rezniqi, Arslan Mustafa

During the War, Dr. Chaim Abravanel, a Jewish physician from Skopje, Macedonia, in the Yugoslav army was stationed in Kosovo. When a typhoid epidemic broke out, Dr. Abravanel treated the sick, including the Albanian Rezniqi family (...). In April 1941, during the German invasion of Yugoslavia, Abravanel's military unit was taken prisoner by the Germans. When Rezniqi heard that the doctor was in a camp, he began looking for ways to help him. Arslan and his son put on traditional Albanian clothes and smuggled themselves into the camp. They reached the section where the Jewish prisoners were held, found Dr. Abravanel and asked him to put on the extra set of Albanian clothing they had brought with them. They removed him from the camp and took him to their home where he stayed until he could return to his family in Skopje. Rezniqi accompanied him on his journey home and made sure that he was safe. Chaim Abravanel, his wife Bertha and their children managed to evade the deportations from Macedonia and survived the Holocaust, but both lost their parents, their six siblings and their families.

After the war, Dr. Abravanel became the director of the hospital in Bitola. His granddaughter Rachel (...) requested Yad Vashem to recognize her grandfather's rescuer Arslan Mustafa Rezniqi as a "Righteous Among the Nations", which was granted on 12 February 2008.

Source: <https://righteous.yadvashem.org/?searchType=all&language=en&itemId=6360449&ind=24>

## Imeri-Mihaljić, Hajrija

At the time of the German invasion of Yugoslavia, in April 1941, the family of little Ester (Levy), born a year earlier, resided in Pristina. Fearing the pro-Nazi (...) regime, which had taken control of this area, Ester's parents fled to the hills to join up with the partisans, leaving the little girl in the care of her grandmother. During the preceding year, the Baruchs (Ester's parents) had hired a nanny, a gypsy\* woman named Hajrija Imeri, who lived in a nearby village (...). Soon thereafter, Hajrija learned that Ester and her grandmother had been picked up by the authorities and moved to a labor camp. She quickly hurried there and met the frightened grandmother, who pleaded with her to take the child with her. "Please guard her and care for her as your own child. If her family returns, they will take her back, if not, keep her as your own daughter." Quickly leaving the camp (Kosovska Mitrovica), Hajrija took the one-year-old child to her tribal village, and joined her to her own five children. She gave the child a new name, Moradia, and treated her with special kindness. At night, the Imeri Family spread out on the floor, and all lay down to sleep, with Moradia tucked in between the other children – always in between for added security. (...)

After the war Ester returned to her mother and her family moved to Israel. Later through Yad Vashem Ester applied for Hajrija to be awarded the title of the Righteous among the Nations, the only gypsy so honoured.

Source: Mordecai Paldiel, 2000, *Saving the Jews: Men and Women who Defied the Final Solution*

[\*the term "gypsy" was used to refer to the Roma community. Today, it has a negative connotation (stereotype): therefore, it should not be used]

## Jovanović, Pero

In the fall of 1941, many Jewish refugees found themselves stranded in Prizren, Kosovo, when their attempted flight to Albania was blocked. Among them were the Jewish couple, Eugen and Else Hochberg, their three-year-old daughter Miriam, and niece, Adela Georgenberger. Eugen, an engineer, became acquainted with Milan Jovanović, who offered to rent them a room in his home. The two families lived together and shared the household responsibilities. When German patrols approached the area, the Jovanovičs hid the Jews in different hiding places around their house. However, (...) they were denounced to the authorities. In early 1944, the Germans arrested the Hochberg couple and Adela, and deported them to a concentration camp. Miriam remained behind with the Jovanovičs. The Jovanovičs' 17-year-old son Pero became Miriam's closest friend. Miriam, fell ill with polio, and needed constant medical treatment. Pero took care of her for over a year, until she recovered. Every day, Pero carried Miriam in his arms for treatment at the hospital that was located at the other end of the city. When the war was over, the Hochberg couple returned to Prizren to fetch their daughter and to thank the Jovanovičs for their dedication in taking care of Miriam. Miriam Hochberg (later Werzberger) immigrated to Israel and established a family. She maintained contact with her wartime hosts.

On September 8, 1993, Yad Vashem recognized Pero Jovanović as Righteous Among the Nations.

Source: [https://righteous.yadvashem.org/?search=kosovo&searchType=righteous\\_only&language=en&itemId=4015481&ind=8](https://righteous.yadvashem.org/?search=kosovo&searchType=righteous_only&language=en&itemId=4015481&ind=8)

# Chapter 3: EXERCISES FOR STUDENTS

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## 1

### LEARNING OUTCOMES AND KEY MESSAGE

Critically analysing and comparing the situation in Albania and Kosovo during the Italian and German occupation.

#### Key message:

In most territories that were directly or indirectly controlled by the Axis, Jews were discriminated against. However, the situation of Jews in Albania, under Italian occupation, was more favourable than the one of Jews in Kosovo, under German occupation. Due to many factors (including pre-existing inter-ethnic tensions), Germans found fertile ground in Kosovo for setting up a local SS Division.

*For definitions, please refer to Glossary*

### METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONS

Students work divided in groups (3 to 5 members). At the end of part b. (or at the end of each part), each group presents its answers in plenary.

Based on the knowledge acquired in this lesson, students compare the situation in Albania and Kosovo:

- Summarize the differences between the situation in Kosovo and in Albania: in which way were the situations different for Jews? Why?
- Focus on SS Division Skanderbeg: Why was the German army able to set up the SS Division Skanderbeg in Kosovo and not in Albania? What could have prevented them from setting it up in Kosovo? What was the motivation of Kosovo-Albanians to join the SS Division?

### MATERIAL AND TIME

No material needed

**25 min** a: 10 min b: 15 min

### DIFFICULTY/GRADE

a: IX and XII b: IX and XII

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## 2

### LEARNING OUTCOMES AND KEY MESSAGE

Reflecting on the importance of individual choices and civic courage, by analyzing the risks implied in the decisions taken by those who have been subsequently recognized as Righteous Among Nations.

#### Key message:

In challenging situations, it is more difficult and dangerous to stand up for your values. This implies acts of strong civic courage. Indeed, persons recognized as Righteous Among the Nations put their own lives at risk for saving Jews.

*For definitions, please refer to Glossary*

### METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONS

Students work divided in small groups or couples. At the end of part c., each group shares its answers. Each group is provided with a copy of the poem.

Read the poem, and discuss the following questions:

- a. What do you think this poem means? What does it imply for those who are persecuted and those who are not?
- b. Compare the situation in the poem with the situation that Albanian and Kosovo families were facing

### MATERIAL AND TIME

ANNEX 1: Niemoeller's poem (one copy for each group)

**30 min** a: 15 min b: 15 min

### DIFFICULTY/GRADE

**a. IX and XII b. IX and XII**

*(can be used as simpler alternative to task 3)*

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# 3

## LEARNING OUTCOMES AND KEY MESSAGE

Reflecting on the importance of individual choices and civic courage, by analyzing the risks implied in the decisions taken by those who have been subsequently recognized as Righteous Among Nations.

### Key message:

In challenging situations, it is more difficult and dangerous to stand up for your values. This implies acts of strong civic courage. Indeed, persons recognized as Righteous Among the Nations put their own lives at risk for saving Jews.

*For definitions, please refer to Glossary*

## METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONS

Students work divided in groups (3 to 5 members), researching and analysing stories of “Righteous Among Nations”. At the end of group work, discuss part c. in plenary.

Based on the stories of people recognized as “Righteous Among the Nations”, discuss the following questions:

- Research about the story of one person who was awarded the title of “Righteous Among the Nations”: What did he/she do? What did this mean for him/her? Which reasons and values pushed him/her towards this risky choice?
- Imagine your family decides to take in an unknown Jewish family for one year. What would be the challenges and risks of this choice?
- Can you think of other examples of civic courage and resistance? Which forms can it take? (ex. non-violent resistance vs armed fight)

## MATERIAL AND TIME

Internet connection for research on Righteous Among Nations (or stories selected and printed by the teacher)

**30-35 min** a: 10 min b: 10 min c: 10-15 min

## DIFFICULTY/GRADE

a: IX and XII b: IX and XII c: XII

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# 4

## LEARNING OUTCOMES AND KEY MESSAGE

Reflecting about the importance of memory and remembrance for today's society; understanding the importance of the connections between Past, Present and Future.

### Key message:

Remembering history is of highest importance for the development of today's society: recognizing what happened in the past and learning from it allows us to build a better future. In order to avoid repeating the same mistakes, it is important to establish facts and hearing the stories of victims and survivors from all sides. Memory sites play a crucial role, allowing us to remember historical events, and call for non-recurrence in the future ("never again").

*For definitions, please refer to Glossary*

## METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONS

Students work divided in groups (3 to 5 members). At the end of part c. (or at the end of each part), each group presents its answers in plenary.

In this lesson, we mentioned the importance of preserving the memory of the past. Thinking about how the Holocaust is commemorated (through monuments, museums, events, etc.), discuss the following questions:

- a. How is the Holocaust commemorated in Kosovo?
- b. How is the Holocaust commemorated in other countries? Each group focuses on one country among: Albania, Serbia, North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Germany, Italy.
- c. Do you think it is important to commemorate the Holocaust? Why yes? Or why not? If yes, in which ways can this be done?

## MATERIAL AND TIME

Internet connection for research

**40 min** a: 10-15 min b: 10-15 min c: 15 min

## DIFFICULTY/GRADE

a: IX and XII b: IX and XII c: XII

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# 5

## LEARNING OUTCOMES AND KEY MESSAGE

Understanding today's reality for the Jewish community in Kosovo, and the causes of the current situation.

### Key message:

Today, only a very small number of Jews live in Kosovo, primarily in Prizren. As a result of the Holocaust and the subsequent socialist regime, there are only few traces of the extensive Jewish community that once lived in Kosovo, and the preservation of Jewish heritage has been severely neglected.

This is an example of long-term consequences of past events, especially conflicts, on current societies.

*For definitions, please refer to Glossary*

## METHODOLOGY AND INSTRUCTIONS

Students work divided in groups (3 to 5 members), and research information about the Jewish community in nowadays Kosovo. At the end of the group work, discuss findings in plenary and compare them with the pictures contained in Annex 1 (the teacher can show them to students).

Thinking about today's Kosovo, discuss the following questions:

- a. What do you know about Jewish life in today's Kosovo?
- b. Do you know any Jewish site in Kosovo?

*[This task could be connected to a study-visit to relevant Jewish places (or families) in Prishtinë/Priština or Prizren]*

## MATERIAL AND TIME

Internet connection for research

ANNEX 2: as reference to be shown to students

**20 min** a: 10 min b: 10 min

## DIFFICULTY/GRADE

a: IX and XII b: IX and XIIš

## ANNEX 1:

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First they came for the Jews  
and I did not speak out  
because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for the Communists  
and I did not speak out  
because I was not a Communist.

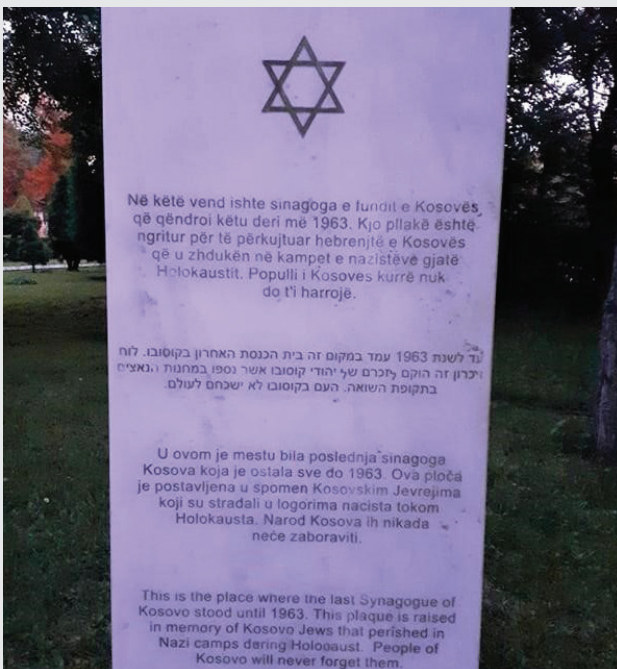
Then they came for the trade unionists  
and I did not speak out  
because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for me  
and there was no one left  
to speak out for me.

**by Martin Niemöller**

## ANNEX 2:

### Jewish memory sites in Prishtinë/Priština



Memorial marking the spot where Kosovo's only synagogue stood until 1963. The inscription also honors Kosovar Jews who were killed during the Holocaust

Source: Authors/forumZFD



Jewish cemetery in Velania

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical\\_monuments\\_in\\_Pristina#Jewish\\_cemetery](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historical_monuments_in_Pristina#Jewish_cemetery)



Boxing Club Prishtina, an abandoned building which is believed to have once housed a Jewish school.

Source: <https://www.timesofisrael.com/in-muslim-kosovo-a-jewish-claim-to-nations-past-and-future/>



Jewish cemetery in Arberia/Dragodan

Source: <https://jewish-heritage-europe.eu/2019/12/17/kosovo-jewish-cemetery-in-pristina/>

# GLOSSARY

**Careful!** Some of the words in this Glossary explain terms that the Nazis used. These terms were coined by Nazis as propagandistic, euphemistic words to whitewash the racist ideology behind them. Those words are marked with the following expression: “(Nazi euphemism!)”.

**ANTI-JUDAISM:** the total or partial opposition to Judaism as a religion, leading therefore to religiously-motivated hostile feelings and behaviors towards Jews.

**ANTISEMITISM:** negative feelings, prejudices and hostile behaviors towards Jews as an ethnic group or “race”. Antisemitism is a form of racism that defines Jews as an ethnic group or race that can be identified by clear physical, behaviors or other characteristics, neglecting that Jews are a highly diverse group of people. In contemporary language usage the term “antisemitism” covers the total of anti-Jewish statements, trends, resentments, attitudes and actions (including discrimination and violence), irrespective of the religious, racist, social or other motivation behind them.

**ARYANS:** a term designating Indo-Iranian peoples who partially migrated to Europe between ca. 2700 and 700 BCE and influenced the languages and technologies of the peoples there. Nazi racist ideology used this term to describe a unity of North-European and Germanic peoples as one race that is superior to all other races (Nazi euphemism!).

**ASHKENAZI:** Jewish diaspora population who lived predominantly in central and eastern Europe since the first millennium AD. Some of them migrated also to the Balkans. Their traditional language is Yiddish and they developed distinct religious rites. Today, the majority of Jews worldwide identify themselves or their ancestry as Ashkenazi.

**ASSIMILATION:** cultural assimilation is the sociocultural process in which a minority group or culture comes to resemble the majority group, identifying with it, assuming its behaviors and beliefs. As a result, the merged individual or group may partially or totally lose its original national/cultural identity so that it cannot be distinguished from the group any longer. Assimilation can be voluntary or involuntary/imposed.

**AUSCHWITZ:** the German name of the Polish town Oświęcim. The Nazis constructed the largest concentration camp on the outskirts of this city. The first part of the camp was called Auschwitz I; Auschwitz II - Birkenau was the largest part of the camp and included gas chambers to exterminate Jews (which is why Auschwitz is also called an extermination camp); and Auschwitz III - Monowitz was a forced labor camp. It is estimated that about 960.000 Jews, 74.000 Non-Jewish Poles, 21.000 Roma, 15.000 Soviet prisoners of war and 10.000-15.000 others died here.

**CAMP:** during Nazism, concentration camps (also called “detention camps”, “holding camps” or “labor camps” - Nazi euphemism!) were established as places where large numbers of people (primarily Jews but also other persecuted groups such as Roma, political opponents, prisoners of war, homosexuals, people with disabilities, Poles and other peoples considered to be Slavs, Jehovah Witnesses and others) were detained and often used for forced labor. Extermination camps served the Nazi plan to systematically exterminate Jews and other groups. To many concentration camps extermination facilities were added after the adoption of the “Final Solution” policy in 1942.

**CIVIC COURAGE:** when an individual or group acts on an issue of importance to the community at great personal risk and without any direct gain. These individuals may not necessarily prevail in the short run, but their courageous actions guide society towards better values and greater equity.

**COUP D'ETAT:** illegal, often violent overthrow of an existing government or leader by a small group (from French, literally meaning literally meaning a “stroke of state” or “blow against the state”).

**CULTURAL DIVERSITY:** the co-existence of a variety of cultural, ethnic, religious or linguistic groups within a society.

**DIASPORA:** dispersion of a people from their original homeland. Often also refers to the community that lives outside of the homeland as a whole or in a specific country or location. The word comes from the Greek “diaspora”, meaning “dispersion, scattering”.

**DISCRIMINATION:** the action of treating a person or particular group of people differently – especially worse than others – because of their identity (ethnicity, sex, skin color, origin, physical attributes, etc.), their choices (political opinion, religion, sexual orientation, etc.) or their situation (disability, family situation, skills, etc.). This mostly happens towards people we consider “different” from us, for various reasons. Discrimination is present at all levels of society and it has a direct impact on the behavior of the person/group who discriminates as well as those who are targeted by discrimination. Discriminatory acts lead the targeted people to feel fear and frustration, progressive loss of self-confidence, insecurity and potential violence.

**EINSATZGRUPPEN:** literally meaning “deployment groups” (Nazi euphemism!) were units of the Schutzstaffel (SS) which advanced into newly invaded territories with the task of collecting information of the identities and whereabouts of local Jewish population and to massacre them. They also murdered the intellectual elite of Poland, Soviet prisoners of war, Roma, resistance fighters against the German occupation and others. It is estimated that the Einsatzgruppen killed more than 2 million people, 1.3 million of which were Jews.

**EMANCIPATION:** the process of achieving equal economic, social, and political rights for a specific group that has been discriminated up to then. In the context of the history of Jews, this term describes the historic process of the alleviation of discriminatory policies and laws against them.

**ENLIGHTENMENT:** a term that has various meanings; in historical contexts it refers to the Age of Enlightenment that took place in many European societies between the 17th and 18th centuries. It manifested itself as an intellectual and philosophical movement that rediscovered ancient Greek philosophical thoughts and gave great emphasis on rationality and reasoning. As such, it advocated the separation of church and state and the foundation of knowledge on science and not belief. Jewish intellectuals picked those concepts up and interpreted their meaning for the Jewish communities. As a result, a distinct Jewish identity, the use of Hebrew (instead of Yiddish) and the integration of Jews into their surrounding societies (including adopting their languages and customs) were supported. Jewish Enlightenment is also called “Haskalah”.

**FINAL SOLUTION:** short for “Final Solution to the Jewish Question”, as translation from the German “Endlösung der Judenfrage”, which postulates that there is an open question or unresolved issue about the existence of Jews that requires a resolution or final settlement (Nazi euphemism!). At first, Nazi leaders considered the deportation of all Jews, later shifting towards their extermination. This shift happened gradually and mass murder took place in 1941 already, but

generally the Wannsee Conference in January 1942 is considered as the event when the “Final Solution” was formulated procedurally and geographically as a policy to exterminate all Jews in Europe.

**GENDARMERIE:** old term for “police” or “military police”. In Albania, the Royal Albanian Gendarmerie (Arma e Xhandarmërisë/Arma e Gjandarmërisë) was founded after the country’s independence from the Ottoman Empire. During the invasion of Albania in 1939, many gendarmes fought the Italians on the side of the resistance.

**GENOCIDE:** acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group (as written in the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, Article 2).

**GHETTO:** a part of a city in which poor people or people belonging to a specific group live, separately from the rest of the population. Ghettos were used by the Nazis to segregate Jews from the rest of the society, denying them equal treatment and their rights.

**HANDSCHAR:** derived from the term “Handžar” referring to an Ottoman fighting knife and short for “13. Waffen-Gebirgs-Division der SS „Handschar“(kroatische Nr. 1)”. The Handschar-Division was a mountain infantry division of the SS. It was conceived on 6 December 1942 to fight Partisans in the “Independent State of Croatia” (which included today’s Croatia and part of Bosnia and Herzegovina), but also committed atrocities against Jewish and Serb civilians. The Mufti of Jerusalem helped recruit Bosnian Muslims for the unit, while a smaller portion were Croat Catholic recruits. Despite high desertion rates, the unit fought the advancing Red and Bulgarian armies until the Germans’ defeat.

**HOLOCAUST:** the term “Holocaust” comes from two Greek words meaning “sacrifice to God by fire”. The word was later applied to describe the total and systematic extermination perpetrated by Nazi Germany and its collaborators, with the aim of annihilating the Jewish people.

**INTEGRATION:** the act of integrating someone as part of a group or society, guaranteeing him/her equal rights and opportunities. An integrating attitude implies the willingness of the involved persons/groups to cooperate with each other with the aim to improve the condition of all.

**INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY:** an international Memorial Day commemorating the Holocaust on 27 January. This day was designated in 2005 by a resolution of the United Nations General Assembly. The date was picked because on 27 January 1945 the Soviet Red Army reached Auschwitz.

**LEBENSRAUM:** German term, literally translated as “living space”, which constituted a principle of Nazi ideology that the German people would need and deserve a larger living space than was available to them in the German Reich (Nazi euphemism!). In effect, it justified the conquest, occupation and annexation of large parts of central eastern Europe as well as the expulsion, discrimination, enslavement, starvation and mass murder of the peoples in those areas (most of whom were considered to be Slavs and therefore inferior to Germans).

**OCCUPATION:** military and/or political power over a territory without claiming formal sovereignty over it (i.e. annexing it to become part of one’s own country). The Nazis expanded the sovereign territory of Germany, but never to the full extent of the territory that the Germans had power over. For example, Yugoslavia was never part of the Reich, but divided into puppet states that were under German rule, while Albania was a puppet state under Italian and later German rule.

**POGROM:** violent popular riot aimed to murder or expel an ethnic or religious group. The use of the term “pogrom” originally referred to the attacks on Jews in the Russian Empire during the 19th and 20th centuries.



**PREJUDICE:** a generalization containing a judgment/opinion which is usually negative about other people or social groups, based on their appearance, skin color, sex, origin, or other attributes. A prejudice means “judgment in advance”: it is therefore formed beforehand, without knowledge or direct experience. Sometimes, prejudices are justified by referring to previous experience, however, individual experiences can never represent the totality of a group.

**PROPAGANDA:** information, ideas, opinions, or images that are broadcasted, published, or in some other way spread with the intention of influencing people’s opinions. Those who produce propaganda (individuals or groups such as political parties) deliberately aim at producing a response or reaction favoring their own intentions.

**PUPPET STATE:** a state with its own government, laws, flag, etc. that is completely dependent on another state and therefore not independent. This means that the state is fully sovereign, but that another state is controlling it. Examples for puppet states under German or Italian rule during World War II are: Albania, the Independent State of Croatia (Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina), the Hellenic State (Greece) and the Government of National Salvation (Serbia). Bulgaria, on the other hand, was an independent state, but with a fascist government that chose to become a member of the Axis powers.

**RIGHTEOUS AMONG THE NATIONS:** title awarded by Yad Vashem (the world Holocaust Remembrance Center in Jerusalem, Israel) to non-Jews who took great risks to save Jews during the Holocaust.

**SCAPEGOAT:** scapegoating is the practice of one person or group blaming another person or group for a problem without them meriting the blame. Consequently, the blamed person or group, who represent the scapegoat, suffers negative treatment. Scapegoating is used to incorrectly explain certain social, economic, or political problems. The term “scapegoat” refers to a story in Leviticus (a book of the Torah and Old Testament) where this practice is documented prominently.

**SCHUTZSTAFFEL:** (abbreviated: SS): literally meaning “protection forces” (Nazi euphemism!). The SS was founded as an elite para-military unit of the Nazi party serving as Hitler’s bodyguards and special police force. Later, some SS units were used like regular military units fighting in World War II and others as guards and executioners in the camps. Thereby, the SS was the organization most responsible for the killing of Jews.

**SEPHARDI:** Jewish diaspora population who lived predominantly in Spain and Portugal till the late 15th century, when they were expelled and dispersed throughout the Ottoman Empire. That is how many of them migrated to all parts of the Mediterranean and the Ottoman Empire, including the Balkans. Their traditional language is Ladino and they developed distinct religious rites. Today, up to 15-20% of Jews worldwide identify themselves or their ancestry as Sephardi.

**STEREOTYPE:** an image or idea of a particular group or type of person based on the oversimplified generalization of one characteristic of that group or type of person. As a result, the members of this group or all people with this characteristic are reduced to that image or idea, disregarding individual characteristics. Stereotypes can be both negative and positive. Stereotypes are always false: even if an image or idea of a group is true for the majority, it will never be true for all members of that group. Furthermore, treating an individual according to a stereotype is wrong, as this does not take the individual characteristics into consideration.

**SYNAGOGUE:** is a Jewish house of worship, like a mosque for Muslims or a church for Christians. The term comes from ancient Greek; in Hebrew, Jewish houses of worship are called “bet kneset” (literally meaning “house of assembly”).

**THIRD REICH:** official Nazi designation for the regime in Germany from January 1933 to May 1945, as the presumed

successor of the Holy Roman Empire (First Reich) and the German Empire (Second Reich). “Third Reich” is a propaganda term (Nazi euphemism!) and therefore does not represent an accurate historical term.

**TOLERATION:** practice of accepting the existence or presence of someone or something in a society by implicit or explicit general agreement of the majority of that society. Toleration implies coexistence, but neither a collaborative relationship between the parties nor equal rights. This means that there is tolerance of each side towards the other, but not respect, and interaction appears only if needed or required by circumstances.

**USTAŠE:** comes from the Croatian verb “ustati” (“rise up”) and refers to the “Ustaša – Hrvatski revolucionarni pokret” (“Ustaša – Croatian Revolutionary Movement”), which was a Croatian fascist, ultranationalist terror organization that existed from 1929 to 1945. Its ideology was based largely on Nazi racist ideology. They claimed that Croats and Bosniaks were part of the Germanic race and considered Jews, Roma and Slavs (especially Serbs) to be inferior. In the Independent State of Croatia, the Ustaše were a militia that acted separately from the regular army and murdered hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Jews, Roma and political opponents.

**VIOLENCE:** actions, words, attitudes, structures or systems that cause physical, psychological, social, or environmental damage, and prevent people from reaching their full potential. Direct physical violence (ex. hitting, beating, shooting, raping, torture) is the most visible form of violence, but it is not the only one. Violence can also be psychological and verbal, cultural (ex. traditions and beliefs which justify the use of violence, sexism, patriarchal values, discrimination), or structural (ex. poverty, corruption, social inequalities, unequal access to rights and resources).

## Project Partners:

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**History Teachers Association:** the Kosovo History Teachers Association (Shoqata e Mësimdhënësve të Historisë së Kosovës-SHMHK) was established in 2008 with the major goal to promote qualitative history teaching within the education system of Kosovo and to facilitate the exchange of good practices among teachers. The Association is member of EUROCLIO.

**New Perspektiva:** the NGO New Perspektiva works to contribute to an understanding of the EU-facilitated dialogue and normalization process between Kosovo and Serbia, as well as to foster greater integration among different communities in Kosovo. It has run projects on opening up thinking on the multi-perspective methodology of learning and teaching history in Kosovo.

**ForumZFD:** ForumZFD (Forum Ziviler Friedensdienst – Civil Peace Service) is a German non-governmental and non-profit Organization established in 1996. In Kosovo and the western Balkans, forumZFD is active in the field of Dealing with the Past and Peace Education. Through different projects, it cooperates with local organizations and stakeholders to build a culture of peace, promote constructive dealing with the past and facilitate processes of reconciliation.

**Yad Vashem:** established in 1953 by an act of Knesset (Israeli Parliament). Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, is entrusted with the task of commemorating, documenting, researching and educating about the Holocaust. Yad Vashem's integrated approach incorporates educational initiatives, groundbreaking research and inspirational exhibits.

**Center for Historical Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Berlin:** founded in 2006, the Center is one of six institutions of the Polish Academy of Sciences, and the first with an historical profile and its own research projects. Its main purpose is to research the history of German-Polish relations in the context of European history.

**Haus der Wannseekonferenz:** today, the Haus der Wannseekonferenz in Berlin is a Memorial and Educational Center which offers a wide range of exhibitions and educational programs to learn about the history of the Holocaust, the history of National Socialism, its prehistory and its consequences. In the same site as its location, on 20th January 1942, fifteen high-ranking Nazi representatives planned the so-called “Final Solution”.

**United States Holocaust Memorial Museum:** the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington D.C. is the main memorial site and museum in the United States dedicated to the Holocaust. Its mission is to teach about the Holocaust in order to promote the fight for human dignity and against hatred and gross human rights violations.



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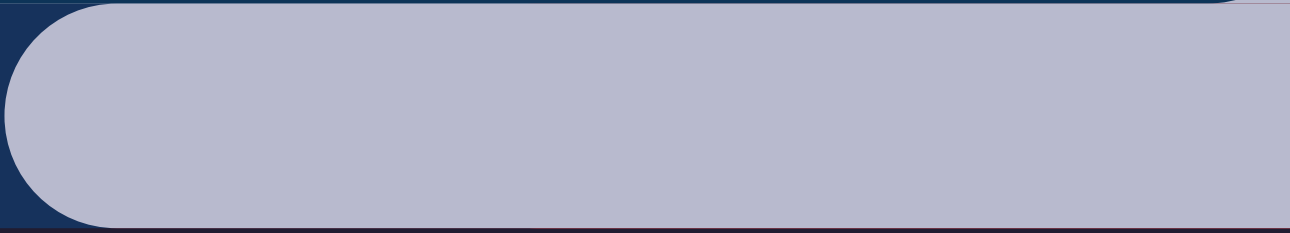
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