

# Let's Talk About Antisemitism

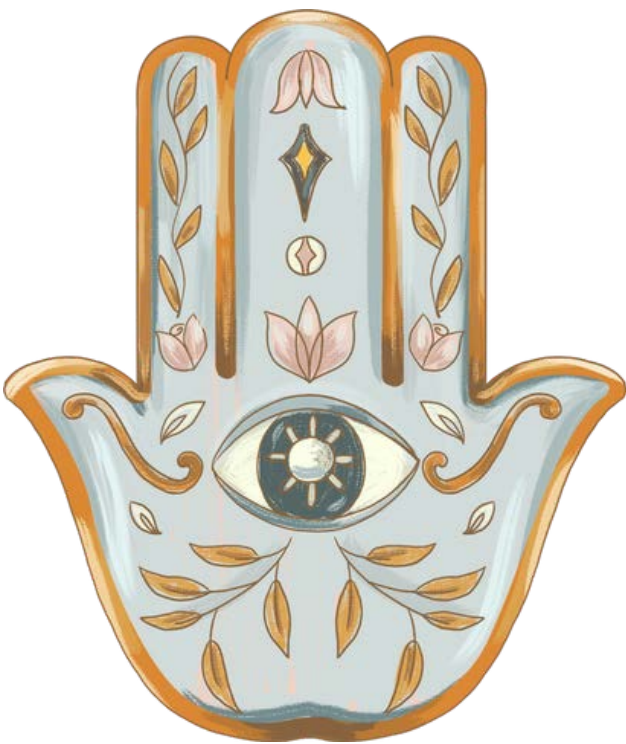
## Teacher's Guide

At least 85 Jewish graves were desecrated at the Israeli part of the cemetery in Charleroi, France. Friday 24 November 2023.



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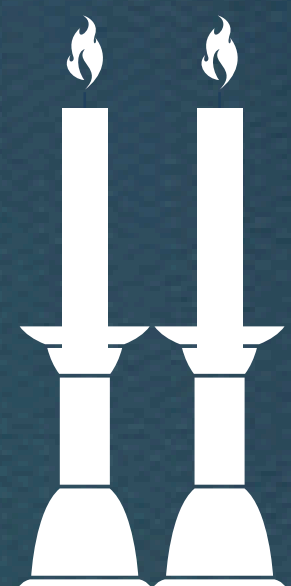
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# Welcome to the Teacher's Guide!



Thank you for your willingness to learn and teach about antisemitism!

In this teacher's guide you will find information and resources to help you teach about antisemitism. You can find the digital version of this guide and other resources at [hnh.org/antisemitism](https://hnh.org/antisemitism). If you have the physical version, you can use the digital version to access the many links that are included. An effort will be made to keep the links in the digital version current.

This teacher's guide includes a historical overview of antisemitism, reasons to teach about antisemitism and best practices for how to do so, an introduction to what it means to be Jewish, frequently asked questions related to Jews and antisemitism, a resource list (including books, websites, and videos), and a timeline. Feel free to skip around and use whatever section(s) you need. While the primary audience for this guide are teachers, anyone interested in learning more about antisemitism and how to fight it will find something useful within these pages.

This teacher's guide connects to "Let's Talk About Antisemitism," a video series made for students and teachers and posted on YouTube. These videos cover a variety of topics related to antisemitism as well as what it means to be Jewish. [Check these videos out on YouTube](#). However, you do not need to utilize the videos in order to use this teacher's guide.







Different colors of text throughout the toolkit indicate clickable links. Words in [teal](#) link to the page where they are defined in the glossary. Words in [magenta](#) are links to helpful websites. Words in [grey](#) link to other sections within this document.

If you would like additional resources for yourself and/or your students, Holocaust Museum Houston has an e-books program that allows students and teachers to borrow e-books and audiobooks about antisemitism and the Holocaust for free. You can learn more at [hmmh.org/ebooks](https://hmmh.org/ebooks) or email [ebooks@hmmh.org](mailto:ebooks@hmmh.org) to request accounts for yourself and/or your students.

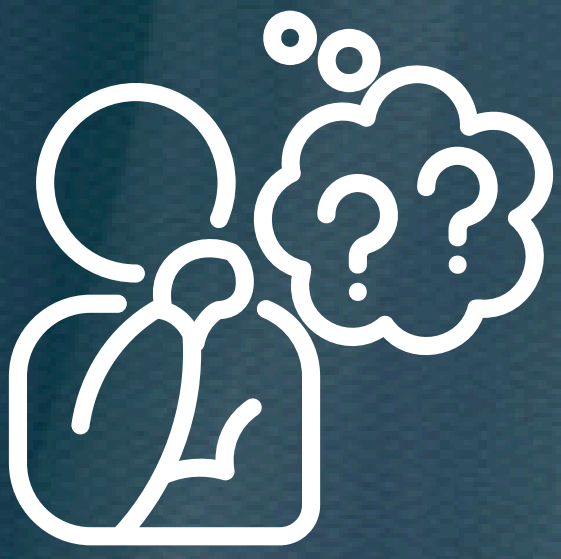
“Let’s Talk About Antisemitism” and this teacher’s guide were created by educators at Holocaust Museum Houston. If you have questions or need assistance with additional resources, email us at [education@hmmh.org](mailto:education@hmmh.org).



The Memorial Room at Holocaust Museum Houston







# What is Antisemitism?

Defining **antisemitism** is complicated, but let's start with a simplified definition of antisemitism: **Antisemitism is conscious or unconscious bias against Jews because they are Jews. This can include bias in attitudes, words, or actions.**

Antisemitism is a way of thinking about **Jews** not as they actually are, but as they are perceived based on **bias**, **prejudice**, and myths that have a long history. Even when this thinking appears to be positive (for example, the incorrect **stereotype** that all Jews are good with money), it can have negative consequences (false accusations that Jews use their skills with money to cheat the system). Antisemitism is also a type of **conspiracy theory**, meaning that lies about Jews are often used to explain why the world is the way it is (usually in a negative way). This doesn't reflect any kind of inner truth about Jews. Instead, it reflects the needs of the people who hold these beliefs.



Vandalism in a Jewish cemetery in Bielsko-Biala, Poland in 2021.

Antisemitism is sometimes called “the longest hatred” because it has existed for so long. It has had centuries to develop and has become ingrained in Western culture. It is so ingrained that while we may recognize it at its most obvious (Shylock, the Jewish moneylender in Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* is a pretty clear antisemitic stereotype reflecting antisemitic **tropes** about Jews and money), we often don't even see its more subtle manifestations. For example, the portrayal of Bram Stoker's *Dracula* “draws implicitly on anti-Jewish motifs, featuring as it does a diabolic figure from Eastern Europe (written at a time of



mass Jewish immigration from eastern Europe to Britain), mysteriously wealthy, with a hooked nose and beard, who drinks blood and shrinks from the sight of a Cross.”<sup>1</sup>(Think the drinking blood thing is weird? Don’t worry - we’ll<sup>1</sup>get to that). Dracula isn’t meant to be Jewish - it is just that when Bram Stoker needed characteristics for a villain, what came to mind were stereotypes of a group seen as sinister, and that meant Jews.

What all of this means is that even identifying antisemitism can be challenging. To do so accurately, you will need some background on how antisemitism has evolved over time. See the [short\(ish\) history of antisemitism](#) for some context on antisemitism’s weird and winding development over time.

Antisemitism has led to Jewish communities not having the same rights as others, being forced to convert, and facing violence, culminating in the murder of six million Jews during the Holocaust. It is even still a problem today.



### Aside: Is there an official definition of antisemitism?

Debates around antisemitism extend even to its definition, with several competing definitions. The most commonly used and comprehensive definition of antisemitism is the working definition from the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which has been adopted by the U.S. State Department, the state of Texas, 43 countries (and counting), and many other organizations and groups, including Holocaust Museum Houston. You can find more information about the definition, including examples of antisemitism, [on IHRA’s website](#).

The working definition states: “Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

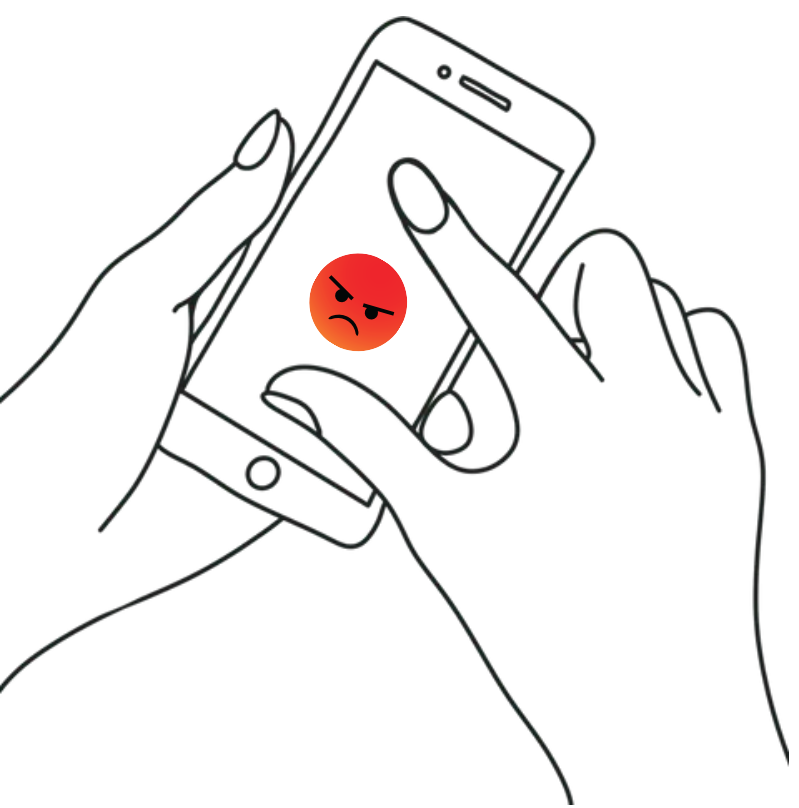
<sup>1</sup>Dave Rich, *Everyday Hate: How Antisemitism is Built into Our World and How You Can Change It* (London: Biteback Publishing, 2023), 50-51.



# Why Teach About Antisemitism?

Now that you know what [antisemitism](#) is, we hope that you will be willing to teach others about it. Here are some important reasons to teach about antisemitism.

*Antisemitism is a real problem today. A report from the ADL released in 2024 found that antisemitic incidents in the United States have increased by 893% over the last ten years. Real Jewish people have faced harassment, vandalism, exclusion, and even violence. The students we work with have shared heartbreaking stories of trying to hide their Jewish identity or facing terrifying situations because of it. Jews have the right to life safely as Jews just like any other group of people, many Jews currently live in fear.*



*Students are going to encounter antisemitism online and/or in real life - teaching about it prepares students to encounter it. Many [conspiracy theories](#) and fringe movements contain elements of antisemitic [tropes](#), but few people recognize them. Our students likely see antisemitism on social media or hear it in the world around them without even realizing that it is antisemitism. If we can better equip them to understand what they see, we inoculate them against hateful ideas.*

*Make the world a better place. Like everyone else, Jews deserve to live safe and free from discrimination. Your commitment to educating yourself and others about antisemitism is called tikkun olam. Tikkun olam is a Jewish concept which means repairing the world.*







*Understanding antisemitism helps students understand complexity and media literacy.* Antisemitism is an incredibly complicated form of hatred that can take many different guises. Learning about it not only allows students to understand and face this hatred when they encounter it, but also teaches critical thinking and analysis. Antisemitism is based on lies. When students have background, they can dismantle these lies by using evidence-based arguments.

*Build empathy.* Jews make up about 2.4% of the population of the United States. Many students lack basic knowledge of what it means to be Jewish and don't understand antisemitism. Learning about antisemitism can help students gain empathy for Jews and other groups that face **prejudice** and discrimination.



*What starts with Jews never ends with Jews.* Antisemitism is often called the canary in the coal mine of democracy - when Jews are targeted, it is a sign that others are or will soon be targeted as well. When antisemitism is allowed to run unchecked it has a corrosive effect on a country's democratic values, institutions, and ideas.

*Students cannot understand the Holocaust without understanding antisemitism.* **The Holocaust** was only possible because of the long history of antisemitism in Europe. Students need this context in order to learn about the Holocaust. Without this context, they can easily fall for misinformation.





# Who are the Jewish People?



We are about to explore [antisemitism](#), which means addressing misconceptions about [Jews](#). But what does it actually mean to be Jewish? This means different things to different people, but what unites Jews across the world is their connection to more than 4,000 years of history, religion, culture, and adaptation. It is possible to not be religious and still be Jewish. Someone can be born Jewish or they can convert (depending on Jewish religious denomination). Some Jews strictly follow Jewish dietary and other laws laid down in the [Torah](#), while others don't. In other words, there are many ways to be Jewish, and Jews still argue about these differing paths today. But Jews are more than just a religion, culture, or ethnicity: they are, quite simply, a people. [This video](#) is a helpful explainer on what it means to be Jewish and is great for students too.



A Jewish girl reads from the Torah during her Bat Mitzvah in Kaifeng, China





# Different Ways of Being Jewish

While **Jews** around the world share a common origin in the land of **Israel**, the Jewish community is highly diverse.

There are Jewish subcultures based on where their ancestors lived. **Mizrahi Jews** are descendants of Jewish communities from Israel, as well as North Africa and other parts of the Middle East (Mizrach means east in Hebrew). After the destruction of the second temple and the exile of many Jews from their homeland, Jews found homes in many different places, becoming part of the diaspora. **Ashkenazi Jews** trace their ancestry back to Jewish communities in the Holy Roman Empire in central Europe (Ashkenaz means Germany in medieval Hebrew). Due to **antisemitism**, many Ashkenazi Jews were either expelled from or fled western Europe and were welcomed in Poland, which became the center of European Jewish life before the Holocaust. **Sephardic Jews** are descendants of Jewish communities from Spain and Portugal (Sefarad refers to the Iberian Peninsula in Hebrew). They were expelled from Spain and Portugal in the 1400s. Smaller subcultures of Jews include those from India, China, and Ethiopia. Jewish subcultures differ from each other in specific elements of language, culture, and religious practice, but they are still united as Jews by the same basic beliefs, traditions, and origin.

There are also different religious denominations within **Judaism**. The most common denominations in the United States are Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform. You can find out more about these and other denominations [here](#).



A Jewish family in Yemen, 1944. Suleiman ben Pinhas al-Cohen is the older man seated in the middle. His son Salam is to the left of him, also seated and holding a baby. The girl standing next to Salam is his sister Sham'a.







# Major Jewish Holidays and Traditions



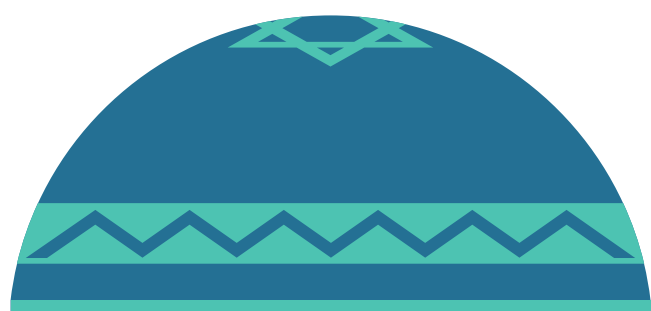
A joke says that most Jewish holidays boil down to: “they tried to kill us, they failed, let’s eat!” While this is a bit tongue in cheek, it also captures the essence of many Jewish holidays, which find joy and community despite the challenges Jews have faced throughout their history.

Every Friday at sunset many Jews celebrate the beginning of Shabbat (also known as the Sabbath), the day of rest, which lasts from Friday at sundown until Saturday at sundown. This day of rest and contemplation begins with lighting candles, prayer, and a meal.

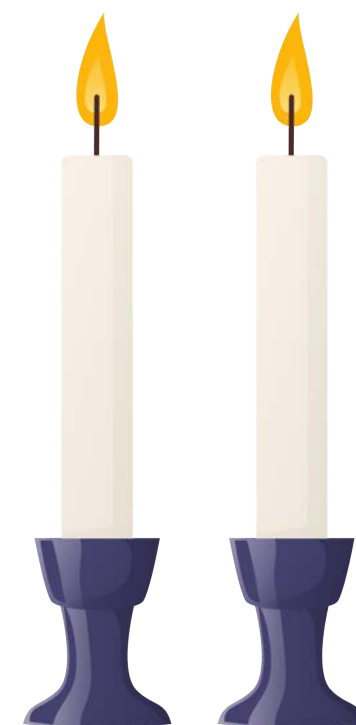
The rest of this section covers just some Jewish holidays and traditions.



Braided challah bread commonly eaten on Shabbat



A kippah (also called a yarmulke), which is worn by observant Jews either during prayer or all the time as part of a requirement that their head be covered as a sign of respect to God



The first three letters  
of the Hebrew alphabet



## Aside: Hebrew

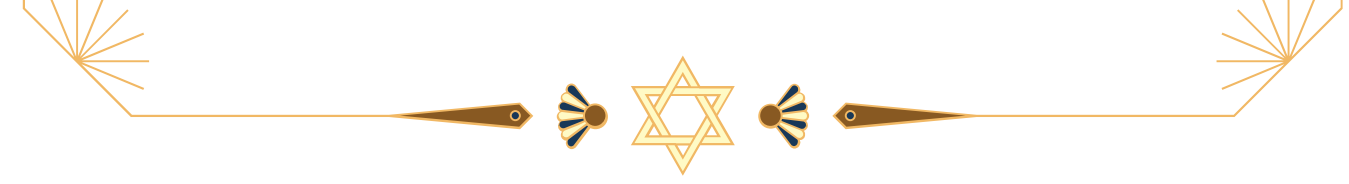
Hebrew is the ancient language of the Jewish people. It was both the spoken language of Jews in ancient **Israel** and the language in which the **Torah** is written. As most Jews were exiled from their homeland in Israel and entered the **diaspora**, Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language, staying in use primarily for religious rituals. However, Hebrew was revived by the Zionist movement and is now a spoken language once again. Hebrew is read from right to left and modern Hebrew is typically written without vowels.

שבת  
שלום



This Hebrew phrase is read from right to left. It says “Shabbat shalom,” the traditional Shabbat greeting.





**Rosh Hashanah** is the Jewish New Year. It marks the birthday of the universe as the day God created Adam and Eve. Rosh Hashanah begins the fall holiday season, known as the Days of Awe or the High Holidays, which are a time of introspection. Like all Jewish holidays, it begins at sundown. Rosh Hashanah is celebrated with candle lighting, festive meals, and prayers.

A common food eaten on the holiday is apples with honey, which represent wishes for a sweet new year. Other symbolic foods include round challah bread to symbolize the circle of life and pomegranates whose plentiful seeds express hopes for many blessings in the coming year. Blowing a shofar, a ram's horn trumpet, is an important part of Rosh Hashanah services at a synagogue.



Our Turn to Host Rosh Hashanah by Jacqueline Kott-Wolle





# Yom Kippur

, meaning “Day of Atonement,” is the holiest day in the Jewish calendar. Yom Kippur follows Rosh Hashanah and is also part of the High Holidays. This is a solemn day dedicated to fasting, repentance, and prayer. It lasts a day from sundown to the next sundown. This is a day when Jews seek forgiveness for transgressions against God. As in Jewish tradition only the individual who has been wronged can forgive, the time leading up to Yom Kippur is also a time to seek forgiveness from others for any wrongs committed in the previous year.



A **Torah** scroll



Jews Praying in the Synagogue on Yom Kippur  
by Maurycy Gottlieb, 1878.



## Bar Mitzvah



means “son of the commandment” and is a coming of age ceremony for Jewish boys. Starting in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some denominations of Judaism also have an equivalent ceremony for girls, called a Bat Mitzvah (“daughter of the commandment”). This religious ceremony typically takes place at age 13 for boys and 12 or 13 for girls, before which the young person spends time studying Judaism and Hebrew.

As part of the ceremony, they read from the **Torah**. Bar or Bat Mitzvah represents a child joining their community and means that they, rather than their parents, are now responsible for their own actions.






# Passover

is observed for eight days (seven in [Israel](#)) in early spring. It celebrates the liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, told in the Exodus story in the Hebrew Bible, in which Moses was sent by God to the Egyptian Pharaoh. When Pharaoh refused to free the Jewish people, Egypt was afflicted with ten plagues, the last of which was the death of firstborn children. The children of Israel were “passed over” and spared from this plague, giving the holiday its name.

Passover is celebrated with a variety of traditions. For the entire holiday Jews must abstain from eating leavened bread (including most breads, pasta, and cakes), as the Israelites left Egypt in such a hurry that there was not time for their bread to rise. Instead of bread, Jews eat a cracker-like, unleavened food called matzah. A Passover [Seder](#) includes telling the story of the Exodus through symbolic foods, such as bitter herbs representing the bitterness of slavery and drinking four cups of wine or grape juice to symbolize the sweetness of freedom. The Seder also includes the wish “next year in Jerusalem,” the longing of [diaspora](#) Jews to return to their homeland.



The four questions (Mah Nishtanah in Hebrew) begin the telling of the Exodus story during a Passover [Seder](#). They are asked by the youngest attendee and focus on what makes Passover different from all other nights. For example, the first question is: “On all other nights, we eat leavened foods and matzah. Why on this night only matzah?” The second question asks: “On all other nights, we eat all vegetables. Why on this night maror (bitter herbs)?”

Matzah



The Four Questions on Jeanne Mance Street by Jacqueline Kott-Wolle



# Chanukah



means “dedication” in Hebrew as it celebrates the re-dedication of the **Second Temple** in Jerusalem in the second century B.C.E.

The **Jews** had risen up in rebellion against the Seleucid dynasty that had colonized **Israel** and the king who had desecrated the Second Temple by putting up a statue of Zeus and sacrificing pigs.

The rebellion drove the Seleucids from Jerusalem and the victorious Jews who rededicated the Second Temple witnessed a miracle. When they went to light the candelabrum called a hanukiah, commonly called a menorah, they realized they only had enough oil to keep the candles burning for a single day, but the candles stayed lit for eight days, after which they were able to find more oil. To celebrate this miracle, Chanukah lasts for eight nights. Chanukah includes the lighting of a menorah, with an additional candle lit each night, and is known as the Festival of Lights. Traditional foods include oil-based foods such as latkes (potato pancakes) and jelly donuts called sufganiyah.



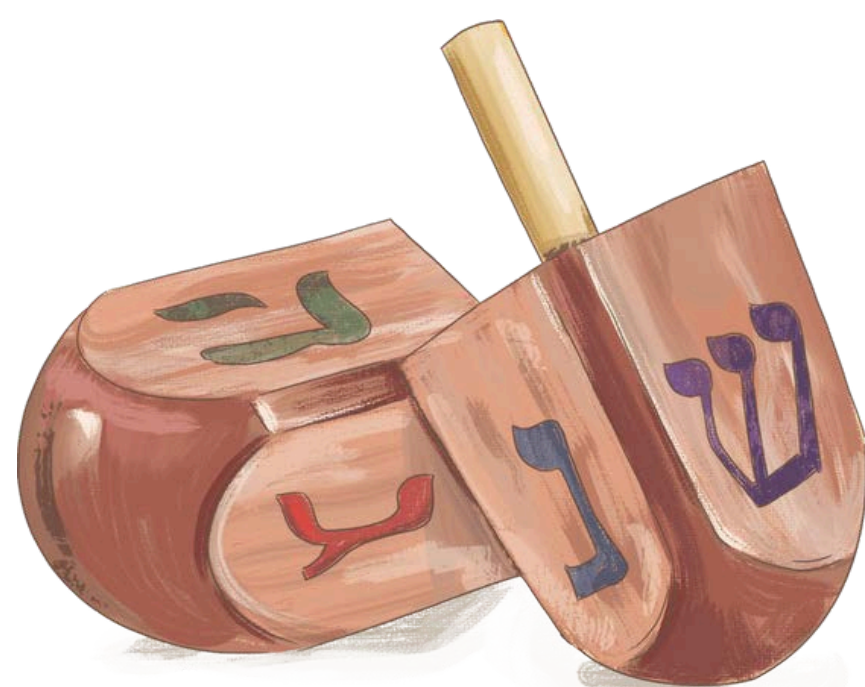
Latkes



Sufganiyah



Dreidels are spinning tops with four Hebrew letters: נ (nun), ג (gimel), ה (hei), ש (shin), which represent the phrase “a great miracle happened there” referring to the Chanukah story.



A photo of the hanukiah in the window of Rabbi Akiva Boruch Posner, looking out at the Nazi Party headquarters building in Kiel, Germany in 1931. The Posner family left Germany for **British Mandate Palestine** in 1933 and convinced many in the Rabbi's congregation to leave as well.



# A Brief(ish) History of Antisemitism



*The Entire City* by Samuel Bak





# A Brief(ish) History of Antisemitism



The history of the **Jewish** people began over 4,000 years ago. The Hebrew Bible tells of a covenant between God and the Jewish people starting with Abraham. That covenant was renewed at Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments and is renewed continually as an eternal relationship between God and the Jewish people. The Hebrew Bible also records the experience of the Jewish people in the Land of **Israel**. The Romans conquered Jerusalem, the capital of Israel, in the year 70 C.E., destroyed the Jewish **temple** there, and forced most of the Jews into exile. These Jews migrated throughout the rest of the world, creating new communities who are now known as the Jewish **Diaspora**. Jewish life flourished and Jews became an integral part of the cultural, business, and intellectual life of the communities in which they lived.

Jews have always been a minority whose religious and/or cultural traditions were different from the majority around them. Depending on the times and circumstances, they prospered and found social acceptance or they experienced persecution and isolation. In periods of social and economic stress, it was sometimes convenient to blame Jews for causing social problems.

Although Christianity grew out of Jewish teachings - Jesus himself was a practicing Jew - the Christian Church remained hostile toward Jews because they did not accept Christianity. Jews were even blamed for the death of Christ. However, the Church didn't want to kill Jews either. The theologian (and saint) Augustine of Hippo, gave the Jewish people a special role. Augustine said that Jews had a special relationship with God and therefore should not be killed. Instead, Augustine wanted Jews to live as strangers amongst Christians as "proof" that being Christian was better than being Jewish. The phrase that best sums up his vision for Jews isn't something Augustine actually said, but it describes his idea succinctly: Jews should "survive, not thrive."





13th century statues from the Strasbourg Cathedral in France. Defeated and blindfolded Synagoga (right) is contrasted with victorious Ecclesia (left).

The secondary goal was to convince all Jews to convert to Christianity by showing them the supposed inferiority of their ways. This meant that Jews weren't wiped out by Christians in Europe, but the relationship wasn't always smooth. Jews were held up as an example of all that was bad in the world, including sometimes being associated with the Devil. Churches contained art depicting Christianity ("Ecclesia") as triumphant and Jews ("Synagoga," a reference to Jewish places of worship - [synagogues](#)) as defeated and blinded to the truth.

Over the next few centuries Jews were often forced to wear pointed hats or yellow badges in order to identify them as Jews. This visual separation was also used for Jews in the Muslim world, where differences in clothing denoted non-Muslim groups.

Over time, antisemitic ideas became entrenched in Europe, with certain [tropes](#), or [stereotypes](#), about Jews repeated until many believed them to be fact. We are going to trace the development and consequences of some of the core ideas of [antisemitism](#) as they wound through European history and then spread around the globe. These ideas not only had real and often devastating consequences for Jews as individuals and as a community - they also became deeply embedded in European culture.



In this image from 1515 of Jews being burned at the stake, the Jews can be identified as Jews by the round yellow badge on their clothing.

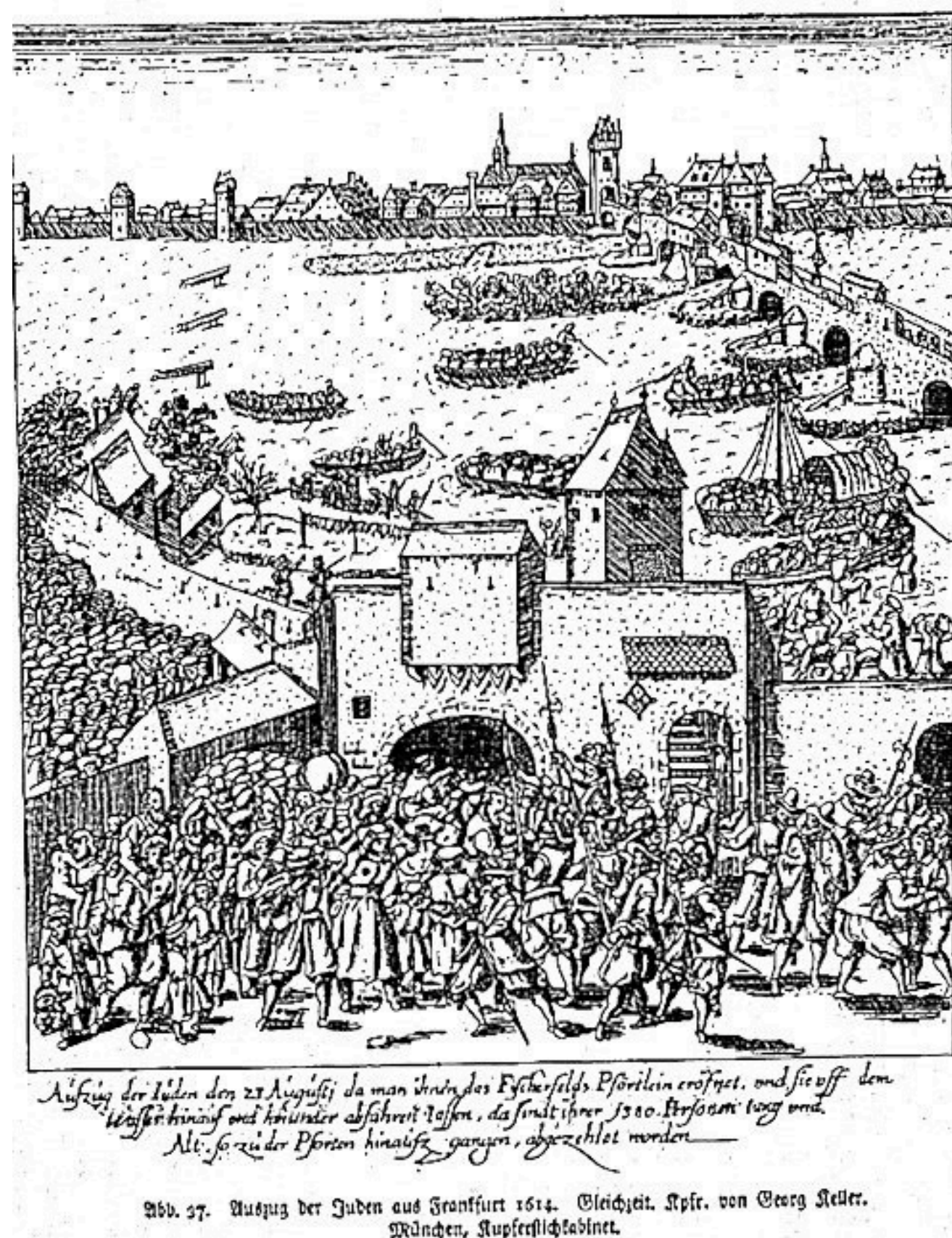


# Antisemitic Trope: Jews and Money



As Jews in Europe were not supposed to thrive, merely survive, they faced a variety of restrictions in different parts of Europe during the Middle Ages. Many professions were closed to Jews, and they were often forbidden to own land. In order to make a living, some Jews became moneylenders. Before the rise of banks, moneylenders were an important part of a local economy, but Christians were not supposed to lend money at interest to other Christians, which when done at high rates was known as **usury**. However, despite this restriction, most moneylenders at the time were Christians, not Jews. Jews were able to step in and provide this service, particularly for local nobility, kings, and the Church, but this job also made them targets. After all, people don't tend to like someone they owe money to. It also is the origin of long-running **stereotypes** associating Jews with money that persist to this day.

Monarchs who couldn't or wouldn't repay their debts realized they could just expel their kingdom's Jewish community, take their property, and cancel their own debts. This is exactly what happened in England in 1290. Jewish communities eventually experienced forced expulsions from most western European cities and countries, including France in 1306 and Spain in 1492. However, antisemitic stereotypes stayed even after Jews were expelled; when Shakespeare wrote the antisemitic caricature of the moneylender Shylock in *The Merchant of Venice*, Jews hadn't lived in England for more than a hundred years.



The Jewish community is expelled from Frankfurt in 1614.





# Escalation: The Crusades



The **Crusades**, the first of which was called in 1095, marked an important and violent escalation in the history of antisemitism, even though Jews were not its intended victims. The Catholic Church called on its followers to travel to the Holy Land (the area of the Middle East in and around Jerusalem) to fight the Muslims who at the time had conquered the area. Some crusaders, however, were confused. They didn't understand why they should kill non-Christians in the Middle East but leave non-Christians alive in Europe. So as the First Crusade traveled towards Jerusalem they attempted forced conversions and massacred local Jews, particularly in Germany. Jews continued to be targeted during the Crusades, not just in Europe but also in the Holy Land.



## A Jewish Chronicle of the First Crusade

“Those who remained in their homes were set upon by the steppe-wolves who pillaged men, women, and infants, children and old people. They pulled down the stairways and destroyed the houses, looting and plundering; and they took the Torah Scroll, trampled it in the mud, and tore and burned it. The enemy devoured the children of **Israel** with open maw.”<sup>2</sup>

From *The Chronicle of Solomon bar Simson*

An illustration from the 1300s depicting the Shepherd's Crusade (1320), during which hundreds of Jews were killed in France and Aragon.

<sup>2</sup> The Jews and the Crusaders: The Hebrew Chronicles of the First and Second Crusades, translated and edited by Shlomo Eidelberg (Hoboken: KTAV Publishing, 1996).





## Aside: Antisemitism and the Muslim World



A 13<sup>th</sup> century illustration of a Jew and a Muslim playing chess.

After the Muslim colonization of the Middle East, North Africa, and Spain, Jews and Muslims lived and worked together across these areas. Jews had legal status as “People of the Book,” meaning there was a recognition that Judaism and Islam shared a belief in one god and in a similar ethical framework. While Jews, along with Christians, faced certain restrictions, they had a protected status and were able to practice their religion. While some negative views about Jews are present in both the Qur’an and the Muslim oral tradition, this did not manifest as the demonization of Jews that we are covering in Christian Europe. Modern antisemitism across the Muslim world is considered a European colonial import.



# The Weirdest Trope: The Blood Libel

The average Christian living in Europe in the Middle Ages didn't always understand Augustine's theology of letting Jews "survive, not thrive," so sometimes there was popular violence against Jews, especially in times of social or economic upheaval. **Stereotypes, discrimination,** and extreme violence against Jews were common. This violence was often justified by a variety of lies about Jews. Sometimes these developed because of misunderstandings, others because of the regrettable human tendency to blame misfortune on those seen as different or Other. An extreme example of this is a myth about Jews known as the **blood libel**. The first

example of the blood libel from the Middle Ages comes from Norwich, England in 1144. When a boy named William was found stabbed in the woods, his family (with no evidence) blamed the local Jewish community. The murder was never solved, but a local monk tried to get William declared a saint. Having a local saint could attract pilgrims to a community, who would bring fame and money. But there needs to be a compelling reason for someone to be made a saint. So instead of a tragic unsolved murder, the monk falsely claimed that William was murdered by Jews, who supposedly treated him like Jesus on the cross (remember that Christian tradition at the time held that Jews were collectively responsible for the murder of Jesus).

The story of the blood libel spread and there were other accusations (also without evidence) in England and other parts of Europe. A common reaction to blood libel

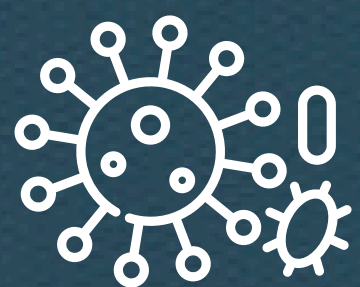


A German woodcut from 1492 depicting the myth of Saturn eating his children. In this image, the Roman mythological figure of Saturn is depicted as a Jewish person - the circle badge on his robes was a badge Jews at the time were required to wear to identify themselves.



accusations was the murder of local Jews. These stories developed their own tropes: Jews supposedly kidnapped Christian children and used their blood for religious rituals, used the blood to bake matzo for the Passover holiday, or consumed it directly to improve their own blood. In reality, Jewish tradition forbids consuming the blood of animals, let alone of people. The segregation of Jews and Christians resulted in misunderstandings and myths spreading about Jewish traditions and religious practices.

As bizarre and false as the blood libel is, it is still present in antisemitic discourse today. But some who use it aren't even aware of where it comes from. So when cartoonists depict Israeli leaders drinking blood, for example, they may not understand why this repetition of the blood libel is so upsetting to Jews and so dangerous.



## Antisemitic Trope: Jews and Disease

The Black Death (a bubonic plague pandemic that spread across Europe and beyond from 1346 to 1353) marked another escalation in antisemitism and the birth of another long-standing antisemitic trope: the supposed connection between Jews and disease. As the plague spread, a variety of social outsiders, including Jews, lepers, and Romani were blamed for a catastrophe that medieval Europeans could not understand. In an atmosphere of terror and confusion, Jews were accused of poisoning wells in order to make Christians sick. While today we know that bubonic plague is caused by the bacterium *Yersinia pestis* and spread through flea bites in humans and animals rather than via Jewish plotting, the association of Jews and disease is unfortunately still in use today.

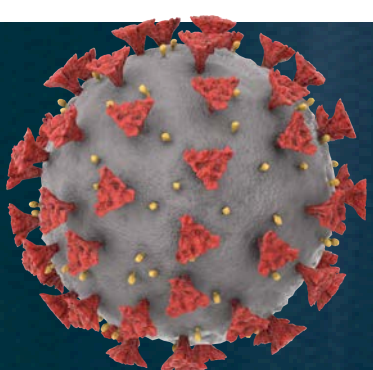
### Aside: A Long Shadow

In their article “[Persecution Perpetuated](#),” Nico Voigtländer and Hans-Joachim Voth found that parts of Germany with pogroms from the time of the plague also experienced violence against Jews in the 1920s and 1930s.





An illustration from a manuscript created in 1349 shows Jews being burned in Brussels during the Black Death.



## Aside: Antisemitism During Covid-19

Just as Jews were falsely blamed for the Black Death, they were also falsely blamed for the Covid-19 pandemic. The flyer shown here, which claims that “every single aspect of the covid agenda is Jewish,” lists Jews in a variety of positions in order to claim that all of these people were colluding to manipulate non-Jews. Note that the pentagram on the right side of the page is an attempt to connect Jews with the Devil.

**EVERY SINGLE ASPECT OF THE COVID AGENDA IS JEWISH:**

**BLACKROCK AND VANGUARD ARE THE TWO LARGEST SHAREHOLDERS OF BOTH PFIZER AND GLAXOSMITHKLINE, AS WELL AS PRACTICALLY ALL OF THE MSM.**

REMEMBER... THOSE WHO ARGUED THAT "IF YOU'RE AGAINST LOCKDOWNS, YOU'RE AGAINST STATE POWER" WERE LITERALLY **SHABBOS GOY** CARRYING OUT THE WILL OF **THE JEWS**, WITTINGLY OR UNWITTINGLY.

**EVERY SINGLE ASPECT OF THE COVID AGENDA IS JEWISH:**

- CDC DIRECTOR - ROCHELLE WALENSKY - JEWISH
- CDC DEPUTY DIRECTOR - ANNE SCHUCHAT - JEWISH
- CDC CHIEF OF STAFF - SHERRI BERGER - JEWISH
- CDC CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER - MITCHELL WOLFE - JEWISH
- CDC DIRECTOR, WASHINGTON OFFICE - JEFF RECZEK - JEWISH
- COVID CZAR - JEFF ZIENTS - JEWISH
- COVID SENIOR ADVISER - ANDY SLAVITT - JEWISH
- HHS SECRETARY - XAVIER BECERRA - JEWISH
- HHS ASSISTANT HEALTH SECRETARY - RACHEL LEVINE (A TRANSGENDER) - JEWISH
- HEAD OF PFIZER - ALBERT BOURLA - JEWISH
- PFIZER CHIEF SCIENTIST - MIKAEL DOLSTEN - JEWISH
- MONDERNA CHIEF SCIENTIST - TAL ZAKS - JEWISH
- BLACKROCK CEO - LARRY FINK - JEWISH
- BLACKROCK PRESIDENT - ROB KAPITO - JEWISH
- VANGUARD CEO - MORTIMER J. BUCKLEY - JEWISH

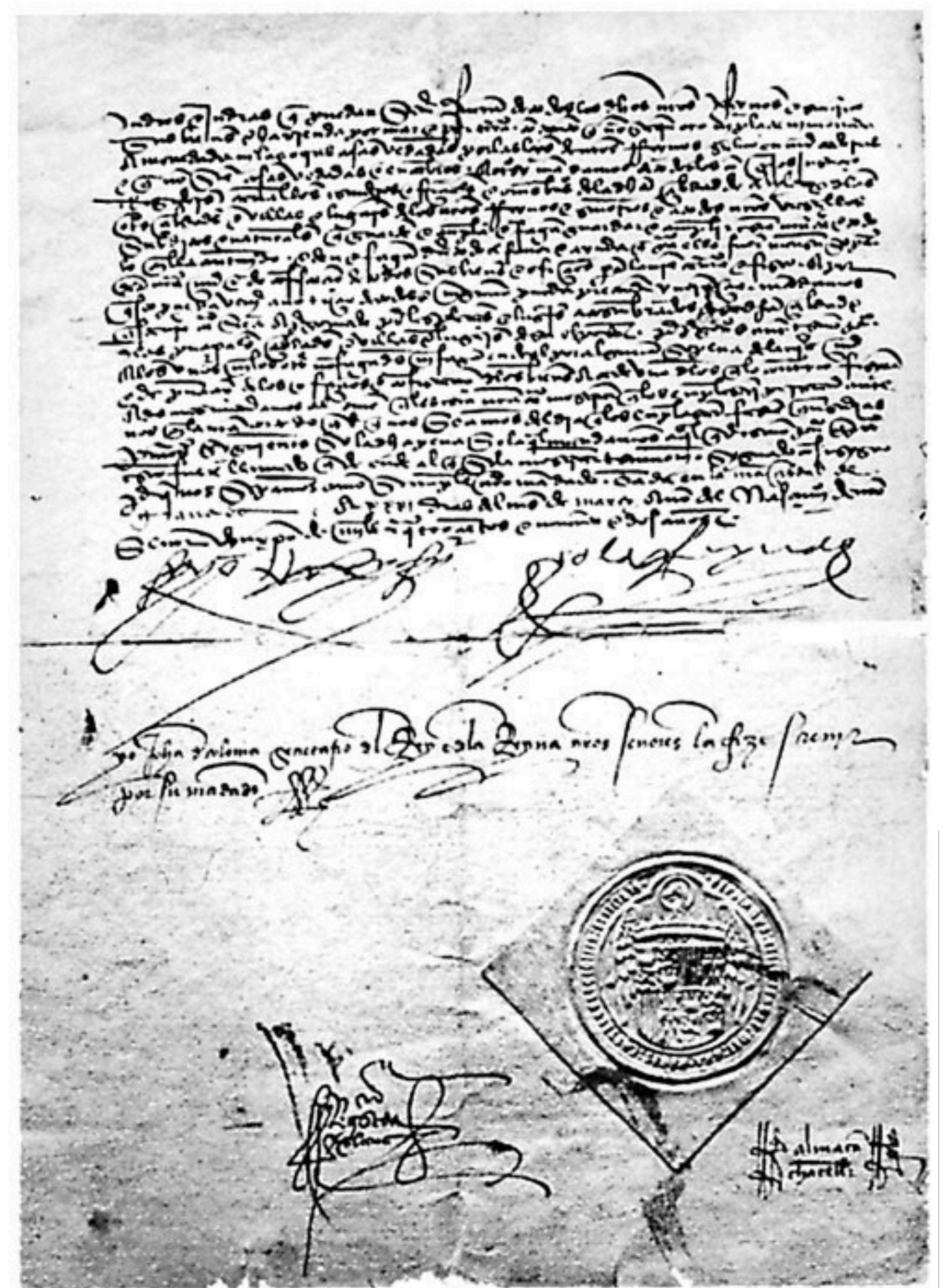


# The Spanish Inquisition

When Jews were threatened with death across Europe, they could sometimes survive by converting to Christianity. When Spanish monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella expelled Jews from Spain in 1492, some Jews converted to Christianity rather than go into exile. Jewish converts to Christianity in Spain were known as New Christians, *conversos*, or *marranos* (Spanish for pigs). Prejudice against these converts (from both Judaism and Islam) took on a pseudo-racial cast as concerns began to be voiced about the “purity of the blood.” The belief grew that converts, who had converted by force rather than conviction, were not sincere and that these converts would continue to practice Judaism in secret. The Spanish Inquisition was set up in 1478 to root out these supposed “*judaizers*” and ensure adherence to Catholic orthodoxy throughout Spanish society.



A page from the Barcelona Haggadah, from 14<sup>th</sup> century Catalonia, showing the Yom Tov bracha (holiday blessing).



A sealed copy of the Alhambra Decree, of 1492 also known as the Edict of Expulsion, which expelled Jews from Spain.



# Ghettoization

The word “**ghetto**” originates from Venice, where in 1516 Jews were confined to a specific neighborhood. This systematized the frequent segregation of Jews to “Jewish quarters” in many major European cities. Ghettos were often located in undesirable parts of the city. For example, the ghetto in Rome frequently flooded. The goal, as we have seen before, was to encourage Jews to convert - anyone who converted would be able to move out of the ghetto. This practice soon spread across much of western Europe.

## Antisemitism Spreads

As Europeans colonized many parts of the globe, they brought antisemitism with them. For example, the Spanish Inquisition spread to Spanish-ruled Latin America, where charges of “**judaizing**” could lead to torture and execution. However, it wasn’t just the specific targeting of Jews that followed Europeans to the new world - antisemitic ideas travelled along with people.

In the United States, while religious freedom gave Jews the ability to practice their religion freely, antisemitic ideas flourished. For example, in 1862 future president Ulysses S. Grant issued General Order 11, which expelled Jews from Tennessee, Mississippi, and Kentucky. Grant was trying to stop the illegal trade in cotton from the Confederacy, which he incorrectly blamed on, you guessed it, Jews.



Mariana de Carabajal is burned at the stake in Mexico City in 1601 for supposedly “**judaizing**,” or following Jewish practices while pretending to be Catholic.



# Enlightenment?



In 18th century western Europe, the Enlightenment and its ideas about human equality, religious tolerance, and civil rights enabled Jews to leave the ghettos and become almost equal citizens under the law, a process known as Jewish emancipation. This emancipation was spread across Europe by Napoleon and became seen as the correct path for modern societies.

But this equality came with a price.

In revolutionary France, there was a debate about whether or not Jews should be given full citizenship rights. A famous phrase from this debate shows the tension that has often existed when Jews were granted rights: “All must be denied to Jews as a nation; all must be given to Jews as individuals.” Jews were expected to assimilate into the dominant culture. They could stay Jews by religion, since religious



NAPOLÉON LE GRAND,  
rétablit le culte des Israélites, le 30 Mai 1806.

A French print from 1806 shows Napoleon granting freedom to Jews.

freedom was seen as important, but were expected to give up everything else that made them different. Some Enlightenment philosophers like Voltaire even found a new way to justify hating Jews. They claimed that Jews clung to their religious and cultural traditions and should give them up in order to be part of the modern world.

As is common when a formerly persecuted group receives equal rights, there was a backlash to Jewish emancipation. When Jews appeared to be succeeding in professions now open to them, Jewish lawyers, doctors, politicians, and military officers were sometimes treated with contempt and distrust.





A caricature of Alfred Dreyfus as “the traitor” by Victor Lenepveu, which was published as part of a series called “Museum of Horrors.” The series denigrated Dreyfus and his real and perceived supporters.

This was even true in France, the leader of emancipation, where an event known as the Dreyfus Affair divided the nation. Alfred Dreyfus was a French military officer who was falsely accused of spying for Germany, put on trial, found guilty, publicly humiliated, and imprisoned. Attempts to demonstrate Dreyfus’s innocence only made the military dig in their heels more. What a French person thought about Dreyfus became based not so much on the evidence, but rather on their support for democracy (which correlated to support for Dreyfus) or on support for traditional institutions like the monarchy and military (which was connected to the campaign against Dreyfus). An innocent Jewish man thus

became a symbol for much broader political debates and identities. This can still happen to Jews today, and the consequences for those Jews caught in the crossfire can be devastating.



An 1895 illustration by Henri Meyer shows the ceremony in which Alfred Dreyfus was publicly stripped of his military rank. His honors were torn from his uniform and his sword was broken. This was meant as a public humiliation of Dreyfus in front of his peers. Members of the public also gathered to witness the ceremony, with some in the crowd shouting “Mort aux juifs! À mort le traître! À mort Judas!” (“Death to the Jews! Death to the traitor! Death to Judas!”). At the conclusion of the ceremony, Dreyfus insisted upon his innocence to the crowd.

Dreyfus was sent to Devil’s Island, a volcanic island off the coast of French Guiana, where he was imprisoned for more than four years. He endured a second court-martial in which he was again wrongly convicted. The actual traitor, Ferdinand Esterhazy, was found innocent. The truth and the fate of an individual, particularly a Jewish one, was considered less important than the honor of the French military.



After a long and arduous campaign, Alfred Dreyfus was eventually released. He served in the French military during WWI, as did his son, and his wife Lucie worked as a nurse with the Red Cross. Alfred died in 1935, but Lucie was still alive during WWII. She was hidden in a convent during [the Holocaust](#). One of Alfred and Lucie's granddaughters, Madeleine Lévy, joined the French Resistance against the Nazis, was captured by members of the French militia, and was deported to Auschwitz where she was murdered at the age of twenty-five.



A photo of Alfred Dreyfus with his wife Lucie and children Jeanne (left) and Pierre Léon (right).



Madeleine Lévy, granddaughter of Alfred and Lucie Dreyfus, in 1940.

Antisemitism in its old forms also continued to persist across Europe as well, particularly in eastern Europe. In the late 19th and 20th centuries, anti-Jewish [pogroms](#) - organized riots and outbreaks of mass violence - erupted in Russia and Poland. This brutality led to a flood of emigration and great numbers of Jews came to the United States and more western parts of Europe, including Germany. By this point, antisemitic [tropes](#) were deeply rooted across European societies. People might know individual Jews (although Jews were a minority in every country in Europe), but could still believe [stereotypes](#) about Jews as a whole.





# Antisemitic Trope: Jews and World Domination

The backlash to Jewish emancipation increased along with Jewish immigration to western Europe from the east. Antisemitic ideas also came east. In 1903, a document appeared in the Russian Empire that claimed to be the minutes of a meeting of Jewish leaders in the late 1800s who plotted world domination. While antisemites have claimed that the minutes are from the First Zionist Congress held in Basel in 1897, this “[Protocols of the Elders of Zion](#)” is not real - it is a forgery based on several previously written documents, including a satiric novel called *Dialogue in Hell Between Machiavelli and Montesquieu*. Despite being proved false numerous times (including by the *Times of London* newspaper in 1921), the Protocols has been translated into many languages and continues to be read today. It has fueled a variety of conspiracy theories which claim that Jews want to take over the world or that they already have taken over the world and control events via puppets in positions of power in governments, banks, and other powerful institutions.

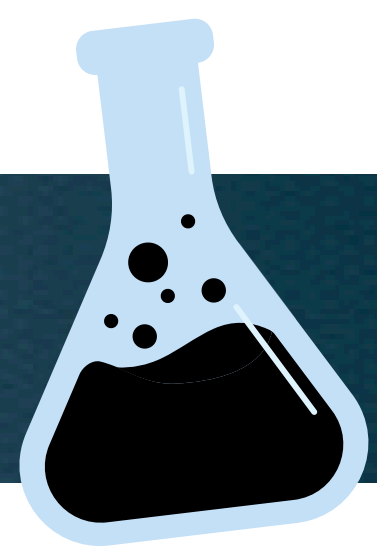
A particular proponent of the Protocols was Henry Ford, who serialized the text with commentary in his newspaper *The Dearborn Independent* and published it as a book called *The International Jew*. Ford’s antisemitism was deeply admired by the Nazis, including Hitler, who praised Ford in his book *Mein Kampf* and kept a bust of Ford in his office.

The front page illustration of a 1911 edition of a Russian book called *The Great in the Small* that also contained the text of the Protocols. It contains a variety of symbols associated with the occult. The attraction of the Protocols isn’t logical, but conspiratorial. It speaks to a need to explain complex changes in the world in simple terms.



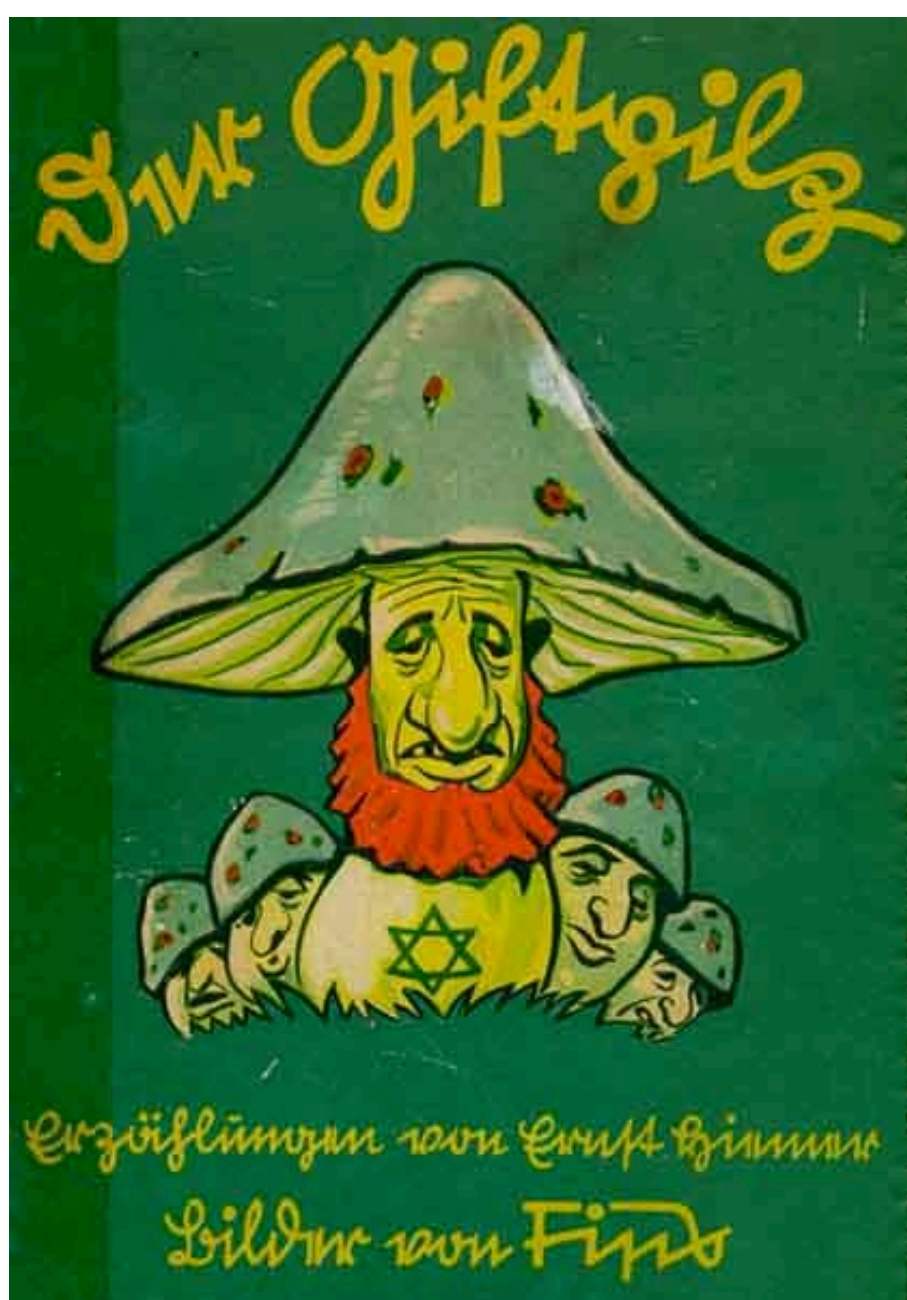


# “Scientific Racism”

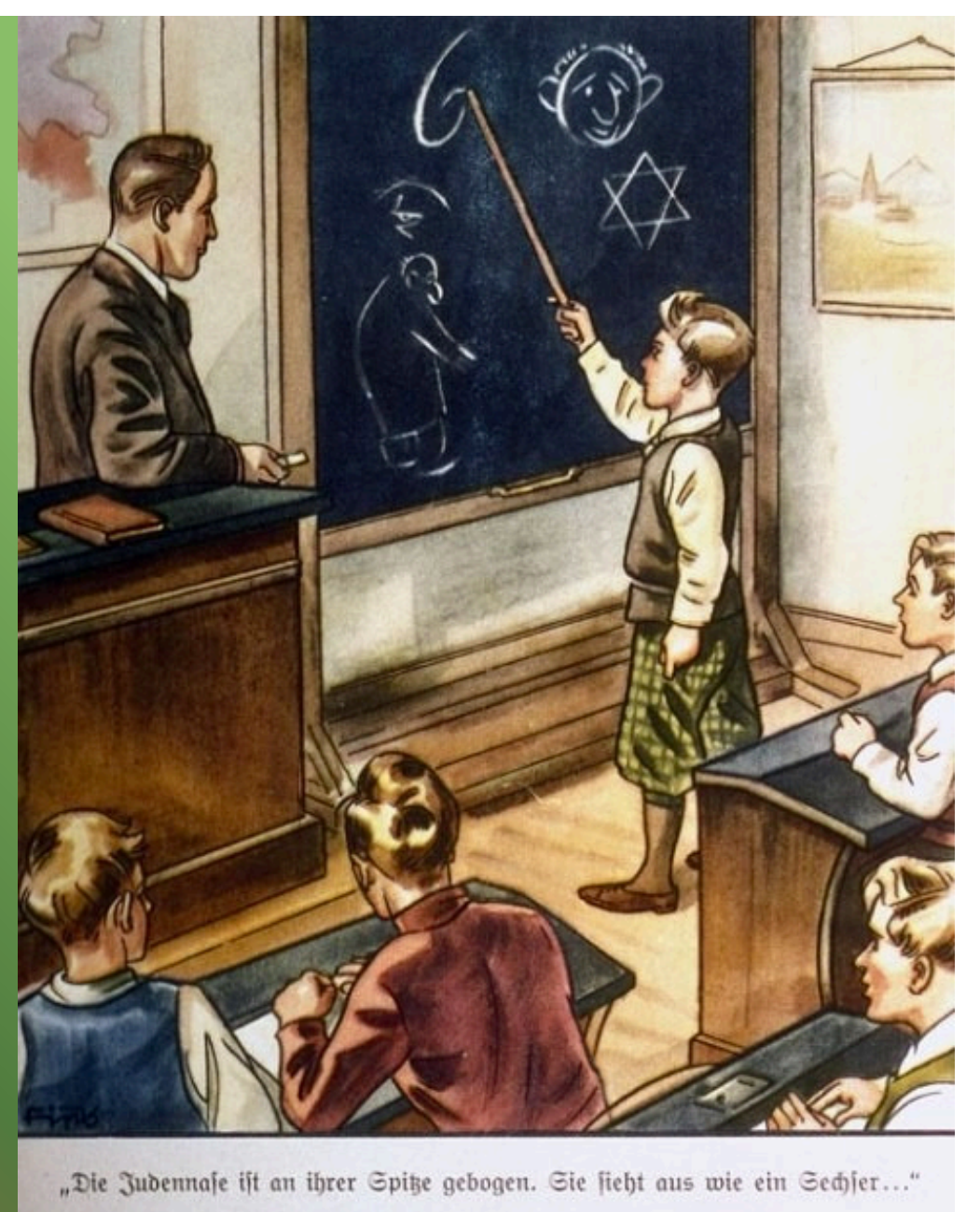


In the early 1900s, a new type of antisemitism appeared. This used the new language of science and claimed to be against Jews because of their supposed race. This was part of a broader effort by scientists in Europe and the United States to classify humans the way animals had recently been classified. While some of the earliest efforts to do so saw all races as equal, this did not last long. Soon races were seen in a hierarchy. Jews, categorized as a “**Semitic**” race from the Middle East, were seen as inferior to the “Nordic” race of northern Europe. Racial “science” began to associate Jews with the same stereotypes that had been used for Jews for years, even though these were not accurate. Jews were frequently depicted as ugly, with extra large facial features, particularly large noses, hunched backs, and dark hair.

**Racial antisemitism** took away an important safety net for Jews. While we have seen that Jews were faced with discrimination and even murder throughout European history, they were sometimes offered the option to convert to Christianity to save their lives. Racial antisemitism saw Jews as different due to their biology rather than their beliefs and practices. People who wanted to rid the world of Jews could no longer do so by changing their minds. The ground had been laid for **the Holocaust**.



The cover (left) and an illustration (right) from a Nazi-era children's book called The Poisonous Mushroom, show how old stereotypes of what Jews supposedly look like were reused by the Nazis. The Poisonous Mushroom compared Jews to mushrooms that can seem safe to eat but are actually poison and therefore must be classified and identified for everyone's safety. In the illustration on the right, students are learning how to identify a Jew: the boy is pointing to a shape that looks like a '6' on the board - this is supposed to be a typical “Jewish nose.” The full translated text is available online [here](#).





## A stylized illustration of a diverse group of ten people shown in profile, facing right. They are arranged in a slightly overlapping line. The individuals have various skin tones, hair colors, and styles, and are wearing different types of clothing, including hoodies, sweaters, a hijab, and a suit. The background is a dark, textured green.

Over time, there became an established **stereotype** for how Jews supposedly looked. There are many examples of this in a variety of visual media from the Middle Ages to today. **Caricatures** of Jews only rarely show women - usually Jews are represented as male. They are shown with large noses and lips, dark hair with receding hairlines, hunched shoulders, and heavyset bodies. These caricatures were sometimes paired with animal body parts like horns or referencing the drinking of blood (remember the **blood libel**?). Needless to say, Jews are a diverse group who do not all fit this stereotype and you cannot tell someone is Jewish by their looks. But the stereotypes persist today.



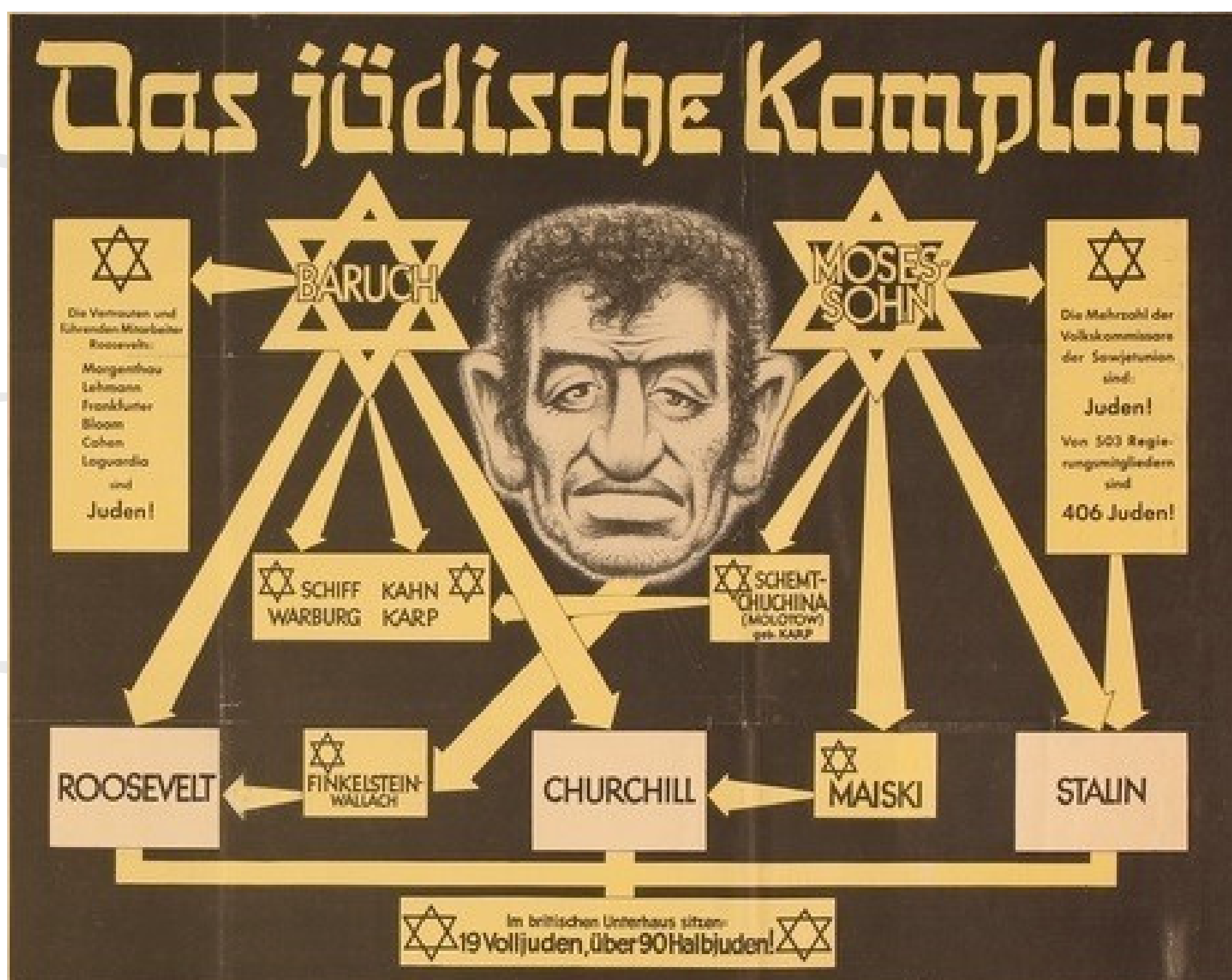
22. B.—THESE FIGURES WILL NOT BE FOUND ON THE SAME DAY.

The Commercial Vampire, an illustration by Leon Barritt from 1898, demonstrates how all the antisemitic tropes under discussion often came together by the end of the 19th century. How many antisemitic tropes can you spot?



# The Holocaust and Its Aftermath

In 1939, the year World War II began, the total world Jewish population stood at over 16 million. Approximately 9 million Jews lived in the European countries that Nazi Germany would occupy during World War II. About six million Jewish people were murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators during [the Holocaust](#). As of 2025, the world Jewish population has still not recovered to the level it was in 1939. Jewish communities were comprised of people who loved their families, celebrated their traditions, worked in different professions and trades, served their countries in the military and other civil offices, and practiced their religion. Yet all of them were targeted for murder by Nazi Germany and its collaborators - not for anything they had done, but simply because they were Jews. The mass murder of the Holocaust emerged from Nazi ideology, but it could not have happened without the lengthy tradition of antisemitism across Europe. Some people and groups in Nazi-occupied or allied countries willingly participated in the murder of Jews, including partisan groups who otherwise fought the Nazis. Jews desperate to escape from Germany in the 1930s had difficulty finding safe havens due to both general anti-immigrant and specifically antisemitic prejudice. This shows just how deeply antisemitism had penetrated European society.



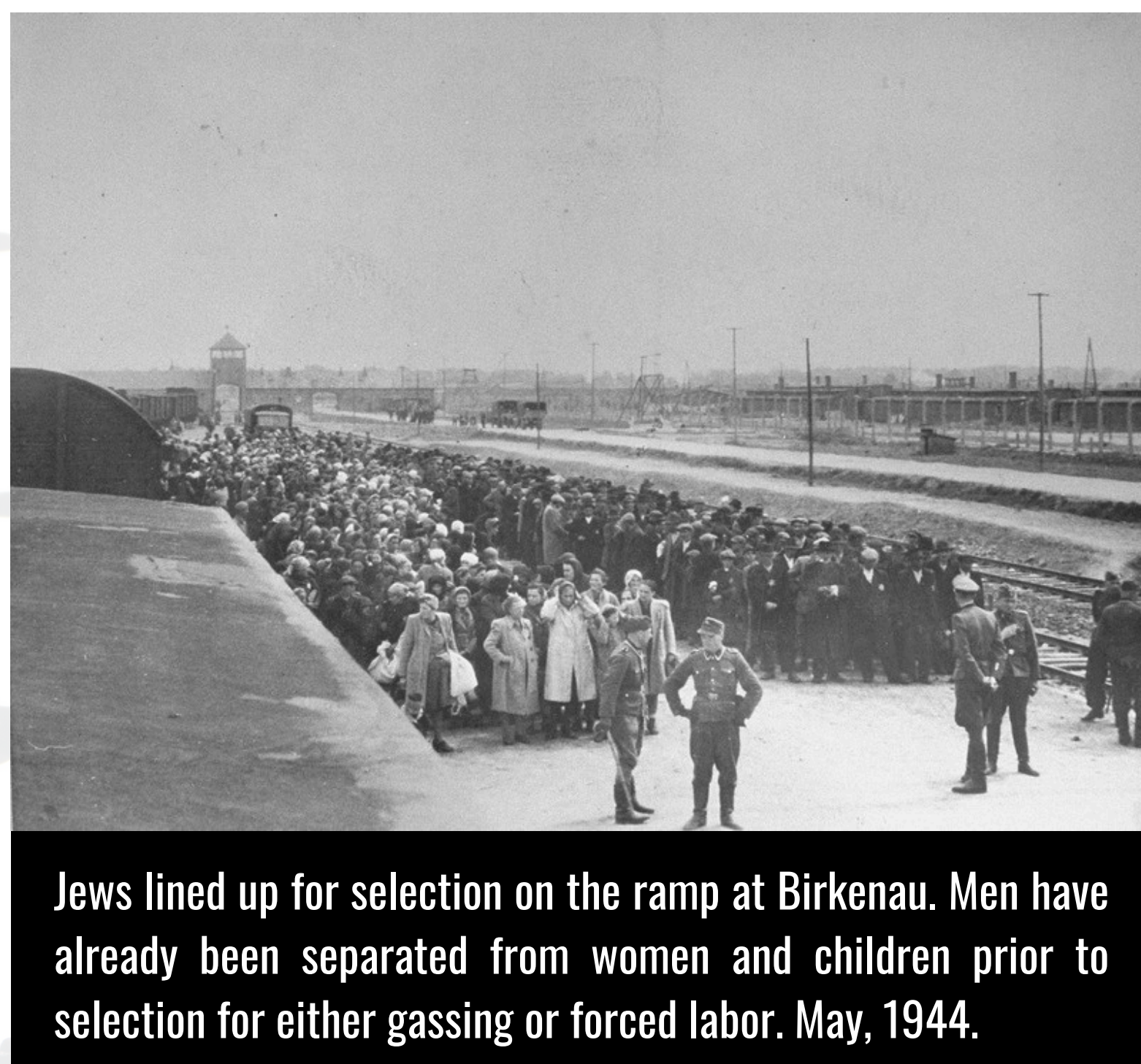
Nazi propaganda poster entitled "The Jewish Conspiracy" falsely links Jews to Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill. It is accompanied by an illustrated caricature of a Jewish man.

The claim that Jews were manipulating the Allies for their own gain was a frequent message of Nazi propaganda during WWII. This was also claimed by some isolationists in Allied countries, including the United States. In the U.S., people who were determined to prevent U.S. entry into WWII called President FDR "Franklin Rosenfeld" (a name associated with Jews). This is recycled from the idea of Jewish puppet masters behind world events described in [the Protocols of the Elders of Zion](#).



The Nazi murder of Jewish people during the Holocaust differed from their treatment of any other group. This does not reduce the impact upon **other groups**, such as Roma and Sinti, political opponents, Soviet prisoners of war, members of the LGBTQ community, people with disabilities, Jehovah's Witnesses, Afro-Germans, non-Jewish Poles, and victims of reprisal actions against civilians of every country occupied by the Nazis. These stories should be and are told and remembered. But there is a reason that many histories of this terrible time focus on Jewish people, and that the term "the Holocaust" refers specifically to Nazi crimes against Jews.

Some of the most famous images of the Holocaust are those of people being selected on the ramp at Auschwitz-Birkenau. This "selection" determined who would be murdered in the gas chambers immediately and who would endure a slower death from forced labor, ill treatment, and starvation. This process of selection only applied to Jews.



Jews lined up for selection on the ramp at Birkenau. Men have already been separated from women and children prior to selection for either gassing or forced labor. May, 1944.

While over two million Jews were murdered in these killing centers, others were killed in mass shooting operations, died in ghettos and concentration camps, or on death marches.



The Kalderon family in Bitola, Macedonia. This was one of many photos that were used by the Bulgarian occupation authorities to register the Jewish community of Bitola in preparation for their deportation to Treblinka in March 1943. Almost all of the Jews deported from Bitola were murdered in the Holocaust simply because they were Jewish.



A German soldier who witnessed the shooting of Jews during the Holocaust expressed his approval of the mass murder in a letter home, saying, “the Jews are guilty of everything. This battle is an emergency that has to be fought through and through. Only then will the world find its eternal peace.” This attitude was the result of centuries of antisemitism which put all the ills of the world on the shoulders of Jews. The Holocaust serves as a warning that unchecked antisemitism can too easily lead to mass murder.

In the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust, survivors who tried to return home sometimes encountered violence from their former communities. In the town of Kielce, a [blood libel](#) accusation resulted in the murder of Holocaust survivors who tried to return to their homes. Many other survivors who tried to return to their communities found that their homes had been destroyed or stolen - many had nowhere to return to. In this atmosphere of continued discrimination and dispossession, many Jews decided to leave Europe. Most survivors wanted to go either to the United States or to [British Mandate Palestine](#), parts of which in 1948 would become the state of [Israel](#).

## Holocaust Denial



[The Holocaust](#) made antisemitism less acceptable to many, but antisemitism did not vanish. In fact, a new form of antisemitism emerged: [Holocaust denial](#). Holocaust denial was sometimes a response from people who did not want to face what they, their nation, and/or family did during the Holocaust. But it also emerged from people with no personal connection to the Holocaust. In these cases, Holocaust denial was an attempt to rehabilitate antisemitism.

Holocaust denial takes different forms. Sometimes it manifests as claiming that the Holocaust, one of the most well-documented events in human history, did not happen. In this version, Jews supposedly are lying about the Holocaust in order to get some benefit. Downplaying the facts of the Holocaust, from the existence of gas chambers to the number of Jews killed, is also a form of Holocaust denial.





# Soviet Antisemitism



In the victorious Soviet Union after WWII, Jews who remained faced continued challenges. Religious Jews had already been persecuted and compelled to give up their religious traditions before the war, but the suspicion and mistrust of the Cold War also impacted Jews.

The Soviet Union originally supported the creation of the state of [Israel](#) in 1948, but quickly soured on it when it appeared that Israel would be in the orbit of the United States. In order to delegitimize Israel, the Soviet Union utilized old antisemitic tropes and came up with new ones. Because of Israel's connections to the United States and western Europe and in order to divide it from other countries in the region in an age of decolonization, Soviet propaganda claimed falsely that Israel was a “[settler-colonialist](#)” or “imperialist” state. In Europe, Jews were told they were strangers from the Middle East. After the creation of Israel, Jews in the Middle East were suddenly told they were strangers from Europe.

This propaganda did not die with the Cold War - it still exists today. Many of the people who use terms like “settler-colonialism” or “imperialism” to talk about Israel have no idea that they are repeating Soviet propaganda, but it spreads quickly across social media anyway.

Antisemitic image from Pravda Vostoka (“The Truth of the East”), a Russian-language newspaper published in Uzbekistan, from December 1971. The title is “The banner of the [Zionist](#) gang,” and the image combines a Star of David and swastika in order to equate the state of Israel with the Nazis.







# Expulsion of Jews from Middle Eastern Countries

Until the 1960s, about one million Jews lived in Muslim-majority countries across the Middle East and North Africa, including modern-day Egypt, Libya, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen. Today, however, only a few thousand remain. Following the Arab-Israeli war in 1948, and again following the Iranian Revolution in 1979-1980, thousands of Jews were expelled or forced to flee countries where their families had lived for generations for the safety of Israel, the United States, or anywhere that would take them. The danger was international news: on May 16, 1948, the New York Times printed an article titled “Jews in Grave Danger in all Muslim Lands: Nine Hundred Thousand in Africa and Asia face wrath of their foes.”

## Aside: The Farhud



The **Farhud** (Arabic for “violent dispossession”) was a **pogrom** targeting the Jewish population of Baghdad, Iraq on June 1 - 2, 1941. It was led by pro-German Iraqi soldiers, police, and young people. Between 150 and 180 Jews were murdered and 600 were injured. There was widespread looting and destruction of property. Urged on by Nazi propaganda, the rioters also associated Jews with British colonialism in Iraq and/or with the Zionist movement that Arab nationalists were already organizing against. Jews had lived in Iraq for hundreds of years, but the shock of the Farhud convinced many Jews to try to leave, although some later returned. However, the continued targeting of Jews by Arab nationalists made life more difficult for Jews across the Middle East. By 1951, most Jews had left Iraq for **Israel**. Ironically, the targeting of Jews only increased their support for **Zionism** and led many Jews to move to Israel.



## Aside: What is Zionism?




The ADL defines **Zionism** as “the movement for the self-determination and statehood for the Jewish people in their ancestral homeland, the land of **Israel**.” Zionism originated in the 19th century as a political movement calling for the creation of a Jewish state in the ancient Jewish homeland of Israel. This was motivated by two main ideas: Jewish connection to the land of Israel and growing antisemitism in Europe. There has been a continuous Jewish presence in what is now the modern state of Israel since biblical times, but many Jews were exiled and forced to enter the diaspora after the Roman Empire colonized the area and destroyed the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. But no matter where they lived, Jews maintained a connection to Israel through religious and cultural practices.



Survivors of the Buchenwald concentration camp arrive in Haifa, 1945.



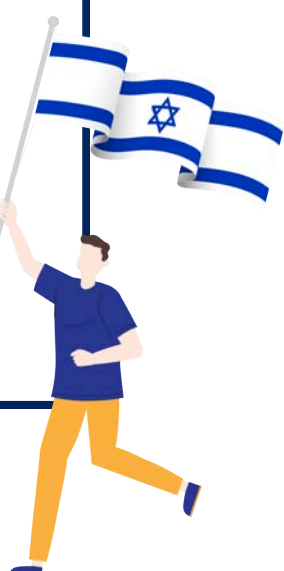


Jews built lives across the world, but the continued existence of antisemitism convinced some Jews that they would never be fully accepted by any other group and so should seek to re-establish a state in their ancestral home. The Holocaust provided the most stark example of this trend and convinced many Jews that they needed a safe place. The fact was that Jews had nowhere to go and no government to care about their interests. Every other country always had a more important priority. Jews wanted to take their place in the family of nations and have a country that would finally put them first.

In 1948 the Zionist dream was realized with the creation of the modern state of Israel. Now that Israel exists, Zionism refers simply to the belief that it should continue to exist. This is the position of more than 90% of Jews around the world. Belief in Zionism does not imply a particular position on Israeli politics and does not mean someone cannot also support Palestinian self-determination. It is a belief held by people across the political spectrum and by Jews and non-Jews alike.

For just one example of the debates within the Jewish community before the modern state of Israel, here is an excerpt from Leon Pinsker's essay "[Auto-Emancipation: An Appeal to His People By a Russian Jew](#)":

"The Jewish people has no fatherland of its own, though many motherlands; no center of focus or gravity, no government of its own, no official representation. They home everywhere, but are nowhere at home. The nations have never to deal with a Jewish nation but always with mere Jews. The Jews are not a nation because they lack a certain distinctive national character, inherent in all other nations, which is formed by common residence in a single state."





# Antisemitism After the Holocaust

The events of [the Holocaust](#) shocked the world and made overt displays of antisemitism less common (even if they didn't go away completely). Efforts were made to reduce the presence of antisemitism in western societies. For example, when the Catholic Church convened the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, they specifically rejected the charge that Jews were responsible for the murder of Jesus, which had provided a long-standing excuse for religious antisemitism. Yet antisemitism did not go away. Antisemitic tropes were still part of western societies. Obvious antisemitism went underground or was veiled in coded language, but it still existed. Holocaust denial spread around the globe, helped by mass media and the advent of the internet. It was still common for Jews in the United States to be asked where their horns were (a belief going back to associations of Jews with the Devil from the Middle Ages) or have pennies thrown at their feet (a reference to the [trope](#) of Jews and money).

The KKK and its white supremacist descendants continued to champion many old antisemitic tropes, especially because Jews were often involved in causes that championed human rights, including the Civil Rights Movement in the United States. For example, of the three young activists murdered in Mississippi while trying to register Black people to vote, two (Andrew Goodman and Michael Schwerner) were Jewish.

A protest against the integration of high schools in Montgomery, Alabama featuring not just Confederate flags but also an antisemitic sign. The sign combines a stereotype of a Jewish nose with the tagline "THE CONSPIRACY," in an image that would fit in with Nazi propaganda. White supremacists consider Jews non-white and a threat to the monolithic society they wish to build.





Many manifestations of antisemitism came to center around the new state of Israel. Palestinian terrorist groups or their sympathizers targeted Israelis around the world, with the notorious kidnapping and murder of coaches and athletes from the Israeli delegation to the 1972 Munich Olympics being just one example. The wider Jewish population also came under attack from such groups, including the suicide bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1994 that killed 85 people and injured 300.

Rescue workers sift through the rubble at the site of a car-bombing at the Asociacion Mutual Israelita Argentina (AMIA) Jewish Community Center in Buenos Aires, Argentina, on July 18, 1994. The bombing remains unsolved. It is the largest attack on a Jewish community outside Israel since World War II.



Conspiracy theories involving Jews continue to proliferate. After the 9/11 attacks Iranian propaganda falsely claimed that the perpetrator was really Israel and that Jewish and Israeli workers had not shown up to work at the World Trade Center that day. The actions and status of individual Jews, whether they be neoconservatives in the cabinet of George W. Bush or the billionaire George Soros, are used as stand-ins for all Jews.

**Anti-Zionism**, a movement that claims Israel should not exist, spread across the world and came to be accepted in mainstream circles, particularly on the left of the political spectrum. Antisemitism always falsely associates Jews with whatever is seen as the ultimate evil of the time. In the Middle Ages, Jews were associated with the Devil. In the Enlightenment, Jews were associated with superstition. In the west, Jews were associated with communism and in the Soviet sphere they were associated with capitalism. Anti-Zionism falsely connects **Israel** with colonialism, **apartheid** and **genocide**, three of the great evils of our time.



# October 7<sup>th</sup> and Its Aftermath

On October 7th, 2023, members of the Hamas terrorist group invaded Israel from Gaza. They murdered approximately 1,200 civilians in an orgy of murder and sexual violence and took 251 hostages back into Gaza. On October 8th, 2023, crowds around the world celebrated the massacre



A destroyed building in Israel in the aftermath of the October 7th, 2023 attack.  
The photo was taken on October 11, 2023.

and condemned Israel - despite the fact that it had not yet responded with any military action. When Israel did respond it became the center of breathless news coverage, almost all of it negative towards Israel. Protests against Israel erupted on college campuses across the world, particularly in the United States. Antisemitic incidents, including harassment, assaults, firebombings, and even murder, skyrocketed. When protestors repeated antisemitic tropes, these were not condemned by protest leaders. The phrase “from the river to the sea,” which calls for a Palestinian state reaching from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea and thus calls for the removal of Israel, went mainstream. Both Israeli and Palestinian self-determination deserve to be respected, but this has faded from international discourse in favor of a one-sided narrative.

The protracted war in Gaza can be criticized just like any other policy of the Israeli government. But no other country faces calls for its destruction as a country the way that Israel does. No other country’s reaction to the organized murder of its citizens has faced such a barrage of criticism for trying to defend itself. This singling out of the world’s only Jewish state veers into antisemitism.



# Antisemitism Today

Between 2015 and 2024, antisemitic incidents in the United States increased by 893%.



Antisemitism today exists on both the right and the left of the political spectrum. It can look different depending on someone's background. Sometimes antisemitism is intentional, but sometimes people use antisemitic **tropes** without even realizing the long and dangerous history of what they are saying.

What all this means is that antisemitism can be difficult to recognize, especially when it comes from someone we otherwise agree with. It is easy to dismiss claims something is antisemitic and much harder (but more urgent) to look into history and see the dark origins of something we thought of as normal.

Below are some examples of how antisemitism manifests today.



# What Does Antisemitism Look Like Today?



Here are just some of the different ways antisemitism can manifest today:

- Accusations that Jews control the world
- Physically harming Jews because they are Jewish
- Beliefs that Jews are all rich or are good with money (they aren't)
- Attacks on property because of a real or perceived connection to Jews
- Threatening Jews or a Jewish community
- Claiming the Holocaust didn't happen ([Holocaust denial](#))
- Distorting the facts of the Holocaust ([Holocaust distortion](#))
- Using imagery from the Holocaust in service to a contemporary cause
- Believing that Israel should be destroyed (also known as [antizionism](#))
- Associating Jews or Israel with Nazi imagery (also known as [Holocaust inversion](#))

Here are some real and recent examples of these ideas:

- In 2018, a man attacked and killed congregants at the Tree of Life - Or L'Simcha Congregation synagogue in Pittsburgh, PA. Eleven people were killed and six were wounded. The shooter believed in a [conspiracy theory](#) called "[Great Replacement Theory](#)," which falsely claims that Jews are bringing non-white immigrants into the United States or European countries in order to dilute the white population.
- In 2022, flyers were distributed in neighborhoods across multiple states claiming that Jews were controlling the response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Another set of flyers in the same year paired an image of Hitler with the quote "we can do it again," calling for another Holocaust.
- The "happy merchant meme" is a [caricature](#) of many [stereotypes](#) of a Jewish person: large nose, hunched back, creepy smile, and hands rubbing together. This meme can be found across social media, often related to posts falsely accusing Jews of being greedy or controlling world events.



- During the Covid-19 pandemic, some people in the United States and abroad who were protesting against requirements to wear masks in public or get vaccinated wore yellow stars, mimicking those Jews were forced to wear during the Holocaust. These protestors were basically claiming that what they were experiencing was the same as what Jews experienced during the Holocaust, an example of [Holocaust distortion](#).
- In 2003, animal rights group the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), opened an exhibit called “Holocaust On Your Plate” which paired photos from the Holocaust with pictures of animals in factory farms.
- In 2022, a British man invaded a synagogue in Colleyville, Texas and took three congregants and the rabbi hostage. He then demanded the release of an al-Qaeda member who was held at a nearby prison. He did this because he believed that Jews would have the power to get someone released from prison (they didn’t).
- In 1975, United Nations Resolution 3379 “Determines that Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination,” despite the fact that [Zionism](#) refers simply to the belief that the state of Israel should exist. Resolution 3379 was revoked in 1991.
- In 2025, a Jewish cemetery in Houston, Texas was vandalized and some of the headstones in the cemetery were broken.
- In 2025, a peaceful gathering bringing awareness to Israeli hostages held in Gaza by Hamas was firebombed just a week after two Israeli embassy employees were gunned down in Washington, D.C. by an attacker who shouted “free Palestine” as he was arrested. The next week, the national Holocaust memorial in Canada was graffitied with red spray paint reading “Feed me.” While all three incidents purported to be about the war in Gaza, they are fundamentally attacks on Jews and Jewish history because they are Jewish, which makes them antisemitic.
- Also in 2025, a hacker took control of the X (formerly Twitter) account of the beloved Sesame Street character Elmo and posted antisemitic content, including a call to “Kill the Jews.”



# Best Practices for Teaching About Antisemitism

*Highlight the real impact of antisemitism on actual people.*

Help students build empathy by showing the impact of antisemitism on individuals rather than just on Jews as a group. This also shows students that not all Jews are the same.

*Don't just teach about antisemitism. Teach about Jews.*

The end goal of teaching about antisemitism is not just to teach about ideas from the past but to have a positive impact on the future. In order to reduce antisemitism, make sure that the first time your students encounter Jews is not in the context of their victimhood but instead as real people.

*Remember real Jews.*

It can be very easy to lose sight of real Jews when you learn about antisemitism. Antisemitic **tropes** are so far from the reality of Jewish people, but they are part of European culture and are more prevalent than Jews themselves.



Austrian Jewish women are publicly shamed during the November Pogrom in November 1938 with signs reading "I have been excluded from the national community."



Houston survivor Dr. Anna Steinberger with her brother Jacob in Poland before the Holocaust.





# What Can I Do About Antisemitism?



*Educate yourself.* As we hope you have learned from this teacher's guide, antisemitism can be difficult to recognize if you don't know about its history. You are already taking the important step to understand antisemitism. Thank you!



*Educate others.* Once you have educated yourself about antisemitism, teach students, family, friends, and anyone who will listen what antisemitism is. The more people who learn about and can recognize antisemitism, the more chance we have of fighting antisemitism as a society.



*Don't repeat antisemitic ideas, or correct yourself when you do.* It can hurt to be told you said something antisemitic. After all, when we think of antisemitism what often comes to mind first are the Nazis, and you aren't anything like that! It is a very human response to feel defensive. It is more difficult, but also more productive, to acknowledge you said something that had an impact you didn't mean and apologize for it. We all do better when we learn from our mistakes instead of repeating them.



*Call out antisemitism when you see it.* Antisemitism is at its most dangerous when it becomes normal. So if you see or hear antisemitism, call it out! This is especially true if it is coming from family or friends - these are the people most likely to listen and trust you rather than lashing out. You don't have to give them a long history lesson in the moment, either. Even just a "hey, that's not cool" or "let's not go there" can help demonstrate to someone that you won't accept antisemitism in their presence. If someone makes an antisemitic joke, pretend not to understand and keep asking them to explain. This can lay bare the prejudice behind the joke and takes the wind out of it as a joke.





# Appendices

[Appendix 1: Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Appendix 2: Timeline of Antisemitism](#)

[Appendix 3: Recommended Resources](#)

[Appendix 4: Glossary](#)



*The Link* by Holocaust survivor Samuel Bak



# Appendix 1: Frequently Asked Questions

This section includes the answers to some frequently asked questions about antisemitism. Each question has a short and a long answer.



*Too Many Questions* by Holocaust survivor Samuel Bak





# Appendix 1: Frequently Asked Questions

*Why are Jews so concerned about antisemitism?*

## Short Answer

Antisemitism that manifests as words has become action far too often throughout history, leading Jews to be sensitive to antisemitism because they know where it can lead.

## Long Answer

It isn't just Jews who should be concerned about antisemitism. Antisemitism has often been called the canary in the coal mine of hatred because what starts with hating Jews often expands to target other groups as well. A society that accepts and normalizes antisemitism is a warning sign that democratic values and respect for human rights are under severe strain.



The New York Times

### Jewish School in Toronto Is Targeted for a Third Time

Canadian ministers will convene a meeting with the police to discuss antisemitism, after attacks at Jewish establishments in Toronto and Montreal this week.

### Paris prosecutors say murder of Holocaust survivor was anti-Semitic

Yacine Mihoub, Alex Carrimbasus plead not guilty to 2018 slaying of Mireille Knoll, which prosecution alleges was aggravated by hatred of Jews

By CNAAN LIPSHITZ

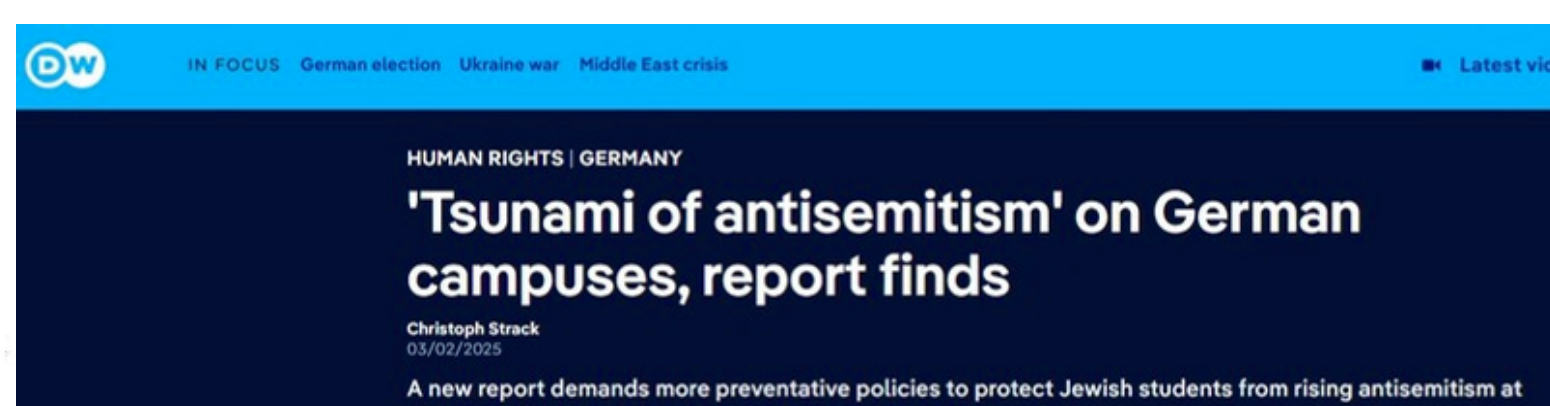
15 May 2020, 10:56 pm



JTA — Two men who allegedly killed and robbed a Holocaust survivor in her Paris apartment will stand trial for murder that was aggravated by -Semitic hatred, Paris prosecutors said.



### Australian police find explosives for possible antisemitic attack







*What does it mean to be Jewish?*



## Short Answer

Being Jewish means different things to different Jewish people. It is a combination of several types of identities: religion, culture, and ethnicity.

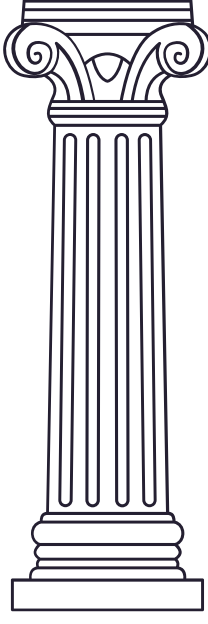
## Long Answer

There is no one way to be Jewish because it is personal for everyone. Many Jews are Jewish because they were raised Jewish, following religious and/or cultural traditions involving a variety of combinations of religious worship, holiday celebrations, culture, community, education, ritual, and family history. Others become Jewish by religious conversion. This can be confusing, because Jews don't fit neatly into the categories commonly used to sort people. This leads to simplifications, such as thinking about Jews purely as a religious group. But being Jewish is more complicated and includes more facets of identity. Jews live in different countries and speak different languages, but their traditions and history unite them and make them a people.



A [seder](#) plate for the Jewish holiday of Passover showing the traditional items: roasted egg, shank bone, bitter herbs, *charoset* (apple, nuts, spices, and wine), lettuce, and parsley. Each item represents a part of the Exodus story of the Jewish people escaping from slavery in Egypt before the journey to the promised land. Learn more about each item [here](#).





*Why have so many people hated Jews throughout history?*



## Short Answer

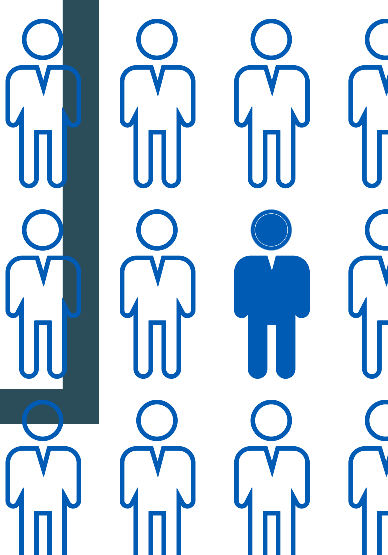
Humans have a bad habit of hating those who are different from them, and Jews have not only been different but want to *stay* different.



## Long Answer

In Europe in particular, the early history of Christianity laid much of the groundwork for antisemitism, a history that modern Christians across denominations have worked hard to repair. Many of the first converts to Christianity were Jews (Jesus was also a practicing Jew), so Christianity and Judaism were in direct competition. When many Jews decided not to convert to Christianity, early Christians also sought converts amongst the pagan Roman population. The responsibility of the Roman government for Jesus's death (crucifixion was a traditional Roman method of execution) was therefore downplayed and shunted off onto the Jews. Christianity's claim to be supplanting Judaism also meant that early Christians were incentivized to delegitimize Judaism and Jews. These early efforts became part of European society as Christianity became the primary religion of most of Europe.

While we are focusing here on negative reactions to Jews, there have been plenty of times when Jews have been accepted as equal members of society. So Jews haven't been universally hated throughout history. But the negative experiences tend to stick out more than the positive ones.







👉 *If antisemitic ideas aren't true, where do they come from?*

## Short Answer

Misconceptions about people who are different from the majority.

## Long Answer

Throughout most of their history, Jews have been a minority wherever they live, and a minority that wants to maintain at least their beliefs and traditions. In other words, they don't want to become just like the majority. Not everyone throughout history has been willing to accept Jews as they are. People who can't accept Jews or are scared of those different from themselves have started rumors about Jews. Sometimes misunderstandings have led to the development of **stereotypes**. Over time, Jews have come to represent the quintessential “other” in European culture, which in turn spread its influence throughout much of the globe.

But in the end Antisemitism doesn't actually tell us anything about real Jews - what it does is tell us about the fears and desires of antisemites. Antisemitism has existed and still exists in places where no Jews live. For antisemites, Jews become a symbol for what is wrong with the world rather than flesh and blood people.

As Jean-Paul Sartre wrote, Jews have “passionate enemies, and defenders lacking in passion.”<sup>3</sup> The norm has been for antisemitic ideas to spread easily while very few people spoke out against them.



<sup>3</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *Antisemitism and Jews: An Exploration of the Etiology of Hate* (New York: Schocken, 1948), 72.





## Where do Jews come from?



### Short Answer

Jews originate from the Middle East, in an area that includes what are today [Israel](#) and the [West Bank](#).



### Long Answer

It helps to think about Jews in the United States the same way we think of other multi-generation immigrant families. There are Italian Americans, Mexican Americans, Chinese Americans, etc. who may have come to the United States from those countries one generation ago or five generations ago. Jews became refugees from their home, but they kept their connections to both their traditions and their original homeland throughout the centuries. Jews pray toward Jerusalem, which was the center of Jewish life before the destruction of the second temple, and the desire to return to their ancient land is woven throughout many Jewish traditions. The phrase “next year in Jerusalem” is uttered or sung as part of a Passover seder, for example. Jewish religious traditions also associate the return to their homeland with the coming of their messiah.



The temple menorah on the Magdala stone, which dates from before the destruction of the second temple. It was found in the ruins of a synagogue from the ancient city of Magdala in northeastern Israel near the Sea of Galilee.



*Why did so many Jews live in Eastern Europe before the Holocaust?*

### Short Answer

Antisemitism



### Long Answer

During the Middle Ages, many countries in western Europe forcibly expelled their Jewish populations. Parts of eastern Europe, including Poland, welcomed these Jewish refugees.

*Are all Jews rich?*



### Short Answer

No

### Long Answer

This is a common but untrue **stereotype** about Jews. Jews, like any other group of people, are different. Jews are represented at all different levels of economic security and wealth. Often specific people, like billionaire George Soros today or the Rothschild banking family historically, are held up as examples of “Jewish” wealth. But the experiences of one or a small number of people don’t represent everyone. It is easy to find examples of other groups who have a few ultra-wealthy members, but this doesn’t seem to get called out unless they are Jewish.






*Why do some people claim the Holocaust didn't happen?*

## Short Answer

Antisemitism

## Long Answer

**The Holocaust** is generally considered (rightly) to be a horrible event that should never be repeated. This causes a major problem for anyone willing to identify as an antisemite: how can they justify believing in the same things as the Nazis, since we all know where those ideas led. Some antisemities choose to avoid having to justify their beliefs by claiming that the Holocaust didn't happen at all. It also fits into their worldview that claims Jews manipulate others for personal gain. Keep in mind that the Holocaust is one of the most well-documented events in human history and that most of the evidence we have for the Holocaust comes from the Nazis themselves. The Nazis tried at Nuremberg didn't deny what they had done - they tried to make excuses for their behavior instead.



U.S. military personnel organizing German documents collected as evidence for the International Military Tribunal trial of Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg. Most of the evidence presented at the Nuremberg trials came from Nazi records and the Nazis on trial never denied what they had done - they just made excuses for why they did it.



*Are Jews a race?*

**Short Answer**

No

**Short Answer**

No

## Luigi Allswel

Race is, basically, made up. It isn't connected to actual genetics or biology. Instead, it is a way of sorting people into different groups based not just on skin color but also on societal assumptions about a group. Jews can be considered part of an ethnicity based on common ancestry, but they are not a race. It is also possible to become Jewish through religious conversion. There are Jews who look white, Black, Latinx, Asian, and Middle Eastern. Despite what the Nazis want you to think, you can't actually tell if someone is Jewish just by looking at them.

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An illustration from *Inheritance and Racial Hygiene* by Alfred Vogel shows “German youth” (on the left) contrasted with “Jewish youth” (on the right). The subtitle says, “from the face speaks the soul of the race.” Jews in Germany were Germans too, but the Nazis sought to exclude groups they believed were “undesirable” from the Germany community. When Hitler came to power in Germany in 1933, Jews made up less than 1% of the German population, meaning many Germans had never met a Jew.



# *Are Jews white?*

## Short Answer

It's complicated, but no.



## Long Answer

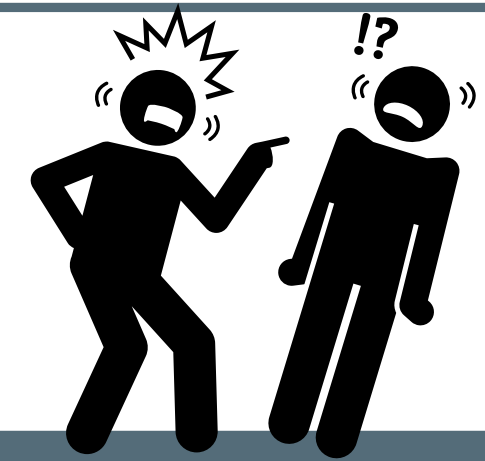
Some, but not all, Jews may appear to be white. In the United States, we think about difference mainly through the lens of skin color because of our particular history. For most of Europe's history, however, the main way people thought about difference was based instead on religion, language, and region. Whiteness in the United States is also a cultural construction that has changed over time. For example, today Italian-Americans are considered white. When they first came to the United States in large numbers, however, they were not considered white.

If whiteness is constructed as involving European ancestry, then Jews are not white. While there was intermarriage with Jews who lived in Europe for generations, Jews did not originate in Europe. If whiteness is thought of as associated with privilege, then Jews are not white. Jews are a minority who have frequently faced discrimination, dispossession, and murder throughout their history. If whiteness is based on skin pigmentation, some (but not all) Jews can appear white.





*Is criticizing **Israel** antisemitic?*



## Short Answer

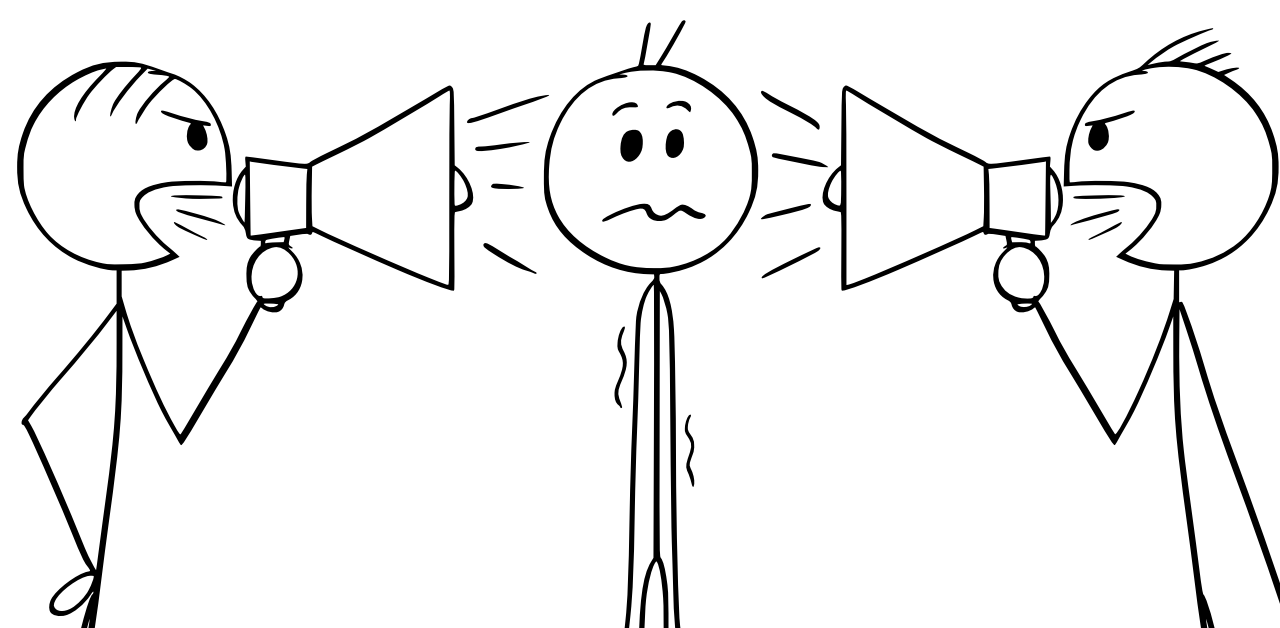
It doesn't have to be, but it can be when it (knowingly or unknowingly) utilizes antisemitic tropes and/or treats Israel differently than other countries.



## Long Answer

Criticizing Israel and its government the way you might criticize any other country and government is totally fine and not antisemitic. However, the vilification of Israel often relies on antisemitic tropes. For example, political cartoons showing Israeli leaders drinking the blood of Palestinians are the latest adaptation of the blood libel trope. Using that lie goes beyond criticism of the individual or Israel and becomes antisemitism. Criticism of Israel also veers into antisemitism when it treats Israel differently than other countries. As of 2025, Israel is the only full democracy in the Middle East

Want to avoid accidental antisemitism related to Israel? Criticize specific actions and policies of individuals or organizations, not the entire people (no country, including Israel, is monolithic). Do your research and avoid spreading misinformation (which is unfortunately quite common where Israel is concerned). Basically, treat Israel like you would treat any other country.





## Is *antizionism* antisemitism?



### Short Answer

Yes, because it calls for the elimination of the only Jewish state in the world.

### Long Answer

**Zionism** is the belief that Jews have the right to self-determination in their ancestral homeland: Israel. It does not mean support for any particular Israeli political party, politician, or policy. It is simply the belief that Israel should exist. This means that **antizionism** is a call for the elimination of the world's only Jewish state.

Despite the many crimes committed by other countries around the world, Israel is the only country that faces an organized, international movement calling for its elimination. This has led some Jews to call Israel “the Jew of the nations,” meaning that it feels as though Israel is treated with the same discriminatory and eliminationist rhetoric as Jews have been throughout history.



A protest against a United Nations resolution declaring that Zionism is racism in 1975. The resolution was rescinded in 1991. Despite Israel's small size and the existence of many other conflicts around the world, Israel is frequently singled out by the United Nations for negative resolutions. This is also despite the fact that Israel is the only full democracy in the Middle East.



## *Is Israel committing genocide?*

### Short Answer

No

### Long Answer

In recent years the term genocide has been more and more frequently misused to lend moral weight and urgency to particular conflicts. Harm to civilians during war, while terrible, does not mean that genocide is occurring. Genocide refers to the specific intent and actions meant to destroy a national, ethnic, racial, or religious group because of their identity. For example, Jews were specifically targeted and murdered by the Nazis simply because they were Jewish. Israel is not seeking to destroy the Palestinian people - the Palestinian population has grown considerably since the creation of the state of Israel.

Baselessly accusing Israel of genocide is a type of **Holocaust inversion**, which seeks to demonize Israel by associating them with the greatest evils of our time (i.e. Nazis and genocide). It also misrepresents one of the most complicated conflicts in the world. No matter anyone's opinion about any particular Israeli government, disliking their actions doesn't make them genocidal.



Raphael Lemkin, who coined the word genocide, was a **Zionist** who was a member of a Zionist youth group and was the youth affairs editor and columnist at a paper called *Zionist World* when he lived in Poland. He urged fellow Jews to unite around the idea of General Zionism, which he defined as, "the idea of the Jewish statehood. This is the aspiration to create a Jewish state with all its political, economic and social components. A state consists of three factors: land, people and political sovereignty."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> James Loeffler, *Becoming Cleopatra: The Forgotten Zionism of Raphael Lemkin*, *Journal of Genocide Research* 19.3, 2017.



*Is Israel a **settler-colonialist** state?*

Short Answer

No

Long Answer

Jews are indigenous to the area that makes up Israel. Many Jews were forced into exile when the Romans colonized the area, but there has been a continuous Jewish presence in the land of Israel since biblical times. Israel is actually a post-colonial state because it reunites an indigenous people with their homeland.



An image of the Western Wall of the **Second Temple** in Jerusalem from a Jewish pilgrimage guide, circa 1315 CE.



## *Is Israel an **apartheid** state?*

### Short Answer

No

### Long Answer

Apartheid in South Africa imposed an extremely strict separation between those who were defined as white and those who weren't. Some hallmarks of what George M. Fredrickson calls "overtly racist regimes" like Apartheid South Africa are legally-mandated segregation and laws against sex and intermarriage. In Israel, none of these features are present. Non-Jewish Israelis live side-by-side with Jewish Israelis. They have the right to vote and participate in the political process. They work in the Israeli civil service, foreign service, police, military, and private sphere. All of this would have been unthinkable in apartheid South Africa.

Some Israelis do face types of discrimination and racism, but this is not unique to Israel - it is common in many countries, including the United States. Claiming that Israel is an apartheid state is not just a lie - it prevents constructive dialogue about ways that Israel can improve and strengthen equality and democracy.

Israeli president Isaac Herzog, United Arab List leader Mansour Abbas with other officials and young Bedouins in Rahat, Israel in 2022 for the opening of the Hall of Culture.

This kind of interaction would never have occurred in apartheid South Africa, where strict separation between different groups was legally enforced and the government was openly racist.

Source: Kobi Gideon/Government Press Office of Israel





# Appendix 2: Antisemitism Timeline

This is a timeline containing selected events in the history of antisemitism. This is not a comprehensive list (it would be way too long). Instead it is a representative sample of what antisemitism has looked like throughout history.



*Yizkor Theme* by Holocaust survivor Samuel Bak



# Appendix 2: Antisemitism Timeline



70 CE

The Roman Empire destroys the Jewish **Second Temple** in Jerusalem, the center of Jewish faith, and exiles the Jewish people.

1171

The Jews of Blois, France are falsely accused of crucifying a Christian child as part of a religious ritual (an untrue accusation now known as the **blood libel**). More than thirty Jewish men, women, and children are burned at the stake.

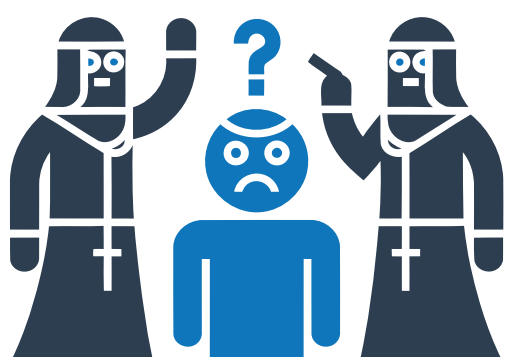
1215

The Pope calls the Fourth Lateran Council, which decrees that Jews must wear identifying badges or clothing to prevent intimate relationships between Jews and Christians.



1478

The Spanish Inquisition is established to find and punish converts to Christianity from Judaism or Islam who are not considered to be sincere in their conversion.



410 BCE

The **synagogue** in the Egyptian town of Elephantine is destroyed and looted by local Egyptian priests.

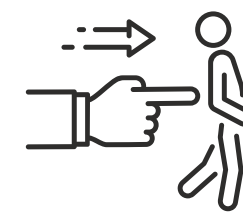
1096

Crusaders on their way to Jerusalem murder 10,000 Jews across northern France and Germany.



1242

The **Talmud** (the primary source of Jewish religious law) and other Jewish texts are burned in Paris, France.



1290

Jews are expelled from England and the king seizes their property.

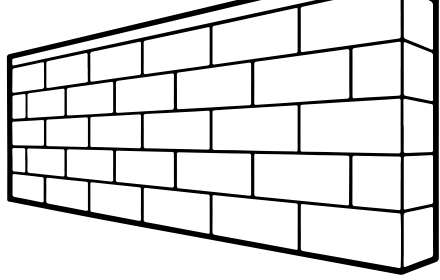
1347-1360

Jews are falsely accused of poisoning wells and causing the “Black Death,” a major outbreak of bubonic plague across Europe. This accusation is sometimes accompanied by violence against Jews.

1492

Shortly after their defeat of Spain’s Muslim rulers, the new king and queen of Spain announce that all Jews must convert to Christianity or leave.





1516

Jews are confined to a specific quarter in the Italian city of Venice, which becomes known as the [ghetto](#). The practice of confining Jews to ghettos later spreads across Europe.

1648-1649

During a Ukrainian Cossack uprising against Polish rule, up to 100,000 Jews are massacred by the rebels.



1862

During the United States Civil War, General Ulysses S. Grant issues General Order Number 11, which expels Jews from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi.

1881-1906

A series of [pogroms](#) (organized attacks) on Jewish communities in Russia prompts many Jews to flee to other parts of Europe or to the United States.



1939

A pro-Nazi rally with more than 20,000 attendees is held in New York City at Madison Square Garden.



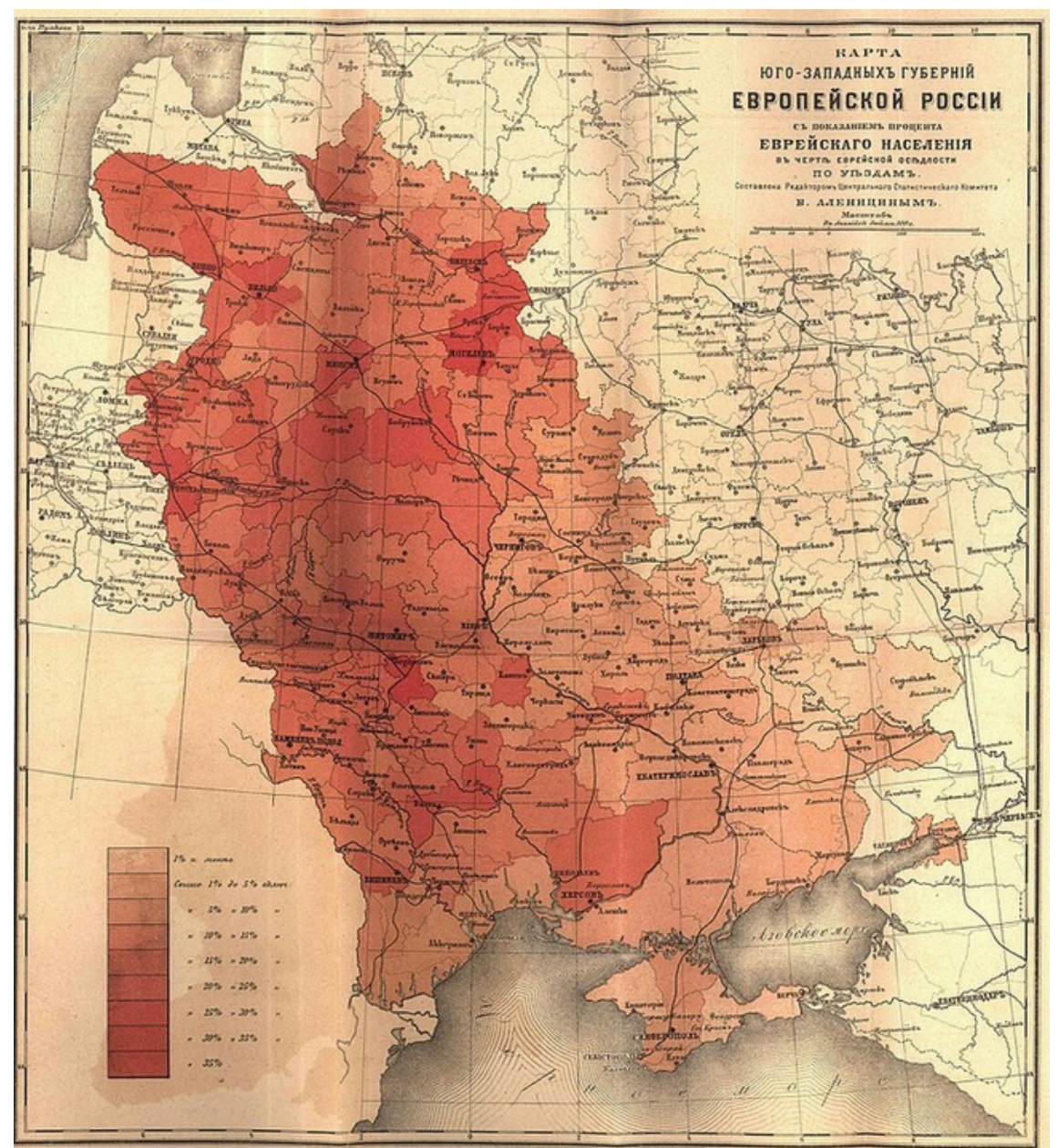
1543

Martin Luther publishes “On the Jews and Their Lies,” a book that denigrates Jews for not converting to his new form of Christianity and calls for their impoverishment and exclusion from society.



1795

Empress Catherine the Great of Russia restricts where Jews can live in her empire, an area that becomes known as the [Pale, or limit, of Settlement](#).



1920

Henry Ford’s newspaper begins publishing a series of lies about Jews based on a forgery called “[The Protocols of the Elders of Zion](#),” which falsely accuses Jews of trying to control the world. Hitler kept a statue of Ford in his office.

1939-1945

World War II and [the Holocaust](#), in which six million Jews are murdered across Europe by the Nazis and their collaborators.





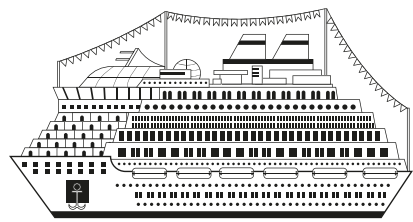
## July 4, 1946

Holocaust survivors attempting to return to their homes in Kielce, Poland, are massacred by Polish civilians, police, and soldiers. At least 42 people are killed and more than 40 are injured. The pogrom was triggered by a [blood libel](#) accusation.



## September 5-6, 1972

Terrorists affiliated with the Black September Palestinian militant group attack the Israeli Olympic team attending the 1972 Summer Olympic Games in Munich, Germany. Eleven Israelis and a German policeman are murdered during the attack.



## October 7, 1985

An Italian passenger ship called the *Achille Lauro* is hijacked by terrorists connected to the Palestine Liberation Front (PLF) off the coast of Egypt. Jewish-American man Leon Klinghoffer is shot and killed by the hijackers and his body thrown into the ocean.



## 2000

Holocaust denier David Irving sues historian Deborah Lipstadt for libel, claiming she damaged his reputation and lied when she called him a [Holocaust denier](#) in a book called *Denying the Holocaust*. Lipstadt and her publisher Penguin Books win the court case, demonstrating that Irving is in fact a Holocaust denier.



## January 9, 2015

A terrorist associated with Islamic State kills four hostages at the Hyper Cacher kosher supermarket in Paris, France.

## 1948-1949



Jews are expelled from most Middle Eastern countries.



## 1952

Czechoslovak Communist official Rudolf Slánský and thirteen other high ranking officials are put on trial on trumped up charges of treason. Their Jewish backgrounds and supposed [Zionist](#) connections were part of the accusations. All of the officials were found guilty and eleven were executed.



## 1967

Members of the Ku Klux Klan bomb the new Congregation Beth Israel synagogue in Jackson, Mississippi in an attempt to silence its [rabbi](#), who was an outspoken advocate for racial justice.



## 1975

With a concerted push from the Soviet Union, United Nations General Assembly Resolution 3379 “determines that [zionism](#) in a form of racism and racial discrimination.” As Zionism is simply the belief that Israel should exist, this claimed falsely that Israel’s very existence is racist. This is only revoked in 1991.

## July 18, 1994

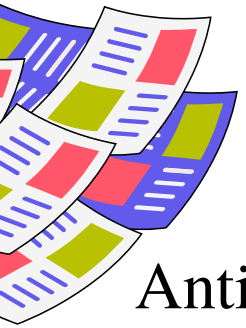
A suicide bombing at the Asociación Mutual Israelita Argentina (AIMA, a Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, Argentina) kills 85 people and injuries more than 300.







A 19-year-old shooter kills one person and injures three at the Chabad of Poway synagogue in Poway, California in April on the last day of Passover. In December of the same year a man invaded the home of a Chasidic [rabbi](#) and stabbed multiple people gathered to celebrate the seventh night of Hanukkah. The rabbi later died from his injuries.



Antisemitic flyers are found in neighborhoods in Houston and around the United States. They blame Jews for the Covid-19 pandemic and claim that Jews control U.S. politicians and institutions.



## October 8, 2023 - Present

As Israelis are still counting their dead from the October 7th attack, celebrations break out around the world. Antisemitic incidents in the United States increase by more than 200% compared to the same time period the previous year. Sustained protests, particularly on U.S. college campuses, call for Israel to be destroyed and include antisemitic tropes and stereotypes.



## The Future

What will the future of antisemitism look like? Will people like you stand up and try to make a difference? Or will the longest hatred continue into the future? That is up to us.

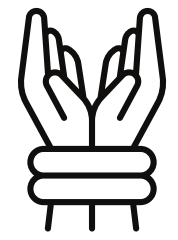
## 2019

## October 27, 2018

A gunman attacks the Tree of Life - Or L'Simcha Congregation [synagogue](#) in Pittsburgh, PA. Eleven people are killed and six wounded.



## January 15, 2022



A terrorist sympathizer enters the Congregation Beth Israel [synagogue](#) in Colleyville, Texas and takes four hostages. He demands the release of an al-Qaeda member being held in a nearby prison in the mistaken belief that Jews control the United States and can grant his wishes.

## October 7, 2023



Hamas terrorists invade Israel from [Gaza](#), murdering 1,200 people and taking 251 people hostage. As of the writing of this teacher's guide, some hostages are still held in Gaza in terrible conditions more than 660 days later.





# Appendix 3: Recommended Resources

This section includes recommended books, helpful websites, videos, lesson plans, and organizations that fight antisemitism. Remember that items in **magenta** are clickable links.



*Inner Fire A* by Holocaust survivor Samuel Bak

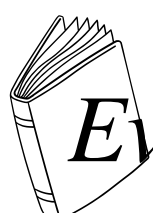




# Books

 *Antisemitism: A Very Short Introduction* by Steven Beller

- Exactly what the title promises - a short introduction to a complex topic
- Available to borrow for free via our [e-books program](#)

 *Everyday Hate: How Antisemitism is Built Into Our World and How You Can Change It* by Dave Rich

- A highly accessible guide to the history of antisemitism and its manifestations today by one of the UK's foremost experts on antisemitism

 *Anti-Judaism: The Western Tradition* by David Nirenberg

- A more detailed and academic exploration of the history of antisemitism in the West from the ancient world until today

 *The Accusation: Blood Libel in an American Town* by Edward Berenson

- The story of a blood libel accusation in Massena, New York in 1928
- Available to borrow for free via our [e-books program](#)

 *Jews Don't Count* by David Baddiel

- A British comedian critiques the way Jews are left out of conversations about minority rights and social justice

 *We Need to Talk About Antisemitism* by Rabbi Diana Fersko

- A rabbi shows how antisemitism impacts the Jewish community and individual Jews and recommends practical strategies for confronting antisemitism for both Jews and non-Jews







*Israelophobia: The Newest Version of the Oldest Hatred & What To Do About It*

by Jake Wallis Simons

- An accessible breakdown of how a great deal of anti-Jewish hatred is currently expressed through the vilification of Israel



*Uncomfortable Conversations with a Jew* by Emmanuel Acho and Noa Tishby

- A powerful conversation about antisemitism and what it means to be Jewish today



*The Story of the Jews* (2 volumes) by Simon Schama

- A history of the Jewish people from 1000 BCE until 1900
- Both volumes are available to borrow for free in English or Spanish via our [e-books program](#)
- [PBS created a documentary based on the books, which you can view for free online](#)



*Tia Fortuna's New Home* by Ruth Behar

- A beautiful children's book about tradition and culture featuring a Cuban Jewish family in Miami
- A class set is available to borrow for free in English or Spanish via our [e-books program](#)

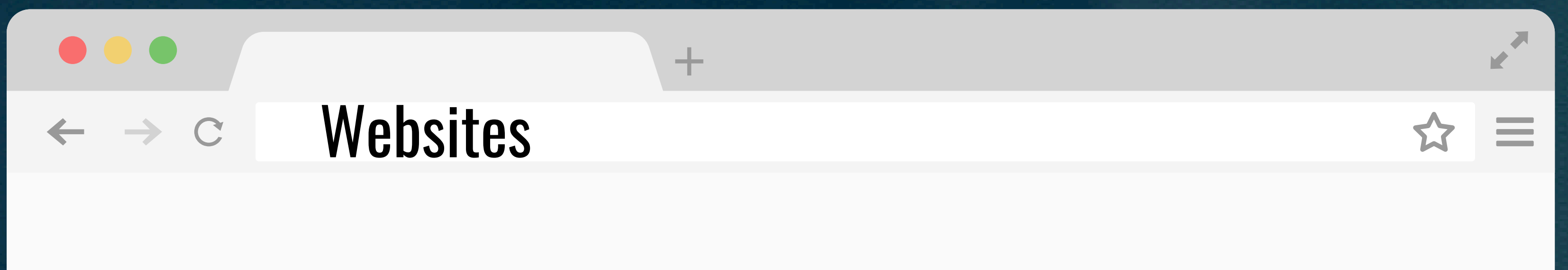


*The Christmas Menorahs: How a Town Fought Hate* by Janice Cohn

- A children's book telling the powerful story of how Billings, Montana stood up to antisemitism in 1993
- A class set is available to borrow for free via our [e-books program](#)



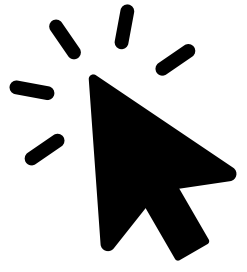




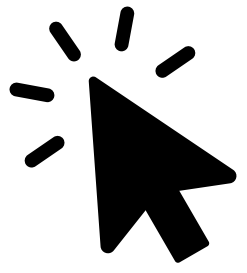
Click on any of the resources mentioned below to access it online



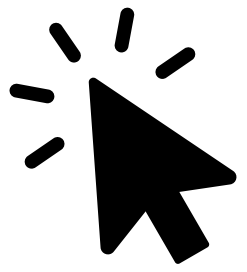
[Online Holocaust Encyclopedia from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)



[Antisemitism Uncovered: A Guide to Old Myths in a New Era](#)



[Translate Hate, a glossary of common antisemitic tropes and ideas](#)



[Resources on Jewish history](#)



[Resources on Jewish culture](#)



# Videos

Click on any of the resources mentioned below to access the video. All of the videos are hosted on YouTube.



[Let's Talk About Antisemitism Playlist](#)



[What is antisemitism from UNESCO](#)



[Basics of antisemitism from the Anne Frank House](#)



[The myths behind antisemitism](#)



[What is antisemitism? from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)



[Antisemitism through time from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#)



[What does it mean to be Jewish? from Yad Vashem](#)



[The Story of the Jews documentary on PBS](#)





# Lesson Plans



Click on any of the resources mentioned below to access them online



A wide variety of lesson plans about antisemitism and other kinds of bias are available from the ADL



A unit on antisemitism from Echoes & Reflections



The Holocaust and Human Behavior collection from Facing History and Ourselves



The history of antisemitism and the Holocaust from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum



Lesson plans about the Holocaust from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum



Lesson plans on Jewish history in Central and Eastern from Centropa

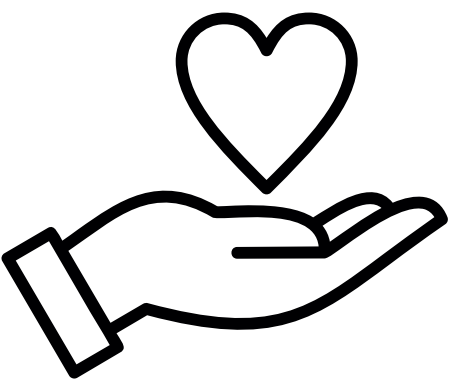




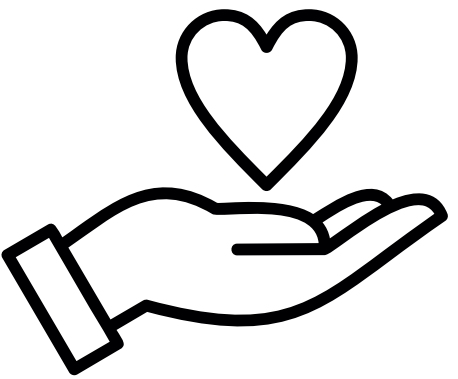
# Organizations



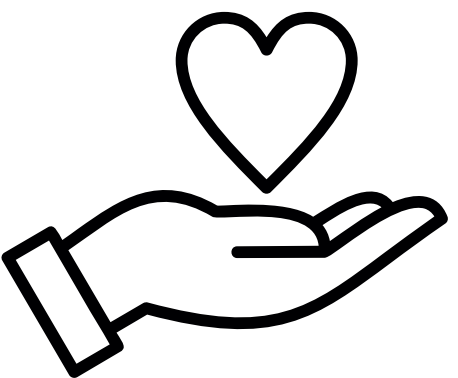
These organizations fight antisemitism as part of their mission. Click on the name of an organization to access their homepage.



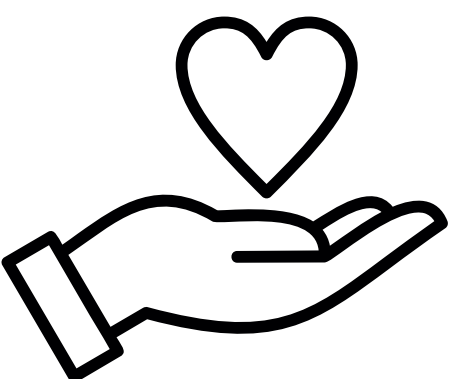
[The Anti-Defamation League \(ADL\)](#)



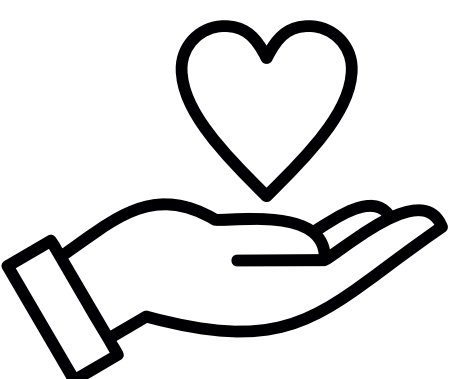
[The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum \(USHMM\)](#)



[The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance \(IHRA\)](#)



[The Texas Holocaust, Genocide, and Antisemitism Advisory Commission](#)



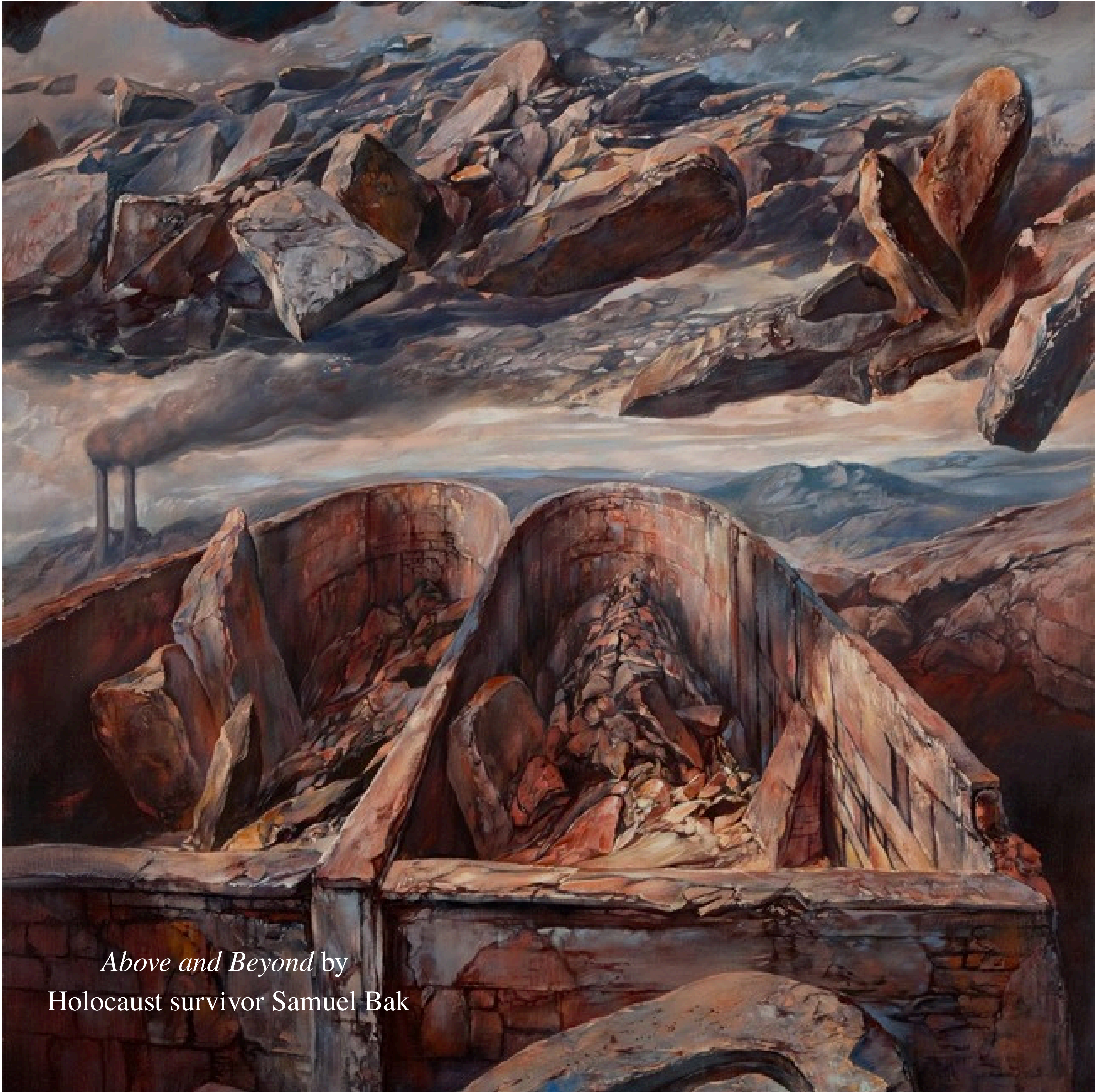
[Yad Vashem: The World Holocaust Remembrance Center](#)

**[Reporting an incident of antisemitism](#)**



# Appendix 4: Glossary

This glossary contains key terms related to Jews and to antisemitism.  
These terms are highlighted in teal throughout the teacher's guide.



*Above and Beyond* by  
Holocaust survivor Samuel Bak



## Antizionism

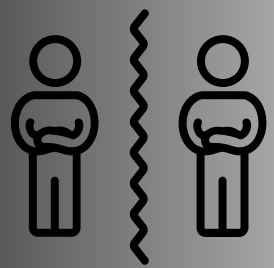
### Antizionist

The belief (or person holding the belief) that the state of **Israel** should not exist and therefore should be eliminated. Anti-Zionism is a form of antisemitism because it goes beyond critique of specific Israeli actions or policies and calls for Israel's destruction.

## Antisemitism

Conscious or unconscious bias against Jews because they are **Jews**. This can include bias in attitudes, words, or actions.

## Apartheid



Literally “separateness” in Afrikaans. A system of racial segregation in South Africa from 1948-1990s. Under this system, non-white people experienced extreme **discrimination**, including limits on their movement, laws against intermarriage, and lack of civil rights. Antizionist rhetoric often claims incorrectly that **Israel** is an apartheid state as part of broader efforts to delegitimize the state of Israel.



## Bias

Seeing a person or group as better or worse than another, usually in a way that is unfair. Can be based on a wide variety of characteristics.

## Blood Libel

A myth from the Middle Ages that claims (incorrectly) that **Jews** as a community kidnap Christian children and use their blood for religious rituals. Also known as “ritual murder.” This lie still circulates today. It was referenced in the manifesto of a mass shooter who targeted a synagogue in Poway, CA in 2019. It also appears in cartoons and memes showing **Israeli** leaders and/or soldiers drinking the blood of Palestinians.

## British Mandate Palestine

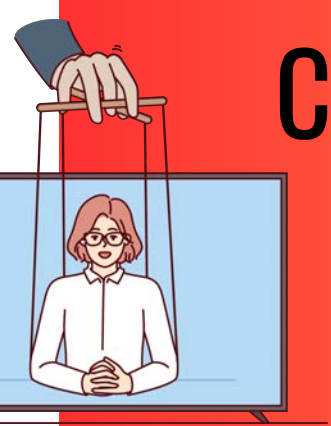
An area encompassing modern-day **Israel**, the **West Bank**, and **Gaza** administered by the United Kingdom after World War One.

## Caricature



An exaggerated image representing a person or group, usually in order to create a comic or grotesque effect. They are often used in propaganda to reinforce biases and spread **stereotypes**.



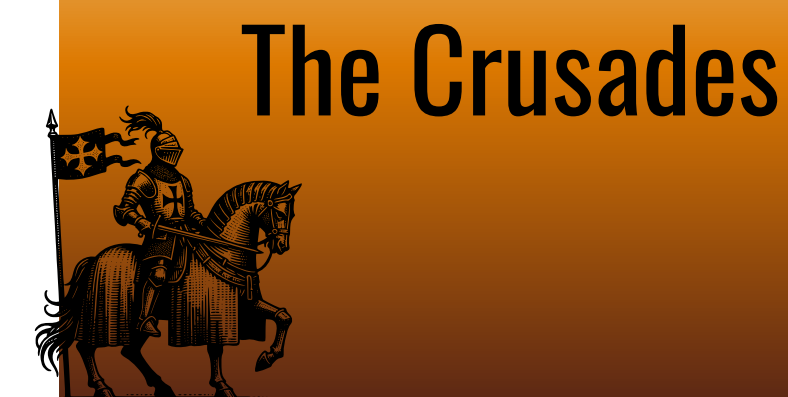


## Conspiracy Theory

Claiming incorrectly that an event or situation is caused by a secret plot of a malicious group of people. This usually means simplifying a complex situation. **Jews** have been the targets of conspiracy theories throughout history.

## Conversos

A **Jewish** person who converted to Catholicism in Spain or Portugal during the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, or their descendants. The Church feared that conversos had only converted to avoid discrimination or expulsion rather than because of genuine belief, accusing conversos of being “**Judaizers**.” Some scholars see this as an early manifestation of the concept of race, as it relied on the assumption that Jews could not change the identity they were born with, or could even pass on being Jewish to their Christian descendants. Many conversos were targeted during the Spanish Inquisition. Some Jews did continue to practice **Judaism** in secret; they are known as “crypto-Jews.”



## The Crusades

A series of campaigns called by the Catholic Church and Christian European rulers against Muslims and other perceived enemies. While **Jews** were not identified by Church authorities as targets, they experienced violence both in Europe and the Middle East during multiple crusades.

## Diaspora



In general, a population that is widely dispersed from its original homeland. For **Jews**, it refers to Jewish populations outside **Israel**.



## Discrimination

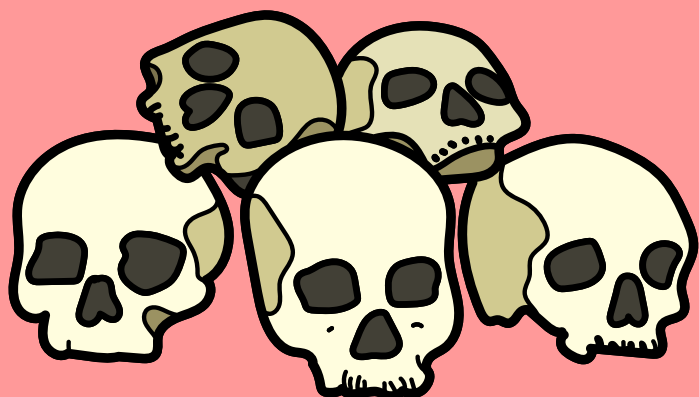
Treating someone unfairly due to a specific aspect of their identity, such as race, religion, other belief system, gender, class, age, or other identity.

## Gaza

Also known as the Gaza Strip. The smaller of the two Palestinian territories bordering **Israel**. Gaza was controlled by Egypt from 1948 until it was captured by Israel after the Six-Day War in 1967. Israel unilaterally withdrew from Gaza and removed any Israelis living there in 2005. Gaza is governed by a Palestinian group called Hamas, which in addition to leading terrorist attacks against Israel has ruled Gaza undemocratically and brutalized the people of Gaza.



## Genocide



A legal term coined by Polish-Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkin during the Holocaust from the roots “genos” meaning people and “cide” meaning killing. Genocide was legally defined in the **Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide** in 1948. It refers to the intentional attempt to destroy a nation, ethnicity, race, or ethnic group because of its identity through the means of murder, mistreatment, prevention of births, and/or stealing of children. Examples of genocide include the Holocaust, the Armenian Genocide during WWI, and the Rwandan Genocide of 1994. Unfortunately, this powerful word is often misunderstood and misused.

## Ghetto



Originally a term from the Middle Ages in Europe, when it meant a neighborhood where **Jews** were forced to live. The Nazis also used this term to describe enclosed neighborhoods where they forcibly confined Jews during **the Holocaust**.

## Great Replacement Theory

A false **conspiracy theory** believed by some white supremacists that accuses Jews of masterminding a plot to bring non-white immigrants to “replace” white people in the United States or Europe.

This conspiracy theory has resulted in significant violence towards Jews, including inspiring the attacker of the 2018 shooting at a **synagogue** in Pittsburgh.

## The Holocaust



The murder of six million **Jews** by the Nazis and their collaborators during World War II. Jews may also refer to this event as the **Shoah** (“catastrophe” in Hebrew) or **Khurbn** (“destruction” in Yiddish).

In addition to the Holocaust, millions of other victims were persecuted and murdered by Nazi Germany and its collaborators because of a variety of identities. The Nazi drive to destroy any Jewish people they could reach root and branch differed from the way any other group was targeted. For example, only Jews experienced selections for the gas chambers at Auschwitz.



## Holocaust Denial

Claiming that [the Holocaust](#) did not happen, including by denying the existence of major aspects of the Holocaust, such as mass murder in gas chambers, or by claiming that the Nazis did not intend to commit genocide.

The Holocaust is one of the most well-documented events in human history. Our evidence for the existence of the Holocaust and how it occurred comes primarily from Nazi documentation, as well as eyewitness accounts, forensic evidence, and survivor testimony. Attempting to deny this overwhelming evidence is a type of antisemitism because denying the Holocaust not only disrespects the victims and survivors but also implicitly (or sometimes explicitly) claims that [Jews](#) are lying about the Holocaust in order to obtain sympathy, support for [Israel](#), and/or money.

See also: [a more in-depth definition](#) of Holocaust denial and distortion from the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance.

## Holocaust Distortion

Distorting rather than denying the facts of [the Holocaust](#), often in order to downplay it. Examples of Holocaust distortion include claiming that far fewer than six million [Jews](#) were actually killed, claiming Hitler had no knowledge of the Holocaust, claiming that a lot of good came from the Holocaust, and blaming Jews for causing the Holocaust.

## Holocaust Inversion

Using the memory of [the Holocaust](#) to criticize or lecture [Jews](#). In this antisemitic worldview, Jews are accused of failing to learn the lessons of the Holocaust and becoming just as bad as the Nazis, particularly in their treatment of Palestinians. This is not just incredibly offensive - it is also factually inaccurate. There have been periodic wars within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but no Israeli government has ever sought to destroy Palestinians as a people.

Holocaust inversion is often used to demonize Jews, Israelis, and the state of [Israel](#). It attempts to use the moral authority of Holocaust memory to discriminate against, silence, and abuse the actual victims of the Holocaust.





Literally “uprising” or “shaking off” in Arabic. This is the term used to describe two periods of violent campaigns against Israel by Palestinians groups in 1987-1990 and 2000-2005. The Second Intifada in particular was marked by widespread violence and terrorism, including a campaign of bombings targeting buses and other civilian targets in Israel.

Israel  
יִשְׂרָאֵל

1. The modern state of Israel
2. The ancestral homeland of the Jewish people and the northern of two Hebrew (Jewish) kingdoms in the ancient Middle East
3. The Jewish people
4. The literal meaning is “he who struggles with God”



A nation of people originating from the Israelites of ancient Israel. The primary religion of Jews is Judaism.

Being Jewish is a combination of culture, religion, and ethnicity, and may mean different things to different Jews. Jews live around the world but share the same traditions, holidays, and origin.

Judaism



A monotheistic religion (meaning belief in one god) originating from ancient Israel. The religion practiced by the Jewish people. Followers of Judaism study the **Torah** and follow its teachings.

There are a variety of movements within Judaism that differ in their interpretations of biblical requirements and laws. In the United States, the main movements of Judaism are Orthodox, Reform, and Conservative.

Judaizing/  
Judaizers

Term used to accuse Jews who had converted to Christianity of secretly remaining Jews or to accuse Christians of following Jewish practices.

Khurbn  
חורבן

Meaning catastrophic or total destruction in Yiddish, this term is used to describe the Holocaust, as well as other violent incidents in Jewish history such as the destruction of the **Second Temple**.



## Pale of Settlement

Established in 1795 by Russian empress Catherine the Great, this pale (limit) restricted where most Jews could live in the Russian Empire. The area of the Pale included what is now Belarus and Moldova and parts of Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine, and Russia. The official restrictions ended with the Russian Revolution in 1917.

The area of the Pale of Settlement was where most Jews lived in Europe before the Holocaust, where most Jews were killed during the Holocaust, and where most Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust came from.

## Pogrom



Literally “riot” in Russian. An organized attack, most frequently used to describe attacks on Jewish people or communities. The term came into common use in Europe and the United States after a series of attacks on Jews in the Russian Empire in the early 1800s. These attacks caused a wave of immigration by Jews to western European countries and to the United States.

## Prejudice



An unfair **bias** against or towards a person or group that is based on emotion rather than knowledge or experience.

## The Protocols of the Elders of Zion



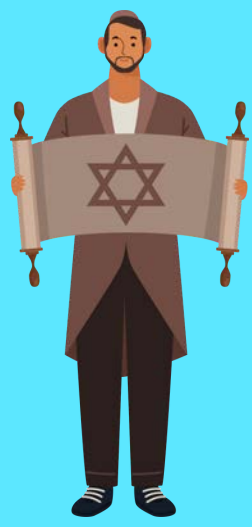
Also known as “the Protocols,” this document claims to be the minutes of a secret meeting of Jews plotting world domination. It is actually a fake document assembled by antisemites (possibly members of the Russian secret police) in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. While the Protocols has been debunked numerous times, it has been translated into numerous languages and continues to be read and sold today.

A representative quote: “Our right lies in force. The word “right” is an abstract thought and proved by nothing. The word means no more than:—Give me what I want in order that thereby I may have a proof that I am stronger than you.”



# Rabbi

רַבִּי



A spiritual leader or religious teacher in **Judaism**. After the destruction of the second temple in Jerusalem in 70 CE, Judaism adapted. The temple priests who had previously been considered religious authorities were no longer able to perform their traditional role without the temple. Rabbis gradually became the main religious authority. Their roles include interpreting the **Torah**, leading religious services, and leading rituals marking lifecycle events (including births, funerals, weddings, and comings of age).

## Racial Antisemitism

An evolution of **antisemitism** to fit the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries' obsession with race, this ideology falsely claims that **Jews** are a race with specific and unchanging characteristics. This belief prepared the way for **the Holocaust** through its false claim that Jews are evil because of their blood and cannot change being Jewish through religious conversion.



# Seder

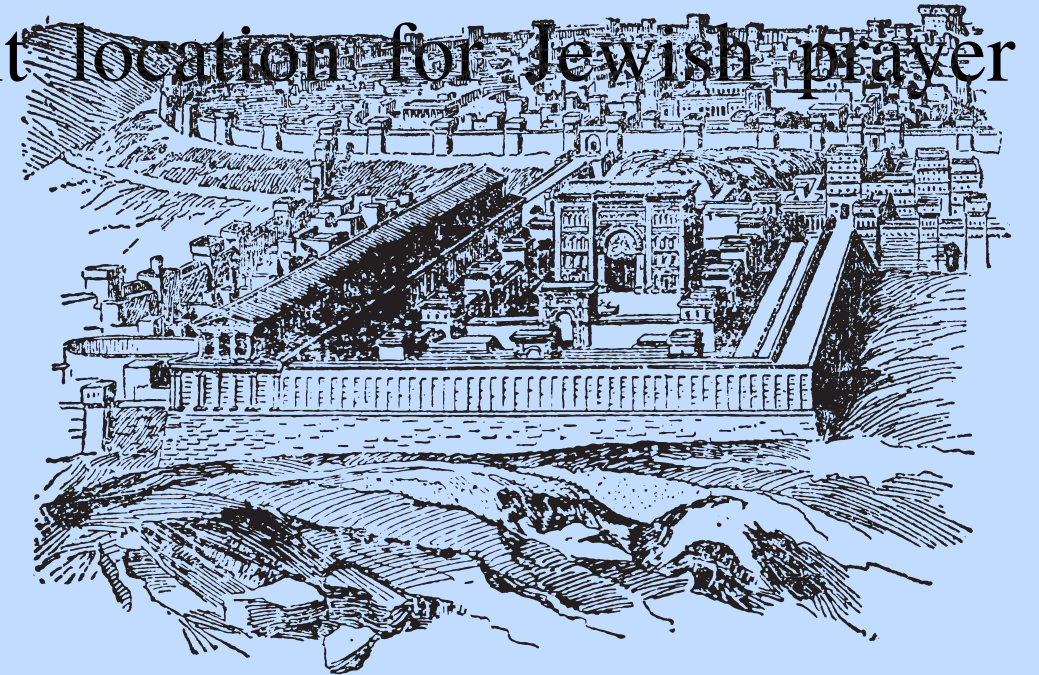
סדר

Hebrew for “order,” this describes the ritual meal for the first one or two nights of **Passover**.

## Second Temple

Located in Jerusalem, it was the second temple built on the Temple Mount and was the center of Jewish worship from 516 BCE to 70 CE. The second temple replaced the original Jewish temple built by King Solomon in Jerusalem, which was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 BC. When the Romans destroyed and looted the second temple in 70 CE, it was considered a disaster of apocalyptic proportions for Jews. Despite Judaism's adaptation to meet the challenges of exile and diaspora, Jews today still pray facing the direction of the second temple.

Some parts of the second temple remain, most importantly the Kotel or Western Wall (sometimes known as the Wailing Wall to non-Jews). This is still an important location for Jewish prayer today.







## Semitic

Illustration of Shem

Refers to a family of languages from the Middle East, including Hebrew, Arabic, Aramaic, Phoenician, and Akkadian. The word was coined in the 1770s and referenced the biblical figure Shem, one of the sons of Noah. Despite originally referring to languages spoken by different groups, by the 1800s “Semitic” was used to mean Jews specifically. Wilhelm Marr, who popularized the word “[antisemitism](#)” and proudly identified as an antisemite used the term for Jews to separate himself from religious [prejudice](#) against Jews. He instead claimed that his prejudice was based on science. This was a forerunner to [racial antisemitism](#).

## Settler Colonialism



A theory of colonialism that describes the process of foreign settlers conquering an area and displacing the indigenous population through violence and assimilation. It describes the development of the United States, Canada, and Australia, among others.

Settler colonialism is frequently used to describe the modern state of [Israel](#), but this is inaccurate. [Jews](#) are indigenous to Israel and are therefore not settlers but people returning to their homeland. Arabs from the Arabian peninsula can be more accurately described as settler colonialists in the area.

## Shoah שואה

Hebrew for “catastrophe,” it is another way to refer to [the Holocaust](#). The term is used by Jews in Israel and many in the [diaspora](#).

## Shtetl

The [Yiddish](#) term for town, referring to a small Jewish town or village in eastern Europe. Most shtetl communities were destroyed in [the Holocaust](#). You can learn more about some of those communities [here](#).

## Stereotype

An oversimplified generalization about a group of people that assumes every member of a group is that way. This means that some members of a group might match a stereotype but not all or even most members of the group are actually like that.





## Synagogue

Meaning a place of assembly in **Judaism**. A Jewish place of worship and gathering place. Can sometimes also be referred to as a temple or shul.



## Talmud

תלמוד

A collection of the Oral Torah (Mishnah) and its commentary (Gemara) dating from the years 0-500 CE. It includes writings, laws, and debates by many different **rabbis** reflecting on a wide variety of topics. This collection of rabbinical wisdom and argument informs how Jews interpret the Torah. It provides the foundation for Jewish religious law and practice.



## Torah

תורה

The first five books of the Hebrew Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Also known as the five books of Moses, as it was given to Moses by God. This tells the origin story of the Jewish people.

## Trope

A concept or idea that occurs over and over. In relation to antisemitism, certain incorrect and negative ideas about Jews have become tropes as they have been repeated over and over.



## Usury

Loaning people money and charging them unfair amounts of interest. Simply charging interest on a loan is not usury - usury refers specifically to exploitative practices that are unfair and/or illegal. Starting in the Middle Ages, Jews were frequently and unfairly charged with usury, which eventually became the pretext for the mass expulsion of Jews from many western European countries.

## West Bank

An area of land on the west bank of the Jordan river that is partly administered by Israel and partly by the Palestinian Authority. The area was annexed by Jordan after the 1948 Israeli War of Independence and was captured by Israel during the Six Day War.



## Yiddish

A language spoken by many Jews in central and eastern Europe before the Holocaust. It combines German with Hebrew and Slavic elements and is usually written with the Hebrew alphabet. Most Jews who were murdered in the Holocaust were Yiddish speakers.

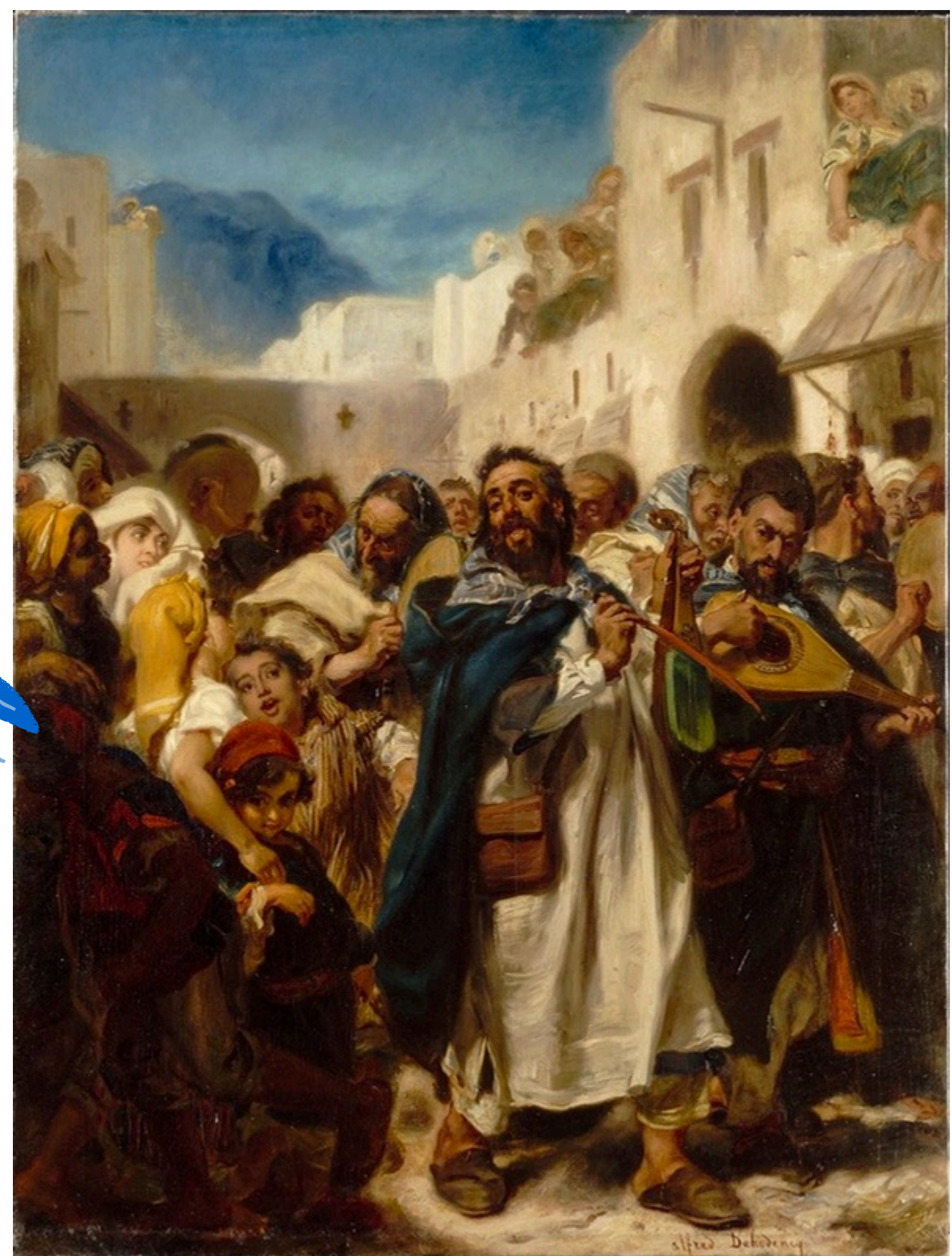
Yiddish is still spoken by more than half a million people around the world, particularly in the United States and Israel. There is a growing movement to revive Yiddish language and the culture surrounding it.

## Zionism Zionist

The movement for the self-determination and statehood for the Jewish people in their ancestral homeland, the land of **Israel** and people who believe in that idea. Zionism originated in the 19th century as a political movement calling for the creation of a Jewish state in the ancient Jewish homeland of Israel. After the creation of the state of Israel, Zionism basically means the belief that Israel should continue to exist and a Zionist is anyone who believes in that idea.



The interior of the Portuguese **synagogue** in Amsterdam by Emanuel de Witte, 1680.



A Jewish festival in Tétouan, Morocco by Alfred Dehodencq, 1865.