

PART 3

Never again!

OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights and Anne Frank House project

Teaching material to
combat anti-Semitism

1. Never again
2. Living together
3. Anti-Semitism today
4. Media and information literacy
5. Anti-Gypsyism
6. Refugees



1. Never again

After the World War II, when many countries faced the consequences of atrocities, destruction and devastation, they began to jointly participate in creation of international organizations as platforms for cooperation and establishment of basic norms and social values that everyone would agree upon, with the aim to ensure that the genocide and other crimes would never happen again.

The World War II was the most horrible and deadliest conflict in history, with a human cost of 55 million lives. Millions were left homeless, becoming displaced persons and refugees, entire cities were leveled to the ground, material damage was immeasurable, and whole nations were traumatized by the enormous losses and horrors they had experienced. Only after the end of the war humanity was able to see how terrible and immense were the consequences of the twelve-year Nazi regime in Germany, with Holocaust as the most heinous crime of them all.

In order to prevent the horrors of the World War II from ever happening again, practically all countries of the world became members of the United Nations (UN) in order to cooperate in the field of international law, global security, economic development and social equity. State officials agreed that it is necessary to establish rules on basic human rights, that would oblige all states to recognize the equal rights to life, freedom, property, religion and the use of one's own language for each individual. As a result, the United Nations member states formulated a list of the most important human rights they called the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**.



The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. /.../

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.



The Universal Declaration of Human Rights was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948.

Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment./.../

Article 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law./.../

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief./.../

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference./.../

Article 20

Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association./.../



United Nations General Assembly Hall in New York

UN definition of genocide

Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948.

Article 2

In the present Convention, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:

- (a) Killing members of the group (people);
- (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group (members of specific people);
- (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part;
- (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group (people);
- (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.

Article 3

The following acts shall be punishable:

- (a) Genocide;
- (b) Conspiracy to commit genocide;
- (c) Direct and public incitement to commit genocide;
- (d) Attempt to commit genocide;
- (e) Complicity in genocide.

QUESTIONS/ASSIGNMENTS for students

1. Why is the World War II considered to be the greatest and most horrible conflict in the history of mankind?
2. Indicate which human rights were violated during the World War II.
3. Give some examples of human rights violations today.

The gray zones of democracy

The right to freedom of expression is very important fundamental right, but it should not endanger or jeopardize the human rights of others. However, different rights are sometimes conflicting. Some words, pictures, gestures, music, etc., are painful and discriminatory for a particular person, while another person may not feel that way or does not know or understand it. Sometimes freedom of speech is abused and used as a cover for hate speech. It is not always easy to be sure where one ends, and where the other one begins.

Unfortunately, across Europe, music artists occasionally appear who use derogatory and offensive words in their lyrics, referring to different minority peoples or social groups, like the Roma, Africans, immigrants or members of the LGBT population, and who promote prejudices and stereotypical images about them. Some of them write about the Jews in their lyrics, using abusive and negative language, and there are those who even celebrate Nazism and deny the Holocaust, in a more or less covert manner.

– **Some** criticize them, believing that these musicians spread hatred, and that their songs should be banned on radio and television. They are convinced that the artist and public figures, who exert considerable influence on the young people, have even greater social responsibility, and that their offending and insulting words about the Jews or Roma, for example, find a stronger echo. Some believe that this should not be given too much importance, because the controversy surrounding the songs just draws more public attention and contributes to their popularity. Some say that these instances should not be allowed to pass without protest, and wonder how our fellow citizens, for example Jews or Roma, would feel if we fail to react - because it might seem like we agree with those musicians, or as if we just don't care.

– **The others** say that as music artists they have the right to express their thoughts and opinions, and feel that, as long as they do not directly incite violence, they are not overstepping the boundaries into hate speech. Some feel that in a free society we must allow for different viewpoints, and that one should not exclude the other. Some claim that criticism of such lyrics is exaggerated. Others say that these musicians are actually correct and that their lyrics represent a realistic image of society, and that self-righteous phonies and various mercenaries censor and prevent the truth to be heard. Some consider that these musicians are popular exactly because of such lyrics, and that they are the reason many come to their concerts.

- What do you think about this dilemma?
- What could be the consequences of inciting discrimination and expressing hate speech?



Freedom of expression according to European convention on human rights:

Article 10 – Freedom of expression

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of expression. This right shall include freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. This Article shall not prevent States from requiring the licensing of broadcasting, television or cinema enterprises.
2. The exercise of these freedoms, since it carries with it duties and responsibilities, may be subject to such formalities, conditions, restrictions or penalties as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society, in the interests of national security, territorial integrity or public safety, for the prevention of disorder or crime, for the protection of health or morals, for the protection of the reputation or rights of others, for preventing the disclosure of information received in confidence, or for maintaining the authority and impartiality of the judiciary.

2. Living together

Have you ever asked yourself: Who am I? What do I strive for? Why do I identify with a certain group, and not with another? These are the questions that all people ask themselves sometimes, and they are related to our identity. Identity is a term that denotes the way an individual or a group perceives themselves. One of the oldest human qualities is the need for distinctiveness, identification, and assimilation.

Identity is a layered category, and in different circumstances, diverse facets of our identities come to the fore, or rather become more important than others. One and the same person is primarily a grandson or a granddaughter to his or her grandparents, a representative of his or her school at a municipal competition, a youth from Serbia when on an excursion to Greece, a fan of a sports club at the stands, or a guitar player in a music band. Under different circumstances, a grandfather will introduce the same person as: “This is my grandson”, while a member of an orchestra will introduce him by saying: “This is our guitarist”. All these parts of the identity are relevant and real, and we need them to cope with society and build relationships with other people.

On the one hand, identity is a very personal category and everyone has the right to feel and construct their identity as they experience it themselves. But on the other hand, identity can be imposed, especially by majority groups, by perceiving someone in a certain way, regardless of the fact that it does not coincide with how that person experiences himself/herself. It is important to emphasize that identity is a social rather than a biological category. Identity is not inherited through genes or “through blood”, but developed as a person grows up in an environment that has certain values and worldviews, through learning, maturing and self-discovery.

Different categories of identities can be abused, especially when used with the aim of inflaming hatred towards those who are not members of the same group. It became apparent that identity is a powerful driving force in history, and that people sometimes sacrifice for a group with which they identify with, or even commit crimes in its name.

Cultural diversity is the acceptance and respect of differences between religious, ethnic and other groups that do not share the same values and lifestyles, and not insisting on their assimilation into dominant culture.

Tolerance, in the broadest sense, is the ability to engage in a dialogue with others. A man cannot survive alone in a society, therefore tolerance is a necessary prerequisite of socialization and humanity. Today, tolerance means respecting the other, recognizing the right to diversity and the need for dialogue. While we once perceived tolerance as a passive acceptance, or “putting up with” diversity, today tolerance is considered an active, but nonviolent communication that grew out of the need for mutual understanding.

Discrimination is a different treatment or behavior towards a particular person that is different in relation to treatment or behavior towards others, based on the perception of that person’s affiliation to a particular group or category, based on: class, national, religious, sexual or gender affiliation, disability, sexual orientation, age, social or marital status, etc.

Xenophobia is fear and mistrust of something that is experienced as alien and unknown, primarily of people who are in some way perceived as members of another group. Anti-Semitism, anti-Gypsyism, nationalism and similar, are different forms of xenophobia. One of the forms of xenophobia is racism.



There is no race – only racism

Racism is a kind of hatred based on the presumption that there are biologically different races of people, and that some races are superior to others. This also implies the assumption that members of the same race possess certain common characteristic features that are genetically transferred from one generation to another, which are specific to that race alone. According to this worldview, these particular features include characteristics of personality, moral understanding, intellectual abilities, etc., which consequently implies that, for example, members of a particular race are genetically predisposed to be criminals. Therefore, racism suggests that the affiliation to a particular race and the characteristics that it entails cannot be altered, since they are permanently defined and determined by birth. Racism is based on gross generalizations and a range of prejudices and stereotypes, which throughout the history to the present day, resulted in various forms of discrimination and intolerance manifested in the deprivation of liberty, exploitation and violence, and even genocide against the peoples who were allegedly members of the “inferior race”. One of the terrible examples of racism is the fate of millions that have been forcibly abducted and taken away from Africa to be exploited for centuries as slave labor in North America.



Demonstrations in London in 2017, on the occasion of 21 March, the date declared by the United Nations General Assembly as the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

German Nazis too based their ideology on racism, and the anti-Semitism they propagated relied on the claim that the Jews were a “race” with negative traits that they convey and inherit by birth. Consequently, each Jew, even a child, would be equally “dangerous”, because they each carry “negative traits” that are inherited “by blood”. And Roma too were treated as “inferior race”. For the Nazis, the Slavs were “inferior race” too, so the crimes that they committed against the Serbs, the Poles, the Russians and others, included racist component.

Today, many countries have rejected the idea that there are different races of humans and consider the perception of people as members of “different races” as an obsolete and primitive social construct, which has evolved in order to justify colonial conquests. In the modern world such idea has been overcome. Therefore, the assumption of the superiority of certain “races” over the others, has been rendered absurd.

Despite of it all, racism is still present today and permeates and inspires various ideologies and political movements based on hatred, intolerance and exclusion. Racism is an important element of the political programs of various populist parties, especially in countries inhabited by people originating from various parts of the world, or countries that are preferred destination of refugees. Also, racism is an important element of neo-Nazi ideology. Hate speech, as well as hate crimes, are often inspired by racism.

National minorities in Serbia

The Republic of Serbia is a multinational community. With its Constitution and a set of laws, the Republic of Serbia has regulated the way in which the constitutionally guaranteed rights and freedoms of the members of national minorities are exercised. In order to exercise their right to self-government in culture, education, information and official use of languages and script, members of national minorities may elect their national councils. By 2018, 21 national minorities constituted their National Councils in the Republic of Serbia: Bunjevci, Bulgarians, Bosniaks, Hungarians, Roma, Romanians, Ruthenians, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Croats, Albanians, Ashkali, Vlachs, Greeks, Egyptians, Germans, Slovenes, Czechs, Macedonians, Montenegrins, and the Federation of Jewish Communities. These National Councils are involved in the process of cooperation with the competent state authorities.



Federation of Jewish Communities in Serbia

Since their arrival to the territories of present-day Serbia, at the beginning of 16th and 17th century, the Jews founded their associations in the cities where they lived, which were called **Jewish Communities**. Besides helping them establishing closer ties amongst each other, the Communities assisted them in solving issues such as the right to education and work, the right to erect their synagogues, cemeteries, schools, as well as humanitarian associations, through their contacts with the local and state authorities. Communities often founded cultural and sports societies, as well. Since, over time, Communities were established in many towns across Serbia, they decided to form a joint organization bearing the current name, the Federation of Jewish Communities in Serbia.

This Federation was formed a century ago, on 1 July 1919, under the title of Federation of Jewish (Israelite) Religious Communities. After the World War II, it was renamed Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia. From that time to the present day (2018), the presidents of the Federation were: Hugo Spitzer, Dr. Friedrich Pops, Dr. Albert Weiss, Dr. Lavoslav Kalderburg, David Albahari, Aca Singer, Aleksandar Nećak, Ruben Fuks and Robert Sabadoš.

Today, there are nine Jewish communities in Serbia, in the following cities: Belgrade, Novi Sad, Subotica, Pančevo, Zemun, Niš, Zrenjanin, Sombor and Kikinda, with a total of about 3000 members. The Jewish Historical Museum is also a part of the Federation, dedicated to collecting materials, objects and documents from Jewish history.



Federation of Jewish Communities in Serbia and Jewish Historical Museum, at 71a Kralja Petra Street, in Belgrade

(Text about the Federation of Jewish Communities in Serbia: Aron Albahari)

Young people on identity, tolerance and discrimination



"Identity can change. We create it. We get something from our parents, that's true, but identity is mostly generated over the years and through experience acquired. When I'm 55, I'll have different experiences, so I'm probably going to know much better who I actually am. I

have Romani, and Albanian, and Wallachian and Turkish origins. Sometimes it is burdensome for me to define my ethnicity. But I realized that I do not have to be any of the above, if I decide so. That is how I feel for now, but I am aware that my attitude can be changed later, with years. On the other hand, all those identities I was born with can be an advantage, because I feel a closeness to all of those cultures, customs and languages. I can communicate with many different people. I'm proud of this and look at it as an advantage. If a person is proud of who he/she is, then that is how others will perceive him/her too."

Sara Đorđević, age 16, Belgrade



(Photos of the young people: Teraforming © terraforming.org)



“Have I discriminated against someone else? I would never do anything against my principles. We don't know in what way something that we do now, could affect our entire life. Since I was little, I was brought up to put myself in other people's skin and to try to find for myself how I would feel in the position of someone I have hurt in some way. That is how I learnt that what I don't wish for myself, I shouldn't wish for others, or do to others. However, there is a possibility that, in spite of our best intentions, we discriminate against someone, without being aware of it. The solution is to try to get to know the people we live with, to know who they are, what they find upsetting, what matters to them, how they would not like to be treated by us.”

Zlatica Pavlović, age 16, Šid



“People have the need to look for a culprit, other than themselves, especially in time of crisis. Then, they usually look for a scapegoat among those who are different from the rest. These were often the Jews, but it could have been one of us. I could have been chosen because I am chubby, because I'm listening to different music, or because I have an unusual hairstyle – simply because I'm different in some way. That's all total nonsense. There are no good and evil nations – there are only good and bad individuals.”

Матија Вељковић, 16 година, Ниш

“There are no good and evil nations – there are only good and bad individuals”

GLOSSARY

Multinational (state) – the state inhabited by various peoples

National minority (ethnic minority) – a minority community whose members are distinguished by a special national, or ethnic identity, different from the identity of the national, or ethnic majority in the common state.

QUESTIONS/ASSIGNMENTS for students

1. List some of the basic human and civil rights that are legally guaranteed to the citizens of Serbia.
2. List some of the basic human and civil rights that you respect.
3. Has someone ever denied you the right to do something because of your national, religious or any other affiliation?

3. Anti-Semitism today

Anti-Semitism can be described as hatred, animosity, or bias against the Jews, just because and only because they are Jews. Anti-Semitism is a very old phenomenon that was manifested in various ways throughout the centuries. Its most horrible form was the Holocaust. Anti-Semitism still exists today, in almost all parts of the world, as well as in Serbia. Although contemporary anti-Semitism has certain specificities, what characterized it through centuries up until the present day, is that it remains based on prejudices, stereotypes, myths and lies.

Anti-Jewish myths and lies

Regardless of different content and manifestations of anti-Semitic myths and lies, from religious to racial anti-Semitism, throughout the history anti-Semitism has always had a very prosaic and practical background, that stemmed from the interest of certain structures of society to secure the power for themselves, or to turn away the attention of the people from the real social problems, passing the Jews as the “culprits” for all kinds of misfortunes, or to hinder and prevent the Jews from engaging in the economy, thus safeguarding their own monopoly, or the most prosaic of reasons – to justify the robbery of the Jewish property, as well as their persecutions and murder, or all of it together.

Religious anti-Semitism is hatred and animosity against the Jews based on religious “arguments”. The central point in Christian anti-Semitism, from early Christianity to the modern times, is the accusation of the “betrayal of Jesus Christ” and “deicide”. According to the long-dominant theological teaching, all Jews are collectively responsible for Christ’s crucifixion, for eternity. This idea played an important role in the centuries-long persecution and discrimination of Jews in Europe. Another characteristic of religious anti-Semitism is the emphasis on the “inferiority” of Judaism in relation to Christianity. For a long time, Christian theology described Christianity as spiritual, based on love and forgiveness, while Judaism was presented as “materialistic,” with the special emphasis given to the “lack of notion of forgiveness”. Christian art accompanied this dogma, so painting, frescoes and sculptures that adorned the outer walls of churches often depicted allegories that assert “failure” and “inferiority” of Judaism. On the one hand, Jews were demonized and portrayed as freaks, and on the other hand, “erased” and left out of works of art which were supposed to portray biblical motifs, in which, in the Bible itself, the Jews play a role.

As part of the falsehoods and myths propagated against the Jew, there were often **charges that were quite absurd**. Perhaps it is understandable that in ancient times, due to ignorance and illiteracy, and under the pressure from the church and the rulers, such accusations were accepted by the people, but it is difficult to justify that many of such charges are present in various forms to this very day. Such absurd accusations include the myth that the Jews allegedly “poisoned the wells” to spread the contagion, so they were blamed for the outbreak of plague epidemic that decimated Europe in the 16th century. These unfounded accusations led to the massacre of thousands of Jews in various parts of Europe, but the claims that the Jews “spread disease” or other calamities, still exist today in various contemporary



Defeated Synagoga with a blindfold across her eyes – the sculpture in a cathedral in the French city of Metz, symbolizing “inferiority” of Judaism in relation to Christianity

forms. A similar fabrication was conceived in Europe in the 12th century, suggesting that the Jews “abduct and kill Christian children, and use their blood in rituals during the celebration of the Jewish holiday of Pesach”. The accusation that Jews carry out “ritual murders” exists today in various forms, especially among anti-Semites in the Arab and Islamic world.

One of the typical anti-Jewish prejudices is that the Jews are “obsessed with gold, money and wealth,” and that they are “usurers” who mercilessly force their debtors into ruin. This stereotype first appeared back in the Middle Ages. At that time across Europe, the local rulers and the church banned the Jews from engaging in a whole range of professions, as well as possessing or working the land, while on the other hand, encouraging them to engage in trade, banking and money lending (since usury was prohibited for Muslims and Christians for religious reasons). In essence, anti-Semitism was manifested through the disenfranchisement of Jews (the ban on engaging in certain professions and the possession of land), which gave rise to new anti-Semitic prejudices about them, that exist to this day.

The concept of the existence of an enormous “**Jewish power**” that represents “a peril” has been, and still is, the crucial point of anti-Semitism. Such prejudices have their roots in the Middle Ages, but were reinforced during the 19th century, after the period of the creation of modern nation states and emancipation that finally opened the door to the Jews to participate in a society as equal citizens, especially in some countries of Western Europe. However, under the influence of centuries-old negative stereotypes, Jews who managed to achieve economic and social prosperity were often perceived as a “threat” to the existing privileged classes and power structures. As a result, anti-Semitic propaganda portrayed the successful or influential members of the Jewish community as representatives of the sinister and all-powerful universal Jewish collective, which by its nature is “suspicious”, “conspiratorial” and “menacing”. Prejudices about the Jewish dominion played an important role in the Nazi propaganda. German Jews were portrayed as the purported “masters” of German politics, economics, culture and the media, and a part of the “World Jewry” (Weltjudentum) that “controls” the global economy and “rules” all major world powers – from American capitalism to the Soviet Bolshevism.

The notion of “Jewish power” is still the most widespread anti-Semitic concept and a common motif replicated in anti-Jewish propaganda. Allegations about “Jewish power over the media”, banks, etc., are the most prevalent. This image is also drawing on the stereotype of the Jews as a homogeneous collective that is working to secure “global Jewish interests” in an organized manner, as well as on historically rooted prejudices about the Jews as unreliable “alien elements”, never loyal to interests of the state and nation they live in.



Burning of the Jews accused of spreading the plague
(woodcut from 1493)

Anti-Semitism did not disappear after the Holocaust.

Racial anti-Semitism – an innate, immutable and eternal sin

In the second half of the 19th century, the new radical, nationalistic and racist ideas emerged, promoted by writers in France, Germany and other countries. A number of books were published to forewarn about the “Jewish conspiracy” against the Christian world, individual countries, or against the “Aryan race.” Since the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, anti-Semitism was influenced by racial biology. The negative traits that supposedly characterize the Jews were given their “biological explanations” – they are “innate” to the Jewish “race”. According to this concept, the Jews not only possess an “alien”, “abnormal” and “dangerous” mentality, but are also biologically different from the “superior race”. “Scientists” endeavored to

purportedly prove that the Jews were both inferior and dangerous, at the same time. As a logical consequence, the institutes for racial anthropology and eugenics developed theses about the “lack of space” for the superior race, and pointed to the perils of “mixing the races”, which resulted in the “racial hygiene” concept”.

Racial anti-Semitism, which played a crucial role in Nazi ideology, was based on the idea that the alleged negative features of the Jews were “biologically inherent”, immutable and eternal. If earlier in the history the Jews stood a chance of avoiding the pogrom by changing their faith and converting to Christianity, this new racial definition stripped them of any possibility of doing something to redeem themselves, because their alleged “depravity” was considered inherited and an inevitable part of their unique “innate, immutable, and eternal sin”. This harsh judgment from which there was no salvation resulted in the deaths of millions of Jews during the Holocaust.



Memorial to the Murdered Jews in Berlin
(Photo: Alessio Maffei, Unsplash)

But no one believes this lies today anymore ... Or?

Although it would be logical to expect, that in the contemporary society of the 21st century, when human civilization achieved certain level of knowledge and general education, and after we have experienced how anti-Semitism can lead to such terrible mass crimes as the Holocaust, that no one could possibly believe in these absurd anti-Jewish lies, myths and stereotypes. Unfortunately, we are witnessing quite the opposite. Anti-Semitism is very much present today..

The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism

Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.



INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE

International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance is an organization dedicated to advancement and promotion of education, research and remembrance of the Holocaust. Republic of Serbia is a member of the Alliance since 2011.

For more information: www.holocaustremembrance.com

Some of the contemporary examples of anti-Semitism include:

- Making, dissemination or participation in dissemination of mendacious stereotypical allegations about Jews, with the aim do dehumanize an demonize the individual Jews or Jewish community, which includes, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a Jewish world domination, or of Jews controlling the media, government, banks, etc.
- Accusing Jews as individuals or people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews;
- Accusing Jewish fellow citizens of being more loyal to “global Jewish community” or to the State of Israel, and giving priority to representing their interests, rather than to the interests of their own countries, whose nationals they are;
- Denial of Holocaust, as well as distortion of Holocaust history, or historical revisionism of Holocaust, as well as the accusation of the Jewish people and the state of Israel that they invented the Holocaust or exaggerated the number of its victims;
- Calling for, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a racist ideology or an extremist view of religion.

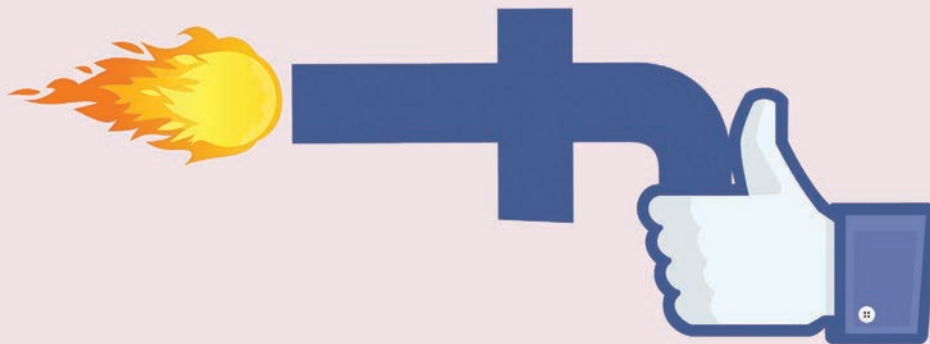
Anti-Semitism on social media

The main source for propagating anti-Semitism today is the Internet, primarily social networks, forums, blogs, and similar channels. Creation, placement and dissemination of anti-Semitic content is done with the aim of creating new groups of like-minded people, especially among the youth. Anti-Semitism on the Internet is sometimes overt and clearly recognizable as in, for example, content that ridicules Holocaust victims, praises the Nazis, or offends or threatens the Jews, etc. But often malicious anti-Jewish propaganda is concealed in content about the real problems that many people face. Such texts are written in a seemingly objective way, and at first glance they appear to be quite justified and well argued socio-political commentary. For instance, they can relate to criticism of globalization, international monetary policy and institutions, unemployment as a result of privatization and closure of factories, corruption among politicians and CEOs of large companies, etc. But gradually and discreetly, a theory infiltrates the text, that behind all these negative phenomena stands a small, all-powerful, group of individuals. This is how the old stereotype and myth of the “Jewish conspiracy and power” and “Jewish global dominion” is introduced again. While there are some who intentionally spread anti-Semitism, many social media users do not go deep enough to analyze such content, but share and “like” it, because on the surface it appears as something they agree with. In this way, anti-Semitic propaganda spreads widely and reaches us through our friends and people we trust. Therefore, it is important to learn about anti-Semitism and other forms of xenophobia within the framework of strengthening media and information literacy, so that it can be recognized, rejected and confronted in time..



In 2016 international research on anti-Semitism on social media, posts on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Youtube were monitored around the world and in many different languages. During 2016, as many as 382,000 anti-Semitic posts were identified, most of them in the United States (68%), and in Germany (14%). Unfortunately, the number of anti-Semitic posts on social media has grown steadily over the years, and in the first months of 2018, it increased by 30% in relation to 2016.

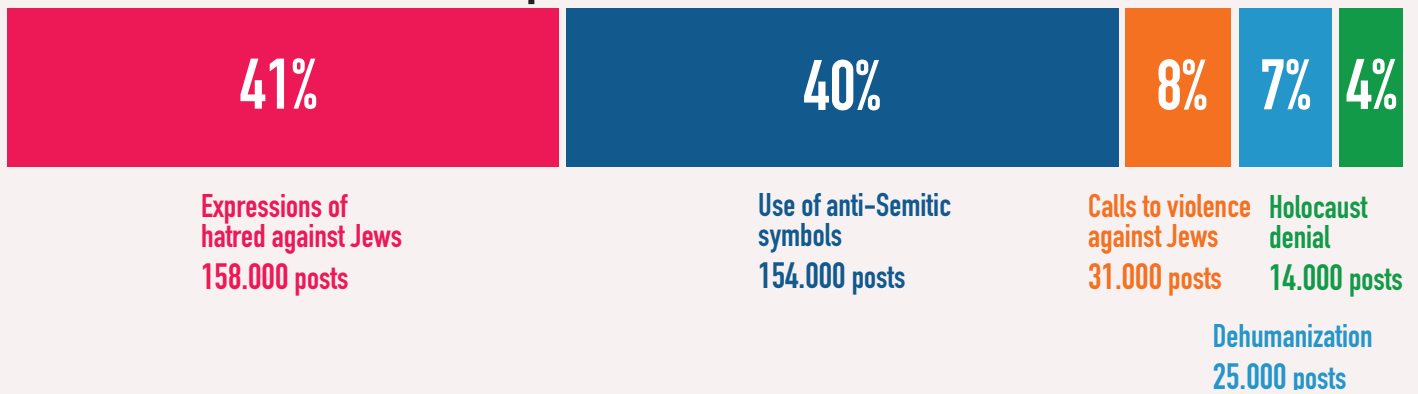
In 2018, for the first time, Serbia was among the 10 countries where anti-Semitic symbols and distortions of Holocaust history were posted the most on social networks.



(Illustration: Terraforming © terraforming.org)

**Before you “like” and share, consider the content. Is it truthful? Check the source of the information. Is it offending anyone or inciting to violence?
If it’s hate speech – react!**

382.000 anti-Semitic posts on social networks in 2016



The report of the World Jewish Congress on anti-Semitism on social media, in 2016 and 2018. The World Jewish Congress is an international organization representing Jewish communities from over 100 countries of the world

(Illustration: Terraforming © terraforming.org)

Anti-Semitism and Israel

Anti-Semitism can also be directed at the State of Israel, when Israel is perceived as a Jewish collective in the context of hatred against the Jews. It is important to note that expressing criticism against the policy of an incumbent administration of the State of Israel, at a particular time, falls within the political rights of every individual and cannot be regarded as an expression of anti-Semitism – just like criticizing policies of any state, whether one's own or foreign. But when this criticism turns into denial of the right of Israel to exist as a sovereign state, than that goes beyond the boundary of a democratic political dialogue, and becomes hate speech and an expression of anti-Semitism.

On the other hand, anti-Semitism is very strong and widespread today, precisely

because of the intense animosity towards Israel, especially among the Middle Eastern Arab and other Muslim countries, which strongly support the Palestinian side in the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis. The accusations leveled against all the Jews in the world, or individual Jews, for being collectively or personally responsible for policies led by the State of Israel at a certain point in time, and in particular the acts of violence against the Jews worldwide, inspired by hatred of Israel, are certainly one of the most aggressive and dangerous forms anti-Semitism is manifested today.

Anti-Semitism, which is expressed as denial of the right of Israel to exist as a sovereign state, is called **anti-Zionism**. Sometimes, in the anti-Jewish context, the words "Zionists" and "Zionism" are used as negative terms, insinuating that Zionism, or the State of Israel as its result, is something negative. This alludes that the very existence of the State of Israel is evidence of Jewish "influence" on world politics. Some even claim that the Holocaust itself is a part of the "conspiracy" to create the State of Israel, which is, of course, absurd and reprehensible.



The ancient city of Jerusalem has an enormous importance for believers of the three great religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Both the Israelis and the Palestinians claim Jerusalem as their capital city. (Photo Rob Bye/Unsplash)

Holocaust denial

Holocaust denial is a denial of the historical reality regarding the extent of destruction of the Jews by the Nazis and their collaborators, as well as the assertion that the Holocaust never happened. Holocaust denial may also include denial or calling into question the manner in which the Holocaust took place (such as denial of the existence of gas chambers, mass shootings, starvation and torture, etc.), or the intention to commit genocide against the Jews. Also, a form of Holocaust denial is the claim that the Jews are “exaggerating” the number of victims, in order to advance their own “interest”.

In essence, holocaust denial is always a form of expression of anti-Semitism. The real goal of Holocaust denial is the rehabilitation of a political ideology that is responsible for the Holocaust, or related ideologies that have impelled Nazi collaborators and helpers to participate in the Holocaust.

Neo-Nazism

Neo-Nazism is a militant movement and a political ideology that seeks to revitalize and reaffirm the ideas and practices of the Nazi Third Reich, combined with the ideas of local nationalists and chauvinists. The movement exists in many countries around the world and is also organized through international networks. Neo-Nazis borrow elements of classic Nazism, like racism, anti-Semitism, anti-Gypsism, anti-communism and homophobia, and share common denial of the Holocaust, as well as the use of Nazi symbols and iconography in combination with the new Nazi symbolism. They are opponents of cultural diversity, and apart from the Jews and Roma, they often target Muslims, Arabs, Africans and various other minority groups. When organizing public demonstrations and rallies, they are frequently confronted by anti-fascists who organize counter-protests, and although such events are usually accompanied by strong police presence, the groups often clash. Neo-Nazis actively spread their propaganda, as well as threats, on social networks and forums. In general, the movement relies on violence, threats, physical attacks and other forms of intimidation of its opponents. Simultaneously, these and similar groups are trying to engage in democratic political life of their countries, by organizing themselves in political parties and participating in local and state elections. As political parties, they publicly declare to be against racism and xenophobia, and to respect democratic values, but in their actions they remain faithful to their ideology. In the last ten years, in many European countries, these and similar political parties have managed to achieve considerable success and legally, through democratic elections, enter the local, regional and state administrations, and even the European Parliament.



(Photo: Hans Runesson)

Distortion of the history of the Holocaust

Distortion of the history of the Holocaust refers to, above all, the intent to deny, reduce or justify the effects of actions taken by German Nazi collaborators and helpers in the realization of Holocaust, as well as attempts to lay the blame on other nations and ethnic groups.



Demonstrations against neo-Nazis in Dresden, Germany, 13 February 2012.

Danuta Danielsson, a Jewish woman from Poland, whose mother survived the horrors of the Nazi camps, lived in the city of Vaxjo, in the south of Sweden. When she saw the neo-Nazi rally on the streets of her city, she was shocked and angry, and she hit one of the protesters on the head with a bag. This photo became known as a symbol of civil resistance to neo-Nazism. Neo-Nazi in the photo was convicted of hate crime for killing a young Jew who was gay, later that same year.

Neo-Nazi rally in Sweden, 13 April 1985

Confessions of a former neo-Nazi from Belgrade

Nebojša K. is a third grade student of a Belgrade high school.

Until recently, Nebojša was a neo-Nazi.

He encountered neo-Nazism in high school. Among the older students there were those who were wearing characteristic clothes and insignia of neo-Nazism, and in that way promoting Nazism and inviting others to join them. Nebojša believes that a good number of students in the school considered Nazis to be “cool” and admired them. Among the symbols that the neo-Nazis wore in school were mostly swastikas, mixed with some medieval and traditional Serbian coats of arms and symbols of “Serbian honor”. Nebojša soon joined them and became a “Nazi”, as he called himself. He wanted “others to remember him as a cool guy”. The older neo-Nazis gave them books written by some Serbian “alternative historians”, and taught them that the Serbs are “the great and ancient people that all others wish to exterminate”. Nebojša knew about the Nazi crimes in the World War II, and about their crimes against the Serbs as well, but he was explained that this was a “new, modern Nazism” that has “nothing to do with that old one”, but it’s more about “socializing”, and that it was “an offshoot of punk and rock music, and football”. For Nebojša, to be neo-Nazi, meant being “addicted to adrenaline”, because he was drawn to “that mob that had a certain energy and strength.” He felt “a rush of adrenaline” when they went to “action”, which meant that they would go about the town in a group, and spread fear. He also felt “adrenaline” when he was with the neo-Nazis at the stands of a football stadium, because, as Nebojša says, “your heart is overflowing when you see that the masses are singing the same song”. While he was a neo-Nazi, Nebojša “hated some people.” He mostly hated Roma. He knew that “he should also hate the Jews, but he did not know any Jew”. While they were “getting high on adrenaline” because they felt “strong in a group,” many others were scared of them. Nebojša was aware of this, and sometimes he thought about it. And then one day, when a huge fight between the fans of the opposing teams broke out during a football match, Nebojša suddenly realized that it was completely by an accident that he was a fan of that particular football club, and if he were born in another part of the city, he could have easily become a fan of the other team. Suddenly, it became clear to him that, in fact, it was quite unimportant which club you are rooting for. He looked at the brawling crowd and realized that he was just a “little cogwheel and a little ant in that mob,” and that “it’s not a place for him at all”. He stopped hanging out with the neo-Nazis and he is no longer wearing Nazi symbols and insignia on his clothes. He believes that it was very stupid to have spent a couple of years as a neo-Nazi, but that he has learnt his lesson. Today, Nebojša volunteers at a Belgrade theater. One day he wants to become a theater director.



(This text is based on an interview with Nebojša, which is not his real name)



Certain groups, especially football team supporters, occasionally display racist, anti-Semitic, neo-Nazi, and other xenophobic slogans and symbols, and chant offensive messages. The International Federation of Football Associations FIFA, as well as the most famous football stars, are decisively opposed to this kind of behavior by the football fan groups.

Football players of the Italian team Lazio wear t-shirts with the image of Anne Frank in protest of anti-Semitic incidents among their fans.

Anti-Semitism around us

Anti-Semitism and prejudices based on anti-Semitic stereotypes can be manifested in everyday life, in our environment, and if we do not consider it and pay attention, we may not even notice them. There should be a reaction to any form of anti-Semitism, as well as any other xenophobia, however small and insignificant it might seem. Especially in schools, anti-Semitism must not be tolerated between students, nor among teachers.

"In the first grade of high school, I met many new kids, and when they asked me where I was during the summer, I did not want to hide anything or make up stories, so I said I was in Israel. Then they said, "Yeah, okay," and from then on they all teased me that I have a big nose. They just joked around, and it was not such a negative experience, it was more a bit strange and a little funny, because I don't have a big nose at all."

Marina Drašković, 17, Jewish Community in Novi Sad's Teenage Club

"The professor of history in my school always has something negative to say about minorities, she covers it up a bit, but it's always negative. Shiptars did this, Bosniaks did that ... She speaks that way about the Jews too. She doesn't say anything bad because she knows I'm there, but she says about the Jews, for example, "all the Jews are rich, they have been rich throughout history, and there is no poor Jew", and then all the students turn around and look at me and laugh, and I just wish the ground would swallow me whole."

A.P., age 17, member of a Jewish Community in Serbia



Security of Jewish communities in Europe

Armed attacks on the lives of Jews are the most extreme expression of anti-Semitic hatred. Since the end of the World War II to this day, attacks on Jewish property, institutions and culture have taken place. In the last few years, a series of deadly attacks inspired by anti-Semitism has shaken Europe again. On 19 March 2012, an armed assailant entered the Ozar Hatorah Jewish School in the French city of Toulouse and, motivated by hatred of Jews, killed a teacher and three students, and wounded a few others. Armed attacks in Brussels in 2014, Paris and Copenhagen in 2015, and elsewhere, targeting Jewish museums, synagogues, shops and schools, were directed against the local Jewish communities.

Hate crimes

Criminal offenses can be characterized as anti-Semitic, that is as crimes committed out of hatred against the Jews, when the target of the attack or the offense, whether people or property, is chosen because it is Jewish, or perceived as Jewish, or associated with the Jews.

Jewish school in Paris under protection of the heavily armed French special forces, 2015



Anti-Semitic hate crimes

Harassment, discrimination and violence inspired by anti-Semitism affects women, men, girls and boys, members of the Jewish people and religion, those who are perceived as Jews, or those associated with the Jews. Also, the targets of vandalism and violence are Jewish institutions, Jewish religious buildings, schools, cemeteries, museums, monuments, etc. These include attacks on events celebrating Jewish culture and customs, and frequently attacks on everything related to the State of Israel.

Crimes motivated by anti-Semitic hatred have multiple consequences not only on the victims of the attack, but also on the everyday life of the whole Jewish community. Not only do they physically endanger individuals, their property, and in general the Jewish community and culture, but they constantly instill a sense of fear and insecurity.

All this has a very negative impact on the rights and freedoms of the Jews. Many are afraid to publicly declare their affiliation to the Jewish people, culture or religion, and choose not to wear traditional Jewish symbols and ornaments, or attend religious ceremonies, and only observe their customs and culture in secret. Many practice self-censorship, or refrain from expressing their views on various issues in schools, workplaces and the social media, for fear of giving up their Jewish identity, and exposing themselves and those closest to them to anti-Semitic harassment or even violence. Consequently, the violence against the Jews, as well as fear of violence, results in stifling the Jewish culture and banishing the Jews from public life in their communities.

It is a duty of every country, as well as its citizens, to ensure security and freedom for all fellow citizens. It is also our duty to oppose all forms of violence against minority and vulnerable groups, which includes violence against the Jews.



Desecration of Jewish cemeteries

At the Jewish cemetery in Pančevo, 47 tombstones were destroyed causing considerable material damage, in December 2017.

On his own initiative, a passenger in a New York subway train erases offensive anti-Semitic graffiti written with a marker pen.



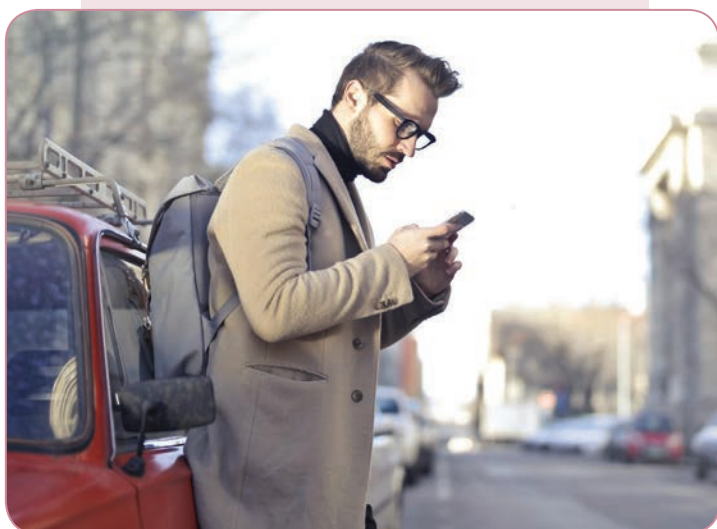
4. Media and information literacy

Media literacy represents the knowledge about the phenomena, development, languages of expression and aesthetics of all kinds of media: radio, television, film, print, the Internet and all forms of digital technologies. Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression, that this right also implies the freedom to hold opinions without interference, and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers. Media and information literacy gives citizens the competencies necessary to claim and enjoy the benefits of this basic human right, but also to recognize, resist and oppose propaganda and the spread of stereotypes and hatred in the media.

Factual manipulation, as well as the creation and dissemination of false information, are among the most important means of creating confusion and fear in a society, and for creating and fostering new stereotypes and prejudices, and even inciting animosity and hatred towards different groups of society. In that sense, media and information literacy is a crucially important precondition for the functioning and preservation of democracy, and human and civil rights in a society. That is why one of the most basic and necessary competences that a citizen in a modern society must possess is the ability to critically evaluate information and sources of information.

The new technologies and the new media enable us to get information much faster and from many different sources: from the professional media where the content is produced by educated journalists, with responsible editors behind them, to the social networks where content is created by more or less competent communicators, bloggers, activists, citizen-journalist, as well as common users. This opens up the possibility to check a piece of information in several places and from multiple sources, but also creates a precondition for easier manipulation and dissemination of completely false or not completely truthful information.

Even the fact that the source of information is a serious and a professional media, does not guarantee its quality and truthfulness, because, despite the professional responsibility and the journalistic code of ethics, journalists are also prone to bias and stereotypical thinking, as they themselves





can be victims of fabricated and untruthful news, that they failed to sufficiently check before publishing. Also, a truthful information can be manipulated by presenting it in a positive or a negative light through, for example, choice of words, accompanying illustrations, particular editing, by putting it in a certain context, etc.

Today, user friendly and easily available digital technology, computers, smartphones and applications, have enabled millions of people to record, edit, and produce content that can easily be shared on the Internet. Likewise, it's easy to retouch and alter images so that it is no longer possible to recognize, for example, which photo is manipulated, and which one is real

Populism

Politicians who promote populism often try to convince the public that real concerns and objective problems in a society are in some way related to minority groups, immigrants, refugees, political opponents, etc. For that purpose, they often manipulate information and place falsehoods.



Art

Literature, painting, music, theater, film and other form of arts, play an important role in presenting, preserving and transmitting historical experiences and narratives. Art can be a very effective medium to combat Holocaust denial, distortion or revision of history, and the spread of hatred and political populism.

From the performance of "The Sisters of the Brothers Baruch", on the scene of Kosmodrom Dorćol National Theater in Belgrade, April 2017

(Photo Terraforming © terraforming.org)

Non-objective and biased reporting



Examples of non-objective and biased reporting, reflecting prejudice, can be found in the photographs published at the time when the American city of New Orleans was hit by major floods, after the hurricane Katrina, in 2005. Some US media published photos of desperate people of New Orleans wading through the chest-deep water in search of food. However, the caption of a photo depicting Afro-American suggested he was “stealing food from the supermarket”, while an almost identical photo of a white woman had a caption saying that she was “finding food in an abandoned supermarket”.

Hate speech

Due to its influence on public information and public opinion, any creation of an informative content, both in traditional and social media, implies responsibility. When it comes to media content, there is an issue of professional, moral and criminal responsibility. When misused, the media can contribute to creating intolerance and violence among different groups, or on the other hand, media can be an important factor in promoting tolerance and democracy. The most severe form of media abuse is hate speech. The history has shown us that hate speech has far-reaching consequences, especially when it comes to the promotion of violence and war.



Hate speech is any form of expression that incites, promotes, justifies or calls for intolerance, discrimination, hostility, hatred and violence, or which intimidates, offends or disparages an individual or group. Hate speech is often directed at persons of another nationality, religion, gender, sexual orientation, origin, and so on. We should always react if we notice hate speech in the media, or on social networks. We can react by reporting the content to the appropriate authority: moderator, editor or, in the more serious cases, the police. We can also write a comment and oppose it, and in that way take a stand in the protection of a vulnerable group or an individual.



Protest march against hate speech, Minneapolis (Minnesota, US), 6 October 2016
(Photo: Fibonacci Blue, Minnesota US)

German Nazi propaganda

Adolf Hitler, the leader of the German Nazis, saw early the importance of propaganda and wrote about it: “Propaganda must not investigate the truth objectively and, in so far as it is favorable to the other side, it must be concealed, and only the aspects of the truth which are favorable to our side must be presented.”

Consequently, upon taking power, the Nazis established the Ministry of Propaganda, headed by Joseph Goebbels, one of Hitler’s closest associates. His main task was to persuade the majority of Germans that the German people are under threat of great danger from external and internal enemies, and that these enemies are above all Jews, Roma, communists, homosexuals and other political opponents. Aware of the importance of culture and art, the Nazis declared all artistic expression, which was not in line with their political and anti-Semitic aspirations, to be a “degenerate art”, which they banned, censured and destroyed. Many artworks and books were burned, and performances and radio broadcasts of certain music styles were prohibited. The Nazis quickly realized the power of contemporary media, especially the film. To that end, an anti-Semitic propaganda film was produced, entitled “The Eternal Jew”, which was presented as allegedly a “documentary” film, while in actuality it was completely scripted and manipulated, with the scenes taken out of context, portraying the Jews as disgusting and horrifying. Along with anti-Jewish exhibitions and propaganda placed in children’s books, posters and newspaper articles, this film was a part of meticulously planned process to completely dehumanize primarily the Jews, but other enemies as well, and in such a way prepare the Germans for the idea that they should be exterminated.

The nadir of the Nazi propaganda and manipulation was the fake refurbishment of the Theresienstadt concentration camp, prior to the visit of the International Red Cross delegation, in 1944. In order to hide the truth about the Holocaust, the Nazis rearranged and prepared the camp to look as if the Jews live in comfort and luxury, sit in cafes and enjoy music plays. This farce was so well orchestrated that in February 1944 a propaganda film was shot showing a “pleasant life in the Theresienstadt camp”. When the film was completed, all participants in the shooting, who were actually prisoners of the camp, were immediately sent to Auschwitz and killed.



Joseph Goebbels, Minister of Propaganda in Nazi Germany and one of Hitler’s closest associates (Bundesarchiv, Bild 102-17049 / Georg Pahl / CC-BY-SA 3.0)

Propaganda

Propaganda is the use of non-objective information to achieve certain goals, through exerting influence on a specific target group. Through planned action on manipulating and shaping perception and understanding, as well as provoking certain reactions in the interests of the propagator, propaganda often uses arguments, language and the mode of communication that produce emotional rather than rational reactions.

Media literacy has become one of the most important means of defending democracy, and in the future its importance will only be increasing.

GLOSSARY

Animosity – a hostile attitude towards a person, a social group, or a community.

Homophobia – fear or hatred directed towards homosexuals.

QUESTIONS/ASSIGNMENTS for students

1. Explain what the difference is between religious and racial anti-Semitism.
2. Do the research using books and the Internet to find examples of contemporary anti-Semitism. Analyze specific examples and talk about them with your teacher and classmates.
3. Research and analyze specific examples of hate speech in the media (newspapers, press, radio, TV, internet) directed towards other nations or minority groups and talk about them with your teacher and classmates.

5. Anti-Gypsyism

For hundreds of years, until the present day, there is a special hatred against the Roma in Europe, which is based on stereotypes and ignorance. That hatred is known as anti-Gypsyism.

For many centuries the Roma were the victims of stereotypes and prejudices. Continuous persecution and discrimination they suffered at the hands of the majority population, often institutionalized and enforced by state authorities, resulted in Roma not having the same predispositions and opportunities as other peoples. Roma were often banned from permanently settling in one place, so they were forced into nomadic life. Roma were frequently denied the right to engage in certain occupations, to educate themselves and to participate equally in socio-political life. As a consequence, all this led to isolation, marginalization and poverty.

In the course of the 20th century, anti-Gypsyism was evident in legislation and the state administration in many countries of Europe. Roma were entered into special police registers. During the World War II, these Romani registers were used by the Nazis, in many countries, to identify, arrest, and deport Roma to the camps. After the war, not only were the Romani people not recognized as victims of persecution by the Nazis and their collaborators, but were again exposed to discrimination and persecution, in many countries.

Social services often removed Romani children from their families, and special commissions were authorized to order forced sterilization of Roma women and men in countries such as Sweden or Switzerland, where some of these laws were in force until the mid-1970s. Throughout Europe, Roma were largely denied access to education, which made it more difficult to solve the problems of unemployment and poverty. The lack of trust that many European Roma feel towards state institutions is a direct consequence of the long, systematic discrimination and mistreatment that Romani people were exposed to, whose perpetrators were the very representatives of the state and government institutions, including police, municipal officials, social and health workers. Today, Roma are still the group most vulnerable to discrimination.

Anti-Gypsyism manifests itself today in various forms, ranging from an open physical attacks to discrimination in everyday life, especially when it comes to health, employment, housing and social protection. Anti-Gypsyism is constantly revived and reaffirmed



On 2 August, the young Roma and others from all over Europe, gather at the memorial grounds of the The Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum, to commemorate the Roma Genocide Remembrance Day

(Photo Terraforming © terraforming.org)

Anti-Gypsyism is a hatred of Roma grounded in prejudices and ignorance on the basis of which the Roma are ascribed with a number of negative “attributes”, which serve as an argument and justification for dehumanizing them, treating them as less worthy, or segregating, isolating and expelling the Roma. As such, the concept on which anti-Gypsyism is built has nothing to do with the Roma, but with the racist and primitive attitudes of a person expressing them.

through the reproduction of stereotypes and prejudices in which Roma are represented in a negative context. This is often reflected in the way Roma are presented in the media, through the jokes mocking Roma, or on social media, etc.

The situation for many Roma in Europe is very difficult, often dramatic. In many countries the rise of extreme nationalism led to organized attacks on Romani settlements. City authorities often demolish their settlements, and Roma are resettled. Frequently, Roma are left without a housing solution following forced evictions, compelled to live in unhygienic and degrading circumstances. Such resettlements took place in Serbia as well, which was pointed out by the United Nations, among others.

For all these reasons, Roma often live in constant fear.

Persecution of Roma during Holocaust

Building upon a long tradition of hatred and mistrust against Roma, Nazi ideology also considered Roma an “inferior race”. During the World War II, the Roma were targeted by German Nazis and collaborationist regimes throughout Europe, where they were subjected to persecutions, robbery, forced labor, mass killings and genocide. In Nazi Germany and other occupied countries all over Europe, many Roma were arrested and deported to Auschwitz and other Nazi death camps, where they were killed. When the Germans



Deportation of Roma in the German city of Asperg, on 22 May 1940.

were carrying out reprisals against the civilian population in the occupied Serbia, the Roma were victims of mass executions by shooting. It was not just the German Nazis who persecuted the Roma: on the territories of the Independent State of Croatia, the Ustaša committed one of the greatest genocides against the Roma in Europe; massacres against Roma in Romania, Ukraine, Hungary, the Czech Republic and other countries were carried out by the local fascist regimes and the collaborationists.

Although they were victims of such a massive crime, for decades, in much of Europe, the Roma were not recognized as a group that was specifically targeted by the Nazis and their helpers in the World War II, and who perished in such a large number. Only recently the interest of historical science for the fate of Roma has grown, and European countries increasingly recognize this crime.

In 2007, the Republic of Serbia decided to declare 16 December as National Remembrance Day of the Roma Genocide in World War II, in memory of 16 December 1942, when Heinrich Himmler, one of the Hitler’s closest associates, issued an order for the systematic deportation of Roma to concentration camps to be liquidated.

In 2015, the European Parliament accepted the initiative to recognize 2 August as the International Roma Genocide Remembrance Day, commemorating the deaths of 3,000 Roma in the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp between 2 and 3 August 1944.

The Roma genocide in the World War II is called **Porajmos** or **Samudaripen**.

Common historical experiences of Roma, Jews and Serbs in the World War II

On the territory of Yugoslavia, during the World War II, the Roma shared their destiny with the Serbs and the Jews. On the territory of the Ustaša’s Independent State of Croatia, Roma and the Jews were subjected to racial laws and, together with the Serbs, exposed to genocide. The Jasenovac camp, in which the Ustaša massacred Serbs, Roma and the Jews, is one of the most horrifying symbols of this crime.

In the German-occupied Serbia, the racial anti-Romani and anti-Jewish laws were adopted simultaneously. Roma were also obliged to wear a yellow armband, they were banned from public places, thrown out of work, etc. In addition to the communists

and opponents of the occupation, the Jews and the Roma were the first to be targeted by the German mass shootings. In Serbia in autumn 1941, around 2,500 Roma men were shot in retaliation, particularly those detained in Topovske šupe in Belgrade, while a number of women and children were interned in camps, especially in the camp at Sajmište. There were cases where the Serbian collaborationist authorities arrested the Roma and handed them over to the Germans for execution instead of the Serbs. However, in many retaliations carried out in the autumn 1941, the Germans executed thousands of Serbs, Roma and Jews side by side, at the same massacre sites. The massacres in Šabac, Zasavica, Draginci, Kraljevo and Kragujevac were just some of the most horrific examples of these crimes. Serbs, Jews and Roma were victims of mass crimes in Bačka, under the Hungarian occupation, where part of them was deported, and where some were used as forced labor.

In spite of their precarious position, the Roma gave their active contribution to the liberation of our country through participation in the anti-fascist and liberation movement.

The forgotten genocide

The World War II Roma genocide remained in the shadows, for a long time. Historiography did not deal with this issue until the 1980s when the first scientific studies on the persecution of Roma in the Third Reich emerged. Because of the general lack of historiographical interest and disregard for Roma victims, reflected in the remembrance policies throughout Europe, the genocide against Roma is also referred to as the “forgotten genocide”. This had severe consequences on the survivors and family members of those who perished, since on the one hand, their right to compensation was denied for decades after the war, and on the other hand, their enormous loss and trauma were ignored. It wasn't until the 1980s, that Germany admitted the Roma were also targeted by the Nazis and that, as such, they were victims of genocide. Gradually more and more countries have recognized Roma victims, but this process has not yet been fully completed. Over the past decade, significant steps have been taken in the historical research, and new studies on the persecution of Roma have been published in various countries.



Laying of wreaths at the memorial complex “Stratište” in Jabuka, near Pančevo, on the occasion of National Remembrance Day of the Roma Genocide in the World War II, on 16 December; at this place, Germans executed by shooting around 10,000 Serbs, Jews and Roma.



Settela Steinbach on the train to Auschwitz

Anonymous girl on the train for Auschwitz

Settela Steinbach was a Roma girl who lived in the Netherlands. She was only nine years old when the German occupation forces conducted raid to arrest the Dutch Roma, on 16 May 1944. Together with her mother, two sisters, two brothers and other relatives, Settela was arrested and transferred to a Westerbork transit camp in the Netherlands, from where the prisoners were deported by trains to Auschwitz death camps. In the Westerbork camp, a Jewish prisoner, who was a photographer, was ordered by the Germans to shoot a film about the life in the camp. So he filmed a girl he didn't know peering from the wagon as the door was closing and the train was moving to Auschwitz. Upon arrival to Auschwitz, Settela and all her family were killed in the gas chambers. A prisoner who shot a film with a camera in Westerbork was later killed in Auschwitz as well, together with his entire family.

The image of an anonymous girl peering out of the wagon of a train to Auschwitz was found and preserved after the war. It was one of the most famous film documents from the Holocaust for decades. Only in 1994 the researchers succeed in identifying the identity of the Roma girl Settela Steinbach. Until then, the Netherlands did not officially admit that the Roma were victims of pogrom in the World War II. After it was proven that the girl in the famous picture was Romani, the Dutch government was forced to recognize the Roma as victims of Nazi persecution.

Šaban Bajramović was born in Niš, in 1936, and was orphaned during the World War II. He became one of the most famous Roma singers, and was a worldwide recognized artist. When he died in 2008, he was honored by the President of Serbia, many ministers, artists, film directors and citizens. A monument to this great music artist was erected in Niš, in 2010. Since then, the statue of Šaban Bajramović was repeatedly desecrated with racist graffiti against Roma, and even with a painted swastika - a symbol of Nazism. Local anti-fascist organizations have organized washing of the monument and graffiti removal several times.



Monument to Šaban Bajramović in Niš

(Photo FriedrickMILBarbarossa)



Forced eviction and demolition of the informal Roma settlement "Belvil" in Belgrade, in April 2012

(Photo European Roma Rights Center, Matt Lutton/ERRC)

The settlement did not have adequate communal and construction permits, nor the basic sanitary conditions for normal life. Some of the residents of the demolished settlement were provided with another accommodation, but others were left in inadequate, unhygienic and degrading conditions for a long time. The settlements offered to Roma as alternative accommodation are often spatially segregated from the rest of the community and exclusively intended for housing Roma.



Branko Đurić is a journalist and the editor of the radio show "Romano Them", on Radio Belgrade, that brings the listeners the most important news from the country and the world, in both Romani and Serbian languages, everyday. It covers current affairs and

topics from the life of Roma community, to provide information to citizens of Serbia on the opinions, achievements, culture and everyday life of this population, as well as their efforts, problems and challenges on the path of emancipation and integration.

(Photo Terraforming © terraforming.org)



Violence against Roma

Unfortunately, even in Serbia, the cases of physical violence against Roma are not a rare occurrence. On 18 October 1997, in the center of Belgrade, "Skinheads" killed Dušan Jovanović, a twelve-year-old boy of Roma ethnicity, as he was going to a supermarket. On 17 November 2000, actor Dragan Maksimović was brutally beaten to death by football hooligans in Belgrade, because they "thought he was a Roma".

QUESTIONS/ ASSIGNMENTS for students

1. Why is the genocide of Roma in the World War II considered forgotten, neglected or suppressed?
2. Think about why is it important for victims of crimes in the World War II to be recognized, respected, and remembered. Analyze what are the consequences of neglecting or forgetting the crimes for the victims and their descendants? Consider how we can contribute to preserving the memory and raising the awareness of the victims of the World War II?
3. Research the examples of anti-Gypsyism at your local community level. Analyze specific examples and talk about them to your teacher and classmates.

6. Refugees

The history of the refugee transports and columns is inseparable from the history of the Balkan Peninsula. In the interwar period, the territory of Serbia was a transit zone for many Jewish refugees from Central Europe trying to get to Palestine. Over 200,000 Serbian refugees came to the territory of the German occupation zone in Serbia, during the World War II. More than a half were Serbian refugees from NDH. The break-up of SFR Yugoslavia drastically influenced the changes of ethnic structure in many parts of the former Yugoslavia. During the 1990's, numerous refugees arrived to Serbia, primarily from the territory of Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo. At the same time, many citizens left Serbia, including many members of the Jewish community, who fled to Israel. At the very beginning of the 21st century, the Republic of Serbia is a transit zone for hundreds of thousands of refugees from the Middle East.

Jewish refugees in Europe and Yugoslavia in 1930's

The rise of the National Socialist Party, led by the party leader Adolf Hitler, to power in Germany, in 1933, marked the beginning of the implementation of policies that were directed against the Jewish people, among others. The policies, motivated by anti-Semitism, were legalized by the adoption of racial Nuremberg laws, in October 1935. Under the pressures of anti-Semitism and anti-Jewish laws, many Jews left Germany. The majority of Jewish refugees traveled to Palestine, which was under British administration at that time. The refugees were also taking a journey to other, mostly overseas countries.

One of the refugee routes was the so-called "Balkan route" that led across the territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia. By April 1941, and the beginning of the World War II in Yugoslavia, the "Balkan route" was taken by around 50,000 Jewish refugees. Many of them needed help. A large number of countries refused to take in Jewish refugees, partially due to anti-Semitism. Getting a visa was a huge problem, so the Jewish refugees were frequently forced to pay exorbitant amounts to embassy officials to issue them visas illegally, or to purchase falsified travel documents.



Jewish refugees from Germany



British police expelling Jewish refugees from the UK, at Croydon Airport near London, 31 March 1939. These Jewish refugees arrived from Czechoslovakia, but the British authorities, after refusing to let them into the country, deported them to Poland.

Since the mid-1930's, British authorities in Palestine, many European countries, as well as the United States, started implementing a very restrictive policy of issuing entry visas to Jewish refugees.

Cartoon published in the New York
Daily Mirror, 6 June 1939



Ernst Pawel was born in 1920 in Germany, to the Jewish family. They lived in Berlin until 1933, when they were forced to escape from Germany under threat of Nazism and anti-Semitism. That is how Pawel arrived to Belgrade as a refugee.

In this passage from the book “Life in Dark Ages”, Ernst Pawel describes the exile, the encounter with the new environment in Belgrade and the language he does not understand.:

“Solitude is a gift from the sky, but an active greenhorn is not yet ready to appreciate it. Never before, and not even later, was I so completely cut off from contact with people, like that first Belgrade summer. To those who spoke my language I did not have anything to say, and beyond the hall of the hotel ‘Royal’, I was deaf and numb, I could barely discern the street signs in Cyrillic, and I could not talk much more than a baby in a pram. I felt as if I was looking at life through a thick, sound-proof, glass, and I was not sure whether I was on the inside looking out, or I was out and looking in. It gradually became apparent that not only was I not able to communicate with my compatriots, but I could no longer call any language my own; my passionate dismissal of Germany and all that it represented included the very language that shaped my consciousness. And so, a week after my arrival, I devoted myself to learning Serbo-Croatian, determined to overcome this beast in a few months.”

Destiny of the Jews from Kladovo transport

Kladovo transport is the name for a group of about 1,200 mostly Austrian and German Jews, who, as members of illegal refugee transport, tried to reach Palestine across the Danube and the Black Sea, using rented ships. The road to Palestine led them across the territory of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia and Kladovo, a Serbian town on the border with Romania, where they arrived on 31 December 1939. They were stopped there because Great Britain did not issue them visas to enter Palestine. Kingdom of Yugoslavia authorities ordered transferring all members of Kladovo transport to Šabac, on 22 September 1940, where most of them, with few exceptions, stayed until the breakout of war in April 1941. The German occupation forces executed all the men of Kladovo transport in the village of Zasavica, on 12 and 13 October 1941. In January 1942, all women and children from Kladovo transport were transferred to the newly founded Jewish camp Zemun, at the Belgrade Fair (Sajmište). By May 1942, all of them were suffocated in the gas van.



Members of Kladovo Transport aboard the riverboat
“The Queen of Mary” 1939/1940
(Holocaust Memorial Museum, Washington)

The riverboat “The Queen of Mary” was one of three ships chartered by the organizers of Kladovo Transport from the Yugoslav River Shipping company, for the transportation of refugees.

Refugees in the occupied Serbia

The establishment of the fascist puppet Independent State of Croatia, on 10 April 1941, signaled the beginning of terror against the Serbs, Jews and Roma. The persecution, and then the genocide, was preceded by the adoption of a series of decrees and laws by the Ustaša authorities, and one of the measures prescribed against the Serbs envisaged their mass expulsion. Already by June 1941, the first major wave of Serbian refugees from NDH arrived to the territory of the German occupation zone in Serbia. By August 1943, 214,375 refugees and exiles were registered; out of that number 113,601 came from NDH, 39,365 from Bulgarian, 31,913 from Italian, 23,539 from Hungarian occupied territory, in addition to 5,959 Slovenes. The number of the unregistered was considerably higher.



(Photo: Žorž Vladimirovič Skrigin)

Milica Tepić from Kozara, with her son Branko, on her back, and daughter Dragica, in the refugee column running away from the Ustaša, January 1944.

In addition to the refugees who reached Serbia, many sought shelter from Ustaša terror hiding in the woods, or took refuge alongside the partisans, especially in Kozara, Banija, Lika and Kordun.

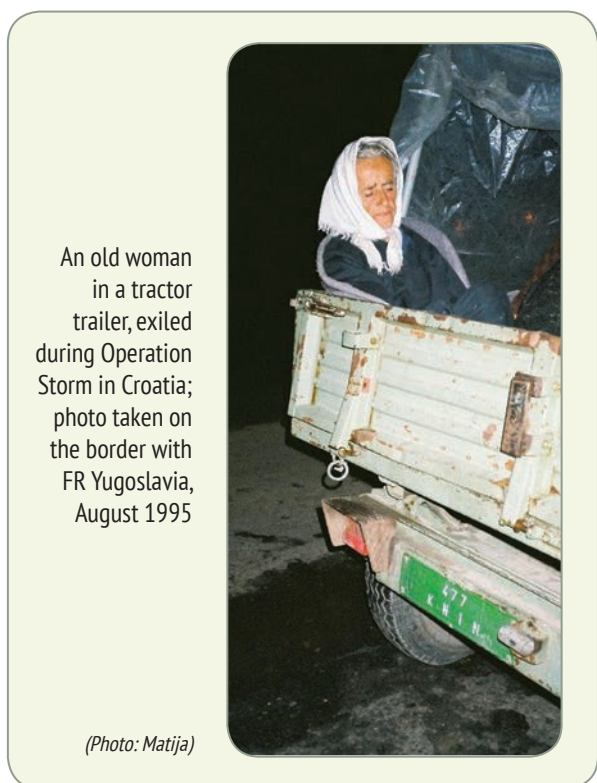
During the World War II a boy called **Bogdan Ajduković** (1936) lived with his mother Darinka in Serbia, as a refugee from the Independent State of Croatia. Refugees came to Serbia from other occupied territories too.

(Historical Archives of Belgrade, Collection of War Orphans' Files (2777), Bogdan Ajduković's File)



Refugees of the 90's in Serbia

In the 1990s, SFR Yugoslavia disintegrated with a series of wars and armed conflicts that took place in Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Metohija, all through to the aggression of the NATO alliance member states on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, which was then composed of Serbia and Montenegro. These conflicts caused a large number of human casualties and material damage, as well as a huge wave of refugees. Many were forced to escape from conflict areas, or were exposed to danger because they belonged to an ethnic or a religious group that was a minority in the particular territory, or were targeted due to their political affiliations. During the 1990s, the refugees kept coming to Serbia, especially from Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Kosovo and Metohija. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees data from 1996, there were more than 600,000 refugees in Serbia at that moment. Many of them remained in Serbia, and today are our fellow citizens. Some continued on their way to other countries, and only a negligible number returned to their homes after the war.



An old woman in a tractor trailer, exiled during Operation Storm in Croatia; photo taken on the border with FR Yugoslavia, August 1995

(Photo: Matija)

Serbia commemorates the events of 4 August 1995, when, following the operations of the Croatian military, more than 250,000 Serbs were exiled from Croatia, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees data. Today, many of them live in Serbia and other countries around the world.

Famous musician **Nikola Demonja** was a twelve-year-old boy when he came from Croatia with his mother to Belgrade, Serbia, a few days after the Operation Storm. Nikola, his parents and his sister continued to live in Belgrade's Block 45, where Nikola went to the "Branko Radičević" primary school.



Refugees from Yugoslavia in Israel in the 1990s

During the wars of the 1990s, just like other peoples, many Yugoslav Jews were forced to save themselves by becoming refugees. Federation of Jewish Communities offered them assistance, within their means. That is why many came to Belgrade, as a first step on that journey. Some remained in Serbia, some sought refuge in other countries, and a part of them went to Israel. Just as Yugoslav Jews lived together with other peoples of Yugoslavia, they also shared their refugee experience with friends, neighbors and members of their families, including Serbs, Croats, and other Yugoslav peoples. Therefore, many of them, who were not Jews, found refuge from the war in Israel.

Refugee route to Israel

At that time, there were several boarding schools in many cities of Israel full of young refugees from various parts of Yugoslavia, not all of them Jews.

When the war started in 1991, Anja was 16 years old. Her mom and dad were divorced. Her father lived in Belgrade, and Anja was living with her mom in Zagreb. Anja remembers being afraid to say that she was born in Belgrade and that her dad is in Serbia. When the war broke out they lost all contact with her father. In the summer of 1992, they managed to receive a letter from him, with the instructions that Anja should come to Budapest, and from there travel to Israel. Before the trip, Anja gave away all her records to her friends in Zagreb. She remembers being scared whether she will manage to find her dad at the Budapest train station. Fortunately, her father was waiting for her on the platform. The Belgrade Jewish Community helped transfer Anja to safety in Israel, and her father stayed back in Belgrade. Upon landing in Tel Aviv, on 27 August 1992, Anja remembers feeling the warm air of Israeli summer for the first time. It was all kind of unreal. Though she has never been to Israel before, she felt a sense of closeness to that country. She was enrolled in a boarding school where she met many other children she had known before, from the Jewish Community in Belgrade. They were all there to get away from the war in Yugoslavia. Anja was very pleased to see the familiar faces of her friends. Anja remembers that, at that time, in several cities of Israel, there were a number of boarding schools full of young people from various parts of Yugoslavia, and not all of them Jews. In early January 1993, Anja's relatives who had escaped from Sarajevo arrived. Going to Israel meant a change of life for Anja. On the one hand, it offered her security and the escape from war, and on the other hand, a very international environment, which she particularly enjoyed after nationalism and violence in Yugoslavia. She quickly learned the language and felt at home in Israel. Anja now lives in Amsterdam and helps the newly arrived refugees to settle in the Netherlands.



Anja Čonkić today

(compiled on the basis of an interview with Anja Čonkić)

Refugees in Serbia today

According to the data provided by the Commissariat for Refugees, since the beginning of migration crisis in June 2015, more than a million refugees and migrants passed through the territory of Serbia, attempting to reach the European Union countries, through the so-called “Balkan route”. According to Europol, ever since certain states erected walls and installed barbed wire fences at their borders to restrict the entry, as many as 90% of refugees and migrants are entering the EU through smuggling channels. Those who are trying to cross the border illegally are completely unprotected and deprived of rights, so in some countries, they fall victim not just to smugglers and thieves, but also to corrupt police and civil officers, who are often stripping them of their documents, mobile phones, money and valuables.



Migrants leaving Serbia squeezing through the wire on the Hungarian border (Photo: Gémes Sándor/SzomSzed)

From Kunduz to Belgrade

When they decided to flee, Dad told her that she had to choose and pack only those things she could bear. Because of that, she could not carry the bulk of her favorite clothes, toys and puppets.

Mina and Spužme have travelled over 5000 kilometers from their native town of Kunduz in Afghanistan, with their father, who is sick and can barely walk, their mother, two brothers and a younger sister, before reaching Belgrade. They mostly walked on foot through the snow over the Iranian mountains to reach Turkey. From there, they entered Bulgaria illegally through a forest, where they got lost and spent three days wandering out in the open and without any food. In Belgrade, they are placed in a refuge center where they are resting, but are still planning to go further to Germany, as soon as there is a chance of crossing the Hungarian border. They say they received a nice welcome in Serbia, and that they will never forget it.

Due to war and out fear of the Taliban, Spužme had to leave the school after only couple of years and spent almost all of her time growing up at home and in her yard. However, when a decision was made to flee the country, Spužme says she found it difficult. Her dad told her she had to choose and pack only the things she could carry herself. That's why she could not take the most of her favorite wardrobe, toys and dolls. Her dream is to become an architect one day.

Mina was on her third year of economic studies at the University of Kabul, but she had to abandon her studies when they decided to run. Mina says that education is very important to her, and that parents always taught her that education is the key to survival and success in life. She hopes to be able to continue her studies soon.

Mina and Spužme say that it helps greatly to be together as a family and to go through the hard times in refuge together. They find it difficult to imagine how it must be for the children who are taking such perilous and precarious journey unaccompanied by their parents.



Sisters Spužme and Mina, Afgan refugees in Serbia
(Photo Branko Đurić)

(Interviewed with Mina and Spužme was conducted by journalist Branko Đurić)

Refugees have rights too

The 1951 Geneva Convention was adopted as a result of horrible experiences of the World War II. It defines the notion of refugee and spells out the basic rights that the states must provide for refugees. One of the most fundamental principles defined in international law is the prohibition of expulsion or return of refugees to situations in which their life or freedom would be endangered.

According to the UN High Commissioner for **Refugees** (UNHCR), a refugee is a person who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence, or a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. This is the reason why refugees cross international borders in search of safety in other countries, and cannot or dare not return home.

Asylum is the right of a refugee to have his refugee status recognized, which includes the right to temporary residence, legal protection and material assistance. This right is most often exercised on the basis of a decision of the competent body that decides on the asylum applications.

Internally displaced persons are forced to flee their homes for the same reason as refugees, but never cross international borders and are in their own states.

Migrants are persons who are not forced to leave their country because of persecution or war, but who chose to leave in search of a better life, to seek employment, to reunite with their family, or for other reasons.

Today, we are witnessing that a growing number of people are forced to leave their homes as a result of ecological and natural disasters, caused by human or natural factors.



Children refugees from Syria in Jordan

(Photo DFID – UK Department for International Development) (Source: UNHCR)

Statistical data – refugees today

- Every day more than 28,000 people around the world are forced to leave their homes because of war or persecution. Today, there are over 60 million forcibly displaced persons worldwide.
- Out of that number, about 40 million are internally displaced persons, and 20 million are refugees.
- 51% of all refugees in the world are children, under the age of 18.
- In 2017, over 55% of all refugees came from only three countries: Syria, Afghanistan and the South Sudan.
- Over 55% of all refugees worldwide are hosted in Africa and the Middle East. Only 17% of refugees are in Europe.
- The countries that had the largest influx of refugees in 2017 are: Turkey, Pakistan, Lebanon, Iran, Uganda and Ethiopia.
- There were 3,548 asylum seekers in Serbia, in 2017.

(Source: UNHCR)

QUESTIONS/ASSIGNMENTS for students

1. Why did a large number of countries in Europe and worldwide refuse to accept Jewish refugees on the eve and during the outbreak of the World War II?
2. Think about what kinds of problems did the refugees face in different periods of history, as well as today.
3. Has anyone in your family or among your friends had a refugee experience? If the answer is positive, interview this person and write a short essay.

What hurts the victim most is not the cruelty of the oppressor, but the silence of the bystander.

Elie Wiesel

How can I contribute to the fight against discrimination and prejudice?

Assess what are the most important problems in your local community and suggest how you can contribute to their solution. Let these questions help you:

- Have you ever discriminated against someone?
- Have you been discriminated against?
- Have you ever noticed that someone else was discriminated?
- How did you feel in all three cases?

- Identify who in your local community is most exposed to harassment, hatred, humiliation, or discrimination because of their affiliation to a group. On what basis do you conclude this?
- What problems are they exposed to? Consider what kind of consequences it has for them.
- Do you personally know someone from this group?

- Consider how society could help someone from this vulnerable group in your local community.
- Think about how you and others from your closest environment could directly help someone from that vulnerable group in your local community.
- How can you contribute to improving the situation for that or similar groups across Serbia?



Be an informed, committed and responsible member of society!

Ask around which organizations and institutions in your area are involved in socially-engaged work, fight against discrimination and intolerance, or working to preserve memories of victims of fascism and anti-fascist struggle. Explore historical and cultural monuments in your midst. Visit the local library, museum, historical archives, and look for help and advice from experts there in order to learn more.

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Publication "Teaching materials to combat anti-Semitism" is composed of three parts: Part 1: The Jewish people and anti-Semitism, Part 2: Holocaust, and Part 3: Never again, with the aim to enable the students to recognize anti-Semitism, as well as other forms of intolerance and discrimination, and learn how to confront them.

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