



**Counteracting antisemitism through additional proposals to school curricula from the
Jewish perspective**

WHITE PAPER

Recommendations for teaching about the Jewish History and Holocaust in Poland

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Preface

Before the outbreak of World War II in 1939 the largest Jewish diaspora in Europe with almost 3.5 million people lived in Poland. The Jewish settlement dates back to the beginnings of the state, so the ties between the Jewish community and Poland are almost thousand years old. The first Jews came to the country of the Polans in the 11th century, fleeing the anti-Jewish riots that took place in Western Europe during the Crusades, later even more numerous migration took place in the 12th and 13th century. One of the most important documents which normalised their legal status was the privilege granted in 1264 by Silesian prince Bolesław the Pious, known as the Statute of Kalisz. It guaranteed Jews the freedom to run their businesses, travel and profess their religion. It was expanded to the entire territory of Poland by King Casimir the Great a hundred years later. As in other countries of Europe at that time Jews gained the status of Servants of the Royal Chamber under the direct protection of the ruler. During the Middle Ages, Jews played an important role in the development of cities, trade and crafts. An epoch later, during the golden age of the Commonwealth, Jews were financiers and advisers to kings. They also played an important role in the economic development of the country in the modern era. Equally significant was their participation in the struggles for national liberation - in the Kościuszko Uprising, the January Uprising, and in Piłsudski's Legions; they fought in the ranks of the Polish army during both world wars; many of them were murdered in Katyn.

The contribution of Jews to Polish culture cannot be overestimated - the greatest Polish poets and writers had Jewish roots. The Jewish language, Yiddish, in which the Nobel laureate of Polish origin Izaak Bashevis Singer wrote, was developed in Poland.

Jews have also been present in Polish politics. After Poland regained independence in 1918, they joined the Polish parliament and participated in lawmaking. The result of the mutual history of Poles and Jews was not only a permanent and clear presence of the latter in almost all important events that shaped the history and Polish national identity, but also a significant influence on culture, art, economy and politics of the Polish state.

The thousand-year-old history of the presence of Jews in Poland was tragically interrupted by the extermination of the Jewish community during World War II. After numerous waves of emigration very few of those who survived remained in Poland however after 1989 there was a

successful attempt to rebuild Jewish life in Poland. Even though in contemporary Poland the Jewish population constitutes a small percentage of the society, institutional Jewish life is developing very well. The followers of Judaism fulfill their religious needs in Jewish communities and other religious associations and there are also several dozen of Jewish secular non-governmental organizations including the most numerous of them - The Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland [TSKZ].

This historical, as well as cultural, social, economic and political context should be taken into account when teaching about the Holocaust. Therefore, we propose to extend the History and Polish lessons curricula to include content related to the history of Polish Jews. Thanks to this, it will be easier for students to understand the consequences of the Holocaust in Poland and what the destruction of almost entire Jewish community meant to Polish culture. Knowledge of the socio-political situation in Poland in the interwar period will allow to understand the diversity of attitudes, behaviour and motivations of Poles confronted with the tragedy of their Jewish neighbours.

I

Program basics

In the core curricula developed for primary and secondary schools, the subject of the Holocaust is present, or may be introduced, due to the suggested teaching objectives, in the curricula of two subjects - History and the Polish.

Primary school

History lesson

Student:

- characterizes Germany's policy in occupied Europe;
- presents the extermination of Jews and Roma and the extermination of other nations;
- knows examples of the heroism of Poles saving Jews from the Holocaust;

Polish lesson

The task of a teacher at the second stage of education (grades 4-8) is primarily:

- developing a sense of national identity and respect for tradition;
- developing students' curiosity about the world, motivation to learn about the culture of their own region and national heritage;
- shaping the attitude of openness towards other cultures and respect for their achievements;
- education to adopt active attitudes in life and take responsibility for one's own actions.

Secondary schools

History lesson

First degree industry school

III. The crisis of democracy in Western Europe.

Student:

- compares fascism to Nazism, taking into account the state organization, ideology and politics towards society;

VII. World War II.

Student:

presents the causes and effects of the Holocaust and describes examples of resistance of the Jewish people

High school / technical school (basic level)

XLIX. German policy of extermination.

Student:

- presents the ideological foundations of the extermination carried out by nazi Germany towards Jews and other ethnic and social groups;

- characterizes the stages of extermination of Jews (discrimination, stigmatization, isolation, extermination);
- recognizes the main places of extermination of Polish and European Jews and other ethnic and social groups in Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries (including: Auschwitz-Birkenau, Treblinka, Sobibór, Babi Jar);
- describes the attitudes of Jewish population towards the Holocaust, including the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising;
- characterizes the attitudes of Polish society and the international community towards the Holocaust, including the "righteous", on the example of Irena Sendler, Antonina and Jan Żabiński and the Ulma family.

High school / technical school (advanced level)

XLIX. German policy of extermination.

Student: meets the requirements specified for the basic scope and in addition:

- distinguishes the terminology used in science to describe the German extermination policy during World War II (including the Holocaust, Shoah, Porajmos);
- explains the religious, cultural and political roots of racism and antisemitism;
- presents the racist and antisemitic policy of Nazi Germany before World War II;
- presents and discusses the actions of the government of the Republic of Poland facing the tragedy of the Holocaust, taking into account the mission of Jan Karski and the role of "Żegota".

Polish lessons

Secondary school

Learning objectives - general requirements

Literary and cultural education

- Developing the ability to consciously receive literary works and cultural texts at various levels: literal, metaphorical, symbolic, axiological.
- Building a system of values on the foundation of truth, good and beauty as well as respect for human beings.
- Developing the ability to recognize and evaluate attitudes that build respect for people (e.g. faithfulness, responsibility, moderation) and serve to build communities: state, national, social (e.g. patriotism, justice, duty, nobility, fight, work, courage, prudence).

Creating a statement

- Improving the skills of expressing one's own judgments, argumentation and participation in discussions.
- Developing the ability to formulate and justify judgments about literary works and other cultural texts.

Self-education

- Improving the ability to use various information sources, including digital resources, assessing their reliability, credibility and factual correctness.

Teaching content

Basic range

Literary and cultural education

Student:

- uses the necessary contexts in the interpretation of literary works, especially the historical, literary, political, cultural, philosophical, biographical, mythological, biblical, existential;

Perception of cultural texts

Student:

- processes and hierarchizes information from the texts, e.g. journalistic, popular science, scientific;
- reads non-literary texts of culture, using the code appropriate for a given field of art.

Creating a statement

Student:

- formulates theses and arguments in oral and written statements using appropriate syntactic structures;
- formulates questions, answers, assessments, edits information, justifications, comments and voice in discussions in accordance with the standards;

Mandatory reading

- Hanna Krall, *Shielding the Flame*
- Czesław Miłosz, selected poems, e.g. *Campo di Fiori*

Supplementary reading

- Zofia Nałkowska, 'By the railway track'
- Kazimierz Moczarski, 'Conversations with an Executioner'

II

Suggestions for supplementing topics related to the history, religion and tradition of Jews

From the above-mentioned content and teaching objectives, it can be concluded that a Polish school student can acquire knowledge about the Holocaust depending on the level of education and the type of school he or she attends.

However, in order to integrate the provided content with the rest of knowledge in the mind of the student it is necessary to include a thousand-year presence of Jews in Poland, their contribution to Polish culture, economic and social development in school educational materials.

Therefore to achieve the goals listed in the tasks of Polish teachers ("shaping the attitude of openness towards other cultures and respect for their achievements") **there is a need of basic knowledge of Jewish religion - Judaism.** Lack of such information causes poor understanding of the distinctiveness of Jewish traditions and customs, which makes it easy to adopt false and harmful stereotypes.

Knowledge of Jewish religion and the historical context in which it has been developed is essential to understand the basic text of world culture: the Bible. Bible passages are included in the reading material for both primary and secondary school levels.

The same would refer to the tasks and goals listed in the core curriculum for history lessons. Their implementation requires the student to deepen information on the history of Jews. Without knowing it, it is impossible to meaningfully achieve the goals, for example: (student) "presents the causes and effects of the Holocaust."

Our proposals assume the enrichment of the core curriculum with the following topics:

Antiquity

1. History of Judaism - covenant with God

The roots of Judaism go back to the Patriarch Abraham, who arrived to Canaan from Mesopotamia with his family at the beginning of the second millennium B.C. In the city of Shechem, Abraham made a covenant with God, the sign of which was circumcision.

Jacob, the grandson of Abraham, had twelve sons - they gave rise to the twelve tribes out of which the Jewish nation arose. Jacob, who was named Israel, is considered the father of the Jewish people.

The key figure in the period of the emergence of Judaism, considered to be the creator of the Jewish nation and the greatest of the prophets was Moses. He led the Jews out of Egypt to the Promised Land (Canaan). On Mount Sinai, the Torah, known as the Pentateuch of Moses, was revealed to Moses. Its symbol are two tablets with the Decalogue also called the Ten Commandments, engraved on them. Since then, Yahweh became the only God of the Jews while the Jews assumed the mission of the chosen people. Historically, Judaism is divided into two basic periods - Biblical and Talmudic. The main point of reference for Biblical Judaism is the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh), called by Christians the Old Testament. The canon of the Hebrew Bible is divided into three parts: Torah (Law), Neviim (Prophets), and Ketuwim (Scriptures), and consists of 24 books.

Talmudic (post-biblical) Judaism was formed in the period of rabbinical activity and was based on rabbinic literature, known as Talmudic. The Talmud is the most important book of Judaism after the Hebrew Bible, which consists of two parts: Mishna (a collection of instructions regulating proper conduct) and Gemara (supplement, explanations and commentaries to the Mishnah). Due to its content, the Talmud is divided into two parts: the halakhah, which includes the precepts of the law and regulations concerning religious worship and everyday life, and the haggadah, which consists of parables and legends.

2. Religious doctrine of Judaism.

Judaism is the oldest monotheistic religion in the world. The only God of the Jews is Yahweh - "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob." His name was considered sacred, therefore it must not have been pronounced. They were written as the Tetragrammaton of YHWH and replaced with the word *Adonai* (my Lord).

The Jews are still awaiting the coming of the Messiah of David's lineage, who will save his people and set up his kingdom on the earth. Then the Temple of Jerusalem will be rebuilt and the messianic times will follow: *Olam Ha-Ba* (the world to come).

3. Religious cult: sacrifice and prayer

The first temple was erected by Solomon in Jerusalem - it was a religious centre around which the priestly class that exercised sacrificial worship gathered - blood sacrifices (from animals) and bloodless (from agricultural crops). After the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem built in the 6th century B.C. and expanded in the first century B.C., the animal sacrifice was replaced by a prayer.

In Judaism, an important concept is mitzvah, it refers to 613 commandments, which are divided into 248 commands and 365 prohibitions.

Rabbinic Judaism has created a system of laws regulating the lives of its followers. In the Hebrew Bible as well as the Talmud there are specific ritual and cult precepts which Jews are supposed to follow.

4. Temple and synagogue

The Temple of Jerusalem was built in Jerusalem on the Temple Mount Moriah, where Abraham was to sacrifice his son Isaac to God. Inside the temple, in a place called the Holy of Saints, was the cornerstone of the world, with the Ark of the Covenant. It was a wooden chest lined with gold, in which the Tables of the Decalogue were placed. There was also a menorah in the Temple - a seven-branched golden olive candlestick, a symbol of divine wisdom. The first Temple was demolished by the Babylonian army of Nebuchadnezzar II. At the end of the 6th century BC the Second Temple was built and destroyed by the Romans in 70 CE. After its destruction, the synagogues took over the role of the temple as a place of religious cult.

The synagogue is the most important institution in both religious and social life of Jewish community. In Polish it was referred to as a synagogue or a prayer house, its synonym was also a Jewish school - in German - *jüdische Schule* or *Judenschul* (especially in the Middle Ages), in Latin - *schola judeorum*, in Yiddish - *szul*. The synagogue had several functions - it was a place where the Jewish community gathered, the centre of the community's administrative authorities, a house for religious studies, and above all, the place of prayers with the participation of at least ten adult Jews (minian).

1. The Decalogue as the basis of the ethical and moral precepts of Judaism and Christianity;
2. The Patriarchs of Israel - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the twelve sons of Jacob;
3. Moses as the greatest figure in the history of Judaism and Jews;
4. The Torah as the main part of the Hebrew Bible;
5. Talmud as the basic record of the oral tradition of Judaism;
6. Jewish and Christian canons of the Bible;
7. Synagogue as a place of religious worship.

Middle Ages

1. The role of Jews at the courts of medieval rulers.
2. Isolating Jews from Christians (ghettos, separate laws and restrictions).
3. Religious persecution of Jews as an element of anti-Judaism:
 - accusations of Christ's death; the role of the Vatican Council and the declaration of Church's attitude towards non-Christian religions (*Nostra aetate*) from 1965;
 - anti-Jewish riots during the Crusades;
 - accusations of Jews of ritual murder and the profanation of the host;
 - accusations of Jews of poisoning the wells and spreading the plague;
 - the role of the Inquisition in the persecution of Jews;
4. The expulsion of Jews from Western and Central Europe based on religious and economic issues.
5. The beginnings of presence of Jews in Poland, the role of Jewish merchants.
6. The Statute of Kalisz as the first privilege of Polish Jews and the basic regulation of their legal status.

Modern times

1. Poland as the main centre of Jewish diaspora (from the beginning of the 16th century).
2. The golden age of Jews in Poland. The Bloom of Jewish Religious Thought - Remu and the Napa Code of Conduct for Ashkenazi Jews.
3. The Council of Four Lands (*Waad Arba Aracot*) as a specific form of Jewish autonomy in the Polish-Lithuanian state in the 16th century.
4. The uprising of Chmielnicki and the slaughter of the Jewish population ("churban")
5. The influence of the Enlightenment ideas on the life of Western European Jews.
6. Haskalah:
 - cultural and social revival of Jews through participation in the development of secular sciences, education reform, as well as drawing closer to the culture of the countries of settlement;
 - Wrocław (Breslau) as one of the Haskalah centres;
 - emancipation of Jews.
7. Hasidism as a form of religious renewal of the followers of Judaism:
 - Baal Shem Tov (BESZT) as the founder and first leader of Hasidism;
 - the institution of tzadikim;

- Hasidic rituals;
- contemporary Hasidism and its roots in Eastern Europe (activity of Hasidic dynasties in Israel and the United States).

8. Jews in the Russian Empire:

- state antisemitism and its manifestations;
- the concept of the settlement zone (1791–1917) and its influence on the development of antisemitism;
- anti-Jewish pogroms in the late 19th and early 20th century;
- the antisemitic pamphlet "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" from 1903 as an example of the obsession of the Jewish conspiracy.
- Eastern Jews and their customs, shtetls as Polish-Jewish towns with their specific rituals.

9. Warsaw and Łódź as two large new centres of Polish Jews in the 19th century.

10. Development of secular Jewish culture in Poland:

- literary activity of three great classics of Yiddish literature - Mendele Mojcher Sforim, Szolem Aleichem and Icchak Lejb Perec;
- Yiddish writers who created in the interwar period - Szalom Asz, Jehoszua Perle, Izrael Rabon, Zusman Segalowicz and Jehoszua Singer;
- Jewish theatre and film - the golden age of Yiddish film in Poland from 1936 to 1939;
- Jewish art;
- Jewish press published in Poland - Hebrew, Polish and Yiddish.

11. Zionism as an ideology of the national revival of Jews:

- Teodor Herzl as the founder of political Zionism and the first chairman of the World Zionist Organization;
- creating a Jewish state in Palestine as the main goal of the Zionist movement;
- the role of Zionism in Eastern Europe (awakening of political activity among the Jewish masses and the revival of the Hebrew language);
- First World Zionist Congress (1897) and establishment of the World Zionist Organization.

12. Assimilation as a consequence of the process of granting equal rights to Jews.

13. The participation of Jews in the struggle for Polish independence in the 18th and 19th century:

- The Kościuszko Uprising (1794) and the participation of the Jewish horse regiment under the command of Berek Joselewicz;
- involvement of Jews in the preparations for the January Uprising - the activity of Rabbi Dow Ber Meisels from Cracow, death of the Jewish junior high school student Michał Landa on 8th April 1861, during a demonstration at Castle Square in Warsaw;
- Jews among the soldiers and officers of the Polish Legions, organised by Józef Piłsudski during the World War I.
- The participation of Jews in the World War I.
- The Balfour Declaration (1917) as an endorsement of Jewish national aspirations.
- The situation of Polish Jews in the Second Polish Republic:
 - the number and the location of Jews in Poland in the interwar period, differences between Jewish communities coming from the Prussian, Russian and Austrian partitions;
 - Jewish political life - the activity of Jewish parties: the religious Aguda, the Zionist Mizrachi, the Fokists, the socialist Bund and the Zionist Poalej Syjon-Lewica and Poalej-Zyjon Prawica;
 - Jewish religious life and related phenomena - secularization trends, defense of tradition, efforts to include new content in religion – i.a. orthodox women's spiritual revival movement (activity of Sara Szenirer);
 - Legal situation of Jewish population (legal status of Jewish religious communities, the issue of limiting and prohibiting ritual slaughter);
 - Jewish education - traditional religious education (cheders, yeshivas and bet ha-midrash); Yeshiva Chachmej Lublin as an example of a world-famous Talmudic university; religious and secular schools run by Jewish political parties;
 - the case of *numerus clausus* at Polish universities and bench ghettos as forms of discrimination against Jews introduced at Polish universities in the 1930s;
 - the diversity of Jewish culture in the interwar period - three separate systems of this culture created in Yiddish, Hebrew and Polish; development of literature, press, theatre and film;
- involvement of Polish Jews in war preparations.

Prelude to the Holocaust and Extermination

1. The development of Nazism in Germany:

- Adolf Hitler's antisemitism - "Mein Kampf";
- the Jewish question in the program of the Nazi party;
- stages of discrimination against Jews in the Third Reich;
- the Nuremberg Laws as an expression of institutionalized racism;
- Kristallnacht pogrom (1938) as the beginning of the Holocaust.

2. The situation of Polish Jews after the outbreak of World War II:

- Jews serving in regular formations of the Polish Army - their participation in the 1939 campaign, in the Polish Armed Forces abroad (especially in the Anders Army) and in the Polish People's Army;
- division of Polish territory occupied by the German army into two areas - the lands annexed to the Third Reich and the General Government; the diverse situation of Jews in these areas;
- the first anti-Jewish regulations of the German occupation authorities - marking Jews, isolating them from the Polish population, property seizure, concentration in larger urban centres which were important communication junctions;
- the situation of Jews in the territories occupied after 17th September 1939 by the Soviet Union - escape of Jews to the East from Western and Central Poland;

3. Indirect extermination (1940–1942):

- creating ghettos in the territory of the General Government;
- mass deportations of the Jewish population from Polish territories incorporated into the Reich into ghettos;
- transports to the General Government of Jews from Western Europe - from Germany, the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, Austria and Luxembourg;
- special status of the Łódź ghetto and the economic exploitation of its inhabitants, the activity of Mordechai Chaim Rumkowski;
- creation of a "Jewish residential district" in Warsaw - the largest ghetto in occupied Europe, organization of the ghetto, activities of the Judenrat and the Jewish Order Service, Adam Czerniaków - president of the Judenrat in Warsaw;

- everyday life in the Warsaw ghetto and others – dealing with hunger and disease (typhus), smuggling food into the ghetto;
- civil resistance: attempts to maintain a "normal" life: education, cultural and artistic life in the Warsaw ghetto;
- religious life: activities of rabbis;
- documenting the life of the ghetto (the activities of the "Oneg Szabat" group and creating the Ringelblum Archive), collecting reports and testimonies of the Holocaust;
- social welfare organizations in the Warsaw ghetto - Jewish Social Self-Help, House Committees;
- activity of Janusz Korczak - Orphanage for Jewish children;
- underground activity in the Warsaw ghetto - establishment of the Antifascist Bloc from which the Jewish Combat Organization derived, establishment of the Jewish Military Union;
- the role of Jan Karski in informing the world public about the extermination of Warsaw Jews (report prepared by Oneg Szabat "Liquidation of Jewish Warsaw").

4. *Endlösung* - "Final Solution to the Jewish Question":

- mass murders in the East (Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, Belarus and Estonia) - the activities of the *Einsatzgruppen*;
- the role of the local Polish population in the "solution of the Jewish question" - the pogroms in Wąsosz, Radziłów and Jedwabne;
- the Wannsee conference near Berlin (20th January 1942) and its findings;
- Operation Reinhardt as a form of extermination of Jews combined with property plunder;
- liquidation of the Warsaw ghetto (Great Action); from 22nd July to 21st September 1942, about 254,000 Jews were deported from Umschlagplatz to Treblinka.
- extermination camps in occupied Poland - Kulmhof (Chełmno on the Ner), Bełżec, Sobibór, Treblinka, Majdanek;
- Auschwitz-Birkenau as the largest concentration camp and a symbol of terror, genocide and the Holocaust;
- covering up the traces of German crimes and death marches.

5. Jewish resistance movement:

- underground activity in Warsaw, Łódź, Białystok, Vilnius, Cracow and other cities in occupied Poland;

- the uprising in the Warsaw ghetto as the largest armed uprising of Jews during World War II;
 - armed protests in concentration and extermination camps - the *Sonderkommando* revolt in Auschwitz-Birkenau, the revolts in Treblinka and Sobibór.
6. The attitude of governments and societies of the free world towards the Holocaust:
- the passivity of the governments of great powers;
 - the activities of Szymon Żygielbojm and Jan Karski.
7. Attitude of the societies of occupied Europe on the example of France, Denmark and Hungary.
8. The attitude of Poles towards Jews during the Holocaust:
- Poland as one of the few countries in Europe where any form of support shown to the Jewish population was punishable by the death penalty;
 - individual help provided to Polish Jews - Righteous Among the Nations;
 - the role of the Catholic Church in saving Jews - hiding Jewish children in convents and women's religious congregations;
 - establishment of the Council to Aid Jews (codename Żegota) by the authorities of the Polish underground state;
 - the activity of Irena Sendler and her contribution to saving Jewish children from the Holocaust;
 - the problem of Polish blackmailers, denunciators and informers as a direct threat to hiding Jews;
9. Jewish survival strategies:
- hiding on the Aryan side among the Polish population;
 - hiding with Aryan documents;
 - looking for shelter in rural areas and inaccessible forests and marshes;
 - participation of Jews in partisans - creating Jewish partisan units or joining existing ones, activity of Jewish family camps;
 - involvement of Jews in underground activities - resistance in ghettos, activities of Zionist, Bund and communist youth organizations.
10. Other victims of the German genocide:

- categories of victims: Sinti and Roma, homosexuals, Jehovah's witnesses, mentally ill and mentally handicapped people, terminally ill, genetically burdened and disabled people;
- biological elimination of terminally ill people.

11. The situation of Polish Jews in the Soviet Union:

- escape of over 200,000 Polish Jews to territories under Soviet occupation;
- mass repressions against Polish citizens (including Jews);
- Jews as victims of exile to Siberia and Kazakhstan, and imprisonment in labor camps;
- mass executions carried out in the territory of the Soviet Union by operational groups following the Wehrmacht (*Einsatzgruppen*) - In Babi Yar near Kiev, Rumbula forest near Riga, Lviv, Rivne, Kharkiv, Odessa and Kaunas;
- the Sikorski-Majski Agreement of 30th July 1941 between Poland and the USSR and its consequences for Jews who were Polish citizens;
- Jewish accession to the Polish Armed Forces in the USSR (Anders' Army) and the Polish People's Army.

12. Consequences of the Holocaust:

- demographic losses - the number of Jewish victims of the Holocaust in particular countries;
- Polish Jews who survived the Holocaust (about 350,000 people) and their post-war attitudes;
- trials of war criminals - criminal court proceedings conducted between 1945 and 1949 against the main war criminals of the Third Reich, pending before the International Court of Justice in Nuremberg (Nuremberg trials), trials of the Auschwitz-Birkenau staff (Auschwitz trials) before Polish and German courts;
- Rafał Lemkin as the creator of the term "genocide";
- the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem from 1961 to 1962;
- settlements within the Jewish community - evaluation of the activities of the Jewish Order Service in ghettos, the activity of the Social Court at the Central Committee of Jews in Poland in 1946–1950;
- documenting the Holocaust - activities of the Central Jewish Historical Commission.

13. The situation of Jews in Europe after the end of World War II:

- post-war migrations of the Jewish population;

- operation of transit camps for displaced persons;

14. Establishment of the State of Israel:

- Jewish immigration to Palestine / Israel
- participation of Polish Jews in creating the foundations of Israeli statehood;
- outstanding Israeli politicians and activists from Poland - David Ben Gurion, Menachem Begin, Samuel Mohylewer, Cwi Hirsza Kalischer, Dawid Gordon and Nachum Sokółow.

15. The situation of Polish Jews in the first post-war years and during the People's Republic of Poland:

- post-war attempts to return to their former places of residence and the attitude of Polish society towards them;
- search for relatives who survived;
- two visions of the future - the first related to emigration to Palestine / Israel, represented by the Zionist circles, the second - with staying in Poland and trying to rebuild Jewish life (Bund and Jewish communists);
- emigration of Jews from Poland - after the Kielce pogrom (1946–1947), after the establishment of the state of Israel (1949–1950), Gomułka aliyah (1957–1958) and emigration after March (1968–1970);
- looking for and recovering Jewish children brought up in Christian families;
- the condition of Polish Jews who survived the Holocaust - physical and psychological consequences of the Holocaust;
- post-war pogroms of the Jewish population in Cracow, Rzeszów, Parczew and Radom;
- repatriation of Polish Jews from the territory of the Soviet Union (February-July 1946);
- the Kielce pogrom (4th July 1946) and its consequences for the Jewish population in Poland - the outbreak of the emigration panic and the first wave of emigration in 1946–1947.

16. Attempts to rebuild Jewish life in Poland:

- the activity of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland from 1944 to 1950 as an institution coordinating Jewish life;

- the policy of the communist authorities towards Jews in the first post-war years;
 - Jewish political life - the activity of 11 Jewish parties;
 - activity of Zionist parties and organizations: running schools, orphanages, productivisation centres and kibbutzim.
17. The special status of the Jewish settlement in Lower Silesia from 1946 to 1949 as an example of national and cultural autonomy:
- genesis of the Jewish community in Lower Silesia (repatriations from the Soviet Union);
 - development of Jewish economic life - productivisation and activity of Jewish cooperatives;
 - development of education (activity of different types of schools) and culture,
 - social activity on the example of the Society for the Protection of Jewish Health in Poland – TOZ (Towarzystwo Ochrony Zdrowia Ludności Żydowskiej w Polsce).
18. The abolition of Jewish autonomy in Poland from 1949 to 1950:
- nationalisation of Jewish schools,
 - abolition of Zionist parties and institutions;
 - the dissolution of the Central Committee of Jews in Poland (Pol. Centralny Komitet Żydów w Polsce, CKŻP) and creation of a strictly state-controlled The Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland.
19. The rise of antisemitism in the second half of the 1950s and emigration of Jews from Poland as its consequence (over 55,000 people left between 1955 and 1960).
20. The role of the Social and Cultural Society in maintaining Jewish identity and preserving the Yiddish culture (the activity of Yiddish press and the publishing house "Jidysz Buch").
21. The impact of the Six-Day War between Israel and the Arab states of 1967 as a pretext for developing an antisemitic campaign in Poland, the post-March emigration of 1968–1970.
22. The stagnation of Jewish institutional life in the 1970s

Contemporaneity

1. The revival of Jewish life in Poland after the fall of communism - the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation and its contribution to the development of Jewish education and schooling (establishment of two Jewish schools in Poland - Lauder Morasha in Warsaw and Lauder - Etz Chaim in Breslau).
2. Reactivation of religious life:
 - activity of the Jewish congregation (transformed into Jewish religious communities);
 - recovery of synagogues and prayer houses;
 - activities of rabbis, organizing conversion to Judaism;
 - various currents of Judaism in Poland - Orthodox, Hasidic, conservative and progressive;
 - regulation of the legal status of Jewish communities - the Act of 20th February 1997 on the State's Relationship to Jewish Religious Communities in the Republic of Poland, the possibility of restitution of Jewish communal property;
3. The Social and Cultural Society of Jews in Poland as the most numerous secular Jewish organization.
4. Establishment of new Jewish organizations in the 1990s (Association of "Children of the Holocaust", Association of Jewish Combatants and Victims of the World War II and others).
5. The activity of the most important Jewish institutions in Poland - the Jewish Historical Institute Emanuel Ringelblum in Warsaw, the POLIN Museum, the Jewish Theatre of Ester Rachel and Ida Kamińska in Warsaw and the Warsaw Ghetto Museum.
6. Increased interest in the history and culture of Polish Jews, the Yiddish language, and Jewish heritage (discovering local Jewish history, renovation of Jewish cemeteries).
7. Memory of the Holocaust in Poland:
 - construction of the Monument to the Ghetto Heroes in Warsaw in 1948;
 - cultivating the memory of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising by secular Jewish organizations; celebrating successive anniversaries of the uprising;
 - the presence of Jewish issues in the public debate on the example of the discourse on the pogrom in Jedwabne committed on Jews on 10th July 1941 and the participation of Poles in it.

Jewish tradition

1. Jewish calendar:

- beginning of the Jewish calendar (creation of the world);
- months of the Jewish calendar;
- a week in the Jewish calendar (Sunday as the first day of the week);
- Saturday as a public holiday;
- the beginning of a day in the Jewish calendar (starts in the evening and ends at dusk).

2. Jewish holidays:

- Sabbath - a day of holiday rest in Judaism;
- Yom Kippur as the Day of Atonement;
- Sukkot (Feast of Tabernacles) and its traditions;
- Hanukkah - Festival of Lights;
- Purim - Feast of Lots;
- Pesach (Festival of Unleavened Bread);
- Rosh Hashanah as the Jewish New Year;
- Shavuot (Festival of Weeks).

3. Secular traditions of Polish Jews:

- International Holocaust Remembrance Day (27th January);
- commemoration of the anniversary of the outbreak of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising (19th April);
- Israel's Independence Day (14th May);
- Celebration of the anniversary of the Kristallnacht pogrom (9th-10th November).

4. Brit milah and naming ceremony;

5. Bar mitzvah and bat mitzvah as religious ceremonies related to entering adulthood.

6. Jewish religious wedding and its traditions. Divorces.

7. Funeral rites of Polish Jews and the role of the Chevra Kadisha brotherhood.

8. Jewish prayer outfit - kipa, tallit (talit) and phylacteries.

9. Various traditions, customs and languages: Ashkenazi and Sephardim.

III

Motivation

We are aware that discussing specific topics in detail during one lesson is impossible however we believe that adding information about the situation of Jewish people to each of the discussed historical periods, will give students basic knowledge about the history of Jewish community, which has been living in Poland for almost a thousand years.

Students after such an introduction to the subject will be able to understand what the Holocaust in Poland was about, why it happened right here, and what were and are the consequences of the murder of almost the entire Jewish community in Poland.

During the lesson, teachers can use the textbook written by Robert Szuchta „1000 lat historii Żydów w Polsce” [Thousand Years of the History of Jews in Poland] or the book by Piotr Trojański and Robert Szuchta „Holokaust: zrozumieć dlaczego” [The Holocaust: Understanding Why]. Depending on the amount of time available, the teacher will be able to use the material included on a large or reduced scale.

IV

List of literary works by Polish authors to be used when discussing the topic of the Holocaust (also includes items found in the current core curriculum)

Non-fiction literature:

1. Dawid Sierakowiak, The Diary of Dawid Sierakowiak: Five Notebooks from the Lodz Ghetto
2. Mary Berg, ‘The Diary of Mary Berg Growing up in the Warsaw Ghetto’
3. Renia Knoll “Dziennik” [Diary]
4. Adina Blady-Szwajger: ‘I Remember Nothing More’

Poetry:

1. Czesław Miłosz ‘A poor Christian looks at the ghetto’, ‘Campo di Fiori’

2. Władysław Szlengel: 'Things', 'A window to the other side', 'A small station called Treblinka', 'A Page from the Deportation Diary'
3. Henryka Łazowertówna 'The Little Smuggler'
4. Paulina Braunówna „Żyd” [Jew]
5. Zuzanna Ginczanka „Non omnis moriar”
6. Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński „Tren I” [Threnody I]
7. Tadeusz Różewicz 'The Living Were Dying', 'Pigtail', 'The Massacre of the Boys', 'The Professor's Penknife'
8. Wisława Szymborska 'Still'
9. Władysław Broniewski 'Ballads and Romances'

Prose:

1. Bogdan Wojdowski 'Bread for the departed'
2. Wilhelm Dichter 'God's Horse'
3. Tadeusz Borowski „Pożegnanie z Marią” [Saying Goodbye to Mary], 'This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen'
4. Zofia Nałkowska 'The cemetery lady', 'By the railway track', 'Dwojra Zielona', 'The man is strong'
5. Hanna Krall 'Shielding the Flame'
6. Kazimierz Moczarski 'Conversations with an Executioner'
7. Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz „Umschlagplatz”
8. Andrzej Szczypiorski „Początek” [Beginning]
9. Henryk Grynberg 'Child of the Shadows'
10. Leopold Buczkowski 'Black Torrent'
11. Julian Strykowski „Przybysz z Narbony” [Stranger from Narbonne]
12. Piotr Szewc 'Annihilation'
13. Marek Bieńczyk 'Tworki'

Recommended supplementary literature

- *Akcja Reinhardt. Zagłada Żydów w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie* [The Extermination of Jews in the General Government], ed. Dariusz Libionka, Warsaw, 2004.
- *Archiwum Ringelbluma. Antologia*, [The Ringelblum Archive. Antology], Breslau 2019.

- *Atlas historii Żydów polskich* [Atlas of the history of Polish Jews], ed. Witold Sienkiewicz, Warsaw 2010.
- Bartoszewski Władysław, Lewinówna Zofia, *The Samaritans; heroes of the Holocaust*. Twayne Publishers. 1970
- Bikont Anna, *The Crime and the Silence: Confronting the Massacre of Jews in Wartime Jedwabne*, Farrar Strauss & Giroux. 2016.
- Bikont Anna, *Sendlerowa. W ukryciu* [Sendler. Hiding] Wołowiec 2017.
- Błoński Jan, *Biedni Polacy patrzą na getto* [Poor Poles are looking at the ghetto], Cracow 1994.
- Canin Mordechaj, *Przez ruiny i zgliszcza. Podróż po stu zgladzonych gminach żydowskich w Polsce* [Through Ruins and Rubble. A tour of one hundred exterminated Jewish communities], Warsaw 2019.
- Engelking-Boni Barbara, Leociak Jacek, *The Warsaw Ghetto: A Guide to the Perished City*. Yale University Press. 2009.
- Gross Jan Tomasz, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne*, Princeton University Press. 2001.
- Hertz Aleksander, *The Jews in Polish Culture*. Northwestern University Press. 1988.
- Heschel Abraham Joshua, *The Earth Is the Lord's : The Inner World of the Jew in Eastern Europe*, Jewish Lights. 1995.
- Kameraz-Kos Ninel, *Święta i obyczaje żydowskie* [Jewish holidays and customs] Warsaw 2001.
- Kassow Samuel D. 'Who Will Write Our History?: Rediscovering a Hidden Archive from the Warsaw Ghetto'. Vintage. 2007
- Korczak Janusz, *Ghetto Diary*. Yale University Press. 2021.
- Krajewski Stanisław, *Nasza żydowskość* [Our Jewishness], Cracow 2010.
- *Księga Sprawiedliwych wśród Narodów Świata. Ratujący Żydów podczas Holocaustu* [Book of the Righteous Among the Nations. Saving Jews during the Holocaust], ed. Israel Gutman, Cracow 2009.
- Leociak Jacek, *Ratowanie. Opowieści Polaków i Żydów* [Rescue. Tales of Poles and Jews], Warsaw 2010.
- Levi Primo, *Survival in Auschwitz*. Www.Bnpublishing.Com. 2016.
- *Następstwa zagłady Żydów. Polska 1944–2010* [Consequences of the extermination of Jews. Poland 1944-2010], ed. Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska, Feliks Tych, Lublin 2012.
- Perechodnik Calk, *Spowiedź* [Confession], Warsaw 2018.
- Rees Laurence, *Auschwitz: The Nazis and the 'Final Solution'*. BBC Books. 2005.
- Szmaglewska Seweryna, *Smoke Over Birkenau*. Normanby Press. 2015.
- Tokarska-Bakir Joanna, *Legends o krwi. Antropologia przesądu* [Legends about blood. The Anthropology of Superstition], Warsaw 2002.
- Wiesel Eli, *Night*, Penguin Books Ltd. 2008.
- Wodziński Marcin, *Hasidism: Key Questions*. Oxford Universtiy Press. 2018.
- *Wokół Jedwabnego* [About Jedwabne], ed. Paweł Machcewicz i Krzysztof Persak, vol. 1-2, Warsaw 2002.
- *Wokół pogromu kieleckiego* [Reflections on the Kielce Pogrom], ed. Łukasz Kamiński i Jan Żaryn, Warsaw 2006.

Recommended filmography

- Der Dibuk, dir. Michał Waszyński, 1937, Poland, feature film.
- Historia Kowalskich, [Tragic events of December 6, 1942. Story of polish family hiding their Jewish neighbours] dir. Maciej Pawlicki, Arkadiusz Gołębiowski, 2009, Poland, feature film/documentary
- Ida, dir. Paweł Pawlikowski, 2013, Denmark/Poland, feature film.
- Karski and the Lords of Humanity, dir. Sławomir Grünberg, 2015, Poland/Russia/US, documentary.
- Korczak, dir. Andrzej Wajda, 1990, Germany/Poland/ Great Britain, feature film.
- Kronika powstania w getcie warszawskim według Marka Edelmana [Chronicle of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising according to Marek Edelman], dir. Jolanta Dylewska, 1993, Poland, documentary.
- Birthplace, dir. Paweł Łoziński, 1992, Poland, documentary.
- Never Forget to Lie, dir. Marian Marzyński, 2012, USA, documentary.
- Pianist, dir. Roman Polański, 2002, France/Germany/Poland/Great Britain, feature film.
- Aftermath, dir. Władysław Pasikowski, 2012, Netherlands/Poland/Russia/Slovakia, feature film.
- Po-lin. Okruchy pamięci [Po-lin. Crumbs of memory], dir. Jolanta Dylewska, 2008, Germany/Poland, documentary.
- Rachela na Dworcu Gdańskim [Rachel at the Gdańsk Railway Station], dir. Ewa Szprynger, 2006, Poland, documentary.
- Świadectwo urodzenia [Birth certificate], dir. Stanisław Różewicz, 1961, Poland, feature film.
- ... wpisany w gwiazdę Dawida – krzyż [... the Cross inscribed in the Star of David], dir. Grzegorz Linkowski, 1997, Poland, documentary.
- Ulica Graniczna [Graniczna Street], dir. Aleksander Ford, 1948, Poland, feature film.
- In Darkness, dir. Agnieszka Holland, 2011, Canada/Germany/Poland, feature film.

V

Examples of the most common mistakes in materials concerning Jewish history, tradition and religion

For the past few years (the first stage started in 2016, the completion of the third stage is planned for 2023), the Centre for Education Development (ORE), operating as a nationwide teacher training facility run by the Minister of Education, has been preparing and publishing some didactic e-materials. The idea of this project is to increase the use of information and communication technologies for teaching purposes thanks to the prepared content. The materials must comply with the core curriculum, meet the ORE guidelines and concern topics provided by the Centre. Experts appointed by ORE make substantive, technical and WCAG corrections (*Web Content Accessibility Guidelines* – guidelines for the availability of web content), and then the materials

are posted on the website <https://zpe.gov.pl/>. Finally, the website will include several thousands of e-materials regarding a variety of subjects for all the education levels. Both teachers and students, under the guidance of a teacher, can use these didactic materials.

The Warsaw Ghetto Museum was asked to review the content provided by ORE on the broadly understood Jewish issues. The spectrum of topics sent for substantive proofreading is wide: from biblical topics (teaching materials for Polish lessons) to the Israeli-Arab wars (topics for History lessons). The materials are prepared by teachers associated with the companies that won the tender announced by ORE.

While appraising the initiative of ORE and the idea of using the Internet platform to enrich the educational offer and the fact that ORE commissioned a number of topics related to religion, tradition, culture and history of Jews, it is worth mentioning the repetitive, common mistakes in the materials.

These mistakes fall into three categories:

- a. lack of knowledge about Judaism
 - b. omitting certain facts
 - c. one-sided interpretation of different phenomena
- A recurring mistake of the first type in the materials dealing with biblical themes is the use of the term 'Old Testament' or the 'Holy Scriptures' instead of the Hebrew Bible in the context related to Judaism. For example the text 'The biblical description of the creation of the world' it says: "The followers of Judaism recognize Moses as the greatest hero of the Old Testament." It is obvious that no follower of Judaism will call the Tanakh the Old Testament.

In the same material, its author, not aware of using inappropriate terms, mentions: "Apart from the books that were part of the Old Testament, the followers of Judaism read commentaries on the Holy Scriptures."

Another example of lack of knowledge on Judaism is the caption under the picture of Sefer Torah: "The Scrolls of the Hebrew Bible, known as the Tanakh (or Mikra), containing the texts of the Old Testament books." The Sefer Torah are Torah scrolls, not Tanakh.

Often the authors of the materials do not know or do not quote the exact wording of the commandments of the Decalogue. In the material 'Covenant of the nation with God' we find the statement: 'The first commandment of the Decalogue forbids worshipping other gods and offending one God. (...). First of all, they forbid [commandments] to kill, infidelity, stealing and lies.' The prohibitions mentioned by the author are not included in the Decalogue - there is no prohibition on "offending God" (although there is a prohibition on idolatry), there is no prohibition on killing (there is a prohibition on murdering), there is no prohibition on lying (there is a prohibition on false testimony).

One of the factual errors is the sentence from the material 'God the father and father of Abraham': 'The story of Abraham begins in the same way as the biblical description of the creation of the world it begins with the words <the Lord said>'. The biblical account of the creation of the world begins with the words 'Bereshit bara' ('At the beginning of creation').

The lack of knowledge of the specificity of Judaism is also visible in the material 'A Wedding Song about God', where in the introduction to the topic you can read that the only book of the Bible that does not mention God is 'Song of Songs' (this also applies to 'The Book of Esther').

- Errors consisting of omitting certain facts can be found in the material 'The Country of All Religions', in which while describing Poland, the anti-Jewish riots, pogroms, trials of profaning the host and allegations of ritual murder are not mentioned at all.

Similarly, in the material on Roman Dmowski ('Roman Dmowski - from the history of Polish national thought'), Dmowski's image is presented one-sidedly: there is no criticism on antisemitic threads, no mention is made on Dmowski's sympathies for Italian fascism either.

- Interpretation of the presented issues is a separate subject. This mainly concerns two topics: Judaism's attitude to Christianity and the attitude to the Arab-Israeli wars.

Judaism is presented as a religion of thoughtless executors of the orders imposed on them, unlike Christianity, which requires the faithful to be guided by the moral sense.

In some materials the Israeli-Arab wars are presented in a stereotypical way; it is also quite common to ignore the fact that these wars were caused by the Arab states and Israel was defending its territories. In the material 'Israeli-Arab conflicts' the narrative shows the author's views. For example, in 'The Israelis did not accept the UN partition plan (...). The plan was also rejected by the Arab side.' The order of providing information indicates who was responsible for the rejection of the peace offer. Similarly, when the author mentions: 'The events of September 11, 2001 allowed Israel to include the fight against the Palestinians in the global war on terrorism' he thus suggests that these were not really terrorist acts and that Israel took the opportunity to classify them as such.

VI

Errors in the materials related to the Holocaust

Errors in the materials related to the Holocaust deserve a separate attention.

The most serious are those that ignore the issues related to the negative attitudes of Poles and the role that some of them played in the crimes against Jews.

In the film provided to the Warsaw Ghetto Museum, which is a fragment of the lesson plan illustrating the ways of hiding Jews, the word 'szmalcownik' [blackmailer] was not used even once, and the situations of rendition of Jews by Poles were never mentioned. On the other hand, the inflated numbers of the saved were given and the information that priest Maurycy Godlewski was hiding over 100 Jews in the buildings of his parish. Father Godlewski's parish was located in the Warsaw ghetto therefore Jews did not hide in the parish as they were forced to live there.

Often while writing about the Holocaust it is mentioned that Poland was the only country where helping Jews was punishable by the death penalty - for example, in the material 'Man in the face of totalitarianism and authoritarianism' we can find the following sentence: 'Remember that in Poland during the occupation, people who helped Jews were threatened with the death penalty '.

Sometimes the authors do not know the facts writing for example, 'in several dozen Polish cities during World War II the Germans separated and closed districts in which they created carefully guarded ghettos' (material 'Saving one life, you save the whole world. Irena Sendler's children'), whilst there were over 600 ghettos in the Polish territory occupied by the Germans.

The uprising in the Warsaw ghetto is called ‘the first military uprising in occupied Europe’ - probably because the author of the material ‘Jewish resistance movement’ did not know about the uprisings in the ghettos in the Eastern Borderlands: in Lachwa, Turczyn, Sarny and others.

Also the idea of what the ghettos looked like is sometimes far from reality - the author of the material ‘German Occupation in Poland’ writes: ‘Jews could only stay in the fenced-off zone,’ not knowing that the walls surrounding the ghetto were the exception, not the rule.

The authors use the word "saved" and not "survivor" (for example in the material ‘Memory as a way to tame trauma’) – whereas ‘saved’ suggests that the person survived thanks to someone else which was not always the case.

It also happens that the author of the material uses the term ‘concentration camps’ to mean extermination camps (material ‘By saving one life you save the whole world. Children of Irena Sendler’).

The above-mentioned examples do not diminish the value of the project - they only show that even teachers have problems with navigating the Jewish subject. The issues provided have been corrected and the platform will display the updated version of the content.

VII

Tips regarding Teaching About the Holocaust

There are several documents in Poland that provide guidance on how to teach about the Holocaust. The most important and up-to-date is the 2019 textbook, developed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance ‘Guidelines for teaching about the Holocaust’. The translation of the textbook into Polish was published in 2020 and was included in the website of the Ministry of Education.

IHRA (formerly ITF - International Task Force), established in 1998, brings together experts and representatives from 40 countries involved in education, research and commemoration of the Holocaust. The handbook consists of three parts: "Why Teach About the Holocaust?", "What to Teach About the Holocaust?" and "How to Teach About the Holocaust?" Each part answers the question posed in the title.

‘Why?’ - because it makes it possible to understand some of the mechanisms leading to genocide, to learn about human motivations and choices made in extreme circumstances. Knowledge about the Holocaust allows for the assessment of how the Holocaust influences the shaping of our present, and the analysis of historical processes, develops the skill of critical thinking and social awareness. Its impact on the student's personal development is significant.

‘What?’ - what were the conditions and stages of the Holocaust ?; why people (not only Germans) participated in these crimes and what is complicity in the Holocaust? how did the Jews react to the persecution and mass murder ?; why did some people resist these crimes, and how did they do it?

‘How?’ - carefully prepared classes and appropriate selection of materials will allow for effective teaching about the Holocaust. The methods used by the teacher are important: focusing on the student, supporting his / her critical thinking and reflection.

The authors are aware that the issue of the Holocaust poses many challenges for the teacher, due to its traumatic nature, but also different views on specific issues. For example, the complicity of citizens of other countries than Germany in crimes committed against Jews, the scope of these crimes, and the interpretation of the behaviour of witnesses. .

The authors of the Guidelines identified as most important the assumption that genocide is a process that can be stopped. However in order to achieve that it is necessary to have the knowledge about the historical, social, political, economic and religious factors that determined the Holocaust - an unprecedented happening in the history of Europe - an attempt to murder the entire nation along with destroying its culture and traditions. Studying the history of the Holocaust will provide students with a tool to analyze contemporary events: it will allow them to identify situations where democratic structures in the state are undermined and human rights are violated. It will make the student less susceptible to all kinds of manipulations, and will make it possible to recognize various manifestations of antisemitism and other ideologies serving to divide society.

Teaching about the Holocaust also has consequences in shaping the attitudes of students, their emotional and moral development. Taking up this topic will also result in the involvement of students in projects to commemorate the survivors of the Holocaust, which gives hope that the Germans will not be able to kill Jews twice: the first time by physically annihilating them, and another - by killing the memory of them.

It is extremely important for the process of learning about the Holocaust to take into account the context in which it took place. It will show which topics will be discussed more broadly and which the teacher will devote less attention to. Not only the teaching content, but also the methods used should be varied. In Poland - a country where the Germans placed most of the death and concentration camps, and in which a Jewish community of 3.5 million people lived before the war, it is possible to use both a personal visit of students to one of the camps and participation in a meeting with a witness to history. The stories of witnesses to history - both Jews and Poles – have been posted i.e. on the website of the Warsaw Ghetto Museum. They tell not only about the Holocaust, but also about Polish-Jewish relations in the times directly preceding the war.