In this chapter, we will become familiar with the concept of “Jewish solidarity” through a discussion of various stories of mutual aid presented through original historical documents. These stories show that Jewish solidarity has been practiced throughout Jewish history, regardless of geographical boundaries.

Goals of the chapter
1. The students will recognize that throughout Jewish history, Jewish communities have practiced mutual aid, regardless of geographical boundaries.
2. The students will recognize Jewish solidarity as a value rooted in Jewish tradition.
3. The students will feel a sense of partnership with Jews living around the world.
Method
In this unit, we study historical documents from various periods, all of which reflect Jewish solidarity. This examination will enrich our understanding of the many faces of Jewish solidarity.

Means
Pages 61-87 in the student textbook, appendix page 138.
A large laminated map of the world and a marker

Course of activity - Part 1: Studying various historical documents
Introduction: Read the title page of the chapter
Stage 1: Illustrate the method by studying one document together
Stage 2: Work in pairs on one or two of the historical documents on pages 62-77.
Stage 3: Concluding discussion for part 1 and quiz based on additional sources in the appendix (see end of file).

Introduction: The Principle of Jewish Solidarity in Judaism
After reading the text on the title page, it is worth taking time to consider the saying “All Jews are responsible for one another.”
It is important to emphasize that this saying appears in the Talmud. The principle of mutual responsibility is an ancient one in Jewish tradition, and is also reflected in the Torah itself. For example, see the verses commanding us to help someone in danger, and the prohibition on lending money for interest to another Jew:
“Do not stand by the blood of your fellow” (Leviticus 19:18)
“If you lend money to any of my people with you that is poor, you shall not be to him as a creditor; neither shall you impose interest upon him.” (Exodus 22:25)
As well as appearing in the sacred texts, this principle has also been applied in practice throughout Jewish history. We will now examine just a few examples of thousands of instances down through history when Jews have helped fellow Jews, although they did not know them and had never met them.
Part 1: Studying historical documents which reflect Jewish solidarity

Stage 1: Illustrating the method through the first document • Class study

“Together We Will Rescue Our Brothers in Captivity” (1472) • Level of difficulty: high

This text describes an instance when Jews from one community (Portugal) raised money to free Jews from another community (Arzila in Morocco) that they didn’t know personally.

▶ Reading Abarbanel’s letter – class activity

After reading the letter, ask the class to summarize it.

In the older classes, you can emphasize that although Abarbanel does not state this explicitly, his letter to Yechiel, a rich Jew who lives in Pisa, Italy, is intended as a request for financial assistance and not only as a report of events.

Comments in the letter that create this impression:

• The comment that many Jews from the Portuguese communities, including Abarbanel himself, have already raised a significant sum – ten thousand gold coins (thus Yechiel is invited to join in the commandment of *pidyon shvuyim* – the ransom of prisoners).
• Abarbanel emphasizes that the crisis has not yet been resolved, and ends his letter by expressing the hope that “On hearing this, all Jews will be outraged and profoundly moved.”

The commandment to ransom prisoners

The commandment to pay ransoms in order to free prisoners is considered one of the most important precepts in Jewish tradition.

The Talmud refers to this as a “great commandment” (Babylonian Talmud, Baba Batra, 8b), and even claims that imprisonment is worse than death by sword or hunger.

Maimonides (Rabbi Moshe Ben Maimon, who lived and worked in Spain and Egypt in the 11th century) also emphasizes the importance of this commandment: “You have no greater commandment than the ransoming of prisoners.” He argues that someone who ignores the fate of captives “violates… ‘Do not stand by the blood of your fellow’ [Leviticus 19:18]… and ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’ [Deuteronomy 19:18]” (Maimonides, Laws of Giving to the Poor, Chapter 8, Halacha 10).

Throughout Jewish history, the leaders of Jewish communities around the world have collected donations in order to ransom prisoners.
The price of a captive

“Since the earliest times, it has been known that Jewish communities will spare no effort to redeem their captives. The concern arose that evil people would abuse this willingness and demand excessive sums to free captives… As the Mishna states: ‘One does not ransom captives for more than their value because of Tikkun Olam’ (Mishna, Gittin, 4:6) (in this instance, Tikkun Olam means ‘the greater good.’)

“The Talmud (Gittin 45a) discusses the question of what the Mishna means here by ‘the greater good.’ Is the problem an economic one – the desire to prevent ransoms become a financial burden on the community? Or is this a matter of security – does this provision seek to avoid a situation where Jews will become ideals targets for kidnappers, if criminals realize that they are particularly ‘profitable’ victims, since their fellows are willing to pay any price for their release?

“Most of the Halachic authorities, including Maimonides, argued that the basic basis? of this restriction is the security consideration.”

(From an article by Michael Vigoda, weekly Torah portion sheet, Ministry of Justice, Department of Hebrew Law, issue 60, for the Torah portion Beshalach).

In practice, however, during the Talmudic period and in the Middle Ages, the rabbis encouraged the ransom of prisoners even when the price demanded was excessive. For details, see the article by Rabbi Golinkin: “How Far Should Israel Go in Order to Redeem Captives from Terrorist Organizations?”

www.us-israel.org/jsource/Judaism/captives

Who was Don Yitzhak Abarbanel

Don Yitzhak Abarbanel was born in Lisbon, the capital of Portugal, in 1437. He was one of the greatest commentators on the Torah, and he was also an important politician who served in the court of the king of Portugal and the kings of Spain. After the Jews were expelled from Spain, he served in several Italian city states.

▶ In class

After explaining the commandment to ransom prisoners, refer the students to the questions on page 63.
Stage 2: Work in pairs on the historical documents on pages 64-77

**Note:**
The eight documents vary in terms of difficulty, as noted in the explanation about each document. In general, students will obviously find it easier to deal with shorter texts than with longer pieces. The documents on page 64 (Doña Gracia) and page 68 (Baron Maurice de Hirsch) are slightly harder than the other documents. Allocate these sections to stronger students, and help them as necessary.

The students will now work independently, in pairs, on one document and the related pieces of information. Ask the students to prepare a summary of the document they studied and the related information for the rest of class.

You could ask the three pairs of students that finish the assignment first to prepare a presentation of their information in the form of a newscast, with a newsreader and a report from the field.

**A Woman of Valor (1552) • Level of difficulty: high**

- **Historical background**
Historical information about the Anusim (forced converts) and additional information are provided on page 64 in the student textbook.

- **The testimony of Samuel Usque and discussion of questions 1-3**
  - Samuel Usque was a contemporary of Doña Gracia.
  - Portugal’s only land border is with Spain, and the Anusim could not escape there, since Jews had not been allowed on Spanish soil since 1492. The only other way to leave Portugal is by sea, so the Anusim had to begin their journeys on boats.

  Accordingly, Doña Gracia bribed ship owners and port officials to take the risk involved in allowing Anusim to board ships and leave the ports. She also helped cover the cost of the journey and provide food for them during their escape.

  To the Jews, Doña Gracia seemed almost like God taking them from slavery to freedom. Samuel Usque also compared her to an eagle. The eagle is a powerful bird that carries its young on its wings. This comparison also alludes to a verse in Exodus in which God reminds the Children of Israel that he took them out of Egypt:

  “You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself” (Exodus 19:4).

- **Doña Gracia and the Jewish settlement in Tiberias**
Doña Gracia also financed the settlement of Jews in Tiberias, as explained in the textbook.
**Enrichment activity** (photocopied page).
In the appendix of this file, you will find a page with a photograph of a medal issued by the Tiberias municipality in honor of Doña Gracia. You can photocopy this page and give a copy to each student.

The medal shows a portrait of Doña Gracia, with a copy of the translation of the Bible into Ladino, which she financed. This was known as the Ferrara Bible, after the city of Ferrara in Italy, where the translation was prepared. The medal also shows a ship carrying Jews (who might be escaping from Portugal or heading for Tiberias), the city walls of Tiberias, and a quote from Proverbs:

“Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all” (Proverbs 31:29)

Make sure that the students understand the expression *Eshet chayil* (= heroine).

**Well done, Sir! (1860) • Level of difficulty: medium**

The story of Sir Moses Montefiore is an example of a person who not only provided financial support, but also used his contacts and status to help improve the conditions of Jews around the world. He also helped to save Jews who were victimized by hostile non-Jewish governments or populations.

**Who was Sir Moses Montefiore?**

Sir Moses Montefiore (1784–1885) was a very rich English Jew, although he was born in Italy (which explains his family name). He donated large sums of money to establish new Jewish neighborhoods in Jerusalem and found hospitals in the Land of Israel. He also provided financial support for numerous Jewish communities in the Land of Israel and around the world. Travel was difficult in his time – there were few hotels, and sometimes he was forced to sleep in a tent. Yet even in old age, he continued to visit communities that required his help.

**The Damascus blood libel**

See the information about this incident on page 67.

It is worth putting this incident in its broader context. The first blood libel occurred in England in 1144. Over 150 blood libels against the Jews have since been recorded.

**The song “Sir Moses Montefiore”**

The student textbook quotes the second verse of this song, which refers to Montefiore’s political activities. The song emphasizes that Sir Moses Montefiore did not hesitate to use money to advance his goals – after all, the “large gift” mentioned in the song is actually a bribe. It is important to explain that, in the 19th century, giving bribes to doormen or
junior officials was essential in order to reach their superiors. In some countries, this kind of bribery is still common practice today.

Montefiore also intervened to help the Jews who faced blood libels in Morocco and Hungary.

► **Comments on questions 2 and 3**

**Question 2:** The Ten Commandments includes the prohibition against murder. It could also be noted that the laws of Kashrut prohibit the consumption of blood. Accordingly, meat must be soaked in salt and water (or grilled) in order to remove the blood before it is cooked.

**Question 3:** Queen Esther also took advantage of her relationship with the king to save the Jews in the Kingdom of Xerxes.

**Enrichment activity:** You can show the following clip, which features Israeli singer/actor Yehoram Gaon singing the song in its entirety.

► **Did you know?**

Sir Moses Montefiore enjoyed a long life and passed away at the age of 101. On his 100th and 101st birthdays, he received so many gifts from Jews around the world that the British postal service had to recruit additional staff to handle the congratulatory letters, telegrams and parcels. Special trains brought thousands of well-wishers to congratulate him. For Montefiore, these birthdays provided an opportunity to host impoverished local Jews for dinner and to make donations to six settlements in the Land of Israel.

**Education (1873) • Level of difficulty - medium**

► **Historical background and discussion of questions 1 – 3**

Baron Maurice de Hirsch lived in France in the 19th century. He was born into a rich family with a tradition of philanthropy, and he was himself an important philanthropist who initiated and funded numerous projects in the Jewish world. In his letter, he describes his shock on seeing the poverty and ignorance that were rife among the Jews of Turkey. De Hirsch saw the connection
between ignorance and poverty, and viewed education of the young as the cure. For him, education was not only a goal in its own right, but also a means of breaking the cycle of poverty.

Baron de Hirsch also helped poor Jews in Eastern Europe. At the end of the 19th century, for example, thousands of Jews in Vilna were left homeless after severe floods. De Hirsch provided substantial sums of money to build new homes.

An interesting story is De Hirsch’s support for the settlement of Jews in Argentina, which he saw as a potential solution for the problems facing European Jewry. However, the number of Jews willing to move to Argentina was relatively small.

The Alliance Israélite Universelle

During the 19th century, the harsh living conditions of the Jews of Turkey led the organization Alliance Israélite Universelle (French for “World Jewish Alliance”) to establish Jewish schools in the country, as it had done in many other Jewish communities, particularly in Western Europe, Morocco and the Land of Israel. The “Alliance” was founded in France in 1860 with the goal of promoting Jewish and secular education. During this period, students in “Alliance” schools in many different countries studied in French.

From East to West (1881) • Level of difficulty - easy

Discussion of the poster and questions 1-7

Questions 1-2: Page 70 shows a poster that offers an idyllic description of the way American Jews welcomed the waves of Jewish immigration from Eastern Europe (mainly Russia and Poland) that began to arrive in the US in 1881.

On the right-hand side of the poster (the East), we see the immigrants. Their clothing shows them to be poor, traditional Jews. On the other side (the West) stand American Jews. Their Western clothing shows that they are less traditional and more modern. Their outstretched arms suggest that they are ready to welcome and help the Jewish newcomers.
**Question 3** invites the students to imagine how they might have helped the immigrants. Examples might include help finding work and housing, financial aid, and so forth. See the further details below on this aspect.

**Question 4:** It is reasonable to assume that the fact that the American Jews were themselves immigrants, or the children of immigrants, increased their willingness to help the new arrivals. They could identify with them and were familiar with the experience of migration, and so better placed to understanding the difficulties and provide appropriate and effective help.

**Question 5:** Despite this empathy, some American Jews were less than enthusiastic about the newcomers. Perhaps the new immigrants made them feel uncomfortable. After all, they had just settled in the country and become accustomed to its way of life, and now Jews from the “Old World” came along, reminding them (and reminding non-Jewish Americans) just how different the Jewish immigrants were from modern, Western American society.

**Question 6:** The sea in the poster represents not only the Atlantic Ocean, which the immigrants crossed to reach America, but also the obstacles they faced during their journey. The sea could also be considered a symbol of the cultural and mental gulf between the immigrants and their fellow Jews who had already integrated in American society.

**Question 7:** The Hebrew legend is a quote from the prayers: “And hide us in the shadow of Your wings.” This banner is held by an eagle – the emblem of the United States. Thus the slogan conveys the hope that the immigrants will enjoy the protection and patronage of their new home.

---

**Historical background: Mass Jewish immigration to the United States**

In 1880, there were approximately 250,000 Jews in the United States. Forty years later, the Jewish population was sixteen times higher – four million! Five out of every six Jews in the US were of Eastern European origin. The Jews of Eastern Europe left their countries of birth due to poverty, persecution and the anti-Semitic policies of the authorities. Small numbers migrated to the Land of Israel and other countries, but during this period the vast majority (around 90 percent) headed for the United States.

Most of the Jewish newcomers settled in the major commercial, industrial and cultural centers in the north of the US and in the Midwest (e.g. New York and Chicago). The immigrants worked hard to make a living, sometimes in intolerable conditions. Most of them were employed in the textile industry; many others engaged in petty commerce. American Jews established organizations and tried to meet the immigrants’ needs.
As already noted, some “old-timers” were embarrassed by the new immigrants, who were more traditional and old-fashioned. On the whole, though, the American Jewish community showed solidarity with the Jewish new immigrants. One of the most important organizations they established was the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS), which was founded in 1889. The HIAS established shelters, soup kitchens and centers to distribute clothes to the needy. The organization helped the immigrants during their first steps in their new home – translating documents, guiding them through the medical examinations they were required to undergo, and even helping other relatives to come to America. Locating relatives was important, because potential immigrants had to show that someone in the US would help them, in order to prevent their becoming a burden on the state.

(Sources – Historical Atlas – History of the Jewish People and the HIAS website – www.hias.org)

L’chaim! Cheers! Rishon LeZion Winery • Level of difficulty - medium

Like Baron de Hirsch, Baron de Rothschild was also a rich Jew from France who helped Jews in need. Baron de Rothschild established wineries in Rishon LeZion and Zichron Yaacov to provide a livelihood for Jews in the Land of Israel. Although he made his donations anonymously, many people knew the identity of the generous philanthropist, and Baron de Rothschild indeed became known as “the Well-Known Benefactor.”

The rabbis detailed the best ways to give charity. Maimonides proposed eight levels of charity. He believed that the highest level is to provide work for the poor, so that they no longer need to depend on handouts. This may well have been Baron de Rothschild’s intention. He sent agents to the Land of Israel, including experts in growing vines and making wine, in order to help the settlers manage the vineyards and wineries. However, these agents acted “with a sour face” (to use Maimonides’ expression). They controlled the flow of money, and often gave the settlers the feeling that they were dependent on their mercy.
Let My People Go! (1979) • Level of difficulty - easy

Note:
In Chapter 2, when we examined the program for the Russia and Ukraine trip, we discussed the life of the Jewish communities today in these countries. Now we will take a look at these communities, and others, during the period when they were part of the Soviet Union (USSR).

The Soviet Union was dissolved in 1991, and the different countries it once included are now independent.

### Historical background

The Soviet Union imposed a totalitarian regime that denied all its citizens basic liberties, including the freedom to leave the country. In addition to the obvious reasons why anyone would prefer to leave a totalitarian state, the Jews had their own reasons. Their social status was fragile; the universities imposed restrictions on the number of Jewish students; and, above all, Jews were prevented from living a Jewish lifestyle.

Unlike other Soviet citizens, Jews could apply to emigrate to Israel on the grounds of “family unification.” They knew that Israel would welcome them if they managed to get out, and that they would not face the legal hurdles that are usually encountered by refugees who wish to settle in a new country. However, their applications were almost always rejected. The “Refuseniks” – the name used for Jews whose applications to emigrate to Israel had been rejected – were treated as potential traitors by the authorities and by the people. They found themselves without friends, and many of them also lost their jobs.

Aliyah activists were subjected to sham trials, after which they were imprisoned or sent to concentration camps in Siberia, in some of the coldest places on Earth. Accordingly, they became known as “Prisoners of Zion.”

As a result, most Jews did not dare to apply for exit permits, despite their desire to leave the Soviet Union.

▶ The photograph of the demonstration and discussions of questions 1-2

Jews around the world were moved by the distress of their fellows in the Soviet Union. Jews in free Western countries campaigned as equal citizens of the countries where they live to convince world opinion of the justice of the demand to let Soviet Jews leave. They applied political pressure on their governments to introduce political and economic sanctions against the Soviet Union until it allowed those Jews who wished to leave to do so.
Activities on behalf of Soviet Jews began in the 1960s, on the initiative of Yaakov (Jacob) Birnbaum, a Jewish activist from the United States. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the campaign secured its first successes. However, the gates of the Soviet Union then closed again, and remained closed to the departure of Jews until 1989 – twenty years later.

The photograph shows demonstrators in Durban, South Africa demanding the release of Soviet Jews. The demonstration was organized by the Jewish community in Durban in 1979. Many other demonstrations were held in the United States, France, Britain and other countries, particularly when reports were received describing the harsh condition in which Prisoners of Zion were being held. Demonstrations were also held when senior Soviet political figures visited Western countries.

Naturally, the photograph does not reveal the secret activities organized by Western Jews to help Soviet Jewry. Jews from Western countries visited the Soviet Union as tourists and visited Refuseniks in order to raise their spirits, tell them about the efforts being made to secure their release, bring them Matzot for Passover, Hebrew calendars, Jewish books and other Judaica they might find helpful. The visits helped remind the activists that they were not on their own. Soviet law did not officially prohibit citizens from meeting with visitors from the West, but such contacts raised suspicions of treason, and accordingly entailed dangers. If the KGB (the Soviet secret service) learned of the meeting, they might arrest and interrogate the Refusenik, and even prosecute him or her for all kinds of offenses (see the Enrichment activities below).

As we have learned, the Iron Curtain fell during the 1980s, and the borders of the Soviet Union were opened. Since then, approximately one million Jews from the Soviet Union have migrated to Israel. According to Israel’s Law of Return (see Chapter 6), these immigrants immediately received Israeli citizenship. Some Jews from the Former Soviet Union have preferred to settle in other countries, including Germany and the United States, where the local Jewish communities have helped them settle in their new homes.
The appendix of this file shows the testimony of a French Jew who, like others, was sent to visit Soviet Jews during the period when they lived behind the Iron Curtain. You can photocopy the page, distribute it to the students, and ask them to consider how these visits helped the Refuseniks.

**The Rescue of Ethiopian Jews • Level of difficulty - easy**

**Historical background about Operation Shlomo (1991)**

In 1991, the Israeli government received permission from the Ethiopian government for Ethiopian Jews to emigrate to Israel, in return for a payment of $35 million. The approval was granted just two days before the Ethiopian government was overthrown, and it was clear that the rebels who were about to come to power would not honor the agreement. Accordingly, an urgent operation was launched to rescue the Jews. Approximately 14,000 Ethiopian Jews were flown to Israel in a single day!

**The photograph on page 76 and discussion of questions 1-4**

As explained, it was vital to bring as many Ethiopian Jews as possible to Israel before the rebels took power. The immigrants had to crowd onto planes. In order to fit in as many passengers as possible, the seats were removed from the airplanes and the immigrants were not allowed to bring bags with them. They arrived in Israel empty-handed, sometimes even without a change of clothes.

The State of Israel had to meet all their needs: housing, learning Hebrew and looking for work. Since Ethiopia was a relatively undeveloped country, the newcomers also had to adapt to life in a Western society with different technology, a different mentality, and so forth.

The operation in 1991 to bring Ethiopian Jews to Israel was called Operation Shlomo (Solomon) because according to one tradition, the Ethiopian Jews are the descendants of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.

This was the second operation to bring Ethiopian Jews to Israel. The first, Operation Moses, took place in 1984. Its name was based on an analogy with the exodus of the
Children of Israel from slavery in Egypt to freedom, and the Aliyah of the Ethiopian Jews from a hostile country to liberty in the State of Israel.

Historical background about Operation Moses (1984)
In 1984, Israel did not receive permission from the Ethiopian government to fly out Ethiopian Jews. However, the neighboring country of Sudan allowed Israel to send planes (for payment, and on condition that the operation remained secret) in order to fly 15,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel. The immigrants had to walk thousands of miles to Sudan in order to board the planes. Many died on the way. The operation was halted after six weeks when it was reported in the media around the world. Thanks to these two operations (Moses and Shlomo), Israel succeeded in bringing almost the entire Ethiopian Jewish community to Israel.

Enrichment activity (page to photocopy)
In the appendix of this file, you can see a photocopy of a medal issued by the State of Israel to commemorate the exhausting march by Ethiopian Jews in order to reach the airplanes that took them to Israel during Operation Moses.

Stage 3: Concluding discussion about the first part of the chapter
You could summarize the first part of this chapter by pointing out that although the Jewish people is scattered around the world, Jews have always felt a sense of solidarity toward all the Jewish communities, wherever they are. This support continues to be seen to the present day.

Part 2: Spotlight – Assisting Jews during the Shoah

Part 2: Spotlight – an example of Jewish solidarity during the Shoah
In this part, the class will study in depth one example of Jewish solidarity during the Shoah using several historical documents.
Introduction: The Shoah – historical background
Stage 1: Class study led by the teacher, followed by work in small groups.
Stage 2: Concluding discussion about the case study and the whole chapter.
Conclusion: Let’s Talk
Introduction – the Shoah, historical background

Children’s Forum (pages 78-79 in the student textbook)

In the first part of Chapter 4, we saw several examples (many more could be given) of instances when Jews helped other Jews in distress in various parts of the world.

A question that naturally arises is what happened during the Shoah, when the Jewish people lost six million of its members. Did Jews in the countries that were not subject to Nazi rule help those who were persecuted by the Nazis and their allies? This is the question Meep raises in the children’s forum.

Jonathan’s reply highlights the sense of solidarity among Jews in the countries that faced Nazi persecution, but does not answer Meep’s question. Hadas addresses this point. Her answer focuses on events that occurred in the US during the period when Jews (mainly in Europe) were being persecuted by the Nazis. If you are teaching in the US, your students may find this section particularly relevant.

N.B.

The story Hadas tells her friends is true. Evyatari is also a real person (although, of course, he could not have known Hadas, since she is a fictional character!) We have already met Itamar (see the letter dedicating this book to the memory of his grandfather, the late Alexander Raphaeli).

The map

Before we examine the documents presented in this part of the chapter, we should review some basic facts about the Shoah.

As the map shows, almost the entire continent of Europe became a death trap for Jews. The Germans set up checkpoints on the borders between the countries they controlled and the neutral countries, so that it was very difficult to escape. For example, Jews who tried to escape to Switzerland or Spain had to receive help from smugglers who took them across the border, usually at night and using secret paths known only to the locals. In most cases, the smugglers demanded large sums of money in return for helping the Jews, given the danger this entailed to all those involved. Some smugglers took the money and then handed the Jews over to German soldiers.

Since Britain is an island, it was also difficult to Jews to escape there.

The Land of Israel was ruled by the British at the time. As Hadas mentions, although the British fought the Germans, they were very reluctant to let Jews find refuge there.

The map does not show the continent of America (North, Central and South America). These countries were reluctant to allow Jews to enter, and persecuted Jews could not board ships to these countries (in some cases, Jews who managed to reach America were sent back to Europe).
In a nutshell – the Jews were trapped.

**Stage 1:** Class study led by the teacher, followed by work in small groups (pages 80-87)

**Save the Jews Now:** The Etzel delegation to the United States establishes the Emergency Committee (pages 80-81)

- The document (advertisement on page 80)

Six million Jews were murdered in the Shoah. This advertisement was published in November 1943, by the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People in Europe after the world learned that some two million Jews had already been murdered. The advertisement emphasizes that it was still possible to save millions of Jews in Europe facing persecution by the Nazis.

Question 4 is preceded by a mention of the rescue of the Danish Jews. After it became known that the Germans were planning to arrest all the Jews in Denmark, some 7,500 Jews were smuggled across the sea to nearby Sweden in boats in just one night (the night between October 1 and 2, 1943). This impressive rescue occurred a few weeks before the advertisement appeared.
Background information - The Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People in Europe

After reading the information about the committee, it is worth explaining the process that led to its establishment. At first, just before the Second World War, the Etzel sent young people from the Land of Israel to Europe, where they worked to smuggle Jews to the Land of Israel. The young people saw what was happening with their own eyes and realized how serious the situation was. They were later sent (again by the Etzel) to the United States on various missions. One of their tasks was to act to help the Jews of Europe, but this was not their main purpose. For example, they also worked to raise funds and to secure political support for the establishment of a Jewish army to fight the Nazis alongside the Allies.

In November 1942, when the mass murder of Jews in Europe became known (and remember that the young people had seen Nazi brutality for themselves a few years earlier), they decided to disobey their orders from the Etzel and abandon their other tasks in order to devote all their time to what they saw as the most urgent need: to work immediately to save the Jews still alive in Europe. This was the motivation behind the establishment of the committee.

It is important to note the difference between the approach of the US Administration and that of the Emergency Committee regarding the Jews in Nazi Europe. The US Administration did not believe that special action should be taken to save the Jews, but that all efforts should focus on the war against the Nazis. The committee argued that immediate action must be taken to save the Jews.

How could help have been provided for the Jews in the countries controlled by the Nazis?

- The Emergency Committee suggested various ideas, such as “buying” the release of Jews in exchange for money or equipment. One of the reasons why the US Administration opposed such deals was their fear that this would merely strengthen the Nazi enemy. However, the refusal to adopt this plan also prevented the rescue of many Jews.

- The Emergency Committee also suggested persuading free countries to provide temporary shelter for the Jews, but the countries involved agreed only to accept a limited number of Jews.

Discussion of the questions on page 81

Questions 1 and 2 check that the students have understood the content of the advertisement.
Emphasize to the class why, in a democracy, it is important to secure broad public support when attempting to influence government policy. Emphasize that the Emergency Committee directed its appeal to all Americans, not only Jews. Questions 3 and 4 should help the students recognize the understanding of the media shown by the members of the Emergency Committee. The advertisement on page 80, like the other advertisements it published, appeared in newspapers with wide circulations (the New York Times). It was very large and prominent, and it emphasized facts supporting its approach. The title had the style of a slogan.

On page 82, we note that, like the other advertisements published by the Emergency Committee, this text addresses the reader directly.

Do something! Yes, you! (page 82)

The headlines of the advertisements published by the Emergency Committee
In order to reach different sections of the public, the Emergency Committee published a very large number of advertisements. However, it wasn’t enough that people read the content of the advertisements. They had to be convinced that it was still possible to save Jews in Europe, and that they could do something to help.

Discussion of question 4
The headlines of the advertisements tried to “capture” the readers’ attention and prevent them looking away. They appealed to a sense of caring, and encouraged the reader to look at the rest of the advertisement, where the members of the Emergency Committee could present their case more fully. Like the headlines of the advertisement on page 80 (“Help prevent 4,000,000 people from becoming ghosts,”) the titles of the advertisements on page 82 turn directly to the reader’s conscience and encourage immediately action.

Additional points
- In addition to written advertisements and articles, the members of the Emergency Committee also gave lectures in an effort to persuade the public.
- You could discuss the following questions in class: What are the advantages of a lecture as opposed to a newspaper advertisement? And vice versa. The advantage of lectures is that they create direct contact with the audience. Those present can ask questions that would otherwise go unanswered, and there is a chance to overcome obstacles that might prevent people agreeing with the cause and taking action. A charismatic lecturer may be able to influence the audience more powerfully than a newspaper advertisement.
On the other hand, it is difficult to persuade people to come to a lecture, and those who come are usually already convinced (“preaching to the converted.”) Newspaper advertisements offered a chance to reach people in their own home and to persuade a broader public than those who were willing to come and sit in a lecture hall.

- As noted, the members of the Emergency Committee spared no effort, and worked in both these fields. We will now examine further initiatives they launched.

**A Huge Performance** (page 83)

- **About the performance “We Shall Never Die”**

  Once again, the members of the Emergency Committee tried to decide on the best media strategy. How could they bring large audiences to the performance? How could they produce an effective show that would move and persuade the public?

  - In class: Before asking the above questions, we first ask: what makes you want to go and see a particular show?

  First you need to hear that a performance is being held. You are more likely to hear about the performance if it is held in a famous location. Next, the show needs to be good. What makes you expect that a show will be good? The participation of well-known actors, the name of the show, reviews from those who have already seen it and report that it is interesting / moving / includes songs, etc.

  - Let’s look at the photograph (a scene from the show We Shall Never Die).

  First ask the students to describe what they see in the photograph. Then you can ask them why it seems that this show was particularly impressive.

- **Discussion of questions 5-8**

  - These questions will help the students to summarize the class discussion. They focus mainly on the effectiveness of ways for conveying messages. In the final scene (particularly if it is impressive), the audience is left with a powerful memory that should be strong and moving. In the show, this was achieved by having the performers recite the Kaddish prayer for the dead against a background of enormous Tablets of the Law.

**Political Activities** (page 84)

- **Demonstrations**

  In order to influence US policy, the members of the Emergency Committee organized demonstrations.
Look at the photograph from the Rabbis’ March. It is important to involve public figures in demonstrations. The committee worked hard to bring rabbis, who can be identified by their traditional appearance (hat, beard, etc.) Some of the demonstrators chose to attend in US army uniform (presumably they had served in the army in earlier times). Why did they decide to do this? The demonstration in the photograph was held in Washington, DC, the capital of the United States, and the home of the White House, the official residence of the president. Why did the organizers choose to hold the demonstration there? (For example – who were they demanding to meet?)

**Discussion of question 9**
It was important to hold the demonstration, even if the president of the US refused to meet the demonstrators, because this was a media event that also sought to raise the subject of European Jewry on the public agenda. In order to help the students with this question, you could give them the following clue: What can you see in the top left-hand corner of the photograph? (a journalist with a camera). Why is it important that the media report on the demonstration? (This is how a demonstration is transformed from a local event to one everyone hears about).

**Political contacts**
- Of course, some politicians agreed with the position of the Emergency Committee that action must be taken to save Jews in Europe and were willing to do so (some of these politicians were probably convinced by discussions with the members of the committee and by their advertisements in the press).
- The photograph shows Senator Guy Gillette, who was one of the politicians who actively supported an American initiative to help those persecuted by the Nazis (Jews and non-Jews).

**The efforts of the Emergency Committee bear fruit**
- The War Refugee Board was established on 22 January 1944, just fourteen months after the world learned (at the end of November 1942) that the Nazis were slaughtering Jews in mass numbers. The board helped transfer tens of thousands of Jews to refugee camps in neutral countries (Spain, Switzerland and Turkey), where it helped meet their needs (food, clothing and housing, etc.).
  One of the board’s most important activities was its success in stopping the transfer of Jews from Hungary to Auschwitz (the board convinced the American army to bomb Budapest, the capital of Hungary, in July 1944, thus leading the Hungarian leader Miklos Horthy to declare an end to the deportation of Jews).
- The last sentence on page 84 summarizes the achievements of the War Refugee Board. The “good” news is that in a short period of time, the board managed to rescue some
200,000 Jews. But this is also a sad statement. How many more Jews could have been saved if the board had been formed earlier. (Remember that the members of the Emergency Committee had been asking the US to intervene from as early as November 1942).

**A comment in the margin** of the page mentions two Jewish lobbies active in the US today – AIPAC and J-Street.

**Enrichment:** You could ask some of the more capable students to investigate these organizations over the internet and tell the class about their current activities. In countries other than the US, you can examine whether there is an active Jewish lobby, and what issues it addresses.

The next unit, on page 95 of the student textbook, includes the logo of AIPAC. If the class discusses this organization at this stage, you can analyze the logo with the students (see page 76 of this teachers’ guide).

**A Very Special Group** (pages 86-87)

**Summary and overview**
Write a summary of this special group’s activities on the board (see the column below, “what did they do?”) Then ask the students to suggest what we can learn from this about the members of the group and about effective action in general.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What did they do? (teacher summarizes)</th>
<th>What can we learn from this? (students respond)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the early period, when the Nazis rose to power (before World War II), these young men were chosen to travel to Europe (including Nazi Germany) in order to smuggle Jews to safer locations.</td>
<td>You don’t send just anyone on this kind of mission. The six men chosen were brave, devoted to the Jewish people, and capable of engaging in practical action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Etzel sent the six men to the US to perform several important functions (including securing political and financial support for the establishment of a Jewish army to fight the Nazis alongside the Allied powers, and the establishment of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel. They were also expected to secure the assistance of the US Administration for European Jews subject to Nazi</td>
<td>The fact that the Etzel sent these men to perform these functions shows that they clearly had diplomatic skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In the US, the men realized that one task was more urgent than the others. They decided by themselves to concentrate on this issue and to at least temporarily put their other tasks to the side (despite the objections of their commanders in the Etzel).

They realized that in order to succeed, they had to secure mass support and not try to achieve their mission by themselves.

They established the Emergency Committee.

They worked on two fronts:
- Media
- Politics

In both these fields, they contacted leading figures who could help them achieve their goals.

The six men managed to make the most of their unique talents.

At the same time, each one did everything possible to help the other members of the group.

They did not give up hope, despite the opposition they encountered. They worked day and night.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In the US, the men realized that one task was more urgent than the others. They decided by themselves to concentrate on this issue and to at least temporarily put their other tasks to the side (despite the objections of their commanders in the Etzel).</th>
<th>These men had their own opinions and had a strong ability to analyze the situation. They were not just pawns to be moved around a chess board – they could look at things for themselves and make their own decisions.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>They realized that in order to succeed, they had to secure mass support and not try to achieve their mission by themselves.</td>
<td>They were smart and understood the rules of the political “game.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They established the Emergency Committee.</td>
<td>They knew how to organize things.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They worked on two fronts: Media Politics</td>
<td>They were smart and understood how to influence public opinion as well as the government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In both these fields, they contacted leading figures who could help them achieve their goals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The six men managed to make the most of their unique talents.</td>
<td>They were effective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the same time, each one did everything possible to help the other members of the group.</td>
<td>They were united.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They did not give up hope, despite the opposition they encountered. They worked day and night.</td>
<td>They were determined.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Discussion of question 11**

The activities of the six men meets the high moral demands presented in the Bible.

- **Verse 1 “Time to act”** (Psalms 119, 126). This relates to the group’s demand to act immediately to meet an urgent need (in order to save lives), even if this meant putting aside other principles (for example, they suggested swapping Jews for military equipment, even though this would have strengthened the German army).
- **Verse 2 “We are brothers”** (Genesis 13:8). In the Torah, Abraham says these words when he tries to separate from Lot in order to end the fighting between the
two men’s shepherds. However, this verse is often quoted out of context to convey the value of solidarity.

- **Verse 3:** “You shall not stand aside when your brother’s blood is shed” (Leviticus 19:18). This verse comes from the Torah portion Kedoshim tihiyu (“You shall be holy,”) which includes moral commandments. This verse relates to the refusal of the Emergency Committee to overlook the murder of Jews by the Nazis, and their insistence on immediate action to rescue Jews.

- **Verse 4:** “Two are better than one” (Ecclesiastes 4:9). This verse from Ecclesiastes presents a pragmatic lesson learned through life: “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor. If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? While one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves…” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12).

The end of verse 9 and verses 10 and 12 touch on the question of effectiveness; the six men indeed worked hard to secure mass support, recognizing that this was the key to achieving their goal.

- **Verse 5:** “I seek my brothers” (Genesis 37:18). In the Bible, Joseph says these words as he sets out to search for his brothers. In Jewish tradition, this phrase has become a call for brotherhood. This verse could serve as a summary of the activities of the Emergency Committee.

**Stage 2: General conclusion**

- **Discussion of the Friends Across the Sea forum** (page 87).

- **Meep’s comments:** Meep sums up briefly a key point studied in the Spotlight section.

- **Hadas’s comments:** Hadas exposes the students to one of the greatest scandals of World War II – the refusal to bomb the railroad lines leading to the death camps.

- **Hadas’s last sentence:**

  This sentence (“...it’s very hard to influence others, but the story of these six men shows that it can be done!”) can encourage the students to discuss the general message of the whole chapter:

  - In the first part (pages 62-77), we saw numerous examples of instances in history when Jews have helped their fellow Jews.
  - In the second part (pages 78-87), we focused on the attempts to help the Jewish victims of Nazi persecution during the Shoah.
Suggested Joint Activities for Students from “Here” and “There”

Activity 1: Let’s Talk

The questions on page 88 may help the students to engage in meaningful discussions with Jewish students living in Israel who are also studying the Friends Across the Sea program. There is also a list of questions the students can expect to be asked by their Israeli peers. Even if your students are not in contact with Israeli students, you can still discuss these questions.

Activity 2: Holding a survey

➤ You should focus on the last question in the Let’s Talk section (p. 88 of the textbook): “To what extent do you feel that Jews should help other Jews they do not know (e.g. Jews who live in other countries)?”
• The students answer this question on a scale from 1 to 10 (1=not at all, 10=to a very great extent).
• The students ask the same question of three or four people outside the classroom.
• Collect the figures for the class and display them in a bar graph.
• Send your graph to your twin class, which will also send its graph. Compare the two graphs.
• Hold a discussion in your class: Are there any significant differences between the breakdown of answers between the Israeli class and the Diaspora class?
If so, how can you explain these differences?

Activity 3: Joint creative writing project

➤ The students from both classes will write a joint imaginary story. The whole story will consist of four short chapters, and will relate to one of the three events in Jewish history that reflect mutual assistance among Jews:
The story of Doña Gracia (“A Woman of Valor,” pp. 64-65 in the textbook)
The demand to allow Soviet Jews to leave the USSR (Let My People Go, pp. 74-75)
The rescue of Ethiopian Jews (pp. 76-77)
We recommend that the students write the story in the first person.

You can suggest that the students use a predetermined structure to write the story:
- Each class divides into six groups.
- Each group reads the material in the textbook relating to “its” topic, as well as additional information they research on the subject.

On the basis of this information –
- In the first class, the students prepare the first chapter of the story.
- The second class prepares the second chapter.
- The first class adds the third chapter.
- The second class writes the fourth chapter, completing the story.

Examples of the structure of the stories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The story of a child from a family of Anusim:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. The life of the Anusim in Portugal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The efforts of Doña Gracia to help the Jews board a ship heading for a free country (e.g. the Ottoman – Turkish – empire).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The sea journey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Arriving in the free country, in a city with a Jewish community (e.g. Istanbul)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The story of a child in the USSR whose parents requested permission to make Aliyah in 1980:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. The everyday life of a Jewish family in the USSR.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. The request to emigrate to Israel for “family reunion” and the authorities’ refusal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The struggle by Jews around the world to help Soviet Jewry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Receiving permission to leave Moscow.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The story of a girl who made Aliyah from Ethiopia to Israel:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. The Jews in the villages of Ethiopia here about the possibility to make Aliyah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Gathering in Addis Ababa and waiting for the plane to Israel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The Flight to Israel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Arrival and first days in Israel.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You could also let the students work in a freer and less structured style – encourage them to read the background material about their chosen historical event. Then, students from one class can start the story off, and the students from the twin class can continue the story without determining the order or the number of chapters in advance.

You can upload the stories on Google Docs or Wikispace.
Appendix

Jewish Solidarity
In this unit we learned about many examples of Jewish solidarity throughout history. Near each item or document, write a few lines that explain which story the item or document is connected, and how they are connected.

1

............................................................
............................................................
............................................................
............................................................

2

............................................................
............................................................
............................................................
............................................................

............................................................
............................................................
............................................................
............................................................
“I was sent to Russia by a Jewish organization that campaigned for the rights of Jews in the Soviet Union. I joined a group of (non-Jewish) French tourists who went to visit Moscow (the capital of Russia). But I skipped as many of the tourist trips as possible. I told our group’s guide that I wasn’t feeling well, and while the rest of the group visited museums, I met with Jewish Refuseniks whose addresses had been given to me in France. I updated them on the campaigns on their behalf and encouraged them to remain strong. Some other Jews who were sent by the organization brought Passover Haggadot and books for learning Hebrew. I didn’t do that, but even so I was scared. I was afraid of being arrested by the Russian police, and I knew that it would be very unpleasant to undergo interrogation and refuse to give names.

Despite this, I told myself that it was important to take this opportunity. After all, I was a French citizen and in the end the Russians would have to release me. I knew that the Refuseniks were taking a much greater risk than I was, because they were not supposed to meet with Western citizens (from France, the US, Britain, etc.) If they were arrested, it would be very difficult to secure their release. But they still wanted these meetings, which strengthened their spirits. So how could I not take the risk of meeting them?”

(Testimony of Alain Rosenthal)