

## **Perception of Jews and relations between Poles and Jews**

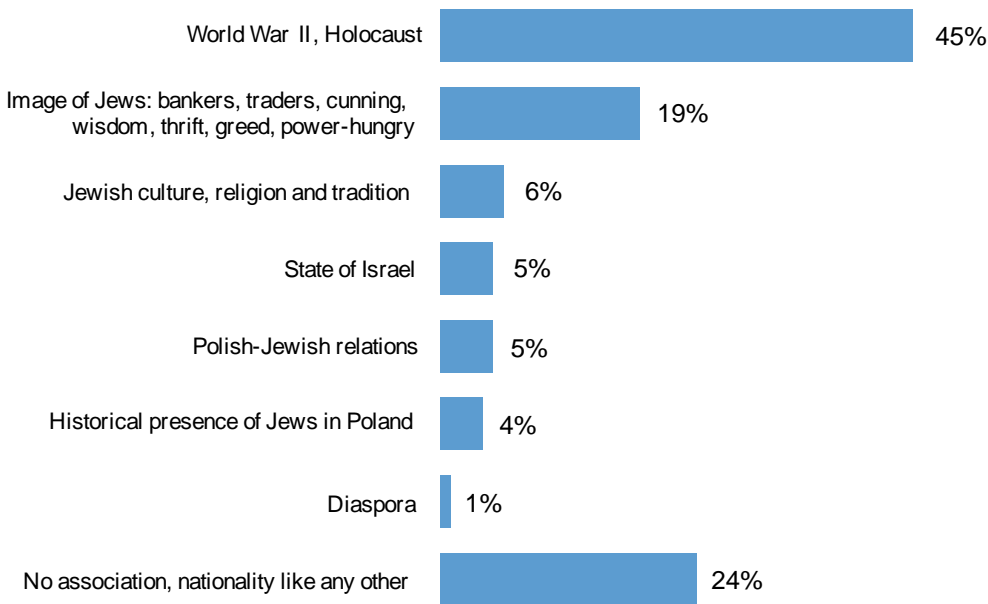
After many centuries of presence in Poland, Jews disappeared from the Polish landscape. Most of the war survivors emigrated. Although the presence of Jews in Poland is strongly rooted in social consciousness, the actual Jewish minority numbers slightly more than 7,000 people, according to the national census. These small numbers makes the Jew a largely symbolic figure, whose image is based on past stereotypes. They were reinforced during the period of People's Republic, when there was little coverage of Jews and Polish-Jewish relations in official discourse. Relations between Poles and Jews came into the foreground after publications by Jan Tomasz Gross, which showed Poles among perpetrators and beneficiaries of the Holocaust, thus questioning their image as heroes rescuing their fellow Jewish citizens.

The perception of Jews in Poland is shaped to the largest extent by World War II and the Holocaust. These two events are most commonly associated when “Jews” and the “Jewish nation” are mentioned. Many people express sympathy for them, stressing their suffering and historical persecution. Most associations are related to the historically grounded image of Jews in which they are primarily entrepreneurs, business people engaged in trade and banking. In addition to neutral statements, respondents attributed to them positive and

negative qualities that determined their professional and material success. On the one hand they were characterized by intelligence, thrift and prudence; on the other hand respondents attributed to them such traits as cunning, tendency to cheat and meanness. Marginally the conviction was expressed that Jews try to rule the world and show a particular degree of solidarity, mutual help. Stereotypical image is complemented by the appearance typical for orthodox Jews: kippah, sidelocks, beard, etc.

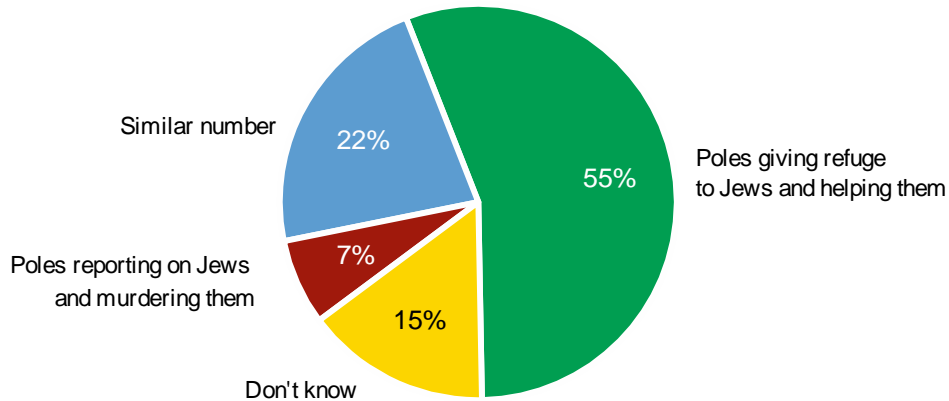
Other associations concerned Jewish tradition, culture and religion, common Polish-Jewish history and mutual relations. The relations between Poles and Jews are usually seen as difficult: respondents mentioned Polish anti-Semitism, but also talked about Poles rescuing Jews during the war. On the other hand, they mentioned anti-Polish attitude of Jews, their negative attitude to Poles, their accusations related to Polish participation in the Holocaust, as well as their demands related to property restitution. The terms “Jewish nation” and “Jews” also bring to mind, on the one hand, the state of Israel and conflicts between Jews and Palestinians, and, on the other hand, the diaspora. A large proportion of respondents reported no specific associations. They usually declared that the term “Jewish nation” does not bring anything to mind, but sometimes, less frequently, stressed that Jews are a nationality like any other.

**What comes to your mind when you hear the words “Jewish nation” or “Jews”?**  
 Most common mental associations



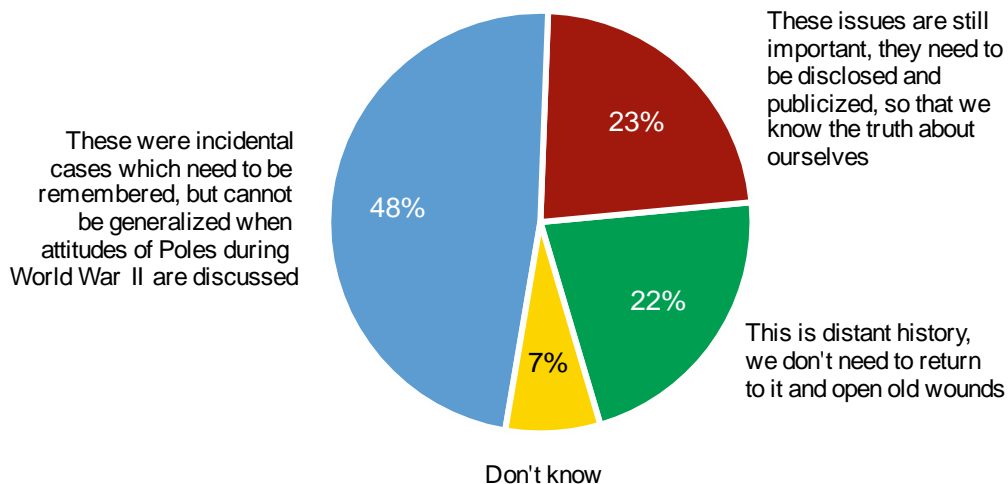
Most respondents are convinced that during World War II there were more cases of Poles hiding Jews and helping them than cases of reporting on them and murder.

### Which was more common during World War II?



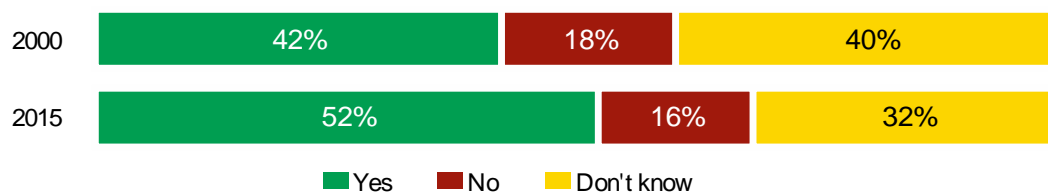
Most respondents (71%) share the opinion that we should not forget about murders and purges committed by Poles on Jews during and after the war. However, the dominant view holds that these incidents were isolated, should be seen in correct proportions and should not be generalized when discussing the attitude of Poles during World War II.

### Which opinion is closest to your own view about murders and purges committed by Poles on Jews during and immediately after World War II?



For some years now there has been an increase in the interest in Jewish culture and, broader, the social memory of Polish-Jewish past has been revived. Survey results confirm this. Since 2000, the proportion of people who have reported that Jews had lived in their place of residence has increased by 10 percentage points, from 42% to 52%.

### Did Jews live in your town or village before the war?



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More information about this topic can be found in CBOS report in Polish: "Perception of the Jews and Jewish-Polish Relations", August 2015. Fieldwork for national sample: July 2015, N=1044. The random address sample is representative for adult population of Poland.