

## Antwerp, Belgium: Rough Trade

My name is Dov Ajzenberg, and I live in the Jewish quarter of Antwerp. Most of the Jewish community here are involved in diamonds in one way or another, and we live in 'Diamondland', a neighbourhood close to the train station. All the jewellery shops are concentrated here.

I work in an office, part of the family business that buys and sells rough and polished diamonds. It's part of the family business started by my grandfather. We trade a lot with diamond companies in Tel Aviv, Israel, a big centre for rough diamonds.

Antwerp has been a diamond centre for 600 years. In the old days, our community ran most of the diamond trade here, but 300 Indian families take the biggest slice nowadays. The Lebanese are a growing force too.

Indian merchants have outsourced a lot of the cutting and polishing to India where they can do it much more cheaply. There are only about 1,500 cutters and polishers left in Antwerp, and some people are getting nervous that this part of the industry will disappear altogether here. As orthodox Jews we live and work very differently from the Indian community. Nevertheless, we put our differences aside when it comes to business and have a healthy working relationship with them.

Antwerp is still the world's number one diamond centre - about 80% of the world's rough diamonds still pass through the city and diamonds make up 7% of Belgium's GDP.



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