

# WORKSHOP GUIDELINE FOR INDIVIDUALS

## JEWISH WARSAW



## RATIONAL

This activity is based on the content of "Jewish Warsaw - A Story About the Human Spirit," an exhibit at the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum. The exhibit describes the fate of Warsaw's Jews and depicts the life Jews lived between the two world wars. The workshop's participants receive innovative, interactive online access to historical content, encouraging them to learn immersively as the stories of young Jews in the interwar period "come to life." During the activity, the participants are repeatedly exposed to dilemmas and challenges that young Jews faced at that time. The activity focuses on four figures who represent a broad ideological cross-section of Jewish youth, and thus it delves into the complexity of Warsaw's Jewish life in those days. The paths of the characters intersect in the course of the activity, highlighting the conflicts and the various ideological positions, so that the participants experience the many different viewpoints and the dynamic, vibrant environment was once typified Jewish Warsaw.

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## GOALS

- To present content from the exhibit "Jewish Warsaw - A Story About the Human Spirit" by means of an innovative, interactive activity encouraging active learning, presenting questions and dilemmas, promoting discussion and clarification of the topic's current relevance.
- To delve into the historical content from a range of personal points of view that expose the participants to the varied identities that the Jewish world of that time comprised, and to the vibrant lives of Warsaw's young Jews between the two World Wars.

# THE COURSE OF THE ACTIVITY

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This activity combines the personal experience of the participants with joint processing within the class/group. It is recommended to act according to the following outline:

- A. Introduction and familiarization with the subject of Jewish Warsaw in a class/group setting.
- B. A personal experience of the participants - can be held as an assignment, homework, etc.
- C. Class/group reflection regarding insights about prewar Jewish Warsaw.

## **Instructions:**

On the main screen, write your name in the designated area. From here on you will continue to the opening film. Afterward, choose one of the four characters of young Jews in Warsaw between two world wars. Then the activity will begin. From then on, you will go through the following steps: an attitude questionnaire, acquaintance with the character through quotes and photographs, an interactive task, uploading a post, position selection & results and concluding video.



**FACILITATOR**

This activity invites the participants to a journey, as it were, into the lives of young Jews in prewar Warsaw, while delving into dilemmas such as: Who they were? What issues occupied their minds? What did they argue over?

To begin with, ask of the participants to briefly share their mental images of Jews their own age in prewar Poland. Those images are important as a way of pointing up stereotypes that the participants apply to Jews of nearly a century ago.

# OPENING

You're invited on a journey into the lives of young Jews in prewar Warsaw. A city where every third person walking down the street was Jewish... Who were they? What issues occupied their minds? What did they argue over?

To begin with, I would like to ask of you to share your ideas of what a person's identity is made up of (for example, beliefs, personal tastes, political opinions, and so on). Now try to imagine what made up the identity of Jews your age in Poland before the Holocaust. What do you know about them? Were they all the same? How did they dress? What was their language? What did they believe in? What did they oppose? What was being Jewish about for them, and how did they express it?

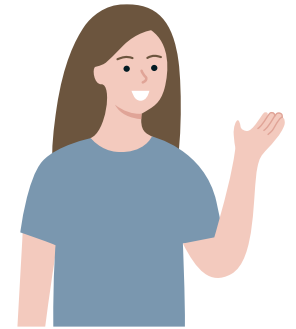


## GUIDELINES

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Send the activity link to the participants, which they will carry out independently afterwards\*. From then on, each participant will follow the instructions appearing on the activity screen. The activity includes the following steps: an attitude questionnaire, acquaintance the character through quotes and photographs, an interactive task, uploading a post, position selection & results and concluding video.

\*If it's not possible to provide the participants with a computer for the activity, it is recommended to hold it at home, as an assignment or as homework.



## FACILITATOR

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During this activity you will be introduced to the lives of young Jews from Warsaw between two world wars. All the characters were actual people who had their own story, beliefs, and dilemmas. Throughout the activity you will receive various tasks, that will help you deepen your acquaintance with the character. Upon entering the opening screen, you will be asked to write your name. From there you will continue to a short video that will provide a brief background about the Jews of prewar Warsaw, and the ideologies or movements of your characters. From then on you will receive the activity instructions on the right side of the screen, presented as a light bulb icon.

The processing and summary of this activity will take place in the next class/meeting.



## GUIDELINES

# PROCESSING AND SUMMARY

After the participants completed the activity, it's important to process with them the experience in which they got to know the worldview of their characters: Roz'a Speizer (Jewish Orthodoxy), Marek Edelman (Bundist), Bracha Mondschein (Hashomer Hatzair Apprentice) and Abraham Rotfarb (Poland as a home).

The purpose of the processing is to find out what new insights they have about Jewish youth before the Second World War, compared to the attitudes and stereotypes they had before this activity.

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During the journey you embarked on with your characters: Roz'a Speizer (Jewish Orthodoxy), Marek Edelman (Bundist), Bracha Mondschein (Hashomer Hatzair Apprentice) and Abraham Rotfarb (Poland as a home), you got to know a bit about their lives, positions, and the dilemmas that preoccupied the Jewish Street at the time. Each of the figures in this activity belonged to an ideological current, which were often in conflict with the others.

What were you able to learn about your character? What is your position regarding their beliefs? What are your conclusions about prewar Jewish life?

This activity was divided into several parts. Let's go back to them:

Attitudes Questionnaire - In the first part of the activity, you took a personal questionnaire, based on the beliefs and ideologies of your character. Who would like to share their answers? How much did you identify or not with their beliefs?

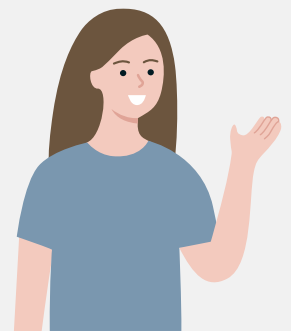
Quotes - You then looked at the pictures and read quotes of the characters. Did anything catch your eye? did you read something interesting?

Creative activity - in this part, you had different tasks: creating a sign for the May Day demonstration for Marek the Bundist, writing an article on behalf of Roz'a the orthodox girl, for the Agudat Israel newspaper, or writing a letter to Bracha's parents about why she decided to immigrate to Israel, as in the case of HaShomer HaTsa'ir, And Avraham's letter in response to the Zionists, who condemn the Jews who saw Poland as their home. What did you create in this section?

Uploading a post - in this section you uploaded a post on behalf of your character and watched the posts of the other characters. Why did you choose this post to represent your character? What did you think of the other characters' posts?

Time to take a stand - in this part you read the positions of the four characters, and were asked to choose which position convinced you the most? Why?

At the end of the activity, you found out what happened to your characters. Then you watched the summary video. How did you feel afterwards?



**FACILITATOR**

# SUMMARY

## **Question: What new insights did you experience during this activity?**

In the city of Warsaw, roughly a third of the people were Jews. Who were they? How did they live? What did they believe in? The purpose of this activity was to show you the lives of Polish Jews before World War II, so that you would have some familiarity about their lives during the last days before the war and the Holocaust descended on them. So that you'll remember them not only as Holocaust victims but as a Jewish community that was alive and vibrant. Those young Jews that you've accompanied through the past hour are typical of a wide variety of youngsters with differing ideologies and beliefs, full of hopes and dreams, fears and hesitancy and belief – just like yourselves.

Abba Kovner – a member of the Hashomer Hatzair movement, a partisan, and a poet – wrote that when he thought of everything the Jewish people had lost during the Holocaust, he was doubly sad for the young generation who will grow up and reach old age and may never even know what they should weep for.

The memory of the Holocaust isn't only about an inconceivable number of victims or about the hideous ways in which they were murdered. It's also about the rich Jewish life that flourished for hundreds of years before the Holocaust and that exists no more.



## GUIDELINES

