



Fact Sheet

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research

Founded in Vilna, Poland in 1925, the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research is the world's pre-eminent research institute and academic center for East European Jewish studies. As the only pre-Holocaust scholarly institution to transfer its mission to the United States, YIVO's work is crucial to understanding the East European roots of the American Jewish experience.

YIVO is known worldwide for its important research publications and its unique library and archives. As the largest repository of archival and library resource materials on East European Jewish life and culture, the YIVO Archives holds 22 million letters, manuscripts, photographs, sound recordings, art works and artifacts. The YIVO Library has more than 350,000 books, newspapers and periodicals in twelve major languages.

In keeping with Vilna YIVO's original mission to serve as a cultural resource for the Jewish people, YIVO continues to publish scholarly books and journals, sponsor academic conferences, courses in Yiddish language and literature, and public programs such as lectures, exhibitions and concerts.

In 1995, YIVO co-founded the Center for Jewish History; a partnership of five Jewish cultural organizations and in 1999 became the first partner to move into the Center's newly renovated complex at 15 W. 16th Street in New York City.

EPYC Program Description

The Educational Program on Yiddish Culture, **EPYC**, is a bold new educational initiative that addresses an urgent need to transmit the lost and nearly forgotten culture of East European Jewry to future generations. Much of the content was sourced from YIVO's library and archives, which contain more than 22 million artifacts and documents related to East European Jewish life. **EPYC** was developed as a comprehensive curriculum that is ideally suited for use in Jewish day and supplemental schools. **EPYC** may also be used as a resource for Holocaust studies and as a curriculum that advances multiculturalism and tolerance in public schools.

The **EPYC** program was conceived in 1999 by Dr. Adina Cimet, a distinguished sociologist, in conjunction with the YIVO Leadership Forum, a volunteer committee of mostly second-generation Holocaust survivors and others, as a comprehensive resource for secondary school education. Dr. Cimet led the program development team that included YIVO researchers Avi Patt, Jesse Aaron Cohen and Michael Cohen. The program also benefitted from the consultancy of Joshua Feinberg, a curriculum specialist and museum educator.

EPYC was designed as an integrated seven volume set that can adapt to a variety of educator styles and classroom settings. It uses an interdisciplinary approach that combines history, sociology, anthropology, religion and folklore. Together with the new educational website, **EPYC** offers more to educators and students than other Jewish history educational materials by bringing this illustrious history back to life in an exciting multimedia format.

EPYC's seven volume set includes:

- **Preface and Users Guide**

- **Two Master Essays**
 - a. *An Outline of Polish History*
Dr. Monika Garbowska-Adamczyk, Professor of Jewish History and Literature and
Dr. Christopher Garbowski, Associate Professor of English.
Maria Sklodowska-Curie University. Lublin, Poland
 - b. *The Distinctive Life of East European Jewry*
Dr. Samuel Kassow, Professor of Jewish History.
Trinity College. Hartford, Connecticut.

- **Cultural Monograph: Lublin, Poland.**
Dr. Adina Cimet, Sociologist and former EPYC Program Director

The Cultural Monograph is the centerpiece of the curriculum. The monograph cross-references a primary source Appendix which includes maps, illustrations, photographs, charts and statistics researched and collected by the YIVO archives and library.

- **Two Student Workbooks; Basic and Advanced**

Joshua Feinberg, Curriculum and Museum Education Specialist

The student workbooks were prepared in accordance with the New York State history and the United States educational standard recommendations. The workbooks consist of ten thematic units designed to connect historical events with contemporary issues using primary and secondary source material. The teachers guide provides in-depth background information and suggestions for class discussions and additional activities.

EPYC Program Availability

The EPYC curriculum will be made available for purchase on-line in a downloadable format through the EPYC website by January 31, 2005. A Hebrew language version will be made available to the Israeli educational market in late 2005.

EPYC Major Contributors

The Smart Family Foundation-David and Cindy Stone, YIVO International Women's Division, The Dibner Fund, Seymour and Cathy Zises, The FJJ Foundation, Inc., Fanya Gottesfeld Heller, David and Ruth Levine, Charles J. Rose, the estate of Julius Stamm and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, Inc. – The Rabbi Israel Miller Fund for Shoah Research, Education and Documentation.

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