

The Righteous in Film

Attachment 3

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ORGANIZER OF THE WORKSHOP:

1. *Do you know any Righteous Among the Nations or stories of rescuing Jews during the Holocaust? If so, how did you learn about them?*

2. *What did you learn about the problem from the film? What seemed new to you in the movie?*

Ask the participants the following question: what is the role of movies in disseminating and collecting information about World War II and the Righteous? Are such movies feature films screened in theaters, television films or documents? Is a film the only instrument of distributing knowledge?

3. *Is the rescuer a fictional character or a real person?*

How can remembering that the character is a real person influence the reception of the film? Is an anonymous hero less credible?

4. *How is the rescuer portrayed in the film? How would you describe his/her personality? Is the rescuer distinguished from other characters? If so, in what way?*

Is the character portrayed only in a positive way? Notice the tendency to depict the rescuers as flawless heroes. What does this procedure serve? What dangers does it entail?

5. How is rescuing Jews during the war depicted in the movie? Do we learn something about the motivation of the rescuer? Do we know what threatens him/her? Does the rescuer act on his/her own? What measures must be undertaken to rescue a Jew? Does the rescuer pay the price for his/her actions? If yes, what price is it?

Does the film ignore any important issues pertaining to the rescue? Does it bring off any elements in a specifically distinct way? What do such procedures serve? Can they be avoided? Can “everything” be told?

6. How are different nationalities presented in the film (Germans, Jews, Poles)? Are they all depicted in the same way?

Bring up the problem of stereotypes: good Poles, bad Germans, Jews— passive victims. Notice the appearance of the actors playing Jews – does it confirm the stereotypical “Jewish appearance”?

7. Which scene do you remember best? Why?

Bring up the issue of emotions. Notice that affection, fear, sympathy, all emotions which a feature film evokes are written down in the screenplay. The director/screenwriter can program specific emotions by means of stylistic and editing tricks.

8. Which elements of the movie (scenes, characters, stage design) appeared credible to you, and which seemed less convincing? Why?

Notice that the world created in a feature film is more suggestive (thanks to stage design, costumes) and may give “the impression of being real”. Note that in the case of a feature film based on a true story some elements must be (in the majority of cases) portrayed in such a way that the world depicted in the movie is complete.

Show the participants iconographic mistakes and historical distortions, if such exist.