

Newsletter

1 2016

ENDING EXHIBITION

The Missing Images: Eugeen Van Mieghem and the Jewish Emigrants to the New World

Until April 10, visitors to the museum had a chance to visit this exhibition in the Robert Guttman Gallery. It was already the third exhibition of the Jewish Museum in Prague on the phenomenon of emigration, devoted to the millions of inhabitants of Central and Eastern Europe who decided to leave for America between the end of the 19th and the first decades of the 20th centuries.



EXHIBITION UNDER PREPARATION

The exhibition *Stranded in Shanghai: The Hongkew Ghetto Through the Eyes of Refugees and the Lens of Arthur Rothstein* will be on view at the Jewish

Museum's Robert Guttman Gallery from May 11 until September, 11 2016. It will feature scenes and images of the Hongkew Ghetto as depicted by the American photographer Arthur Rothstein (1915–1985) in April 1946: the entrance to the ghetto in the Hongkew district, living quarters in Chaoufoong Street, a woman distributing food rations from UNRRA, stateless children born into Jewish refugee families in China, a game of outdoor chess, a makeshift outdoor kitchen in an inner courtyard, soup with matzo dumplings prepared in a traditional Chinese pot, an evacuation notice-board, mail sorting, a group of people checking the latest lists of survivors from concentration camps in Europe...

These documentary photographs from Shanghai later became famous after their publication. Rothstein took them at the start of his assignment in China as chief photographer for the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA), following his discharge from the military. His main task was to document the activity of this international organization, which at the time mainly involved distributing food aid and organizing the repatriation of Jewish refugees back to Europe.

Rothstein's documentary photographs captured the atmosphere of the Hongkew slum immediately after the war. Covering an area of about 2.5 square kilometres, the ghetto was set up by the Japanese occupation authorities as a designated area for European Jewish refugees who had arrived in Shanghai since 1937. In operation between 18 February 1943 and 14 August, it was liberated on 3 September 1945. A large number of European Jewish refugees were still in the ghetto at the time of its liberation, with as many as 20,000 having made their various ways there between 1938 and 1942.

Against the backdrop of Rothstein's photo reportage, the exhibition *Stranded in Shanghai: The Hongkew Ghetto Through the Eyes of Refugees and the Lens of Arthur Rothstein* aims to draw attention to the fate of the Czechoslovak nationals who formed a small but far from insignificant group in Shanghai. On the basis of various lists from 1942–1946, there are estimated to have been between 300 and 400 people in this group, about three quarters of whom were Jews.



Entrance to the Hongkew refugee camp



Arthur Rothstein

The Auschwitz Album on display in Moscow

The Auschwitz Album exhibition was on view at the Lumiere Brothers Center for Photography in Moscow from 3 February until 3 April 1916.

This exhibition features copies of all of the almost 200 photographs from the Auschwitz Album, a unique document from 1944 that depicts the systematic liquidation of Europe's Jews. Originally held by the Jewish Museum in Prague and the Prague City Gallery, the exhibition was first on view at the House of Photography between May and September 2015.

The exhibition opening show in Moscow took place on 2 February 2016 and was attended by the photography curator Martin Jelínek from the Jewish Museum in Prague. The transport of the exhibition to and from Moscow was organized by the Czech Centre in Moscow. The event was also supported by the Embassy of the State of Israel in Moscow.



Article on the exhibition in the Moscow edition of the Metro newspaper

CULTURAL EVENTS

On 14 January the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture hosted the opening of a photography exhibition titled *The Ancient Jewish Community of Yemen*. The photographs were taken by the Israeli photographer Naftali Hilger over the course of seven journeys to Yemen between 1987 and 2008. His reason for travelling there was to learn about and to document the life of the local Jewish community. Naftali Hilger gave a talk at the opening show, providing a wealth of fascinating information on the past and present of the Jewish Community of Yemen and on the fate of the people in the photographs, most of whom have left Yemen over the last few years. Another interesting photography exhibition, titled *The People from Judah, or Jews on the Equator*, which focuses on the Jews of Uganda, is on display at the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture from March until April 2016.



Photograph from the exhibition *The Ancient Jewish Community of Yemen*



Photograph from the exhibition *The Ancient Jewish Community of Yemen*

Two outstanding concerts were held in the Maisel Synagogue in January. The first of these, *Salamone Rossi Hebreo e il suo tempo*, featured the work of the

Italian Jewish Baroque composer Salomone Rossi as performed by For Several Friends, a group of musicians from the world-famous Baroque orchestra Collegium 1704. The second concert was a fusion of Jewish Turkish music and jazz, performed by two Israeli musicians – the percussionist and oud player Yinon Muallem and the pianist Guy Mintus.



For Several Friends Ensemble

Invitation to the cinema

Mimesis Film, Embassy of the State of Israel, Jewish Museum in Prague and Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic cordially invite you to the premiere of

INTO THE NORTH

April 18, 2016 | 6 pm | Světozor Cinema in Prague

In the presence of the Ambassador of the State of Israel to the Czech Republic H.E. Gary Koren and the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Denmark to the Czech Republic H.E. Christian Hoppe

Q&A with the filmmakers will follow after the screening.

A group of Czech Jewish teenagers sets out on a journey to the North. Without their parents to look after them, they must rely on each other. That's how their great adventure starts. They spend four years in Denmark, an oasis in the midst of raging WWII. More than seventy years later, they are ready to tell their story, a coming-of-age refugee story with a happy end, courtesy of thousands of openhearted Danes.

Script: Judita Matyášová, Natasha Dudinski

Director: Natasha Dudinski

Producer: Jan Macola, Mimesis Film

English and Czech subtitles | 89 min

NA SEVER



NEW PUBLICATIONS

The liquidation of Jewish organizations in the Czech border region annexed to Nazi Germany in October 1938

ed. Markéta Lhotová, Museum of North Bohemia in Liberec, in association with the Jewish Museum in Prague, Liberec, 2015, 211 pp, ISBN 978-80-87266-19-9

This publication is the result of a project of the same name that was supported by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic (Grant No. P410/10/2399). The grant recipient was the Museum of North Bohemia in Liberec, the chief researcher was Markéta Lhotová, the co-recipient of the grant was the Jewish Museum in Prague, and the co-researcher was Vlastimila Hamáčková. The research, carried out in 2010–2014, focused on the liquidation of Jewish communities and associations in the Czech border region through the Liberec-based Liquidation Commissar for Organizations, Associations and Funds (Stillhaltekommissar für Organisationen, Vereine und Fonds, Reichenberg – Stiko) and the related Construction Fund Asset Management Ltd. Vienna, Liberec Branch (Aufbaufonds Vermögensverwaltungs-Gesellschaft m. b. H. Wien, Zweigstelle Reichenberg, in short Aufbaufonds).

The results of the project's research are summarized in this publication. The main component of the research work involved collecting and evaluating related information from material in the Stiko Reichenberg funds at the Austrian State Archives, Vienna. The research also highlights the character and structure of the latter collection, thereby facilitating study by further researchers. The research also drew on information from material in archives in the Czech

Republic.

The aim of the project was to address questions concerning the functions of the Stiko authority in Liberec and of related institutions in an attempt to determine the structure and activities of these authorities, as well as their role in the liquidation of Jewish communities and associations. The main focus, however, was on the actual process of liquidating individual organizations. A database was produced for the purpose of processing the collected data, an extract from which is included in the publication. The text also includes an extensive appendix, which is arranged by administrative area (in the occupied border region) and alphabetically by name of the locality where a Jewish community was based in 1938.

The publication contains a summary of the text in German and English, as well as a list of sources used, a bibliography, an index of places, and photographs of several archival documents.



Jews – History – Memory

A new book series *Židé – dějiny – paměť* [Jews – History – Memory] has been launched with the first three volumes. It has been put together by the Jewish Museum in Prague in association with the Institute of Contemporary History (Czech Academy of Sciences) and is published by Nakladatelství Lidové noviny. Its aim is to provide experts and the general public with access to current research on modern Jewish history and culture in the Czech lands and in Central Europe from the eighteenth century to the present. It is a response to the lack of quality research on this topic that has been published in Czech and an attempt to encourage and provide methodological inspiration for further research on Jews in the Czech lands.

The first volume in the series is a Czech translation of Michael L. Miller's book *The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation*. This book is the first key study that combines the cultural, social and political history of Moravian Jews in the period from the beginning of Jewish emancipation until the latter half of the nineteenth century. The new translation of this book into Czech has been made possible with support from the Rothschild Foundation Europe.

The second volume in the series is *Budování státu bez antisemitismu? Násilí, diskurz loajality a vznik Československa* [Building a State Without Antisemitism? Violence, Discourse of Loyalty and the Founding of Czechoslovakia] by Michal Frankl and Miloslav Szabó. This provides a comparative overview of Czech and Slovak antisemitism at the end of the First World War and at the start of the post-war First Czechoslovak Republic. This study, which is the result of a project supported by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic (No. P410/11/2146), explores the role of anti-Jewish violence and analyzes the function of antisemitism in the period when the national state was being “built”.

The third volume in the series is a Czech translation of the German historian Ines Koeltzsch's book *Geteilte Kulturen. Eine Geschichte der tschechisch-jüdisch-deutschen Beziehungen in Prag (1918–1938)* [Shared Cultures: A History of Czech-Jewish-German Relations in Prague (1918–1938)]. This book provides a new perspective of Prague as a “city of three nations” and, with focus on official statistics, municipal politics, public intellectuals and popular culture, explores how the people of Prague created, negotiated and went beyond the perceptions of themselves and of others. The translation of this book was made possible with support from the Czech-German Fund for the Future.

The book series will be presented in the Jewish Museum's Auditorium at the Maisel Synagogue on 2 May – with the authors in attendance.

MUSEUM NEWS

The Jewish Museum in Prague and the Terezín Initiative paid tribute to the memory of the Bohemian and Moravian Jews from the Terezín Family Camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau who were murdered in March 1944

In total, 3,792 Jews from Bohemia and Moravia perished in the gas chambers of Auschwitz-Birkenau on the night of 8-9 March 1944 – the largest single murder of Czechoslovak citizens during the Second World War.

On the morning of 8 March 2016, a memorial ceremony – organized by the Terezín Initiative – was held at the Pinkas Synagogue Memorial to the Victims of the Shoah from Bohemia and Moravia. The synagogue then opened its doors free of charge, and guided tours were held during the day.

As part of the commemorations, there was a screening of the premiere of the documentary film *Bojovníci od Sokolova* [Fighters from Sokolovo, directed and written by Oliver Malina-Morgenstern] about a Czechoslovak unit that fought in the USSR during the Second World War. On the next day (9 March), another discussion from the monthly series “Our Twentieth Century” was held in the Maisel Synagogue, at which Miluška Havlůjová shared her recollections.



Jewish Museum director Leo Pavlát



Karol Sidon, Chief Rabbi of the Czech Republic

Jewish Museum visitor numbers on the rise

At the beginning of 2016, the Czech National Information and Consulting Centre for Culture (NIPOS) produced a publication entitled Museums of the Czech Republic in 2012–2014 in the Light of Statistics.

On the basis of an assessment of the statistical results relating to Czech museums and galleries, the Jewish Museum in Prague has emerged as one of the most visited Czech museums with respect abroad and with prominence in terms of its share of foreign visitors, volume of work capacity and extent of activities. It boasts an important and large library, which is open to the public and is comparable to the large libraries of state-run museums. Moreover, the Jewish Museum's library can function as a stand-alone unit, which is rare for Czech museums and galleries.

For more information, see the website of the National Information and Consulting Centre for Culture: <http://www.nipos-mk.cz/?cat=102>

Fragment of a rare, missing manuscript returned to the Jewish Museum in Prague

In January 2016, measures taken by the Israeli Police, the Police of the Czech Republic and Interpol led to the successful completion of the process of repatriating a fragment of a rare Hebrew manuscript – the Pinkas of the Kyjov/Gaya Jewish Community, dating from 1654–1854, which had been stolen from the Archives of the Jewish Museum in Prague on 30 January 2007. As a result of co-operation with the Czech Embassy in Israel, the rare fragment was returned to the Czech Republic on 22 January 2016, when it was handed over in person to the Jewish Museum director, Leo Pavlát, by the Czech Ambassador to the State of Israel, Brigadier General Ivo Schwarz.





Recording interviews with Shoah survivors and witnesses

Twelve testimonies were added to the Jewish Museum's Oral History Collection in the first three months of 2016. Through our co-operation with the journalist and writer Adam Drda, we have also acquired another 17 interviews with Shoah survivors and witnesses from the former Czechoslovakia, which were recorded in Israel at the end of last year. In addition to the recordings, Adam Drda has also provided us with unique material in the form of photographs and documents from the family archives of Shoah survivors and witnesses.

For more on the interviews with Shoah survivors and witnesses, see: <http://www.jewishmuseum.cz/en/collection-research/collections-funds/oral-history-collection/>

Icy Prague

At the end of January, the Jewish Museum once again took part in the annual charity event Icy Prague. This event gives children the opportunity to become acquainted with the past and present of the Czech capital, with its heritage sites and interesting things to see – which they have often only heard about or seen in pictures. This year's event – the 16th annual – was held on 29–31 January and was free of charge for children.

For more information (in Czech), see www.ledovapraha.cz

Gala concert in the Spanish Synagogue

In association with the Prague Jewish Community and the Czech Foundation for Holocaust Victims (NFOH), the Jewish Museum hosted its annual gala concert at the Spanish Synagogue in Prague to mark International Holocaust Remembrance Day on 27 January 2016. The opening speeches were given by Jan Munk (chairman of the Prague Jewish Community) and Leo Pavlát (director of the Jewish Museum in Prague). The concert featured works by Dmitri Shostakovich, Felix Mendelssohn and Sylvie Bodorová as performed by Ivan Kusnjer (baritone) and the Quattro Chamber Orchestra under the baton of Marek Štilec.



Gala concert in the Spanish Synagogue

Gloria Musaealis

The Jewish Museum in Prague is taking part this year in the Gloria Musaealis, a national competition for museums in the Czech Republic. It has entered the Maisel Synagogue revitalization project for the Museum Achievement of the Year category. The main categories are Museum Exhibition of the Year, Museum Publication of the Year and Museum Achievement of the Year. The Czech Committee of ICOM (International Council of Museums) Award is a separate category. The event also includes a Museum of the Year competition based on the assessments of visitors to museums and galleries in the Czech Republic.

The competition results are announced every year on International Museum Day (18 May).

For more information (in Czech), see:

<http://www.cz-museums.cz/gloria-musaealis/prihlasene-projekty/muzejni-pocin-roku>

Continued successful co-operation with the the Foundation for Holocaust Victims

The Jewish Museum in Prague is continuing its long-term co-operation with the Czech Foundation for Holocaust Victims (NFOH). In total, seven various grant projects were approved for the Commemoration, Renewal and Future programmes in 2016.

For more on the Foundation for Holocaust Victims, see:

<http://www.fondholocaust.cz/en>



EHRI Document blog

An online document blog has been created within the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI; www.ehri-project.eu), in which a number of institutions involved in the EHRI project present a set of selected archive documents from their collections. The blog is intended for the general public and experts alike – for all those who are interested in issues relating to the Holocaust. In addition to providing basic information, it also focuses on experiments with data visualization, for example with regard to places or terms relating to the documents being presented.

Memorandum of co-operation to enhance security at Jewish institutions in the Czech Republic

On 5 April 2016 a memorandum of co-operation was signed at the Czech Ministry of the Interior to enhance security at Jewish institutions, which are considered “soft targets”. The signatories were the Interior Ministry, the Police Presidium, Prague City Hall, the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic, the Jewish Museum in Prague and Prague’s Chabad Centre.

Soft targets are understood to be places with large concentrations of people (e.g., schools, hospitals, shopping centres, cultural centres, sports venues, transport hubs, public transport routes, tourist sites, etc.) which lack proper security and are therefore at risk of a terrorist attack.

The memorandum was initiated by the Ministry of the Interior in reaction to the worsening security situation in the world. As part of the agreement, the post of Security Co-ordinator of Jewish Sites has been created at the Federation of Jewish Communities for the purpose of representing the Jewish organizations that have signed the memorandum in contacts with the government. In addition, a Co-ordination Centre for Soft Targets will be created at the Ministry of the Interior as a platform for operative and strategic co-ordination and co-operation of the signatory organizations. This working group will be led by the Department of Security Policy and Crime Prevention at the Ministry of the Interior. In addition to the Security Co-ordinator of Jewish Sites, the group will also involve security service representatives, Prague City Hall representatives and others that may be brought into the negotiations.

According to the Ministry of the Interior, the memorandum is unique on a European scale and should become a pilot project for the protection of other soft targets in the Czech Republic.



PROMINENT VISITS

On 25 February the Jewish Museum was visited by Joel Hasson, Deputy Speaker of the Israeli Knesset.



On 11 March 2016 the Jewish Museum was visited by Ivana Dubá, a patron of the Museum's Society of Friends.



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