



ŽIDOVSKÉ MUZEUM V PRAZE המוזיאון היהודי בפראג

Newsletter

4 2017

EXHIBITIONS

Through the Labyrinth of Normalization: The Jewish Community as a Mirror for the Majority Society

Currently on display at the Robert Guttmann Gallery (until 28 January 2018) is an exhibition that was produced by the Jewish Museum in Prague in co-operation with the Security Services Archive and the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes for the 40th anniversary of the founding of Charter 77.

The exhibition focuses on concrete cases of Czechoslovak secret police operations against Jewish communities, the dilemmas faced by community members, and the involvement of several members in dissident and other activities outside the official scope of Jewish communities. Brought together from a number of archives, the majority of the unique documents and photographs are being exhibited for the very first time.

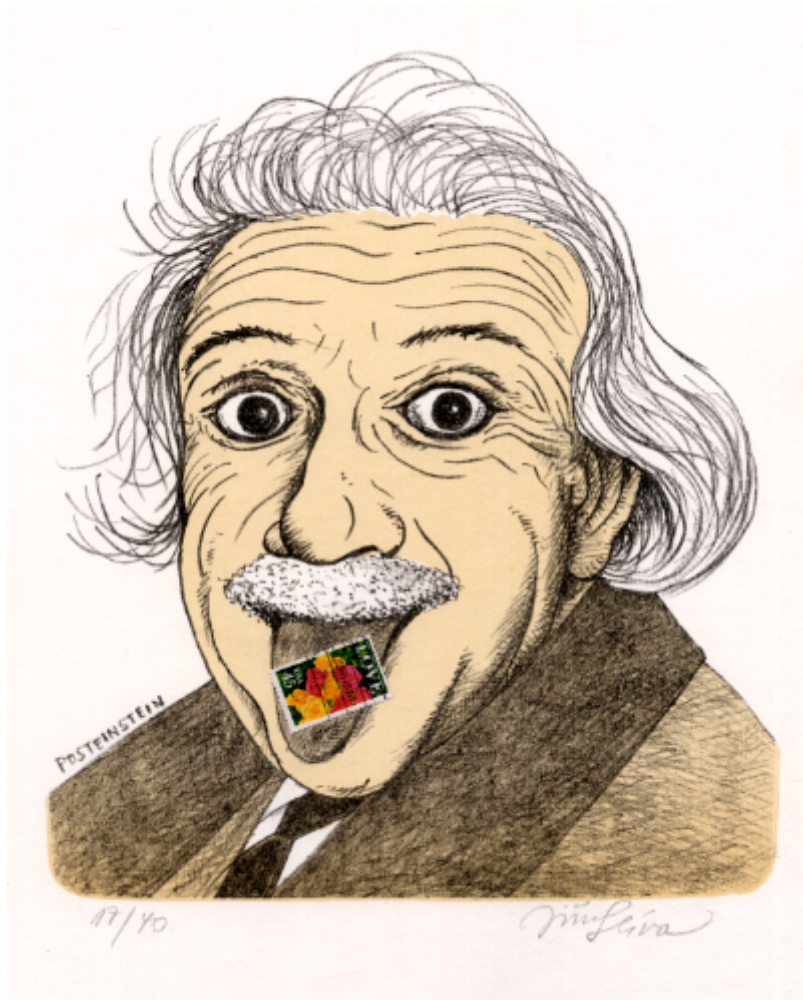
The exhibition is being held with the support of the State Cultural Fund of the Czech Republic and the City of Prague.

A Czech and English-language catalogue was written for the exhibition by the curator Martin Šmok. The catalogue can be purchased at the Jewish Museum's e-shop at <http://www.jewishmuseum.cz/e-shop/publikace/labyrintem-normalizace/> or at the Robert Guttmann Gallery (address: U Staré školy 3, Prague 1). Basic entry price to the gallery: CZK 40.



Under preparation: “My Cup of Kafka... ” Drawings, Prints and Paintings by Jiří Slíva

An exhibition of works by the graphic artist and illustrator Jiří Slíva will be held at the Jewish Museum's gallery for his 71st birthday. It will feature a number of drawings, colour lithographs, etchings, pastels and oil paintings on the artist's favourite themes – Franz Kafka, Sigmund Freud, the Golem, Jewish customs/symbols, and biblical motifs – as well as other material inspired by the works of Jewish writers. Jiří Slíva has been preoccupied with Jewish humour and illustrating the works of Franz Kafka for many years. In December 2017, the Franz Kafka Publishing House published *My Cup of Kafka*, a book featuring Slíva's main artworks inspired by the great writer. A selection of these works will be on display at the exhibition. Also on view will be a range of Slíva's illustrations from books by the Czech-Israeli writer Ruth Bondy, which are dedicated to the language, names and special idioms of Czech Jews. Slíva's exhibited work also includes depictions of café society and scenes from everyday life, which are marked by absurd humour and a love of jazz, wine and dancing. The exhibition runs from 22 February 2018.



Posteinstein, colour lithograph, 2016 © Jiří Slíva

Talent is Desire: Friedl Dicker-Brandeis and the Art Teaching Experiment

The twentieth century is sometimes called a 'century of women'. Not because, in an era of two world wars, genocides and totalitarian regimes, women had the opportunity to play a more significant role in the shaping of the 'grand narrative' of history. Rather, their marginalized intellectual and creative potential represented a positive countercurrent against the destructive force of political and economic upheavals, and the importance of this potential became particularly apparent when official democratic structures collapsed and social certainties were lost. Despite the (albeit meager) recognition of their good work, most of these heroines faded back into oblivion. The Vienna-born Friedl Dicker (whose Czechoslovak passport gave her name as Bedřiška Brandejsová following her marriage in 1936) would have suffered the same fate were it not for the preservation of nearly 4,500 children's war-time drawings – the fruits of her tireless work as a teacher in the extreme conditions of the Nazi concentration camp known as the Terezín ghetto.

On view at the Austrian Cultural Forum in Prague until 13 April 2018, the exhibition focuses on the exceptional artistic and pedagogical legacy of this influential member of the Central European inter-war avant-garde. Despite the tragic circumstances, Friedl Dicker's teaching experiment in Terezín has continued to captivate with its scope and applicability for contemporary educational systems.

Gallery of the Austrian Cultural Forum in Prague (address: Jungmannovo

náměstí 18, Prague 1).

Open Monday–Friday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Free entry.



I have not seen a butterfly around here: Children's Drawings from the Terezín Ghetto

The Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture has prepared a new touring exhibition, entitled "I have not seen a butterfly around here: Children's Drawings from the Terezín Ghetto". The aim of this exhibition of preserved children's artworks is to draw public attention to the world of these children who were incarcerated in the Terezín Ghetto during the Second World War. The show is based on a collection of children's drawings that were made in a two-year period (1942–44) during art lessons given by the prominent artist, Friedl Dicker-Brandeis (1899-1944). It will launch in the Rome Opera House in January 2018, with His Excellency Pavel Vošalík, the Czech Ambassador to the Holy See in attendance.

The Jewish Museum's touring exhibitions are loaned out to cultural and educational institutions and attract large audiences. For more information about the range of touring exhibitions on offer, see <https://www.jewishmuseum.cz/program-a-vzdelavani/vystavy/putovni/>



Ambasciata della Repubblica Ceca
presso la Santa Sede e il Sovrano
Militare Ordine di Malta

TEATRO DELL'OPERA
DI ROMA



Margit Koretzová, 8.4.1933 – 4.10.1944

The Auschwitz Album

An exhibition of photographs from the Auschwitz Album was on display at Smålands Museum in Växjö, Sweden, between January and September 2017. The Auschwitz Album is a unique set of photographs taken by the Nazis in the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp in 1944 and was discovered by chance after the war. The copies of these photographs are kept in the collections of the Jewish Museum in Prague, which has loaned them for the exhibition in Sweden. The opening words were given by the director of Smålands Museum, Lennart Johansson. Smålands Museum received more than 15,000 visitors throughout the exhibition's duration and most of them did not miss the show. The museum also held more than 20 guided tours of the exhibition and several lectures on the topic of the Holocaust.



A photograph from the Auschwitz Album

Life in the Diaspora

An exhibition of photographs by Jindřich Buxbaum, entitled "Life in the Diaspora", was on display in the cloister of Brno's New Town Hall in October and November 2017. The photographs document key events in the lives of Jews living outside Israel. Among the special events depicted are circumcisions, Shabbat celebrations, religion lessons, bar mitzvahs, Purim and Hanukkah celebrations, weddings and funerals. The genocide of European Jews in the 1940s is recalled by photographs from Auschwitz and several portraits of Shoah survivors. At the launch of the exhibition there was a performance by the musicians Hana and Petr Ulrych, and opening remarks were made by the curator Jindřich Štreit. The exhibition was held in collaboration with the Brno office of the Jewish Museum in Prague, the Jewish Community of Brno and the Statutory City of Brno. A research workshop on Jewish traditions and customs was held at the exhibition venue for elementary and secondary school pupils between 30 October and 3 November 2017.



A SELECTION OF CULTURAL EVENTS AND LECTURES IN PRAGUE

Evening programmes in the Maisel Synagogue

In October 2017, the Maisel Synagogue hosted two outstanding discussions for the Festival of Democracy, a programme accompanying the Forum 2000 Conference. The speakers at the first discussion, entitled “Religion and the Crisis of Democracy”, were Mona Siddiqui (Professor of Islamic and Interreligious Studies at the University of Edinburgh), Akeel Bilgrami (Professor of Philosophy at Columbia University) and Liav Orgad (a leading expert on European law and global migration and Head of the Research Group 'International Citizenship Law' at WZB Berlin Social Science Center). This discussion was moderated by Professor Pavel Hošek (Protestant Theological Faculty of Charles University, Prague). The second discussion was held two days later and focused on the future of Israeli democracy. It was attended by the Israeli political scientist Shlomo Avineri (Hebrew University, Jerusalem) and Amichai Magen (Head of the MA Program in Diplomacy & Conflict Studies at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya, Israel). The moderator was the journalist and Czech Radio commentator Jan Fingerland.



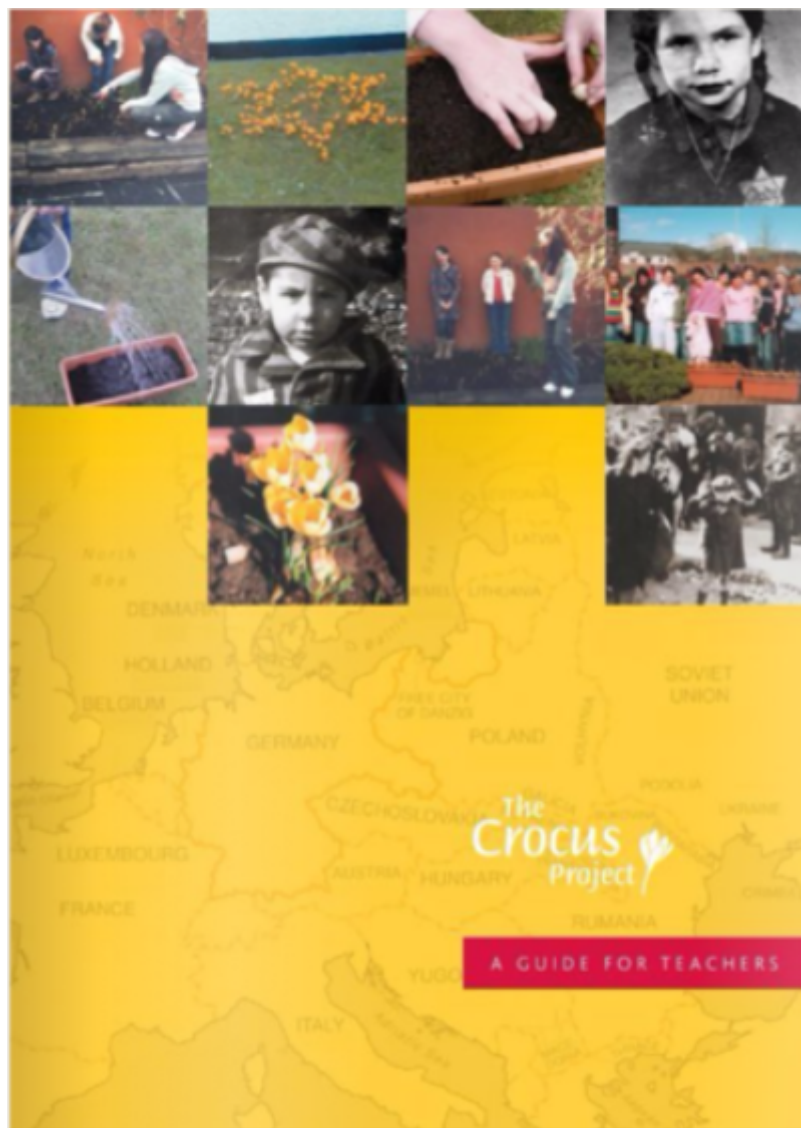
OTHER NEWS FROM THE MUSEUM

Support for apprentice education

For the third year running, the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture is carrying out a project in support of apprentice education. Its aim is to promote the effective prevention of socially dangerous phenomena, such as extremism, antisemitism and racism, as well as to prevent the occurrence of risk behaviour in society. This year, a methodology for teaching about antisemitism was introduced and a new workshop for students with focus on the current problem of antisemitism in the Czech Republic. As part of the project, 814 students of apprentice schools visited our seminars. The project is being carried out with support from Prague City Hall.

Crocus Project

In 2017, an unprecedented amount of schools from throughout the Czech Republic took part in the Crocus Project, an initiative by the Holocaust Education Trust Ireland (HETI) in association with the Jewish Museum in Prague. HETI provides free yellow crocus bulbs for school pupils to plant in memory of the 1.5 million Jewish children who perished in the Shoah and thousands of other children who were victims of Nazi atrocities. In ideal conditions, the crocuses will bloom around the end of January about the time of the International Holocaust Memorial Day (27 January). The Prague and Brno offices of the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture distributed crocus seedlings to 488 schools in September and October.



The Faces of Victims of the Shoah

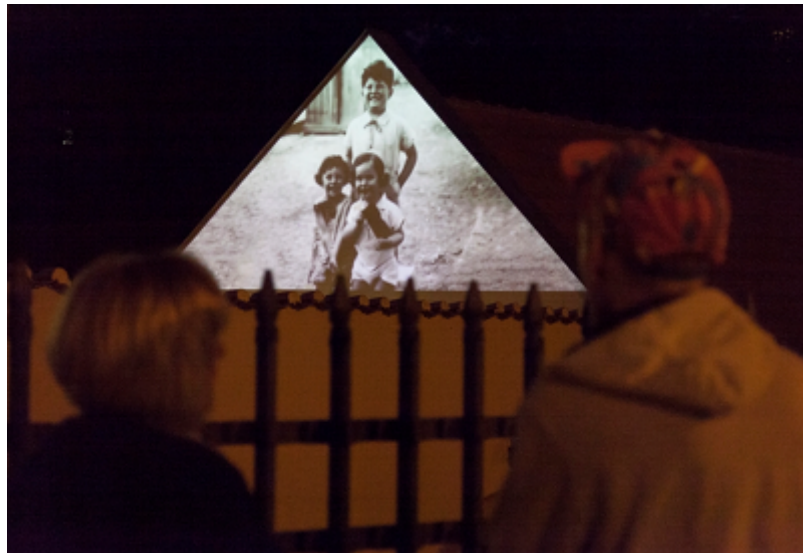
As of 16 October 2017, people walking along Široká Street from the Charles University Philosophy Faculty in the evening hours can view a projection of photographs onto the gable wall of the mikveh building on the grounds of the Pinkas Synagogue. The photographs show victims of Nazi persecution from the Czech lands. This projection is part of the ongoing modernization of the permanent exhibition in the Pinkas Synagogue memorial, which is a symbolic gravestone for the more than 78,000 Jewish victims from Bohemia and Moravia.

The aim of this project is to give a face to at least some of the victims whose names are written on the walls inside the Pinkas Synagogue. Through the help of the general public and, above all, Shoah survivors and witnesses, the Jewish Museum in Prague has acquired photographs of family members, friends and acquaintances who perished or were murdered in the ghettos, concentration camps and death camps.

The first projection of photographs onto the gable wall of the mikveh building on the Pinkas Synagogue grounds began at 7 p.m. on 16 October. The projection takes place every evening, apart from Fridays and Jewish holidays. It lasts 2.5 hours in the winter months, but will be shortened to 45 minutes in the summer (due to later sunset times).

Use of the outdoor space as part of the exhibition area is central to the museum's new approach to the exhibition in the Pinkas Synagogue, which will open to visitors in 2018. There will be material on display in the front courtyard of the synagogue and in Pinkas Street. Digital elements will also be incorporated into the new exhibition, which will provide access to the museum's database of Shoah victims and give additional information. Visitors will be able to access exhibit-related information at an interactive kiosk or via their own mobile devices.

The project for the revitalization of the Pinkas Synagogue has been supported by the Foundation for Holocaust Victims.



Ruth Bondy passes away

On 15 November 2017 we received the sad news of the death of the Czech-born Israeli journalist, author and translator, Ruth Bondy. It was all the more sad for the Jewish Museum as Ruth was a frequent visitor to our library and we had the good fortune of being able to fulfil her wishes and requests concerning her literary work. Ruth's approach was formal at the outset but our relations became closer and closer over time. We always admired the breadth of her knowledge, her vitality, her interest, and her concise sense of humour. Ruth's translation work demonstrated how important it was for her that high-quality Czech literature should be available to readers in Israel. Ruth was always pleased to hear about the possibility of translating a Czech author's work, and we were delighted to be able to contribute in any way we could. In conversations with Ruth, she also shared details of her private life. She loved swimming, an activity with which she started the day for many years. We will remember her as a petite but strong woman who experienced the Shoah at first hand. She will also be remembered for the many books she wrote. It is difficult to come to terms with the fact that she will no longer be visiting us.



Ruth Bondy in a still from the Czech Television programme *Na plovárně* (“At the Swimming Pool”)

Restoration of a sandstone tomb in the Old Jewish Cemetery

In 2017, the Foundation for Holocaust Victims supported a project for the restoration of the tomb of Joseph Solomon Delmedigo, dating from 1655, in Prague’s Old Jewish Cemetery. On account of its significance and the quality of its workmanship, this tomb is one of the most important in the cemetery. In addition, it is the only tomb there that is made of sandstone. In the past, many visitors have inquired about its state of repair. The aim of the restoration work was not only to protect the tomb and to prevent further deterioration, but also to ensure that it remains a dignified monument and to restore this area of the cemetery to its former state.



Support for the recording of interviews with Shoah survivors

In 2017 the Jewish Museum in Prague received another financial donation from Rob Fried, who for many years has been funding the project “From Generation To...”. This project focuses on the recording of interviews with Shoah survivors. We would like to extend our thanks for his generous support.

Provenance and restitution of Jewish assets still relevant

The question of confiscated Jewish assets, research into the provenance of collections, and restitution remain an integral part of academic research across European cultural institutions. International conferences are held each year for the sharing of knowledge and experience related to this field. In 2017, Michal Bušek (a member of the Jewish Museum's library staff) gave presentations on this topic at three conferences. The first of these was held in Paris in March and was organized by *École nationale supérieure des sciences de l'information et des bibliothèques* (National Superior School of Information Science and Libraries). The main topic was the fate of institutional and private libraries during the Second World War with focus on tracing and returning them to their place of origin. For many years, this matter was overshadowed by the question of what happened to looted artefacts, but not for the Jewish Museum in Prague. Michal Bušek's presentation focused on the history of the Jewish Museum's library collection and on its long-term research into the provenance of its books. The second conference was held in Vienna in May and was organized by *Universitätsbibliothek Universität Wien* (Vienna University Library). Its focus was on the collections of cultural institutions. Bušek's presentation at this meeting dealt mainly with the history of the Jewish Museum's book collection and the transfers of library files in 1940-1950. The third conference was held in November at the Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture at Leipzig University, and it focused on the issue of restitution. At this meeting Bušek gave a paper on the restitution of Jewish property in post-war Czechoslovakia, changes after the Communist coup of 1948, and developments after the Velvet Revolution of 1989. He talked about the most important laws on the return of confiscated Jewish assets and about the Jewish Museum's restitution policy.



History of Jewish settlement

On 11 October 2017, two of the Jewish Museum's experts in Jewish studies, Pavel Kocman and Daniel Polakovič, gave a presentation at the 36th international conference of the Prague City Archives ("The City and its Walls"), which was held at the Clam-Gallas Palace in Prague. The topic under discussion was the relationship of the Jewish population in the Bohemian lands to the city walls in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period. On 20 October 2017, Daniel Polakovič gave a paper, entitled "Old Jewish Cemeteries in Prostějov", at the international conference "Reframing Jewish Life: Moravian

Jewry at the Turn of the 19th and the 20th Centuries”, which was held for the Days of Jewish Culture festival in Olomouc. Alexandr Putík and Daniel Polakovič attended the international conference “The Phenomenon of Rural Jews”. Their presentations were entitled “David Gans and the Beginnings of Jewish Rural Settlement in the Mělník District” and “The Jewry of Bohemia – Origin and Structure”. This conference was held on 22–23 November 2017 and was organized by the Society of Friends of the Dr. Simon Adler Museum in Sušice.



Renovation work in the annex of the Smíchov Synagogue

In November 2017, renovation work was carried out on the shop and adjoining areas in the Functionalist-style annex of the Smíchov Synagogue in Stroupežnického Street, Prague. The aim of the renovation was to resolve the long-term problem of rising damp in this part of the building, which has caused damage to the brickwork and loose plaster with increased salinity. Prior to work on the project documentation, a technical survey was completed in September 2016 and proposals were made for optimal structural remediation and waterproofing work – with use made of technology that had been successfully applied during the renovation of the Maisel Synagogue (with the approval of the heritage protection authority). Pressure grouting was applied to the impacted masonry walls in order to prevent capillary action, and moisture-resistant plaster was then used. In addition, the air-conditioning system was altered and a heating system was installed in the rooms with the aim of providing sufficient ventilation and heat distribution. The total renovation costs, including project preparation and engineering costs, amounted to CZK 590,000 (including VAT). As of December 2017, the renovated shop is being sub-let to Chanut s.r.o., which sells gifts and souvenirs – mainly minerals and semi-precious stones, but also figurines, pendants, amulets, porcelain/ceramic vases, jewellery, aroma lamps and tea sets, etc. The operator of the store was selected from 18 applicants on the basis of who submitted the best proposal and terms for running the retail area. We wish the store operator every success and hope that the renovated space will remain fit for purpose for a long time to come.



New museum tickets

On 1 December 2017, the Jewish Museum in Prague introduced new tickets for its exhibitions. The new tickets are colourful and are thermal printed. For a one-year period, an ad for the museum's current business partner, Hotel King David, is featured at the bottom of the front of each ticket. We will be negotiating with other potential partners who would like to place their ads on our tickets.



NEW PUBLICATIONS

Judaica Bohemiae 52/2

A new issue of the journal *Judaica Bohemiae* (Vol. 52/2017, 2) came out at the end of December 2017. The opening study, by Pavel Sládek, provides new insights into one of the most important figures in 16th-century rabbinic culture, Rabbi Judah Lev ben Bezalel (the Maharal). On the basis of hitherto neglected

sources, it formulates hypotheses in an attempt to bridge the gaps in our knowledge of the Maharal's views and of how he was perceived by his contemporaries. In the following study, Iveta Cermanová deals with the genesis, reception and impact of the so-called Ramschak Chronicle – a notorious forgery on the history of the Jews of Bohemia, dating from the early 1820s. Drawing on a crucial assessment of the chronicle by Salomon Hugo Lieben, it presents new findings about the forgery, particularly with regard to the history of how it was received and to its author's biographical details and motivation. The last of the main studies, by Martha Stellmacher, is titled *In Search of the Original Tunes: The 'Collection of Old Prague Synagogue Chants' by Siegmund Schul and Salomon Lieben in 1935–1941*. It features a project involving the transcription and analysis of old Prague synagogue chants that was carried out before the Shoah. Reflecting on the broader context of Jewish musicology from this period, it deals with the genesis, methods and objectives of this project on the basis of a previously unpublished collection of Old Prague Synagogue Chants, as well as other archival sources and eye-witness interviews.

In the 'Reports' section, Agnes Kelemen provides information about the conference "New Approaches to the History of the Jews under Communism", which was held in Prague in May 2017 by the Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Sciences. The final section of the journal contains reviews of the following books: *K dějinám Židů v českých zemích* [On the History of the Jews in the Bohemian Lands] by Lenka Matušíková (reviewed by A. Putík), *Arnošt Frischer and the Jewish Politics of Early 20th-Century Europe* by Jan Láníček (reviewed by Rebekah Klein-Pejšová), *Budování státu bez antisemitismu? Násilí, diskurz loajality a vznik Československa* [Building a State without Antisemitism? Violence, Discourse of Loyalty, and the Making of Czechoslovakia] by Miloslav Szabó and Michal Frankl (reviewed by Frank Hadler), *Die Judenverfolgung im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren. Lokale Initiativen, zentrale Entscheidungen, jüdische Antworten 1939–1945* by Wolf Gruner (reviewed by Vojtěch Blodig), *Nationale Helden und jüdische Opfer. Tschechische Repräsentationen des Holocaust* by Peter Hallama (Blanka Soukupová) and *Friedrich Feigl: 1884–1965*, edited by Nicholas Sawicky (reviewed by Mahulena Nešlehová).

Published since 1965 by the Jewish Museum in Prague, *Judaica Bohemiae* focuses on Jewish history and culture in Bohemia, Moravia and the wider Central European area (the territory of the former Habsburg Monarchy). The journal is indexed and abstracted in the Arts and Humanities Citation Index (Web of Science), Scopus, and the European Reference Index for the Humanities (ERIH PLUS). The texts are published in English and German.

JUDAICA BOHEMIAE LII-2



JEWISH MUSEUM IN PRAGUE 2017

The Jews in Bohemia, Vol. 6

The proceedings of the 6th seminar on the history of the Jews in Bohemia was published at the end of 2017. The seminar was held in Kadaň in October 2017 and organized by the Jewish Museum in Prague in association with the State Regional Archive Litoměřice and the Kadaň-based State District Archive Chomutov. As with the previous seminars (held in Liberec in 2006, Nýrsko in 2008, Tachov in 2010, Trutnov in 2012, Teplice in 2014), the focus was primarily on modern-day issues concerning the history of the Jews in the Czech border regions. The main attention of the seminar was centred on the Holocaust period and its consequences for the life of Jewish communities and individuals. Many of the participants continued to deal with assessments of archival sources relating to Jewish history that are kept in Czech archives. This topic was extended to include material illustrating the character and importance of archival and epigraphical Hebrew sources. The proceedings also include an essay on Jewish sigillography (the study of seals attached to documents as a source of historical information), which makes a significant contribution to the field. This range of issues, however, pushes the seminar's time frame further into the past.

Židé v Čechách

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Sborník příspěvků ze semináře konaného v říjnu 2016 v Kadani

PROMINENT VISITS

October

On 8 October 2017, the Jewish Museum was visited by sponsors of the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, Elvira Skoblo and her son Samuel.

On 9 October 2017, the Jewish Museum was visited by Nicola Mendelsohn (Facebook's Vice-President for Europe, the Middle East and Africa) and her team.



Lady Mendelsohn and colleagues

On 20 October 2017, the Jewish Museum was visited by Dr. Robert A. Weinberg (Professor of Biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and a colleague with their wives.



November

On 20 November 2017, the Jewish Museum was visited by the Israeli ice hockey team.



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www.jewishmuseum.cz

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For payment in USD: 1042639, IBAN: CZ22 6200 0001 0700 1042 6398 SWIFT CODE: COBACZPXXXX

Editor: Kateřina Honskusová

Photographs: JMP