

Newsletter

4 2013

EXHIBITIONS AT THE ROBERT GUTTMANN GALLERY

Truth and Lies: Filming in the Ghetto Terezín, 1942–1945

The exhibition *Truth and Lies: Filming in the Ghetto Terezín, 1942–1945* has been on view at the museum's gallery since 29 August 2013. It was prepared by the Jewish Museum in Prague in collaboration with the National Film Archive in Prague.

This show charts the history behind the making of propaganda films about the Terezín ghetto on the basis of the latest findings. Visitors to the exhibition have an opportunity to see, for the first time, a montage of fragments from the 1942 film that were concealed in the ghetto by prisoners and were later identified at the National Film Archive in 2004. Previously unpublished photographs that were taken in secret during the filming in 1944 and 1945 are also on view, as well as documentary material on the filming in 1942. The exhibition also shows both of the preserved fragments of the second film made at Terezín.

The exhibition is curated by Eva Strusková (National Film Archive) and Jana Šplíchalová (Jewish Museum in Prague). By the end of 2013 it was seen by almost



Movie clapper used in the Terezín film, 1942 © National Film Archives

9,000 visitors. As a result of the great public interest we have decided to extend the exhibition until 30 March 2014.

A DVD has been released for the exhibition (in Czech, English and German). In addition to expert commentaries, this contains selected film clips, an edition of the most important documents and pictures, as well as a chronology of events which also details the fate of the films and their fragments after 1945.

The exhibition project was made possible with the kind support of the Dutch Jewish Humanitarian Fund, the City of Prague, the Czech-German Future Fund, the Foundation for Holocaust Victims (NFOH) and the Jewish Museum in Prague Foundation.

Guttmann Gallery, U Staré školy 3, Prague 1,
Open daily except for Saturdays and Jewish holidays, 9 a.m. – 4.30 p.m.

Under preparation:

Acquisitions, 1994–2014. Acquisitions made by the Jewish Museum in Prague after regaining its independence until the present

(23 April – 3 August 2014)

To mark the 20th anniversary of the museum's regaining its independence, we are preparing a cross-sectional exhibition that seeks to highlight the basic aspects of our acquisition activity and to reinvigorate debate not only about this issue but also about questions that are being intensively pursued in this area (such as provenance research).

Refugees *(27 August 2014 – January 2015)*

Marking the 100th anniversary of the Great War, this exhibition focuses on a little known topic in the Czech lands – refugees from the First World War. In addition to exploring the fate of Jewish refugees in Bohemia and Moravia, it will deal with the broader context of refugees and refugee policy within the entire Habsburg Monarchy.

REQUEST FOR HELP IN IDENTIFYING PEOPLE

We would like to ask visitors to help us identify people in the photos or film footage that are on view at the exhibition *Truth and Lies: Filming in the Ghetto Terezín, 1942–1945*.

If you think you have recognized yourself or one of your family or friends in any of the photos or film footage, or if you can provide more details, please contact us at terezinfilm@jewishmuseum.cz or at the address: Jewish Museum in Prague, U Staré školy 1, 110 00 Prague 1. Your help will be much appreciated.

NEWS FROM OUR DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE

The Prague and Brno offices of our Department for Education and Culture hosted a range of interesting events in the last quarter of 2013. The successful lecture series **"Judaism and Modern Society"** came to an end in December at the Prague office. In the last three lectures, discussions were held between Rabbi David Peter, political scientist Marek Čejka and moderator Petr Mandl (in the lecture "Judaism and the State of Israel"), Jewish education specialist Gafna Váňová, new media specialist Miloš Čermák and moderator Pavel Kuča (in the lecture "Judaism and the New Media") and Rabbi Karol Efraim Sidon, Hebraist Jan Zouplna and moderator Pavel Hošek (in the lecture "Judaism and Secularism"). Each lecture was followed by a Q&A session.

The opening of the exhibition **It Can't Happen Here** was also held in the Prague office on 17 October. This featured a selection of the most interesting artworks from the Terezín Memorial's 15th annual art competition for 2011, as well as a screening of Emir



The exhibition opening on 12 December was launched by a lecture given by its co-curator Blanka Rozkošná

Kusturica's short student film from 1977, *Guernica*. The Prague office also hosted a show entitled **Destroyed Jewish Monuments in Northern Bohemia**, which opened on 12 December. This is an exhibition of previously unpublished photographs that highlights the destruction and liquidation of Jewish monuments.

On 19 October 2013 the Brno office of our Department for Education and Culture in collaboration with the Brno Jewish Community became involved in the **Micro-city** project organized by the Museum of Roma Culture. The aim of this project is to bring people's attention to the places connected with the history of the Cejl district of Brno, which was known for its multi-ethnic character at the beginning of the 20th century. Those taking part had the opportunity to see other sites in the area, to visit the Brno Synagogue Agudas Achim and to attend a reading of excerpts from Alrnošt Goldflam's book *Father and His Son* (read by Jiří Hauser, an actor with the Brno theatre *Husa na provázku* (Goose on a String)).

The last guided tour of Agudas Achim Synagogue took place ten days later, prior to its planned reconstruction in 2014-15. The tour was led by the instructor Kristýna Kubínová and was followed by a lecture ("The Synagogue in the Life of the Jews") on the history of synagogues and their role in the past and present life of Jewish communities.

On 10 December the Brno office was visited by Milan Hein, the director of Theatre Ungelt. In an interesting Q&A session, which was led by Erika Bezdíčková, Hein reminisced about his childhood and the beginnings of his theatre, and then discussed his theatre's current and future repertoire and the actors who work for the theatre.



Milan Hein

THE LIBRARIAN OF AUSCHWITZ

On 7 October the book *La bibliotecaria de Auschwitz* (The Librarian of Auschwitz) by the Spanish author Antonio G. Iturbe was presented by the Jewish Museum, the Cervantes Institute in Prague and the Akropolis Publishing House. Iturbe and Dita Kraus (née Polachová) whose real life story was the inspiration for the novel.

Something unusual occurred when two transports of prisoners from Terezín arrived at the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp on 8 September 1943 – no selection was carried out and the families were not separated or housed in separate sections. Through the literary story inspired by the reminiscences of the now 84-year-old Dita, those present at the book presentation were reminded of the history of the so-called Terezín Family Camp and, above all, the fate of the children living in Block 31 under the supervision of Freddy Hirsch.

The novel was presented by the Czech translator Štěpán Zajac and the publisher Filip Tomáš, and excerpts from the book were read by the actress Zdena Hadrboľcová. Drawings made by Dita as a child in the Terezín ghetto were also shown at the event.



CINEGOGUE 2013: THE STRONG MAN

This year's music-film series CINEGOGUE presented one of the the most important films of the late silent era – the 1929 dark thriller *The Strong Man*. The film was shown in the Spanish Synagogue on 15 October 2013 with live music performed by the Polish nu-jazz band Pink Freud.

CINEGOGA is a series that combines silent film with live music performances in the unique architectural space of the Spanish Synagogue. For its fifth year in 2013, the Jewish Museum in Prague joined with the Polish Institute in Prague to present a crime thriller loosely based on the novel of the same name by Stanisław Przybyszewski, a leading figure of the Polish modernist movement. While this film version came out in the late 1920s, it perhaps even surpasses in power the famous film noirs of the 1940s.



Still from the film
© Filмотека narodowa, Warsaw

The main character is a talentless journalist named Henryk Bielecki who yearns for literary stardom and material wealth. His desire for money and fame is so overpowering that he is willing to do anything, even commit crime. He kills his friend, the gifted writer Jerzy Górski, by a morphine overdose. Bielecki convinces him that his new manuscript is mediocre at best. Górski is overcome with doubt about the quality of his work. He believes Bielecki, and his drug dependence eventually destroys him. Bielecki then takes the manuscript and publishes it under his own name, and this brings him the recognition and riches he had longed for. The turn of fate, however, and his growing unease results in tragedy.

The Strong Man was shot by Henryk Szaro (1900–1942), one of the pioneers of inter-war Polish cinema. This was his seventh film, and his last that was silent. Born Henoch Szapiro, he studied in Petrograd and Moscow, and from 1924 he worked in his native Warsaw first as a stage director then as a film director. His career was cut short by the Second World War. As a Jew, he and his entire family were interned in the Warsaw Ghetto, where he was shot dead during one of the night-time actions.

Thanks to its innovative use of camera and the casting of the renowned actor Grigori Chmara in the lead role, the film met with huge success both at home and abroad. Though lost for decades, it was rediscovered at the Royal Film Archive in Brussels in 1997, and it is one of the few surviving Polish silent films.

The film was accompanied by live music from Pink Freud, a Polish band founded in Gdansk in 1998. Led by bass guitarist Wojciech Mazolewski, the band combines jazz, electronica, rock, folk and drum'n'bass. Their first album (*Zawijasy*, released in 2000) already marked a break from convention, providing a completely new take on *yass* – a term used to define a new stream in Polish music that combines various musical styles.



Pink Freud comprises Mazolewski, Tomasz Duda (sax), Adam Milwiw Baron (trumpet, elektronics) and Rafal Klimczuk (drums). Regularly performing throughout Europe, the band combine experimental improvisation and virtuosity with a distinct sense of humour. They are also noted for providing live accompaniment to silent movies, their most successful commission being for *The Strong Man*, which had its world premiere at the Barbican Centre, London, in 2011.

The CINEGOGUE series is prepared by Michaela Sidenberg (the Jewish Museum in Prague's visual arts curator).

The project was kindly supported by the City of Prague and the Jewish Museum in Prague Foundation

Media Partners: Rádio Classic FM, Expresradio and Cinepur.

Under preparation:

13 and 14 October 2014 *The City Without Jews: Hugo Bettauer and the Republic of Utopia*

The City Without Jews is a 1924 Austrian film by the director, producer, actor and screenwriter Hans Karl Breslauer, based on the bestseller of the same name by the Austrian writer, journalist and adventurer Maximilian Hugo Bettauer.

As the film has not been preserved in its entirety, its end is only intimated on the basis of propaganda material of the period. The original soundtrack, too, has not been preserved. For the film premiere at the Spanish Synagogue, the composer Petr Wajsar will be creating a new score, which will be performed by the BERG Orchestra (under the baton of Peter Vrábel) and the HI-FI band.

A HANUKKAH MENORAH FROM THE JEWISH MUSEUM IN PRAGUE SHONE AGAIN AT THE WHITE HOUSE

On 2 December, a rare Hanukkah menorah was handed over to Steven Kashkett, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Prague. During the Hanukkah celebrations – the Jewish Festival of Lights – this unique lamp was on display at the White House, the official residence of Barack Obama, the 44th President of the United States. On the eighth/last day of Hanukkah – which fell on Thursday, 5 December – all of the candles on the lamp were lit at a special reception hosted by the President and First Lady in the presence of many guests.

For this special occasion, we selected a menorah from the Moravian town of Hrušov whose story – along with the fate of the people who donated the lamp – reflects the turbulent history of the Jewish community of Bohemia and Moravia in the first half of the twentieth century. After more than 70 years, the lights lit on this menorah express faith in the victory of good over evil, freedom over tyranny and knowledge over ignorance.

The loan of this menorah was initiated by J.E. Norman Eisen, the United States Ambassador to the Czech Republic. On the basis of an earlier request made by the First Lady Michelle Obama during a tour of the Jewish Museum, a menorah from the Moravian town of Prostějov was sent to the White House in 2009.



OURS OR FOREIGN? JEWS IN THE CZECH TWENTIETH CENTURY

The “Ours or Foreign? Jews in the Czech Twentieth Century” project, which we are carrying out in co-operation with the Terezín Initiative Institute, culminated with a final conference, **“Ours or Foreign? ‘Minorities’ and ‘Majorities’ in Education about the Czech Twentieth Century.”**

The conference was organized in collaboration with the Czech Academy of Sciences and held in Prague on 6–7 December 2013. Its aim was not only to present the results of the project but also, and above all, to promote open discussion between teachers, historians and representatives of educational or cultural-historical organizations about how to integrate ‘minorities’ into an interpretation of modern Czech history. The opening speech by the project co-ordinator Michal Frankl (Jewish Museum in Prague) was followed by a presentation of the activities of organizations dealing with the education about minorities – Antikomplex, the Museum of Roma Culture in Brno, Collegium Bohemicum, the Multicultural Centre and Centropa. After this, there were panel discussions on the role of oral history and a comparison of the various perspectives of historians and teachers. Primary and secondary school teachers later had an opportunity to try the new teaching methods that were developed within the project and to discuss the use of oral history in education, as well as the links between anti-Semitic and anti-Roma (‘anti-gypsy’) discourses.

The project “Ours or Foreign? Jews in the Czech Twentieth Century” is co-financed by the European Social Fund and the state budget of the Czech Republic as part of the Education for Competitiveness Operational Programme.

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INVESTICE DO ROZVOJE VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ

Projekt CZ.1.07/1.1.00/14.0089 Tvorba výukových materiálů a zavádění výukových programů k dějinám Židů ve 20. století je spolufinancován Evropským sociálním fondem a státním rozpočtem České republiky.

SUPPORT FOR THE JEWISH MUSEUM FROM EUROPEAN FUNDS

A project that seeks to increase the competitiveness of a specific group from the Jewish Museum’s collection department staff who are among employee groups that are disadvantaged in the labour market (due to age, maternity/paternity leave, etc. – for more information, see Newsletters 1/2012 and 1/2013) has also entered its final stage. This project has received major financial support from the European Social Fund via the Prague Adaptability operational programme and is also backed by Prague City Hall. In addition to internships at specialist workplaces in Germany and Israel, project participants attended Adobe Photoshop three-level training and website building management courses in the second half of 2013. Attention was also devoted to improving linguistic and administrative skills. Three monitoring reports on the project have been approved and an audit of the project administration and accounting was successfully completed in November 2013 by Prague City Hall.

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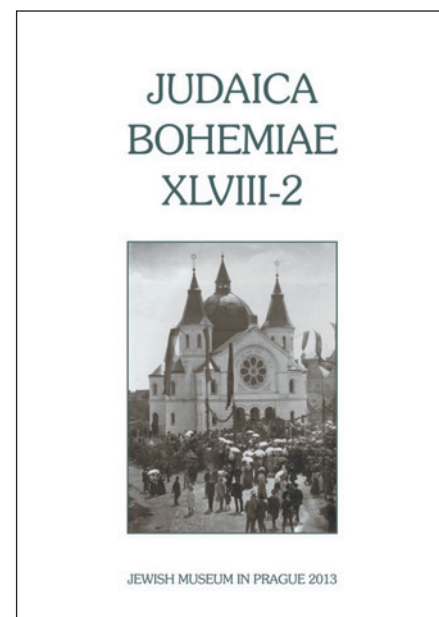
Polishing gold with agate

JUDAICA BOHEMIAE 48 (2013, 2)

A new issue of the journal *Judaica Bohemiae* came out at the end of December 2013.

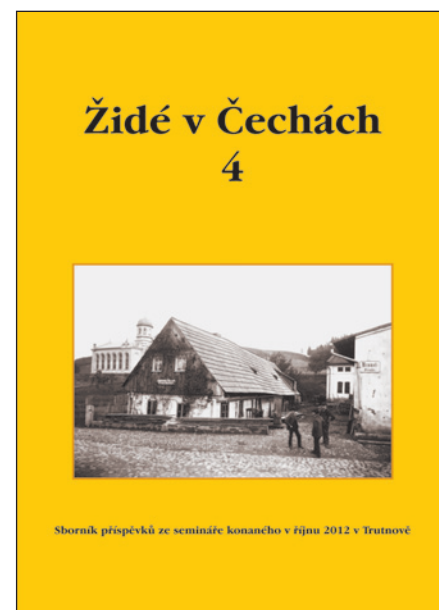
This volume includes a revelatory study by Daniel Baránek which – on the basis of previously unknown sources, particularly from the Austrian State Archives – provides a detailed explanation for the emergence of ‘emancipatory’ Jewish religious communities and for the organizational settlement of Jewish affairs in Moravia and Silesia in the latter half of the 19th century. The following text by Magdalena Sedlická deals with examples of anti-Semitism in the Czechoslovak Foreign Army in Great Britain during the Second World War. The third main study, written by Jan Kotůlek and Rolf T. Nossum, illustrates the fate of Jewish scientists from Czechoslovakia in the face of Nazi danger, with focus on the Czech Jewish mathematician Walter Fröhlich. Drawing on extensive archive materials from the UK, the Czech Republic and the USA, it describes in detail Fröhlich’s unsuccessful attempts at emigration and finding work in the UK and the USA.

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 texts are in English and German.



THE JEWS IN BOHEMIA 4

The proceedings of the 4th seminar on the history of the Jews in Bohemia was published under the title *The Jews in Bohemia 4* at the very end of the year. The seminar was held in October 2012 and organized by the Jewish Museum in Prague in association with the State District Archive in Trutnov and the Museum of Podkrkonoší in Trutnov. As with the previous seminars (2006 in Liberec, 2008 in Nýrsko and 2010 in Tachov), the focus was mainly on modern-day issues concerning the history of the Jews in the Czech border regions. The seminar papers by archivists and employees of regional museums deal with several thematic areas. As well as drawing attention to the contribution of Jews to the development of industrial enterprise and to the history of individual Jewish communities and Jewish settlements in particular regions, they also draw on a demographic perspective. Research on Jewish seals and the presentation of the results of monument documentation constitute specific issues. The fate of the Jews in the 20th century is further illustrated by portraits of several figures.



REVITALIZATION OF THE OLD JEWISH CEMETERY

In our last newsletter, we provided information about the ongoing alterations to the by now unsuitable makeshift paths in the Old Jewish Cemetery, a national cultural monument with the highest level of heritage protection. Work on the paths was completed on 12 November and the tour route was opened to visitors on the following day.

In the same period we made preparations for the renovation of surface of certain sections of the cemetery walls with the aim of removing graffiti, filling in cracks and applying an anti-graffiti coating. Due to the need for an environmentally sound

technological process, the entire project was prepared for more than a year. The project was drawn up by the architect Libor Kovář. Karin Kahancová (Central Office of the National Heritage Institute) contributed to its preparation and implementation, and consultations were also held with the Prague City Hall Heritage Protection Department. Project implementation was carried out between September and mid-December 2013 by ENERFINA, s. r. o., which had put in the best tender for the job.



Walls of the Old Jewish Cemetery before and after revitalization work

ACQUISITIONS IN 2013

The Jewish Museum in Prague made a number of significant acquisitions in 2013. In addition to purchases from private collectors, the most valuable acquisitions include an album of 33 hand-painted postcards, which were successfully auctioned. These postcards were painted by Eugen von Kahler (1882-1944) and addressed to his mother Ottilie von Kahler (née Bondy) – some were sent to her Prague address, others to her family home in Svinař near Prague. Some of the postcards have postmarks (from Bad Ischl, Eichwald and Prague) and a number contain the artist's hand-written text and signature. They were probably put together in an album by Ottilie von Kahler who, according to her family, after her son's death created a kind of memorial in the attic of Svinař Manor, where a large part of the artist's estate is kept.

Among the remarkable gifts received by the museum in 2013 was a rose gold ring from the late-19th century, adorned with a small gold six-pointed star with a pearl in the middle. This item is valuable mainly because older jewellery with a Jewish motif is very rare – most such pieces were destroyed or altered by their owners during the Second World War. Another interesting addition is a set of 183 hand-coloured glass slides with topographical and ethnographic motifs (mostly from the Middle East and Italy), a gift from the estate of Felix Zeman, who used them in geography lessons.

The museum also managed to enrich its collections by making acquisitions abroad. These include a group of items from the State of Colorado that were previously owned by the Frankl, Utitz and Bauer families in Prague, as well as artworks and books from Massachusetts that were donated by the heirs of Mary Baker-Salus, the widow of Wolfgang (Václav) Salus (1909-1953). For more information on these collections, see our next newsletter.

SEMINAR ON MODERN JEWISH HISTORY

In co-operation with the Institute for Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences, the Jewish Museum in Prague prepared a special seminar with a view to creating a platform for academic discussion on the latest research projects on the history of the Jews in the past three centuries.

Despite its emphasis on a historical perspective, this course takes a multidisciplinary approach and seeks to explore selected topics viewed from the perspectives of sociology, political science, history of religion and art history. In addition to the history of Central Europe, attention will also be drawn to the history of the Jewish population in other territories.

In the first seminar, which was held on 6 November, Michal Frankl presented a research project on Czech and Slovak anti-Semitism in the period around 1918, on which he is working with Miloslav Szabó. This project is supported by the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic. On 4 December, participants had the opportunity to discuss a research project of the historian Ines Koeltzsch (Masaryk Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences), which deals with the history of rural Jews and their migration to cities in Central Europe.

Under preparation:

5 February 2014

The Jewish Community in Post-war Greece: Between Assimilation and Exclusion (Kateřina Králová, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University, Prague)

5 March 2014

Transfer of Goods – Transfer of Culture: The Tobacco Monopoly and the Rise of Modern Jewish Intellectuals in the Habsburg Monarchy (Louise Hecht, Palacky University, Olomouc):

2 April 2014

‘Zigeuner’, Juden und andere ‘Fremde’. Zur Kriminalisierung von Minderheiten im langen 19. Jahrhundert [‘Gypsies, Jews and other ‘Strangers’. On the Criminalization of Minorities in the Long 19th Century] (Volker Zimmermann, Collegium Carolinum, Munich):

14 May 2014

History of Hasidism: New Trends (Marcin Wodziński, Uniwersytet Wrocławski, Poland)

4 June 2014

Post-Normal: Jewish-State Relations during the Last Decade of Czechoslovak-Communist Rule (Jacob Labendz, Washington University, St. Louis, USA):

A seminar comprising an introductory lecture and subsequent discussion will be held at the Jewish Museum's Department for Education and Culture (Maiselova 15, Prague 1) at 6 pm.

COMMEMORATION OF 8 MARCH 1944

In the second half of the year, we also focused on preparations for the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the liquidation of the Terezín Family Camp at Auschwitz–Birkenau. Although almost 4,000 men, women and children were slaughtered on the night of 8/9 March 1944 in what was the largest single murder of Czechoslovak citizens during the Second World War, this tends to have a marginal role in the Czech historical consciousness. Throughout 2014, therefore, we will be co-operating with other partners with a view to holding various events and accompanying programmes in an attempt to recall what happened from various perspectives.

Under preparation:

3 March 2014

Publicist Adam Drda will talk about the historical context and bring to attention new materials and information from his forthcoming book about the family camp. The Shoah survivor and historian Toman Brod has promised to attend. Venue: Maiselova 15, Prague 1, 6 p.m.

8 March 2014

Gala concert at the Spanish Synagogue, to be broadcast live by Czech Radio, 8 p.m.

9 March 2014

Memorial ceremony at the Pinkas Synagogue for the victims. Free access to the synagogue after the ceremony. Guided tours.

Guided tour of the exhibition Truth and Lies: Filming in the Ghetto Terezín, 1942–1945.

An evening with Shoah survivors. Discussion under the direction of the teacher and historian Petr Sokol. Five survivors of the family camp have promised to take part: D. Lieblová, E. Mehrová, Z. Růžicková, P. Werner and P. Stránský. More than a description of the history of the family camp, this event will be given over to the personal reminiscences of the survivors and to a discussion about how they feel about the commemoration or non-commemoration in post-war Czech society of the liquidation of the family camp. Venue: Maiselova 15, Prague 1, 5 p.m.

18 March 2014

In association with Gymnázium Přírodní škola (Nature School), texts by Hanus Hachenburg and other boys from the Terezin ghetto magazine Vedem will be set to music. The music will be interspersed with words about the creators of the magazine and the family camp, whose victims included Hanus Hachenburg in July 1944. Venue: Maiselova 15, Prague 1, 6 p.m.

PROMINENT VISITS

January

- Dan Brown, U.S. writer and author of the best-selling novel *The Da Vinci Code*



Dan Brown visiting the Old Jewish Cemetery

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