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Auschwitz Jewish Center

**ACTIVITY REPORT
2015-2016**



15-16



FRED SCHWARTZ (1931-2016), American businessman and philanthropist, founder of the Auschwitz Jewish Center (1995), The Auschwitz Jewish Center Foundation (1995), and The Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (2005), an international center for the study of the prevention of genocide. Mr. Schwartz was recognized for his leadership and dedication to Polish-Jewish relations, receiving the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland (1998), Poland's highest civilian medal, and the Medal "For the Promotion of Tolerance" (2004) by Fundacja Ekumeniczna "Tolerancja" in Warsaw, Poland.

Fred Schwartz also became an honorary citizen of the city of Oświęcim for his contributions to the community (2001). In addition, he was honored with the Anatoly Scharansky Freedom Award, the Distinguished Graduate Award of the Public Education Association, and the Solomon Schechter Medal from the Jewish Theological Seminary.

Mr. Schwartz was a Trustee and Executive Board Member of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, and was the Founder and Chairman of the Raoul Wallenberg Scholarships for the study of Leadership in Comparative Democracies at the Hebrew University.

Thanks to Fred's vision, dedication, and generosity, since 2000 in Oświęcim there has been a place that remembers the once thriving Jewish community and teaches about dangers of prejudice and intolerance.

May his memory be a blessing.

Dear Friends!



After major renovation projects which significantly changed our institution between 2013 and 2014 (including a complete overhaul of the Kluger House and adapting it for Café Bergson and creating the new core exhibit Oshpitzin), the time has come to refocus on our core mission: teaching about the Holocaust and universal mechanisms of discrimination, which contributed to the Holocaust, and are still present in every society.

Our projects that focus on teaching about the fall of democracy in the Weimar Republic, the Holocaust, and psychology of prejudice and hate speech, organized in the vicinity of Auschwitz, have a unique potential to gain an in-depth understanding of the place which was founded in consequence of normalization of hate speech, populism, ignorance, and exclusion of groups and individuals based on their ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation.

Unfortunately the recent political developments in our country and the world are proof that there is very little awareness and understanding of the processes which led to Auschwitz and deaths of millions of innocent victims of the Holocaust and other genocides in the 20th century. Stigmatization as well as verbal and physical violence against people in any way different from the majority society is becoming visible in Poland and many other places. These unsettling circumstances have reinforced our commitment to our educational mission as leaders in combining teaching about the Holocaust with diversity education.

Cultural projects at Café Bergson are also a vital element of our educational work, demonstrating our belief in Tikkun Olam, or repairing the world, through action towards equality, openness, art, heritage and sustainable development. With this approach we also aim to challenge the assumption of Jewish institutions dealing exclusively with Jewish topics. The recent concert of the emerging Polish star, singer Korteż, held at the synagogue in Oświęcim, connected many new visitors with the Jewish Museum. We are continuously committed to bringing residents of Oświęcim and other visitors closer to the local Jewish heritage so abruptly destroyed by the tragedy of the Shoah.

Tomaz Kuncewicz
Director

2015-16



Auschwitz Jewish Center

2015-2016 ACTIVITY REPORT

1. Abraham Fuchs's grocery store at today's Piastowska Street. Interwar period. Collection of Marilyn Pratt.

The Auschwitz Jewish Center (AJC) is the only Jewish presence in Oświęcim – the town the Germans called Auschwitz – which is primarily known as the site of the darkest tragedy of the 20th century.

In September 2000, the Auschwitz Jewish Center opened its doors to honor the former residents of Oświęcim and to teach future generations about the destruction caused by the Holocaust.

Since 2006, the Center has been affiliated with the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in New York. The Center's facilities include the Jewish Museum, the Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue, the Education Center, and Café Bergson.

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2. Outdoor exhibition element: *Stories from Oświęcim*. Photo: Andrzej Rudiak

3. Cover of the catalog *Oshpitzin*.

4. Cover of the graphic novel: *Stories from Oświęcim*, and image from the story *A Priest and a Rabbi*.

OSZPICIN
OSHPITZIN
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Jewish Museum & Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue

The past two years at the AJC were marked by many significant events. In 2015, we celebrated our 15th anniversary and in the following year we bid farewell to our founder, Fred Schwartz (1931-2016).

Our museum's core exhibit, *Oshpitzin. The Story of Jewish Oświęcim*, has been extended to the public space with the outdoor element currently installed on the square in front of our premises. The triangle shaped element features a set of seven graphic novels entitled *The Stories from Oświęcim*, based on real prewar events and a quote from the poem *The Three Oddest Words* by Nobel Prize awardee and Polish poet, Wisława Szymborska: *When I pronounce the word Future, the first syllable already belongs to the past.* The novels were designed by a well-known artist from Kraków, Tomasz Bereźnicki. In line with principles of sustainable development, the outdoor element uses natural light to light up its interior. The triangle was designed by co-authors of our core exhibit: Magdalena Poprawska (Imaginga Studio), Bartosz Haduch & Łukasz Marjański (NArchitekTURA).

Over the past two years, the AJC also developed two new publications: the catalogue of the core exhibit, *Oshpitzin. The Story of Jewish Oświęcim* (2015), featuring a selection of historical photographs and objects on display at the Jewish Museum and *Stories of Oświęcim* (2016) with aforementioned graphic novels by Tomasz Bereźnicki.



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Another innovative project focusing on the Jewish past of Oświęcim is the Oshpitzin exhibit using the Google Cultural Institute platform. Thanks to our cooperation with Google, we can now present a selection of artifacts from our collection on high resolution images made available on a website: www.ajcf.pl/online-exhibition. Soon visitors will also be able to take a 3D virtual tour of the Jewish Museum using Google Street View. The outdoor exhibit element and both

publications were generously co-sponsored by the Town of Oświęcim.

In December 2016, our U.S. Director, Shiri B. Sandler, ended her work in our New York Office. Thanks to her support, commitment, and friendship, the AJC was able to complete a number of innovative and demanding educational projects. Thank you Shiri for being with us!

5. Matisyahu concert (2015).
Photo:
M. Kapustian

6. The visit of the US presidential delegation led by Secretary of the Department of Treasury Jacob J. Lew (third from the right) at the Synagogue and the Jewish Museum.
Photo: A. Rudiak



Special Guests

Following the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz and Birkenau on January 27, 2015, the US Government delegation, headed by the Secretary of Treasury Jacob J. Lew, visited the Jewish Museum and the Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue. The delegation was followed by the Ambassador of the State of Israel, Anna Azari, in April of the same year.

In the summer of 2015, Sigmund Rolat, a Polish-born Holocaust survivor, philanthropist, and member of the AJC Board living in the USA, visited the Auschwitz Jewish Center.

Matisyahu, the world famous American artist, performed at the Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot synagogue at the AJC's 15th anniversary celebration. As one of the most unique singers of the recent era, he is most known for blending

reggae with Hassidic motifs and elements of jazz, hip hop, and beatboxing. In Oświęcim he was accompanied by New York's Dub Trio performing his greatest hits unplugged.

Other notable artists who performed in 2015 include cantor Nikola David of the Liberal Jewish Community in Munich and Rykarda Parasol, an American vocal artist known for her unique voice. The Swedish-born artist is the





7. Kortez concert (2015).
Photo: K. Urbańczyk

8. Dr. Adam Bodnar, Polish Ombudsman, with AJC Director, Tomasz Kuncewicz, visiting the Jewish Museum (2016).
Photo: A. Rudiak

9. Religious youth from France (2015).
Photo: M. Kapustian

daughter of a Holocaust survivor from Poland and is most famous for her “folk-noir” songs. Kortez, the rising star in the Polish music scene, also performed in our synagogue.

In May 2016 Adam Bodnar, Polish Ombudsman, visited the AJC and the Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue.



The Auschwitz Jewish Center regularly hosted students from the UK who came to Oświęcim with a program of the Holocaust Education Trust called Lessons from Auschwitz, with Rabbi Barry Marcus. Other groups that came in the past two years include guests from France with the country’s Chief Rabbi Haim Korsia, educators from Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, participants in the Raphael Lemkin

Seminar by the Auschwitz Institute for Peace and Reconciliation, and participants of the International Summer School *Teaching about the Holocaust* of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków.

At our Yom Hashoah commemoration, we hosted numerous Jewish students and adults from the United States, Israel, Australia, and other countries who came to Poland as part of the March of the Living and groups of North American students participating in the CET Academic Program in Prague. Between July 20 and 22, 2016, we hosted over 1,200 pilgrims from Slovakia, France, Portugal, Malaysia and South Korea as part of the World Youth Days, a Catholic gathering which took place in Kraków.



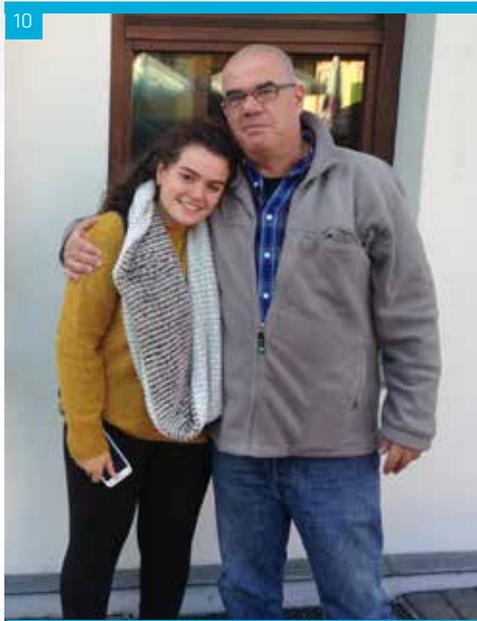
We especially appreciated reconnecting with former Jewish residents of Oświęcim and their descendants who came to visit the AJC in the past two years. They included Zohar Paleiov, Chaim Fischgrund, Elina Shaked with her son Shlomi, Menachem Bargev with family, Haim & Mira Horowitz, Malka Tahler with family, Yocheved & Haim Stollar with their daughter Rachel, Moshe Pinkasy with family, Yael

Balkan-Geva and her husband, Yariv Lehrer with his daughter Gil, Ruth & Jacob Zuckerman with their sons Amir and Ron Sherf, and Miriam Druks (all from Israel), Barbara Leibler and Adam Ringer (both from Poland), Lea Gleitman Posner from Sweden with daughters Barbro & Susanne, and Annette Hollo with her daughter Denise (USA).

10. Yariv Lehrer, son of former resident of Oświęcim, Lolek Lehrer, with daughter Gil (2016). Photo: A. Szyndler

11. Menachem and Joyce Bargev (Israel), descendants of the Holländer and Birnbaum families. Photo: A. Szyndler

12. Participants of the World Youth Days in front of the synagogue in Oświęcim. Photo: T. Kuncewicz



Partnerships & Honors

In 2015, Tomasz Kuncewicz, Director of the AJC, was honored with the Medal of the Witold Pilecki State Higher College of Education in Oświęcim.

In 2015 and 2016 we proudly partnered with the following research and educational organizations: Center for Prejudice Research at the Warsaw University, Dialog-Pheniben Foundation, and House of the Wannsee Conference in Berlin.

In the past two years we have worked together with the Matzevah Foundation headed by Steven D. Reece in order to clean up and maintain the Jewish cemetery in Oświęcim. Since 2005, the US based Christian Baptist volunteers have been returning to Poland in order to take care of the Jewish cemeteries.

In 2016, the AJC supported a new play held at the Oświęcim Cultural Center entitled *Ryby (Fish)*. The play was based on a real criminal story which involved Jewish fish merchants from Oświęcim in Kraków. Zuzanna Mrzygłód, a student of Culture and Media Management at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, directed the performance.



New in Our Collection

Despite the completion of the Jewish Museum's core exhibit in 2014, we are still fortunate to be continuously receiving new artifacts documenting the history of Jewish Oświęcim. Thanks to Annette Hollo and Ruth Zuckerman, we have acquired copies of photographs and documents from the Habersfeld family. Adam Ringer and Wanda Lacrampe donated school report cards of their mothers: Berta Silbiger and Dina Rottenberg Silbiger, respectively.

bers received as a gift from the Liebermann family.

In 2015, thanks to the assistance of our friends from the Matzevah Foundation we have transferred tombstones found in a private garden in nearby Babice back to the Jewish cemetery. In the following year the Jewish tombstone of Josef Thieberg was found incomplete during renovation works at the Catholic cemetery in Oświęcim. Thieberg was a longtime member of the town council of prewar Oświęcim and the president of the local Jewish community between 1910 and 1916.



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We have also received other family memorabilia from Wanda Lacrampe (Rottenberg Silbiger family), Yariv Lehrer (Lehrer family), Menachem Bargev (Birnbaum family), Chaim Fischgrund (Fischgrund family), Marilyn and Lee Pratt (Fuchs family) and Zohar Paleiov (documents from Emil Kuźnicki Factory and Druks & Liebermann families). Rozalia Formas donated photographs of her childhood friend, Rozalia Körbel, and Łukasz Łata offered a watch, which his family mem-



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13. Ida Lehrer. Photograph taken in the Sosnowiec ghetto. Collection of Yariv Lehrer

14. A piece of Józef Thieberg's matzevah. Photo: A. Szyndler

15. Postcard sent by R. Fischgrund in Oświęcim to his mother and brother in Annaberg forced labor camp (1941). Collection of Chaim Fischgrund.



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In August 2016, also at the Oświęcim Jewish cemetery, Dr. Caroline Sturdy Colls of the Staffordshire University (UK) launched a research and reconciliation project exploring cultural and physical genocide in Jewish cemeteries.

16-17. Maintenance work at the Jewish cemetery in Oświęcim by the Matzevah Foundation (US) and non-invasive archeological examination conducted by researchers from the Staffordshire University (UK) led by Dr. Caroline Strudy Colls (2016).
Photo: A. Rudiak



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An interdisciplinary international team from Staffordshire University (UK), The Matzevah Foundation (US), and Fundacja Zapomniane (Poland), located and recorded matzevot within the cemetery grounds using a wide range of forensic archaeological methods. The project, led by Dr. Caroline Sturdy Colls, utilised non-invasive techniques such as Total Station mapping, photogrammetry, laser scanning and Ground Penetrating Radar to create the first accurate plan of the cemetery and the surviving matzevot, to document surviving evidence of the desecration of the cemetery by the Nazis during the war and post-war vandalism, and to identify any below ground evidence of cultural and physical genocide. Drawing upon methods from the digital humanities and games technology, the team will create a highly detailed 3D visualisation of the cemetery and individual matzevot.

In addition we have installed a new bench at the cemetery, concrete foundations for selected tombstones, new information plaques, and a path for visitors.



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Please help us preserve the history of the local Jewish community. We are seeking the donation of artifacts, including personal testimonies, photographs, formal and personal letters, diaries, press articles, and any other materials reflecting the history of Oświęcim's Jews before, during, and after WWII. Anyone willing to donate or lend such materials to the AJC is kindly requested to contact Dr. Artur Szyndler, +48 33 844 70 02, szyndler@ajcf.pl.



18. Participants of *Understanding Evil* visiting Birkenau (2015).
Photo: A. Rudiak

19. Participants of the pilot seminar on Nazi history and hate crimes today for Polish and German police learning about the history of Oshpitzin (2015).
Photo: M. Kapustian

Education Center

We are deeply convinced that exploring history of the Holocaust should lead to elimination of discriminatory behavior, which contributed to the tragedy of Auschwitz. We have been working for many years with young adults and students, exploring the meaning of social activism and standing against intolerance and hate.

Over the past two years, we have continued several educational programs geared towards law enforcement officers who constitute a key element in the system of protection of all citizens from hate crimes.

In March 2015, we organized a two-day training program for 17 staff members of the Office of the Polish Ombudsman and the local branch officers from all over Poland.

In April 2016, we finished our most extensive project for leadership of the police from all over Poland. Called *Understanding Evil*, it was the first program of this kind in Europe where high-ranking officers explored Auschwitz and studied about the Holocaust in order to gain an in-depth understanding of modern day hate

crimes. Throughout the past two years, 200 key commanding officers from all over Poland attended the seminars thanks to the partnership with the Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Police.

Understanding Evil seminars were made possible through the funding of EEA Grants with additional support from the US Consulate General in Kraków.

The programming for Polish law enforcement continued, and at the request of the Police Academy in Katowice, we held four trainings for a total of 80 teachers.



In September 2016, we inaugurated our first international law enforcement training program called **DEMPOL** which brought together 20 police officers from Poland and Germany. Participants visited sites related to history of Nazism and the Holocaust in Berlin and Oświęcim, took part in intensive historical workshops, and exchanged experience in combating hate crimes in both countries. The program is organized in partnership with the House of the Wannsee Conference in Berlin.

DEMPOL is made possible with the generous support of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance with additional support from the Foundation for Polish-German Cooperation, in the framework of the 25th anniversary of Polish-German diplomatic relations.

In 2016 the Education Center inaugurated two more projects aimed for the Polish audience.

Oświęcim. Town of Two Cultures is a collaborative effort of the Jewish Museum and Castle Museum in Oświęcim to integrate teaching about Jewish and Christian residents of prewar Oświęcim and inspiring reflection on benefits of multiculturalism. The program included two workshops offered to schools in the

Oświęcim area: *What was Oshpitzin?* about the local Jewish heritage and *A Visit to the Royal Town of Oświęcim* providing an overview of the town's rich past. This program was inaugurated at a conference at the Castle Museum which brought 20 teachers from all local schools. **Oświęcim. Town of Two Cultures** will continue through 2017.

Antidiscrimination Education Academy is a training project for middle and high school teachers presenting new methods for education about antisemitism, hatred of Roma, and hate speech in general.

A select group of 20 local teachers is participating in this intensive program. Participants will be required to prepare their own lessons before graduating.

The project is realized in cooperation with the Dialog-Pheniben Foundation.



20. Participants of the pilot seminar on Nazi history and hate crimes today for Polish and German police co-organized by the House of the Wannsee Conference (2015). Photo: House of the Wannsee Conference.

21. Flyer promoting the *Town of 2 Cultures* project.



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Antidiscrimination Education Academy is made possible with generous funding from the Remembrance, Reconciliation, Future Foundation.

In April 2016, we commemorated the 75th anniversary of the deportation of Oświęcim's Jews to Będzin, Sosnowiec and Chrzanów.

In their memory we held special art workshops entitled *Memory Project* for pupils in the local middle schools and seniors from Oświęcim.



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In order to keep alive the memory of the children lost in the Holocaust, we collaborated in the worldwide Daffodil Project. Our staff, volunteers, and friends of the AJC planted several dozen flowers near Café Bergson in recognition of this important cause. Similarly, a local edition of the international

22. Participants of the *Antidiscrimination Education Academy* at workshops at the Polin Museum.
Photo: T. Kuncewicz

23. Workshop by the Polin Museum, part of the *Museum on Wheels* project (2016).
Photo: A. Szyndler



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project *Crocus*, organized worldwide by the Irish Holocaust Education Trust, was inaugurated in Oświęcim. Together with Polish and German students we planted flowers on the site of the Great Synagogue, tragically destroyed at the beginning of World War II. The flowerbuds were planted in the shape of a menorah.

We continued our workshops for middle and high school students: *Elder Brothers in Faith* (elements of Judaism), *What Was Oshpitzin* (on the prewar Jewish community of Oświęcim), *Walking Their Paths* (educational walks in the town) and *In Their Footsteps* (discussing Holocaust survivors).

In 2016, the AJC partnered with our friends on two educational projects: the *Małopolska Remembers* program for student visits to Auschwitz, organized by the International Youth Meeting House, and Polin Museum of History of Polish Jews' Museum on Wheels.

In May 2016, we co-organized the ceremony of installing a memorial plaque in honor of the Matlak family, who sheltered Hania Gross, a Jewish girl from Oświęcim, during the Holocaust. The Matlaks were subsequently honored by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations. The plaque was installed in the local school in Przeciszów near Oświęcim, where the rescue took place. The ceremony was attended by the Ambassador of the State of Israel to Poland, Mrs. Anna Azari.



24. Israeli girls at the Jewish Museum (2015). Photo: M. Kapustian

International programs

Over the past two years, our three flagship programs for international students continued: *Auschwitz Jewish Center Fellows Program: A Bridge to History*, for graduate-level students, the *American Service Academies Program*, for cadets and midshipmen from the U.S. Air Force,

Naval, Coast Guard, and Military Academies and the *Auschwitz Jewish Center Program for Students Abroad* for college students studying overseas. Over 150 select participants engaged in in-depth exploration of the Holocaust and pre-war Jewish life, reflecting on the impact of this unique history on their academic and professional careers.

25. Fellows 2015 from Argentina, Canada, Germany, Spain and the USA. Photo: T. Kuncewicz



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26. Hañbal concert
Photo: M. Kapustian

27. Poster promoting Jewish Motifs Film Festival.

28. Invitation to the screening of *Bogdan's Journey*.



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Café Bergson & Cultural Events

In 2015 and 2016, we continued our popular public events for the local community: *Bergson Quiz*, *Bring Your Own Food*, and plays for children. The latter were made possible thanks to the co-funding of the Town of Oświęcim and Oświęcim County.

We welcomed the following theatrical groups: Art-Re from Kraków, Kwadryga from Bielsko-Biała, and Piotr Rybak from Katowice.

We also hosted Atrofia from Poznań and Figures Theatre from Kraków thanks to additional funding from the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage.

In 2015, we held a special party with DJ Funklore to celebrate Café Bergson's first birthday.

As in every year, screenings of selected movies from the International Film Festival *Jewish Motifs* bring hundreds of guests to the AJC. In winter 2016, we showed nine movies from Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, Israel, Slovakia and Sweden. We hosted directors of *Watching the Moon at Night*: Joanna Helander and Bo Persson.

In addition to the festival, we screened other interesting movies including *The Return* (by

Adam Zucker, with a post-screening discussion with the director), *Brzostek* (by Simon Target, with a post-screening discussion with Jonathan Webber) and *Bogdan's Journey* (by Lawrence Loewinger and Michał Jaskulski) on the Kielce pogrom.

We continued our cooperation with International Film Festival *Watch Docs. Human Rights in Film*.



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Our screenings included the following movies: *Forbidden Movies* (by F. Moeller), *Judgment in Hungary* (with a post-screening discussion with film director Eszter Hajdu), *The Beach Rampage That Never Was* (by Diana Adringa, Mamadou Ba, Bruno Cabral and Joana Lucas), *Stories by Migrants* and *Winter on Lampedusa* (as part of the Day of Solidarity with Refugees), and *Show All This to the World* (by Andrea Deaglio).

US Consulate General in Kraków partnered with us to offer a special screening of the Academy Award film *Selma*, followed by a meeting with Persia Walker, an African American journalist, poet, and diplomat. The screening was held in the context of *Black History Month*.

Oświęcim residents also attended special events at Café Bergson inaugurating our museum projects: the outdoor exhibit element and graphic novels *Stories from Oświęcim* (2015) and the catalogue of the core exhibit as well as Dr. Artur Szyndler's lecture *What's next? Holocaust survivors returning to Oświęcim* in commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

The 2015 *Long Night of Museums* coincided with the *Małopolska Days of Cultural Heritage*. In both years we welcomed local visitors who participated in guided tours of the synagogue, the

core exhibit of the Jewish Museum and the Kluger House with Café Bergson. Special guided tours of the Jewish cemetery in Oświęcim were conducted by Jacek Proszyk.

Children attended workshops in the synagogue: *Secrets of the Jewish calendar* and *The Sweet Story of Eden* (the latter prepared by Karolina Jakoweńko and Julia Krzyśków from Zukerman Gate Association and Museum in Gliwice). *The Long Night of Museums* is a major cultural event in Oświęcim co-organized with the Castle Museum, the Roma Association, the Salesian Order and Seraphite Convent in Oświęcim, which welcomes hundreds of the town's residents each year.

Due to increasing interest in the history of the local Jewish cemetery, we made the site available for visitors during the Roman Catholic festival of All Saints Day 2016 with Jacek Proszyk providing insight into Jewish sepulchral traditions during his open guided tours.

We devote a lot of time to issues of social justice, equality, respect of differences, caring for our environment, and problems of racism and xenophobia. At Café Bergson we held series of events under the umbrella of a program called *Culture For You*. These included meetings about smog, the current refugee crisis (with Kamil Kaminski, psychologist and social activist, and

29. *The Long Night of Museums 2016*. A guided tour of the Jewish cemetery in Oświęcim with Dr. Jacek Proszyk. Photo: A. Rudiak



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30. Tours of the Synagogue and the Jewish Museum during the Long Night of Museums 2016. Photo: A. Rudiak

31. Invitation to meeting with Marcin Kącki, author of *Białystok, White Power, Black Memory* book.

32. Poster promoting a lecture by Elżbieta Lisowska: *On Islam, Without Prejudice*.

a screening of the documentary *Salam Neighbor*, and *Many faces of Islam* (with Elzbieta Lisowska, of the Religious Studies Department at the Jagiellonian University).

Our book presentations included meetings with authors of *Belfast. 99 Peace Walls* (Aleksandra Łojek), *Białystok. White Power, Black Memory* (Marcin Kącki) and Heinz Heger's *Men with Pink Triangle* (meeting with Joanna Ostrowska).

Special workshops for children through a program entitled *A Choiceless Traveler*, discussed the refugee crisis through the eyes of a wandering cat, which escaped war-stricken Iraq. This series of events saw classes of local children reflect on the issues of war, suffering and forced migrations. The workshops were held as part of the Day of Solidarity with Refugees.

In 2016, we celebrated Poland's Independence Day (November 11) with a lecture by Adam Leszczyński (*Patriotism and Modernity. Is there a clash?*) and a workshop for kids by Animatorknia Foundation.

The Café also welcomed presentations by Diversity Foundation about its report on the discrimination of LGBT community in the district of Małopolska, Adrian Palczewski who spoke about his experience of backpacking through Australia, and Ania, Thomas, Hania and Mila Alboth – a traveling group better known as the Family Without Borders (2015).

AJC has partnered with *Life Festival Oświęcim* since the very beginning. We continued to organize educational events in support of this worthy project.

In 2015, we screened a documentary entitled *The Story of Irena Sendler*.



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A year later together, with Amnesty International, we offered two workshops for schools: *People on the Move*, focusing on migrations, and *My Body and Human Rights*, on reproductive rights. We also offered Street Art workshop on social issues by Dariusz Paczkowski of Klamra Foundation.

Among singers who performed at the Festival itself, there were artists of Jewish descent:

Jessie Ware (UK), Israeli band Lola Marsh (2015), and Israeli Nina Tayeb (2016).

Our Café itself is also a unique space for promoting singers from Poland and beyond.

The artists who performed at Café Bergson in 2015-2016 include *Halla Nordfjörd* (Iceland), *Paula & Karol* (Poland & Canada), *Shalosh* (Israel), *Tom James* (UK), *Jóga*, *BAiKA*, *Hańba!* and *Coals* (Poland).

33. Paula & Karol concert.
Photo: A. Rudiak



Exhibits at the Café

Since June 2016, we have been showing a new photographic exhibit *Granice | Borders* by two Polish artists living in New York, Piotr Sikora and Piotr Bondarczyk. The exhibition features photographs depicting Polish folk art through a multicultural lens. Through showing Polish traditional costumes worn by people of different nationalities, the authors pose questions about the faces, dimensions, and limits of Polish national identity against the backdrop of rapid social change.

Tiles of Oświęcim is another photographic exhibit on display at Cafe Bergson. The exhibit highlights wall and floor tiles



34. Poster promoting *Granice | Borders* Exhibit.

from the interwar period which can still be seen in the old houses in Oświęcim. Tomasz Kuncewicz developed the concept of the exhibit and Mykhailo Kapustian took the photographs.

In the space between the Jewish Museum and the Café we present a sculpture entitled *Ice cream* by Oświęcim-born artist Agata Agatowska, celebrating her 20 years of artistic work. The project is co-financed by the town of Oświęcim.

Each week our volunteers invite young residents of Oświęcim to their language discussion clubs: [English Cafe at Café Bergson](#) and [German Cafe at Café Bergson](#).

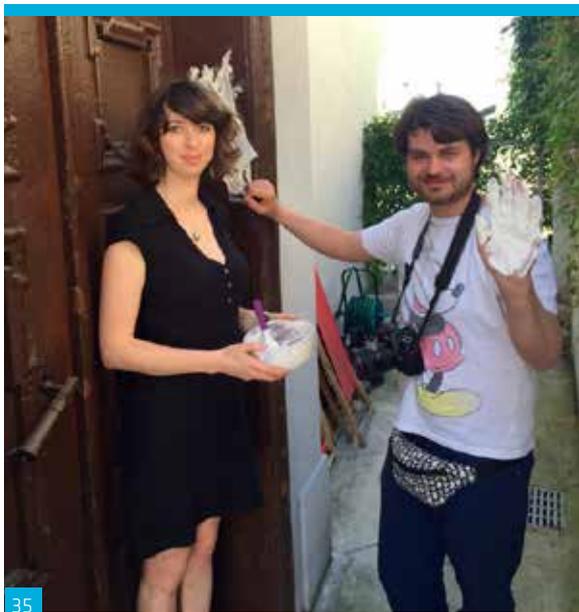
Our work would not be possible without the amazing help of our volunteers. In the past two years we were fortunate to have with us Daniel, Stefan, Paul, Gesine, Misha, Volhodia, Natalia, Judith, Max, Filip & Imogen. Thank you all for your dedication!

In 2016, the Café also welcomed Adam Ringer, co-owner of the Green Coffee Nero chain, and a descendant of an Oświęcim-born family.

Helena Czernek and Aleksander Prugar, makers of Mi-Polin, modern Judaica from Poland, made a cast of the mezuzah from the Kluger Family House, currently housing Café Bergson (2016).

Thanks to a unique license granted by Piotr Młodożeniec, his famous COEXIST logo now decorates a unique series of gadgets sold in our museum's gift shop at the Café.

100% of all proceeds from Café sales go toward maintenance of the synagogue and the Jewish Museum, as well as our Holocaust and diversity education.



35. Aleksander Prugar and Helena Czernek from Mi Polin making a cast of the mezuzah from the Kluger Family House (2016).
Photo: T. Kuncewicz

35. Agata Agatowska and her work *Ice Cream*.
Photo: T. Kuncewicz

Conferences and Seminars Attended by the AJC staff:

2016:

- Summer School of Education about the Holocaust, Kraków.
- Exchange for Change! Humanity in Action, Warsaw.
- Traces of Memory, Traces of Heritage. The Jewish Heritage in Local Memory and Culture, Galicia Jewish Museum, Kraków.
- Connecting Law and Memory, Kazerne Dossin, Mechelen, Belgium.
- Advanced – Curatorial Education Programme, Association of European Jewish Museums, Germany-Austria.
- The Annual Conference, Association of European Jewish Museums, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Jewish Cultural Heritage. Projects, methods, inspirations, Polin Museum, Warsaw.
- Oświęcim Forum of Human Rights, Town Library, Oświęcim
- A fair school – without discrimination and violence, The Union of Polish Teachers, Warsaw.
- Testimonies from the Holocaust, Emmanuel Ringelblum Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw

2015:

- Museum Education Seminar, Association of European Jewish Museums, Vienna, Austria.
- The Annual Conference, Association of European Jewish Museums, Jerusalem, Israel.
- Interculturalism in Education, Polin Museum, Warsaw.
- I hate. How to counter discrimination at school. METIS In-Service Teacher Training Center, Katowice
- Pardes Festival. Encounters with Jewish Culture, Kazimierz Dolny.
- Oświęcim Forum of Human Rights, Town Library, Oświęcim
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Tiles of Oświęcim. 9 Mały Rynek. Photo: M. Kapustian

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