



Auschwitz Jewish Center

# ACTIVITY REPORT 2017-2018



# 17-18





Dear Friends,

*In the past two years we continued our flagship anti-discrimination programs which put the Auschwitz Jewish Center at the forefront of Holocaust and Human Rights organizations in Poland.*

*The global rise of xenophobia has mobilized us to further develop our educational initiatives that explore the sources of hatred and provide tools to stand up to intolerance. It seems now, more obvious than ever, that substantiated knowledge about historical facts, even as extreme as Auschwitz and the Holocaust, does not serve as a vaccine against prejudice such as antisemitism, racism or homophobia. One needs to get deeper into the roots of evil, that is, the psychological mechanisms of perception of people different from us. Only with such knowledge we may be able to become immune to political exploitation of our own fears.*

*In addition to educating the public, the AJC continues to preserve the memory of the Jewish community in Oświęcim, which had been an essential part of the town's life until the Holocaust. The history of Oshpitzin is now presented on the Google Arts & Culture platform thus reaching millions of viewers worldwide. The new version of our mobile app Oshpitzin is an amazingly innovative way to promote the unique and little known local heritage both in the Jewish Museum and in the town itself. Although the newly published guidebook to the Jewish cemetery in Oświęcim is traditional in its form, it presents the historical site from a different perspective, including a glimpse into its nature and biodiversity.*

*Our most recent project, the commemoration of the Great Synagogue in Oświęcim, to be unveiled in 2019 as the Memorial Park, is yet another example of formative remembrance and education. We aim to create a model for commemorating a destroyed Jewish community, which can be replicated in other places with similar history.*

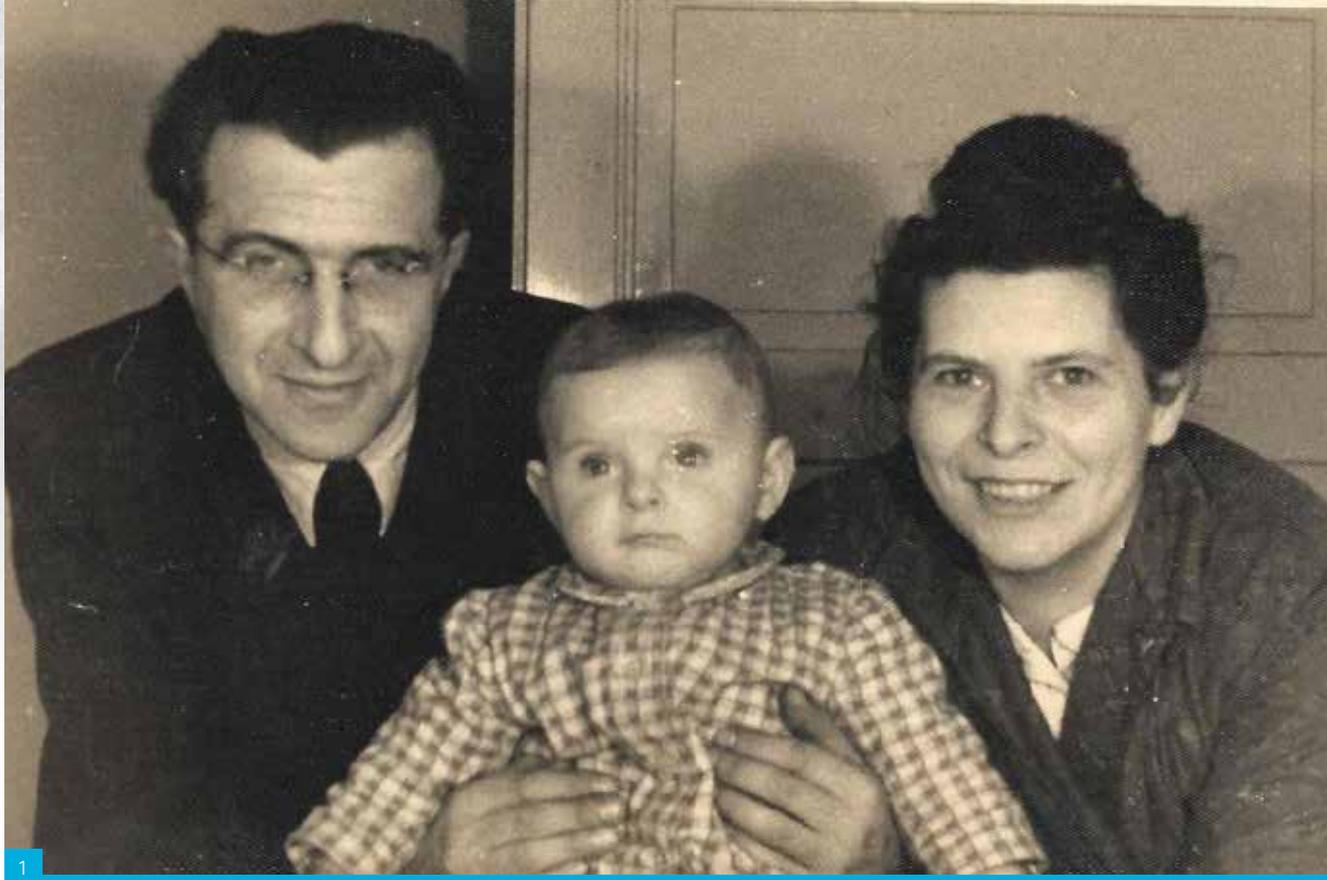
*We are proud to share our accomplishments from the past two years in this Activity Report. Let me also take this opportunity to thank everyone for being with us during this period. By participating in our programs and visiting our Museum and Café Bergson, you are supporting our efforts to remember the Jewish community of Oświęcim and to promote the human dignity of every individual.*

With thanks,

Tomasz Kuncewicz  
Director

2017-18





## Auschwitz Jewish Center

# 2017-2018 ACTIVITY REPORT

1. Natan, Menachem  
and Róża, Czeski  
Cieszyn 1948.  
*Collection of Menachem  
Bergson.*

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.

# 2017-18



OSZPICIN  
OSHPITZIN  
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2. Synagoga Chevra Lomdej Mishnayot i Muzeum Żydowskie.  
Photo: A. Rudiak.

## Jewish Museum & Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue

The past two years were an important period for the commemoration of Jewish residents of Oświęcim in our Museum. On International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2017, in cooperation with Google we inaugurated the virtual online exhibition *Oshpitzin. The story of Jewish Oświęcim* on the Google Arts & Culture platform. The exhibit, which can be viewed at

[www.oshpitzin.pl](http://www.oshpitzin.pl), showcases highlights from our collection accompanied by curatorial information. The most innovative part of the project is the 3D walk of our museum and synagogue, which has been implemented with Google Street View services. Speaking of innovation, one should be sure to explore our most recent version of the



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3. Oshpitzin exhibit on the Google Arts & Culture platform.

2017-18

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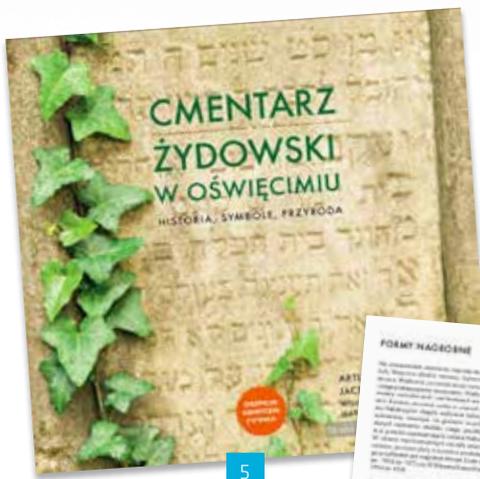
Oshpitzin app, which is a free guide to the Jewish Museum and the Jewish traces in the town itself. The app received a major update with new Hebrew and German audio as well as additional historical and modern views of sites in the town. It continues to be available in English and Polish. Visitors to the Jewish Museum are now able to engage with galleries using Bluetooth wireless technology,

which connects to recorded descriptions of objects when in close proximity to the artifacts. The app is available for download from Google Play and the Apple App Store for smartphones and tablets.

For those who prefer more traditional resources, we have a brand new book: *The Jewish Cemetery in Oświęcim. History, Symbols, Nature* (2018). Authors Dr. Artur Szyndler and Dr. Jacek Proszczyk explain the little known history of the local beit kvarot (cemetery) that dates back to the 18th century as well as Jewish burial traditions in Oświęcim and more generally in the region of Galicia. Additionally, the book offers vivid descriptions of nature and plants accompanied by beautiful photographs of the cemetery. The first readers of the book were residents of Oświęcim who took part in its inauguration at the public tour of the cemetery with co-author of the book Dr. Jacek Proszczyk.

AJC's Dr. Artur Szyndler also contributed to the new official monograph *Oświęcim. The Border Town* (2018), published by the Castle Museum.

The Jewish past of Oświęcim was also promoted outside of Poland at the monumental exhibit *Auschwitz. Not far away. Not long ago.*, inaugurated at the Centro de Exposiciones Arte Canal in Madrid on December 1, 2017. The exhibition features archeological excavations from the Great Synagogue in Oświęcim on loan from our museum as well as a 3D model of the Great Synagogue, built using original blueprints that survived the war in Polish archives.



4. Oshpitzin app after the update.

5-6. The newly published guide to the Jewish cemetery in Oświęcim.

7. Model of the Great Synagogue in Oświęcim at the exhibit *Auschwitz. Not far away. Not long ago.* in Madrid  
Photo: A. Szyndler.



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8. Our youngest audience of the *Long Night of Museums 2018* at Cafe Bergson. Photo: A. Rudiak.

9. *The Long Night of Museums 2018* at the Jewish Museum and the Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue. Photo: A. Rudiak.

10. First left: Tomasz Kuncewicz, AJC Director, planting daffodils as part of the *Daffodil Project*. Photo: A. Rudiak.

In 2017-2018 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 at the local *Long Night of the Museums*. Dr. Jacek Proszyk conducted special guided tours of the Jewish cemetery in Oświęcim. Children attended workshops in the synagogue based on the works of Israeli writer Etgar Keret. *The Long Night of Museums* is a major cultural event in Oświęcim co-organized with the Castle Museum, the Roma Association and the Salesian Order and Seraphite Convent in Oświęcim, which welcomes hundreds of the town's residents each year.



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We welcomed Andrea & Neill Videlefsky from Atlanta who joined us in 2018 as we continued their *Daffodil Project* in Oświęcim. Over the past two years we planted 1,000 daffodil bulbs on the site of the Great Synagogue to remember the child victims of the Holocaust.



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We are currently in the midst of an intensive conceptual update of the Memory section of our exhibition. In 2019 the updated Memory gallery will feature unique personal objects donated recently by descendants of Jewish residents of Oświęcim, local artifact collectors and residents of Oświęcim.

An important transformation is also underway at the former site of the Great Synagogue on Berka Joselewicza Street. On the 80th anniversary of its destruction by the Germans we plan to unveil the Great Synagogue Memorial Park. A commemorative installation surrounded by benches and greenery will stand in this spe-

cial location to symbolize the tragic end of the Jewish community of Oświęcim. The Memorial Park is designed as an open space for residents and visitors to our town. The project will be realized thanks to the generous support of institutional and individual donors from Oświęcim, Poland and internationally.

11. The aerial view of the Great Synagogue Memorial Park including an outline of the building and a piece of uncovered floor.



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## Special Guests

12. Three generations of the Goldfinger family from Oświęcim to Israel. They are the descendants of Natan Goldfinger, who emigrated from Oświęcim to Israel before World War II.

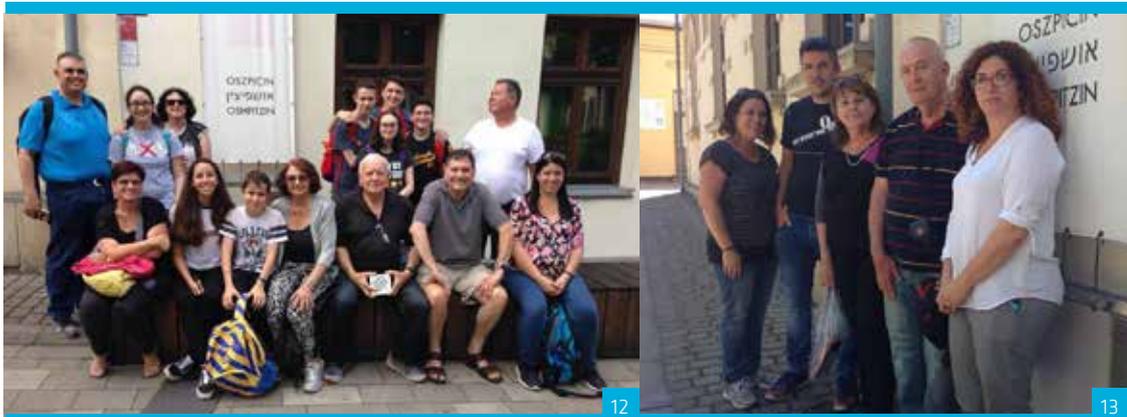
Photo: A. Szyndler.

We especially appreciated reconnecting with former Jewish residents of Oświęcim and their descendants who came to visit the AJC over the past two years. They included Abraham & Haya Golan (Israel) with their family: Orit Inbar, Dganit Golan Kortez and Dror Golan (Haya is the daughter of Henryk Lamm, who

lived at 4 Wysoka Street in Oświęcim); Mor Goldfinger with family (Israel); descendants of Oświęcim-born Natan Goldfinger, who emigrated to Palestine in the interwar period; Lea Gleitman (nee Posner, Sweden) born 94 years ago at today's Plac Kościuszki, with her daughters Barbro and Susanne; and Tali Tamir.

13. Descendants of Henryk Lamm from Oświęcim: Abraham and Haya Golan from Israel with family (2017).

Photo: A. Szyndler.



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It's always rewarding to welcome back participants of our educational programs from previous years. During this period we hosted Captain David Finkel, *ASAP* '08 alumnus, with platoon leadership from Charlie Company stationed at Camp Karliki near Żagań, Poland; students from Westmont College near Santa Barbara, CA with Holly Robertson, a 2013 alumna of the *AJC Fellows Program: A Bridge to History*; and soldiers from the 720th Explosive Ordnance Disposal Company, stationed in Baumholder, Germany, whose visit was prepared by *ASAP* '08 alumnus Captain Evan Kowalski.



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The Auschwitz Jewish Center regularly hosted students from the UK who came to Oświęcim with the Holocaust Education Trust's *Lessons from Auschwitz Project*, led by 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 as well as groups of North American students participating in the CET Academic Program in Prague. On International Roma Genocide Remembrance Day we welcomed groups of Roma visitors from all over Europe.

14. Captain David Finkel, *ASAP*, 08 alumnus, and platoon leadership from Charlie Company, stationed at Camp Karliki near Żagań, Poland touring the Jewish Museum. Photo: A. Rudiak.

15. Aharon Tamir, Director General of the March of the Living.

16. Human Rights activists from the U.S. attending the Western States Center Conference in Warsaw.

17. The Holocaust Remembrance Day in Israel. Former Jewish residents of Oświęcim and their descendants.



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18. Maciek Zabierowski at the lecture about the Jewish community of Oświęcim at the Jewish Museum in Oslo  
Photo: Ann Ødeby.



## Partnerships & Honors

In the past two years we have worked together with the [Matzevah Foundation](http://www.matzevah.org) (www.matzevah.org), headed by Steven D. Reece, to clean up and maintain the Jewish cemetery in Oświęcim. Since 2005, the US based Christian Baptist volunteers have been returning to Poland annually to take care of Jewish cemeteries.

Thanks to a partnership with the Polin Museum and the Roma Dialog-Pheniben Foundation, we have organized a professional development program for teachers called [Academy of Antidiscrimination Education](#), which is described further below in this report.

In 2017 and 2018, we partnered again with the Oświęcim Forum for Human Rights to organize study visits for schools to the Auschwitz Birkenau State Museum and the Jewish Museum in Oświęcim as part of the program [Małopolska Remembers](#).

Tomasz Kuncewicz, Director of the AJC, presented on our recent accomplishments at the conference of the Association of European Jewish Museums in Toledo, Spain and at the Museum of Jewish Heritage – A Living Memorial to the Holocaust in New York in 2017. In the fall of 2018, Maciek Zabierowski presented on the Jewish history of Oświęcim at the Jewish Museum in Oslo.

The Auschwitz Jewish Center was honored with the [Laurels of Entrepreneurship](#) award by the Town of Oświęcim for “combating racism and xenophobia, promoting civic activism and organizing unique educational and cultural events which contribute to the increase of tourism in Oświęcim.”

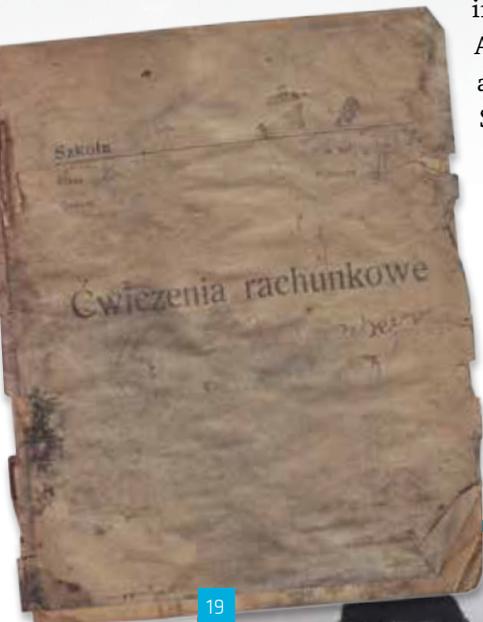
## New in Our Collection

We continued to receive new artifacts documenting the history of Jewish Oświęcim. Our recent donors include Helena Schwartz, Mirosław Ganobis, Chaim Fischgrund, Irith Michelson, Tali Tamir, Simon J. Bronner and Urszula Paszkowska-Englert.

Our recent acquisitions include two math notebooks of Regina Schönker found in a private apartment at 4 Mickiewiczza Street in Oświęcim as well as several documents from the State Archive in the Katowice branch office in Bielsko-Biała.

Anna Firek donated a copy of the book *Sefer ha-Nakot ha-Tora* by a famous Kraków rabbi, Abraham Yehoshua Heshel (1595-1663), with a stamp from the private collection of Mordechai Grubner, a prewar resident of Oświęcim.

In addition, in 2018 we received more than 100 objects, most made of silver, that were found two years earlier by archaeologists Grzegorz Mądrycki and Ilona Smajek during the reconstruction of the building at 5 Mickiewiczza Street in Oświęcim. Before World War II, the building was property of the Weitz family.



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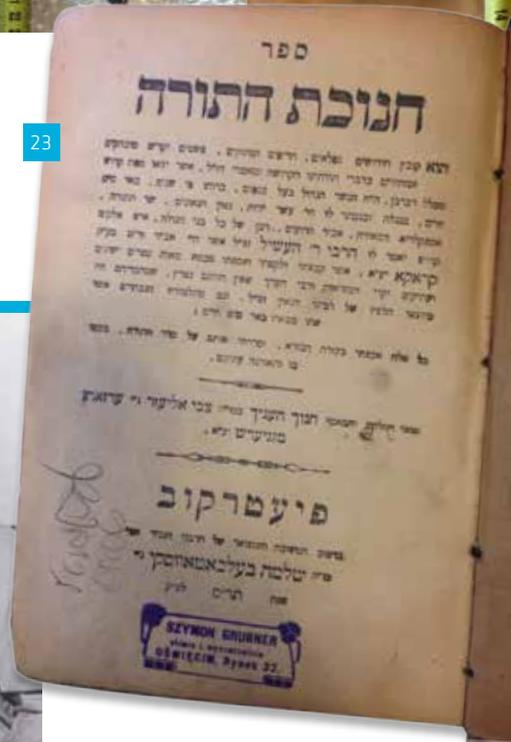
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19. Notebook file belonging to a 5th grade student (school year 1927) – Regina Schönker (born around 1915?). They were found unexpectedly in the attic of the tenement at 4 Mickiewiczza Street.

20. Cesia and Szymon Turner together with their son Harry, 1955. From the collection of Yvonne Turner.

21-22. Silver items found during the renovation of the building at 5 Mickiewiczza Street. The tenement house belonged to the Weitz family before the war.



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23. *Sefer ha-Nakot ha-Tora* with the seal of the pre-war Oświęcim glazier Szymon Grubner. The book was found at the beginning of the 1990s in the former Jakob Haberfeld Factory of Vodkas and Liqueurs by Anna Firek and transferred to our Museum in 2018.

Please help us preserve the history of the local Jewish community. We are seeking donations 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, +48 510 781 199, [szyndler@ajcf.pl](mailto:szyndler@ajcf.pl).

24. Police officers from Iceland at the seminar about the Holocaust and fighting modern hate crimes in February 2018.

25. Polish and German police officers visiting the House of the Wannsee Conference in Berlin during the *DEMPOL* program (2017).



## Education Center

History is more than just the past. At the Auschwitz Jewish Center we strongly believe that learning about the Holocaust should be aimed at eliminating discriminatory behavior, which contributed to the tragedy of Auschwitz. We should also remember the inspiring examples of those individuals who had the courage to stand up for the most vulnerable in their time of need. For many years now we have worked together with youth and adults exploring the meaning of social activism and opposition to every kind of intolerance in order to develop a civil society based on democratic values.

## Professional Development for Law Enforcement

We have partnered with Polish and international police forces to organize specialized seminars about the importance of law enforcement in protecting all citizens from hate crimes.

In April 2017, we continued our 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 experiences in combating hate crimes in both countries. During the Polish component, we hosted German Consul General in Kraków Dr. Michael Gross who met with all participants. The program is organized in partnership with the House of the Wannsee Conference in Berlin. *DEMPOL* was made possible by 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.



Over the past two years we also hosted three groups of police officers from Iceland. In cooperation with the Metropolitan Police of Reykjavik, we organized study trips in Poland for 60 officers from all over Iceland. Participants analyzed the circumstances of the fall of democracy in pre-WWII Germany and the discrimination and racist violence against Jewish citizens. Dr. Mikołaj Winiewski from the Center for Research on Prejudice at the University of Warsaw lectured on the processes of dehumanization and participation in

genocides. The program culminated in a visit to the Memorial Site of Auschwitz-Birkenau, followed by workshops with lecturers from the Police Studies Department of Akureyri University in Iceland.

In May 2018, we organized a similar program for the staff of the Office for Criminal Investigation of the Headquarters of Polish Police and the Office of State Prosecutor. The program was centered around modern day hate crime and challenges for law enforcement and the judiciary.

## Professional Development for Teachers

At the AJC we strive to support teachers as they are those who shape the minds and souls of leaders of tomorrow. In 2017, we inaugurated the *Academy of Antidiscrimination Education*, a year-long course preparing teachers to

supported by personal trainers who helped them prepare and implement their classroom projects. Graduates of the Academy participated in a study trip to Berlin where they witnessed local remembrance sites dedicated



26. Teachers participating in the *Academy of Antidiscrimination Education* at the memorial to homosexual victims of the Third Reich in Berlin.

implement their own tolerance education projects. The Academy had 20 participants from the Małopolska and Upper Silesia regions of Poland. Over the course of six intensive weekend sessions they studied different aspects of hate speech such as antisemitism and homophobia. The sessions focused on the psychology behind prejudice and discrimination, their online and offline manifestations and best teaching practices. Speakers included experts from Warsaw and Kraków academies, teacher trainers and social activists. Teachers were

to victims of the Holocaust and World War II and met with their German counterparts working in the fields of history and human rights education. *Academy of Antidiscrimination Education* was a partnership with the Dialog Pheniben-Foundation and the Polin Museum. The project was made possible with generous funding from the Remembrance-Responsibility-Future Foundation (EVZ Foundation).

According to a graduate of the Academy of Antidiscrimination Education, “IT HAS BEEN

BY FAR THE BEST EXPERIENCE IN THE PAST SCHOOL YEAR. I RECOMMEND IT TO ANYONE WHO WANTS TO ADVANCE THEIR TEACHING SKILLS AND MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE.”

The Auschwitz Jewish Center hosted Christina Chavarria from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum for a special teacher training entitled “The Warning Signs of Genocide and Media Literacy” in December 2017. In her workshop, Mrs. Chavarria discussed hateful media messages using examples from German antisemitic propaganda and spoke about the events which led to the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda, which also included incitement through mass media.

Among international participants of our tolerance workshops over the past two years were also teachers from Lithuania, Romania and the Balkans.



27. Christina Chavarria from the US Holocaust Memorial Museum leading a workshop for teachers in December 2017.

## Local youth

Since we opened in 2000, we have welcomed school and youth groups visiting our Jewish Museum and the Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue as part of their trips to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

Within the framework of our *Human First* program, our anti-discrimination workshops, in which 160 students from Upper Silesian schools participated, concluded with visits to the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum. As a result of the program, students created a social media campaign about combating hate and

discrimination in cooperation with our German and Ukrainian volunteers. This program is realized in partnership with the Center for Local Development and District Police in Katowice.

There is hardly a better way to break out of stereotyping about other people than face-to-face meetings followed by self-reflection. Over the past two years local students from Konarski High School participated in four dialogue sessions with their American counterparts visiting Oświęcim. Thanks to our cooperation

28. Anti-discrimination workshops for high school students visiting Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.  
Photo: A. Rudiak.



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with the *CET Academic Programs* youth from both countries meet twice a year to get to know each other and exchange perspectives on learning about Oświęcim and Auschwitz.

In the reported period we also hosted youth groups from Germany and Ukraine who toured the Jewish Museum and participated in *Memory Project* workshops as part of their programs at the International Youth Meeting House in Oświęcim.

In recognition of International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27, 2018, students from local high schools participated in dedicated workshops about the Holocaust in Oświęcim. They remembered Jewish residents of our town and all those murdered in the Nazi genocide.

We also continued our regular workshops for middle and high school students: *Elder Brothers in Faith* (on elements of Judaism); *What Was Oshpitzin?* (a detective workshop about the local Jewish community); *Walking Their Paths* (educational walk along sites of Jewish remembrance); and *After Auschwitz* (a tolerance workshop after visiting the site of Auschwitz-Birkenau).

In addition, hundreds of young people toured our Jewish Museum and the Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue as part of two programs:

*Małopolska Remembers* which is a partnership with the Oświęcim Forum for Human Rights, and *Through Common History*, where AJC partners with the Center of Dialogue and Prayer, the Roman Catholic Diocese of Bielsko and the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.



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29. Polish-American-Jewish dialogue meeting between students of St. Konarski High School and CET Academic Programs in Prague.  
Photo: A. Rudiak.



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30. Polish, Ukrainian and German youth at the *Memory Project* workshop.  
Photo: A. Rudiak.

31. Dr. Artur Szyndler giving a workshop to students visiting the Jewish Museum  
Photo: A. Rudiak.

## 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;

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.

32. Cadets and midshipmen participating in the [American Services Academies Program](#) visiting the Jewish Museum. Photo: A. Rudiak.



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 200 select participants engage

In response to growing interest from many universities, we have organized study trips to Poland for leaders and students from Baruch College at The City University of New York, The University of Texas at El Paso and Washington & Jefferson University in Pittsburgh.



33. Participants of the [Program for Students Abroad](#) during a visit to the historic Jewish district of Kraków. Photo: Maciek Zabierowski.



34. Participants of the [AJC Fellows Program: A Bridge to History](#) by a mural against antisemitism in Oświęcim. Photo: Maciek Zabierowski.



35. Sholem band at the Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue  
Photo: A. Rudiak.

36. Poster from the Jewish Motifs Film Festival.



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## Café Bergson & Cultural Events

### 2017

As in every year, screenings of selected movies from the [Jewish Motifs International Film Festival](#) brought hundreds of guests to the AJC.

In winters 2017 and 2018, we screened the best movies from 2014-2017.

Over the course of four evenings, we showed 13 films from Poland, the US and Israel.



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In February 2017, Monika Sznajderman, a cultural anthropologist and writer, promoted her recent book [Counterfeiters of Pepper](#) about the author's intimate journey to discover her own Polish-Jewish roots.

Dr. Łukasz Krzyżanowski spoke about the difficult attempts of Holocaust survivors to return to their hometowns based on his research in

Radom, which is discussed in his book [The House that Wasn't](#).

The moving story of Stefania Wilczyńska, a co-worker of Janusz Korczak in the famous orphanage in the Warsaw Ghetto, became the subject of the book [Miss Stefa](#), presented by author Magdalena Kicińska in April.

In the same month, we hosted the 15th edition of the International Film Festival [Watch Docs. Human Rights in Film](#) with six film screenings and a discussion with filmmakers.

Our third April 2017 event was a meeting with Agata Agatowska, a sculptor from Oświęcim, about her recent project [Sculptures from the Future](#).

Among destinations of migration for prewar Polish Jews was Costa Rica. This little known yet fascinating chapter of history became the subject of meticulous research of Polish journalist Anna Pamuła, who presented her

book *Polacos. Chayka Goes to Costa Rica* on a May afternoon at Café Bergson.

Tomasz Cebulski's doctoral thesis, *Auschwitz po Auschwitz. History, politics and memory of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum 1980-2010*, was recently published as a book. The author discussed his findings at our Café with guests.

In cooperation with Równość (Equality) Foundation, we screened *In his eyes*, a story of a relationship between Leonardo, a visually impaired teenager, with his classmate, directed by Daniel Ribeiro.

In celebration of Polish Independence Day, we invited our audience to engage critically in discussion about the image of migrants and refugees. Lt. Col. Gerard Bah, a Human Rights Officer from the District Police in Kielce, presented on the topic of confronting hate and Dr. Konrad Pędziwiatr, from the Dept. of European Studies of the Economical University in Kraków, explained the roots of Islamophobic prejudice in his lecture *Why are we scared of refugees?* Our youngest guests celebrated 100 years of Polish independence with a construction workshop, *Our home Poland*.



adopted on May 3, 1795. Our youngest guests joined us to reflect on the meaning and importance of a constitution for all citizens.

Aleksandra Domańska was another writer to discuss her most recent work. In her book *Aunt Ola's Street*, Mrs. Domańska tells the story of Helena Kozłowska (nee Bela Frisz, 1906-1967), a prewar member of the Communist party in Poland and a member of the partisan movement during the Holocaust. This biographical book offers an attempt to understand Helena's difficult choices, many of which her granddaughter continues to struggle with today.

*Sunday with Oshpitzin* was a special event dedicated to the re-launch of our mobile app *Oshpitzin*, which is a guide to the Jewish Museum and sites of Jewish heritage in our town.

We prepared a workshop about Jewish Oświęcim for children while adult visitors were

## 2018

37-38. Posters of cultural events at Café Bergson: meeting with Fr. Tomasz Chrzan, on his recent biography of Fr. Jan Skarbek and the screening of Sławomir Grünberg's film *Karski and the Lords of Humanity*.

The amazing mission of Jan Karski, a Polish non-Jewish courier of the Polish Government in Exile during WWII, was the focus of a new documentary by Sławomir Grünberg, *Karski and Lords of Humanity*. Grünberg, the director and filmmaker, was present at our screening to discuss the film with the audience.

In March 2018, we remembered Father Jan Skarbek (1885-1951), the prewar parish priest of the Roman Catholic church opposite the Chevra Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue. Father Skarbek was remembered by Jewish survivors from Oświęcim as the moving spirit of the Jewish-Christian coexistence in Oświęcim before the Holocaust.

We ran a *What is a constitution for?* workshop for children celebrating the Polish constitution



39. A screening of the film *Touch of an Angel* on Father Jan Skarbek Square in front of the AJC. Photo: A. Rudiak.

taken on a tour of Oświęcim using our app. The day concluded with an open-air screening of *Touch of an Angel*, a film dedicated to the Schönker family, followed by a meeting with the filmmaker Marek Pawłowski. We proudly hosted Haim Horowitz, a descendant of the Gerstner family, German Consul General Dr. Michael Gross, U.S. Consul for Press and Culture Amy Steinmann and Mayor of Oświęcim Janusz Chwierut.

After screening the film *We are the Jews of Breslau*, the German film directors Karin Kaper and Dirk Szuszie discussed their work on this project.

40. Weekend with Oshpitzin. Visiting the Jewish Museum with the Oshpitzin mobile application. Photo: A. Rudiak.

41. Weekend with Oshpitzin. L-R: Dr. Michael Gross – Consul General of Germany in Kraków, Tomasz Kuncewicz – AJC Director, Haim Horowitz and Shlomi Shaked from Israel, and Amy Steinmann – U.S. Consul for Press and Culture. Photo: A. Rudiak.

42. Workshop *Poles, Jews, Patriots* on the occasion of Independence Day 2018 with Julia Krzyśków from the House of Remembrance of Upper Silesian Jews in Gliwice. Photo: A. Rudiak.



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In November, on Independence Day, our youngest guests honed their paintings skills through the workshops *Poles, Jews, Patriots* with Julia Krzyśków from the House of Remembrance of Upper Silesian Jews in Gliwice and *How to Celebrate Independence* with Katarzyna Heród and Dorota Zwolak from the Miasto Pracownia Foundation.



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After the summer holiday break, we shifted our focus to Breslau, the city known as Wrocław today, to learn more about its prewar Jewish residents and their legacy today.

Our last screening in 2018 was the American-Polish production *In the Name of their Mothers. The Story of Irena Sendler*. Filmmaker Sławomir Grünberg told this unique story of a Polish-Catholic rescuer who managed the operations of saving children from the Warsaw Ghetto.

Just before the end of the year, our friends from Miasto Pracownia Foundation met with children at an intercultural workshop, [Winter Holidays Across Religions](#).

The artists who performed at Café Bergson in 2017-2018 include [Sasha Boole](#) (Ukraine), [Ragnar Ólafsson](#) (Iceland), [Weronika & Marcin Boińscy](#) (Oświęcim), [Czesław Mozil](#) (Poland), [James Harries](#) (UK), [Daniel Spaleniak](#) (Poland), [Jef Maarawi](#) (Greece) & [Soffía Björg](#) (Iceland), [Briga](#) (Canada), [Sholem](#) (Poland, Ultrasonic (Poland) and [Low Roar](#) (USA, Iceland).

The vegetarian Café Bergson is also a home of environmental education. As part of our series about human influence on the environment, we organized a screening of the documentary



[All That Smog](#) and a meeting with researcher Dr. Jakub Jędrak from Polish Smog Alarm, as well as workshops for children.

The Café also welcomes travelers who share their experiences with our audiences. Over the past two years we hosted Ewa Stachura and Nika Gomiashvili who spoke about their life in Georgia, Magdalena Krawczyk and Kamil Szyjka who returned from Iceland and Joanna and Łukasz Kasperek who explored Iran.

Thanks to our wonderful volunteers each week, young residents of Oświęcim attended free classes in our language discussion club, [English Café 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: Judith Althaus, Kamil Baścik, Yevgenia Batina, Friederike Csutor, Aleksander Kubas, Katarzyna Kubisty, Oksana Naumchuk, Weronika Ramza, Theresa Marie Richter, Marcus Rois, Natalia Samulewicz, Dorian Schiffer and Krzysztof Smok. Thank you all for your dedication!



**43.** James Harries (UK) performing at Café Bergson.

**44.** Our volunteers. L-R: Oksana Naumchuk (Ukraine), Dorian Schiffer (Austria), Theresa Richter (Germany).

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## Volunteers & Interns

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*Tiles of Oświęcim, Oświęcim, ul. Sienkiewicza 13. Photo: Mikhailo Kapustian & Piotr Gajek*

*Front cover: Long Night of the Museums – workshop for children. Photo: A. Rudiak.*

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