

News from Prague

Zprávy z Prahy



On 6 May, the 19th annual public reading of the names of the Holocaust victims "Yom HaShoah" took place. This time it was held in the largest number of towns and villages so far, with 31 locations across the Czech Republic joining the event. As in previous years, the event was part of a worldwide commemoration of the Holocaust victims. The date of the commemoration was chosen to commemorate the uprising of Jewish prisoners in the Nazi ghetto in Warsaw.

The reading of the names was held under the auspices of the Embassy of the State of Israel and the Mayor of Prague Bohuslav Svoboda, and the City Council also made a significant contribution to the financial support of the event, together with the Holocaust Victims Foundation and the Darujme.cz portal.

In addition to Israeli Ambassador Anna Azari, the names of the victims were read out by the ambassadors of Slovakia, Austria, Canada, the ambassadors of the Netherlands and France, as well as other representatives of the diplomatic corps, senators and other public figures.

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Commemoration of the Roma victims of the Holocaust

On Sunday, 12 May 2024, representatives of the Terezín Initiative Institute attended a commemorative gathering to honor the memory of the Roma victims of the Holocaust.

The event was addressed by the director of the Museum of Roma Culture, descendants of those imprisoned, a representative of the Office of the President, the President of the Senate, ambassadors, and other distinguished guests.

The site of the camp at Lety u Písku is linked to a long and troubled past. It is an authentic place where the Protectorate's so-called gypsy camp operated between 1942 and 1943.

It was one of two places (the other was in Hodonín u Kunštátu) where entire families of Moravian and Czech Roma and Sinti were forcibly concentrated before being transported to the concentration and extermination camp at Auschwitz II-Birkenau. The camp buildings themselves were razed to the ground and burned after the last mass transport in 1943. During its existence (August 1942 - August 1943), approximately 1,300 men, women and children passed through the camp. It is certain that a total of 335 people died in Lety, most of the victims were children."

source: MRK

Illustrations and photos from the commemorative assembly were provided by Dana Gabalova. A recording of the event is available on the Museum of Roma Culture's Facebook page.



COMMEMORATION OF THE VICTIMS OF NAZI PERSECUTION AT THE TEREZÍN MEMORIAL CEREMONY

On Sunday, May 19, we remembered the victims of Nazi persecution at a commemorative event marking the 79th anniversary of the liberation. The event took place at the National Cemetery in front of the Small Fortress in Terezín.

The event was organized by the Terezín Memorial under the auspices of the Minister of Culture of the Czech Republic, co-organized by the Ústí nad Labem Region, the City of Terezín, the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic and the Terezín Initiative.

Among the guests were Terezín survivors, Czech President Petr Pavel, Czech Prime Minister Petr Fiala, Senate President Miloš Vystrčil, many diplomats and other guests of honour. Dana Gabalová and Dorota Gabalová attended on behalf of the Terezín Initiative Institute.

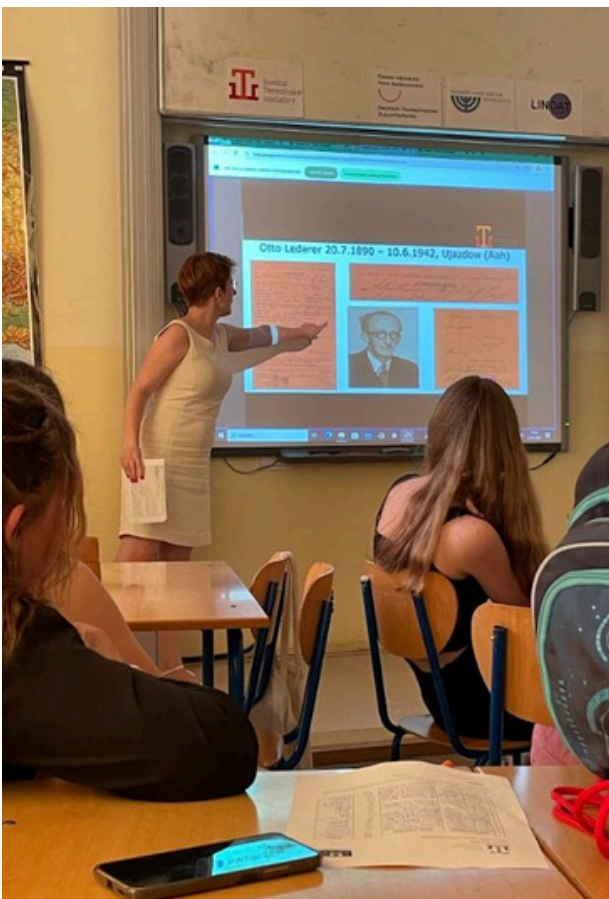
Thank you to the Terezín Memorial for the invitation and to all those who participated in the organization of this important event.



Butterflies from Terezín

The Terezín Initiative Institute was a co-organizer of one of the performances of the Opera Nova festival, organized by the National Theatre and the Prague State Opera.

Butterflies from Terezín is an opera for children and teenagers, written by composer and conductor Charles Baumstark, with a libretto by Lola Ramirez Casanova, who decided to research artistic activity in the Terezín ghetto. Like Hans Krása's oft-performed Brundibár, this children's opera aims to raise awareness of the Holocaust. Its mission, however, is not to portray the tragic fate of the child protagonists, but to highlight creativity and hope in inhumane conditions. All four performances in the sold-out Choral Hall of the State Opera were introduced by ITI Director Tomáš Kraus (photo by M. Kirov).



HUMAN FATES IN THE SHADOW OF THE HOLOCAUST

On June 20, Radana Rutová and Hanka Čadová presented a lecture on Human Fates in the Shadow of the Holocaust at the Bohumil Hrabal Gymnasium in Nymburk. The students of the gymnasium were thus introduced to the fate of Jews during and after the Second World War.

Radana focused on the topic of the so-called Czech Auxiliary Actions and the end of the war in Terezín, providing insight into the complicated situation after the liberation of the ghetto, which was plagued by a typhus epidemic. She explained why the repatriation of Terezín prisoners was difficult and why it did not happen immediately after liberation.

Hanka Čadová explored the human stories behind the Holocaust, and showed how working with archival materials from local district archives helps put faces and stories back on Holocaust victims. The archival materials help create a more holistic picture of their lives. They help people today to make sense of their lives and stories. Without these documents, they would only know them as lists of names and numbers. Digitizing archival records then makes it easier for people to access archival records, and allows them to reconstruct the stories of people in their family or their town.

We would like to thank Bohumil Hrabal Grammar School in Nymburk for their welcome and attention. We would also like to thank the [Czech-German Future Fund](#), the [Foundation for Holocaust Victims](#), and [Lindat](#) for the opportunity to give the lecture.

A follow-up lecture on this topic will be held in the autumn at the Nymburk Municipal Library.

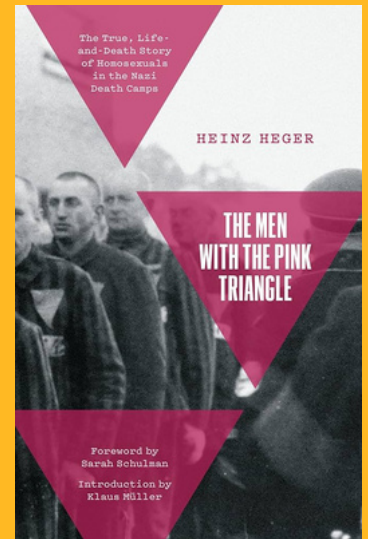
Honoring Queer Victims of the Holocaust During Pride Month

June 28th marks 56 years since the Stonewall Riots. Since 1970, June has been celebrated as Pride Month, and serves to support and celebrate queer folks. It's a time for remembrance and celebration, and a reminder of the ongoing fight against discrimination and the need for continued progress toward full equality.

At Terezin Initiative Institute, our mission is to remember Holocaust victims, research contemporary documents to return victims their faces and stories, and to leverage the knowledge and understanding acquired to promote tolerance, equality, and help maintain a pluralistic society through education.

The Nazi persecution of Jews is most known about, but there were other groups that were persecuted, imprisoned, and killed, whether it be Roma and Sinti, people with disabilities, political prisoners, and yes, queer people.

Due to heteronormative power structures, as a result, with few exceptions, there is a gap in the archives on queer fates during the Holocaust or, if such stories exist, they are assumed to be a deviation from heteronormative Holocaust studies.



ARKS - STARTING AT ZERO

The last two days of this June were dedicated to the project of rescuing and revitalizing the original textile factory of the Löw-Beer family in Brno, known from the story of Oskar Schindler and his wife Emilie, who saved more than 1300 Jews during the Holocaust. A museum and an educational programme centre will be built in the former factory.

The ARKS Foundation, together with the Terezín Initiative Institute and other partners, organized the second annual meeting of schools from several European countries participating in the museum project. Throughout the year, students and their teachers had the opportunity to prepare a presentation in which they shared what the concept of the upcoming institution should be and what its exhibitions should contain. The first day's meeting took place on the factory premises, now undergoing extensive renovation, and was attended by Erika Rosenberg, who was a close friend of Emilie Schindler, whom she wrote several important books on.

The programme continued on the second day in Brno, in the iconic setting of Villa Tugendhat (the Löw-Beers and the Tugendhats are the same family), where the exhibition Starting At Zero opened. The exhibition presents the works of exceptional women artists of the Bauhaus period, textile artists Anni Albers, Otti Berger, Lilly Reich and ceramist Lucia Rie, associated with their work on the interior of Villa Tugendhat. Today, their works are among the most significant and enduring legacies of the 20th century art industry.

The highlight of the program was the installation of a replica of the original Lilly Reich carpet. The accompanying programme included student presentations, a fashion show of garments whose materials were created according to the technologies of the textile artists mentioned above, as well as a concert and other social gatherings.



BOOK BY TOMÁŠ KRAUS, NEXT, PLEASE - PUBLICATION CEREMONY

On Thursday, 27 June 2024, we gathered at the Academia Literary Café for the launch of Tomáš Kraus' book, which bears witness to our recent past. The book is about life in socialist Czechoslovakia in the second half of the 20th century from the perspective of someone whose parents both survived the Holocaust. What was the cultural and social scene like then?

Many guests attended the launch, including Jiří Drahoš, First Deputy President of the Senate of the Czech Republic, and Tomáš Töpfer, actor, director, scriptwriter, former theatre director and senator.

The book is available in bookstores and online.



INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

EPNA Workshop in Lodz

"If you look away, if you don't help when you can, you become an accomplice" - these words of Mark Edelman resonated during the third EPNA (European Practitioners Network against Antisemitism) workshop, which took place from 10 to 12 June in Lodz, at the Mark Edelman Dialogue Centre.

The first [EPNA](#) workshop took place in Berlin in December, the second in Budapest in April, and now we have met in Lodz to focus on two main topics:

1. Manifestations of anti-Semitism not only in Poland.
2. In Budapest we analysed the situation in each country, now we are focusing on the best practices of the members of each working group:
 - Anti-Semitism in schools and universities; anti-Semitism among young people (linked to Holocaust education, combating Holocaust distortion/denial) - Dana Gabalova is a member of this group for the Terezin Initiative Institute.
 - The intersection of anti-Semitism, racism, conspiracy ideology and misogyny.
 - Online anti-Semitism, fake news, online-radicalization.

The program included a tour of Lodz.

On the last day, we met with representatives of Polish NGOs working to fight discrimination, from youth work to lobbying at the EU level.

We took away a lot of inspiring suggestions from the workshop and we are looking forward to working together again!





Meeting with Anglo-American University Students

Meeting with AAU students has become a traditional part of the school's teaching for American students, which has been operating in Prague for a long time.

The topic of the May 29 meeting was not only the history of the Holocaust in Bohemia and Moravia, but also the historical context of the Jewish community's historical development, as well as manifestations of anti-Semitism in today's world, including the current unrest on American campuses.

#AnneFrankDay

On June 12 we celebrate Anne Frank's life and legacy! 95 years ago, Anne was born in Frankfurt am Main.

She and her family went into hiding in Amsterdam in 1942. Anne died in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp aged just 15.

On this day we celebrate her life story and her legacy. Through her diary, she has made it into the rooms of millions of young people, through whom her ideals live on.

We would like to thank all those who have contributed to the project in honour of her memory! You can find the video clips on our social media channels ([Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#)). You can find the videoclips also as a composite video on [YouTube](#).



#annefrankday

WE WISH YOU ALL A NICE SUMMER!
YOUR TEAM AT ITI :)



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Your contribution will help us to keep the victims' database, the holocaust.cz portal and the specialist library running. Thank you for your support!