

<http://www.kingston-synagogue.org.uk/index.php/community/ostrava>

Londýnský kroužek Ostraváků
Der Londoner-Ostrauerkreis
Our Ostrava Group

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Ostravak Reunion

The next Ostravak Reunion will be on

Sunday 27th April, 2014

in the Embassy of the Czech Republic, by kind permission of H.E. MrMichael Žantovský, the Czech Ambassador. It is 3 days before the 69th Anniversary of the Liberation of Ostrava.

Put the date in your diary!

There will be a charge of £7.50/head to cover the (kosher) catering costs and we would welcome any donations to offset these charges.

Follow up from Newsletter #32

Michal Salomonovic

Michal writes:

Dear friends,

I would like to express my gratitude to every one of you for all the birthday wishes I received. They made me immensely happy, as I knew, these were from true friends.

Many cordial thanks and greetings from Ostrava!

Yours,

Michal Salomonovic

Krakow comes to Ostrava

The story of the visit from Krakow to Ostrava was reported in Ostravská radnice , září 2013:

Navštívili nás členové židovských obcí

my a svět

První srpnový den navštívila Radnici města Ostravy sedmdesátičlenná skupina židovských studentů a seniorů. Uvítala je vedoucí kanceláře primátora Marcela Trojáková, která je doprovodila na vyhlídkovou radniční věž.

Výpravu tvořili studenti Lauderovy školy v Praze a členové židovských obcí z Polska, Německa, Izraele a dokonce středoamerické Panamy. Ostravu si k návštěvě zvolili proto, že je inspirovala předválečná ostravská Tóra, kterou před lety zakoupil filantrop Ralph Yablon a daroval synagoze v Kingstonu u Londýna.

Akci organizuje David Lawson, dlouholetý koordinátor „Kroužku Ostraváků při synagoze v Kingstonu,“ jak potvrdil

Michal Salomonovič z Židovské obce Ostrava. Kroužek Ostraváků vznikl v Kingstonu v roce 2005, sdružují se v něm lidé narození před válkou v Ostravě, ale také jejich potomci. Všichni odešli v různých vlnách emigrace z Československa do Anglie, USA, Německa či Palestiny. (ph)



...a ještě snímek před ostravskou Novou radnicí na památku. Foto: Hana Oborilová

Exhibition in Ostrava

Evelyn McGilloway (née Rix) visited Ostrava with her family to see the exhibition of Jewish families in Ostrava, in the City Museum. They arrived the day after the exhibition was due to close, but Dr Kábrtová, the Director, held it open for an extra day for them and, when they left, presented them with the panel relating to the Rix family. Libuše Salomonovičová sent a report of the visit, kindly translated by Radan and edited by Rachel (Evelyn's daughter)

Evelyn Rix, together with her husband Jim McGilloway, children and grandchildren visited Ostrava, October 22-23, 2013. Their first day was spent

at the Jewish Community Centre where they were welcomed by the Chairwoman Dr. Milena Slaninova and Alena Sevcikova who showed them around the centre and took them to see the new Jewish Cemetery. They also viewed the *Stolpersteine* at the site of the former Rix Department Store and visited the park which is the site of the former Jewish Cemetery. The next day, they spent the morning at the Museum of Ostrava as guests of Museum Director, Dr. Kabrtová. On hearing of the family's visit, Dr. Kabrtová invited the whole family for a private tour of the exhibition *Nezapomněli jsme na ně – stopy židovských rodin v Ostravě* ('We did not forget them' – footprints of the Jewish families in Ostrava). This exhibition had been on display for several months longer than anticipated due to the high level of interest it had generated but was due to close shortly before the family arrived. Dr. Kabrtová very kindly extended the dates to enable the family to view the exhibits which included a panel documenting Adolf and Bedřiska Rix, owners of the well-known RIX Department Store in Ostrava during the pre-war era. They were guided by one of the authors - Libuše Salomonovičová and then invited by Dr. Kabrtová for an informal discussion in one of the historical rooms of the Museum. Evelyn Rix received a memorial CD ROM with the exhibition files and the associated newspaper and television reviews. Evelyn Rix and her family were the last visitors of the exhibition. The interest shown by the public was far above the most optimistic expectations and confirmed the statement in the exhibition title – "We did not forget them".
L.Salomonovičová



Dr Kabrtová told us that the exhibition had attracted much more interest than she had expected. Quite a few people from Ostrava came especially to try to find their own Jewish roots and family members who had been killed or lost in the war.

“Jewish Ostrava”

You may remember that Katerzyna Adamek wrote her thesis for the Jagellonian University, Institute of Jewish Studies in Krakow on Jewish Ostrava (Żydowska Ostrawa). We have a copy of the Polish thesis and also a

version in English, translated by Wieslaw Kurkowski and his family. We are very grateful to them all.

Well done, Katerzyna!

Old Photographers and Old Photographs

Jiří Hrdina (see Newsletters #20) has sent us another old photograph, of the visit of the Emperor in 1906:



Zachor – Remember!

On 14th January 2014, Tom Kolisch and David Lawson will give an illustrated talk at Kingston Synagogue (33/35 Uxbridge Road, Kingston upon Thames, Surrey, KT1 2LL), entitled “Zachor - Remember! From Amalek to a Tree of Life, via Ostrava”. It starts at 8:00 p.m. and you are all invited.

On 27th November, David gave a talk to Weybridge JACS (Jewish Association of Cultural Societies) called “Artists and Ambassadors; “Brewers and Bankers; Coal-merchants and a Chanukiah- The ABC of Ostrava”. The fame of Ostrava continues to spread!

News of Ostravaks

Henryk Jurkowski is 90 years young!

His son, Wieslaw writes:

Henryk Jurkowski (Jachcel) celebrated his 90th birthday on 24 October. He lives in Wroclaw with his wife, close to his younger son and daughter-in-law while his older son lives in London. His grandson, wife and great-granddaughter also live in Wroclaw.

Born in Poland, Henryk lived with his family in Bielsko-Biala until the outbreak of war in 1939. His mother Salomea was one of the seven children of Emilie and Sef Stamberger, some of whom went to live in Ostrava. After Sef's death, Emilie lived with Salomea and her children in Bielsko-Biala.

Henryk survived the war despite being in the Gross-Rosen concentration camp but lost his immediate family, his mother, grandmother and sister. Most of the Stamberger family did not survive the war either but those who did ended up scattered all over the world.

Members of the family now live in the UK, USA, New Zealand, Russia, Sweden, Poland, Israel and the Czech Republic. It was only three years ago that the existence in Ostrava and Sweden of descendants of Ernest Stamberger, who changed his name to Rusek, came to light. The family now meets regularly and two large reunions have already taken place, the second even better attended than the first. The next meeting is being planned for 2015.

Henryk celebrated the actual day of his birthday at home while the big party, held on Saturday 26 October, was attended by family, friends and former colleagues. Among the guests present at the celebrations were his cousins Klaudia and Jindrich with their partners who came especially from Ostrava for the occasion. Their visit was arranged in secret by Henryk's sons so it came as a complete and delightful surprise to the birthday boy.

A wonderful time was had by all and we wish Henryk many happy returns.

And so do we! Happy Birthday, Henryk!

Pavel Vransky

Radan sent me some information about Pavel Vransky



Pavel Wechsberg - Vranský received a high award from the Czech President Milos Zeman.

He was born in Lipnik nad Bečvou and lived in Ostrava. More about his life is here (use google translation - it works quite well in this case)

<http://www.pametnaroda.cz/data/witness/677/recording/419-transcript.html>

and

<http://aktualne.centrum.cz/domaci/grafika/2013/10/28/grafika-kdo-ziskal-statni-vyznamenani-2013/#29>

or

<http://www.parlamentnilisty.cz/arena/nazory-a-petice/Zivotopis-plk-Pavla-Vranskeho-234922>

Kurt Loew

John Gould wrote to us about Kurt and sent us a copy of the Kurt's typed memoirs:

Kurt Low, 1928-1992, was the grandson of Hermine, eldest sister of my grandfather, Heinrich Low. Kurt was therefore my second cousin. He was also more distantly related to me by a different route because Hermine married Adolf Low, her father's half brother!

The typescript was scanned and sent to the Jewish Museum in Prague where it is now in their data base. Pavla Neuner tells us:

It is very detailed and interesting description of the years in ghetto Terezin and then concentration camps. The narration starts with few days spent at pretransport collection point, then it describes transportation to Terezin. Kurt writes about the time in Terezin in very detailed way, about the place where he was accommodated, about different works he was doing, about culture and social life in ghetto. He mentions also the visit of the committee of International Red Cross and also the propaganda filming in ghetto. Kurt then writes about transportation to Auschwitz and about the life conditions there. He describes the first impressions from the concentration camps, accommodation, work, Terezin family camp and its fate. Then he writes about work in factory, march of death, transportation to Dachau, hospital in Dachau and finally liberation and leaving to CSR.

Katya Gould (née Löwová)

John also sent us a copy of a fascinating letter written by his late mother:

Excerpt from Letter from Katherina Lowova, Frydek-Mistek Czechoslovakia to her boyfriend (later, husband) in London. Letter originally in German, translated by Irene Gould.

22nd September 1938

Dear Ete

I have received today your last letter and I am compelled to answer you at length since I am astonished how naïve you are in London. You mention that by cutting off the Sudeten German areas a trouble spot in Europe would be removed. However I and any sensible person who is aware of the conditions here knows that this would be the beginning of the end. Chamberlain has simply let Hitler dictate the destruction of Czechoslovakia and hence the end of a democratic Central Europe. He was simply bamboozled by Hitler. I have told you repeatedly that a sharp separation is impossible between German and Czech areas. There are wide areas with 50% Germans, however not all of them Nazis. What will happen to them? The question of the Sudeten Germans will remain a problem in Czechoslovakia even if areas are separated. Further, we have spent millions to build fortresses; these will now be used by the Nazis against us. The newly created borders lack all natural basis, since for hundreds of years the Riesengebirge, Erzgebirge and Adlergebirge mountains and the Bohemian Forest have formed the natural borders. It is impossible to defend the new borders. The most important point however is that Hitler will never be satisfied with the granting of his demands – he will always want more. He does not give a damn about the slum areas. What he wants is the coal mining area and the steelworks; hence just the area in which I am living. Chamberlain has already been dictated by him once, he will obviously do the same again. He has sold and betrayed a “friendly” state in a way which is unknown in history. I should spit at each Englishman for the way in which they behaved. They know that with this they have signed our death sentence. And it is ridiculous and paradoxical to offer guarantees to Czechoslovakia after all the existing guarantees were so shamefully broken.

Looking at the thing from a personal perspective, the following is our situation: Our house lies around 200 meters from the river Ostrawitz. The Poles are demanding the Teschen and Friedek districts up to the Ostrawitz (I have to remark that there is not a single Pole in the whole of Friedek). Ostrawa is 20 km away from us, and German territory is only 20 kms further. You can see our beautiful dilemma.

You probably hear the news in London from the German news office. These ridiculous and unscrupulous lies and distortions have probably added a lot to the change of attitude of the Western powers. However, I fear that Chamberlain will understand soon what he has done; he has handed over Europe to the Nazis, he has destroyed the only democracy in Central Europe, he will sweep us into a terrible war. It is clear that Hitler does not only want to demand the German areas – any reasonably intelligent person will realize. I don't know whether you know that both England and France are now hated by every good person but that the whole world laughs at Chamberlain who let Hitler dictate war in order to keep the peace.

I could bring you 100 examples and proofs of the English insanity, however I am not in a position to do so by letter. I can only tell you that we are at the mercy of what pleases Hitler. Chamberlain carries the guilt and responsibility. It is also clear that the Jews will be the whipping boys – whatever happens. It would be interesting to know what the English statesmen intend to do with the giant stream of refugees. Maybe into the Danube if that is what Hitler wishes. Chamberlain calls it peace-making.

Hitler wanted more rights for the Sudeten Germans. When he got them, he wanted the Karlsbad points. When the Czechs wanted to give him the Karlsbad points, he wanted autonomy and when he had the offer of autonomy, he wanted separation. When he had the separation, he.....

Ilana Avimor, (Bienenstock, Katz and Tochten families)

Ilana found us on the web and wrote:

I found your newsletter when searching the net. I am researching family roots, and I see you have great kehila from Ostrava. My mother in-law's family came from there. I looked, but could not find if you have an on-line search for your archives. The family names I'm interested in are : Bienenstock, Katz, and Tochten.

Is there any way you can refer me to sources of information?

Gmar Hatima Tova

Ilana Avimor

Israel



Needless to say, our wonderful Libuše has found quite a lot of information about the families Ilana has found some wonderful old photographs.

Here is another one (the gold star of our old photos ...

It is the Bar Mitzva of Edek Bienenstock, in Bielsko, 1936. My mother in law, Levia's family (Loewy), came to Bielsko for the Bar Mitzvah and to say goodbye before going to Palestine.

Ilana also told us about the Stern family:



My mother in law, Levia, remembers very fondly, a family named Stern. She does not know if they were family or just good friends, but she remembers every time she came to visit, they will meet. The father was Yecheskel, and he was a Hazan there. The mother was Elsa, and they had a little boy and a girl, named Litzi (?), who played with Levia

Do you know anything about any of these families? If you do, please let Monica or David know.

Otto Winecki



Dear Dawid,

I just switched on the computer intending to write some lines to you and discovered youremail ! Do you believe in telepathy ? You have to. Yes, I'm receiving the newsletters and thank you very much for them I'm in contact with Liliana Seelman's mother Hanne Gruenpeter. I got from her a copy of a diary (in German), handwritten by her father from the day of her birth (1935) till the end of 1938, when the Poles invaded that part of the CSR. After that the family emigrated to England and later, after the war, to Chile.

I also got her parent's Ketuba and after that it turned out that we are blood- related (!). I assume that her grandfather Jacob Windholz was my father's (Josef Windholz) cousin and so I'm almost a generation older. The details of the whole story are fascinating and begging for a writer's pen.

As I already wrote you, my mother Selma Ring was born in Michalkovice and the whole Ring family lived in Ostrava and in many other places in that region. My dear wife Christine (in reality Irene Wilder from Stanislawow in Galizia) wrote already 3 books about herself, us together (for the last...59 years) and our whole families and it would be just impossible to write about all this on one e-mail. One of the books titled "The Girl in the Check Coat" is published in English by Vallentine Mitchell, London (2007), the other two – in Polish. On GOGGLE you will find a lot of informations about them all under "Christine Winecki – "The Girl in the Check Coat"" and also about "Od Stanislawowa do Australii" and "Kangur z Ustronia". The last one is all about my family and is available only in Muzeum in Ustron (Muzeum Ustronskie , e-mail of the Muzeum Director, Mrs. Lidia Szkaradnik is liszka@2op.pl On GOOGLE is also quite a lot about our last visit to Ostrava (2010) and about me being the "passenger" of Eichmann's transport to Nisko (vide "Otto Winecki-Windholz Nisko"). All the books contain dozens of pre-war family photos and original documents, as I'm one of the very few older Jews, who – thanks to good local people – managed to recover all this after the war. Copies of all of them are already in Liba and Michal Salomonovic's archival collection. Just now, our old friend ass.prof.Janusz Spyra from the Silesian University in Cieszyn, is finishing the publication of a substantial album about the Jews of Slask Cieszynski (Slezke Tesinsko) – their history from the late XVIII century until the end of WW II. I was happy to be able to contribute to his work, as at the moment I'am perhaps one of the last and oldest survivors (90+) of the Jewish communities in that region. I hope you will find time to read Christine's book (available at AMAZON or at the publisher) and/or the items in GOOGLE which will tell you a lot about us. Beside that, I'm always ready to answer any your particular questions, providing I will be able to do so.

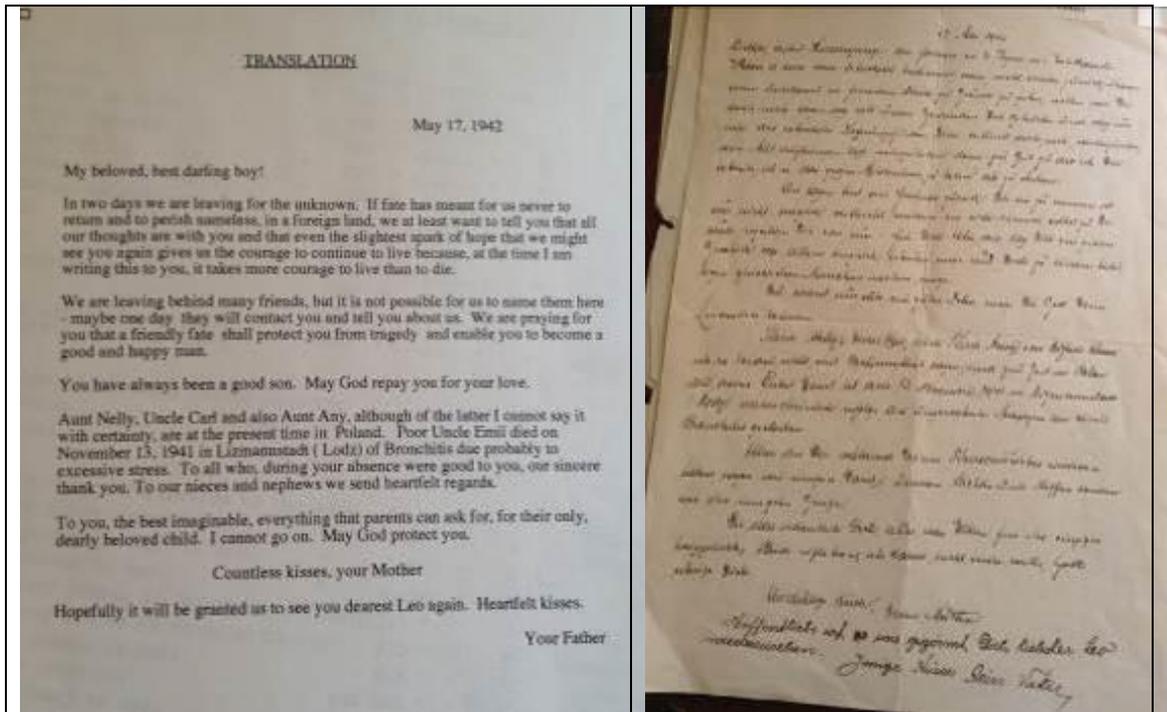
In the not too far future I intend to make a list of my family members living before the war in Ostrava and in that region – maybe an almost miracle will happen again like in the last case with the Gruenpeter-Seelmans ?So, Dear David, once more many thanks for the newsletters (looking for the next ones !) and on that note it's time to close this long, long email with one kind request – please write a bit about yourself and your family. I remain with best wishes and warm regards yours

Otto with Christine (in Polish – Krysia)

Ann Altman (née Körner)

Ann sent some very moving scans of documents. She writes:

I've been busy as the executor of my late 93-year-old aunt's estate. Here are some amazing items that I found among her papers. The letter and its translation describe the deportation and death of my grandmother Anny and my grandfather Emil. The list is part of the list submitted to the Nazis for the "aryanization" of property by my great aunt Nelly (all lived near Brno). The autobiography of my uncles Leo and Fricek and my aunt Nini (who survived the camps) are available on line at <http://orsten.com/Memories/Home.html> All three memoirs are extraordinary.



Seznam věcí, které byly v majetku p. Nelly Körnerové, narozené 18. 11. 1888, v Brně.

1 kus	váha 1100 gr	.....	.....	.....
1 prsten	" 180 "	.....	.....	.....
1 náušnice na nitku	" 130 "	.....	.....	.....
1 náušnice	" 850 "	.....	.....	.....
1 náramek	" 350 "	.....	.....	.....
1 talířek na vlněný	" 700 "	.....	.....	.....
1 šatka na cigarety	" 300 "	.....	.....	.....
1 šatka	" 780 "	.....	.....	.....
1 šatka	" 1200 "	.....	.....	.....
1 souprava dětská	" 40 "	.....	.....	.....
107 kusů stříbrných předmětů /váha váha 880 g/	" 4005 "	.....	.....	.....
1 šatka na čouhání, váha 600 g	" .....	.....	.....	.....
1 tabuletky	váha 70 "	.....	.....	.....
1 pušinka	" 100 "	.....	.....	.....
1 šatka prsten s jup. perle 14 kar. váha 3 gr	" .....	.....	.....	.....
1 perlová šatka /barok/	" .....	.....	.....	.....
1 šatka prsten /barok/ 14 kar.	" 1 "	.....	.....	.....
1 šatka prsten 14 kar.	" 2,2 gr "	.....	.....	.....
1 briliantový prsten 14 kar., váha briliantů 3,5 "	" .....	.....	.....	.....
1 briliantový prsten /2 vlněný briliantů/	" 2,1 "	.....	.....	.....
1 perleťní prsten 14 kar.	" 4,4 "	.....	.....	.....
1 přívěšek /stříbrný/	ant 1,2 "	.....	.....	.....
1 šatka tenký 14 kar.	" 3,4 "	.....	.....	.....
1 šatka náramek kruh 14 kar., váha 36 gr	" .....	.....	.....	.....
1 šatka náramek kruh 14 kar.	" 26,5 gr "	.....	.....	.....
1 stříbrná brčka /2 nejvyšší právo, váha 10 "	" .....	.....	.....	.....
1 stříbrná brčka	ant 18 "	.....	.....	.....
1 stříbrná mince	" 25 "	.....	.....	.....

Michael Gordy writes to let us know that Leon Deutsch (mentioned at bottom of page 7) is his cousin. So our family match-making continues!

Susanne Medas (Kolisch)

Susanne found us on the web, looking for Kolisch connections. She wrote to us:

By chance I found something on my computer - a gathering of members originally from Ostrava, Moravia. at your synagogue. There I saw the name Tom Kolisch; - is he a member of your congregation?

I am 90 years old - my mother was born in North Bohemia, her maiden name was Gisela Kolisch. It is the first time that I have come across this name and I wonder whether by any chance we might be related although I never heard that my grandfather Adolf Kolisch or my great grandfather Isaak Kolisch had relatives in Moravia. I still have a Kolisch relative in North Bohemia, but he has not done any research into the family's past. Would you be so kind and pass this information on to Tom Kolisch please?

My name is Susanne Medas - I am a so-called "Winton child" and I live in North Kensington, London W10

Tom and she are now in touch although it is proving difficult to establish the family connection. Tom's cousin in Israel is now working on it!
Susanne tells us more about her family:

whether there possibly could be a connection between our families even though you don't know - as yet - about Isaak and Amalie Kolisch who were my great-grandparents.

I did not know of any connection in Moravia - but who knows? There could be way back! This is not exactly relevant but my father's surname was Bernstein - his father lived in Vienna but on trying to research his ancestors I learnt that he was born in Tarnow, Poland and I gather that Tarnow had a big number of Bernsteins before the pogroms and may be later in the Nazi period - so maybe there is a connection with the Kolisch clan...

My grandfather Adolf Kolisch had a shop in a small village not far from Liberec and I was told that he was buried in the former Jewish cemetery in Jablones nad Nisou which later on was built over, so no way of getting information via a possible tomb stone. ...

My mother Gisela, had a brother called Leo Kolisch who died very young; one of his sons called Ernst possibly born during the first world war - was living and working in Jablonec near Liberec in the bijouterie industry; his wife was not Jewish and he was spared the fate of most Jews; in 1949 he emigrated to Canada and two sons survive him there as far as I know. I no longer have contact with his sons or daughter; however, since you are going to the Czech Republic next year may be you can establish a link between Kolisch in the Sudeten and Kolish in Moravia.

My own parents, Gisela and Richard Bernstein died in Auschwitz - I came to England in July 1939 on a Winton Kindertransport, aged nearly 16...

Teachers Workshop in Ostrava

Michal Frankl of the Jewish Museum in Prague wrote to tell me about their large education project (Naši nebo cizí?, www.nasinebocizi.cz) as part of which they recently held a workshop for teachers in Ostrava. Tereza Štěpková sent a report of the event:

Help in the Unlawful Times
September 12, 2013

We have organized the conference for the teachers of basic and high schools in Moravské muzeum i Ostrava on September 12, 2013.

The program was focused on the help to the Jews from the side of the minority in the Holocaust period.

The first lecture held by writer **Alena Wagnerová** looked on the two women, strong personalities very important in 1920 – 1950:

- The journalist and anti-Nazi activist **Milena Jesenská**
- The partner of Přemysl Pitter, **Olga Fierzová**, the social worker and helper to the Jewish and German displaced children in Czechoslovakia.

The program continued by discussion with the Holocaust Witnesses – Mr. **Luděk Eliáš** and Mrs. **Zuzana Skácelová**. She was imprisoned with her family in the Slovak camp Vyhne and then in the forest in South Slovakia with the help of the village citizens till the liberation in April 1945.

All of the program was moderated by Mr. **Petr Brod**, journalist and historian.

The program took place in the frame of the educational project “Citizen or Foreigner? The history of Czech Jews in 20th Century”, which is the cooperation of the Jewish Museum in Prague and Terežín Initiative Institute.

We have presented the on-line collection of the documents related to the Jews from Ostrava of the Jewish Museum in Prague:

http://collections.jewishmuseum.cz/index.php/simpleGallery/Show/displaySet/set_id/18

We spent a very nice afternoon with 45 teachers from basic and high schools in region and other people interested in the theme.



Opening of the Conference



Audience



Alena Wagnerová



Petr Brod

(Belated) CHANUKAH GREETINGS

We wish all our readers a happy Chanukah



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זְכוֹר

Zachor – Remember!

From Amalek to a Tree of Life, via
Ostrava

An illustrated talk by
Tom Kolisch and David Lawson

Wednesday 14th January at 8:00 p.m.
in the synagogue

Refreshments will be provided.

KINGSTON  **N**
Ostrava Scroll Group