

Centropa Summer Academy – Berlin 2022





“Centropa was different [from other Holocaust programs] in two significant ways: first, attending a conference in a location that is, in itself, a primary resource, is unequaled. Every piece of information was connected to a tangible. There is something about actually being in a location that allows deeper and broader learning. Second, having the opportunity to engage for a whole week with educators from other countries is unique. Every moment was filled with multiple perspectives from learned and passionate people. Being able to process with them and listen and connect made for an invaluable experience!” *Lhisa Almashy, N. Greenacres, FL, USA*

In 2007, we brought nine teachers working in American schools to Vienna and Budapest. During our eight days together, these American educators met and brainstormed with Austrian and Hungarian public school teachers. Then, all during the school year that followed, they stayed in touch with each other. The Europeans asked about the American Civil Rights era, something they rarely taught. The Americans asked the Europeans how they were teaching Holocaust-related subjects and which books meant the most to their students.

Without intending to do so, we had established an international peer-to-peer network and by 2019 we had brought together more than seven hundred forty teachers, museum educators, social studies administrators, and educational ministry staffers from nineteen countries. We have toured Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Sarajevo, Zagreb, Frankfurt, Mannheim, Prague, Krakow, and Warsaw. We have met with historians, politicians, novelists, and civil society activists. And we have turned the great cities of Central Europe into classrooms—for teachers.

When our Summer Academy participants return to their classrooms and begin their lesson on Vienna’s golden age, they can show pictures of Gustav Klimt’s paintings they took in the Belvedere Museum. When it’s time to talk about the Theresienstadt Ghetto, they can show the pictures—and offer Centropa interviews—of those who survived that hell-on-Earth.

“I have participated in other seminars on Jewish history, but what makes the Centropa Summer Academy unique is that it offers the history teacher more content than we can use in a decade. Centropa’s tour of Berlin gave us so much, and I got to experience all this while working with teachers from fifteen other countries!”

Horatiu Suciu, Lugoj, Romania

Every city in Europe has much to offer in the way of history, but for teachers, no city has what Berlin has, because this city stood in the spotlight of an entire century: from the greatness of German Jewry to its destruction, from the Berlin Airlift to the fall of the Berlin Wall. The drama of history swirls all around you here.

At Centropa, our Summer Academies have three goals:

- to add to the knowledge base of our teachers;
- to improve their skill set for combining history and technology;
- to create partnerships so teachers can learn from and with each other and connect their students during the school year.

This report describes what we accomplished in Berlin, 4 through 11 July 2022, and you will also hear, in their own words, what our teachers tell us about their experience.

Feel free to be in contact with us should you have any questions and thank you for reading this.



Working, touring, learning together: Anke from Germany, Amikam from Israel, and Ewa from Poland.

Berlin ...



... where history is above your head

in the Bavarian Quarter, on signs posted on lampposts that describe which laws Nazis passed against Jews, such as being fired from their jobs, losing their right to drive, when they could shop.



... where history is right in front of you

here on Grosse Hamburgerstrasse in Berlin Mitte, where bullet holes from (presumably) Soviet soldiers shot it out with Germans.



... where history is at your feet

teachers are looking into the memorial at Bebelplatz, where the Nazis held their book burning in May 1935.

Ukrainian teachers and today's headlines



Some of this year's participants flew in to Berlin from as far away as Los Angeles and others came from the suburbs of Berlin. More than three hundred teachers from fifteen countries applied and we could accommodate seventy of them.

One thing we were sure of: with the ongoing war in Ukraine and the tumult at its borders, we figured no Ukrainian teachers would be able to join us this year. We

were wrong. Forty-four applied. We were able to invite four from Ukraine along with one Ukrainian teacher who is currently working with her students from a temporary home in Poland, the other is teaching in the German city of Bonn. During our Summer Academy, these teachers shared their stories of what it's like to live in a war zone and how they are able to teach their young charges. On the following page, Inna Khomenko shares with us her story...

"When the first wave of panic blew over, I felt something like relief because from this moment, we can call a spade a spade. War is war. Russia is the enemy."

Valentyna Merzhyievska, English teacher from Kyiv

"It is agonizing to consider our losses. When the bodies of our soldiers are delivered back here to our town, all the inhabitants take to the streets to say goodbye. These men, and some are just teenagers, are our heroes."

Liudmyla Khomik, History teacher from Volyn region

"I suggested to my colleagues that we bake cakes—'Ukrainian snacks'—from the beginning of the war. We brought food from home. We prepare cakes daily in the school kitchen and take them to our defenders at checkpoints."

Tetiana Moskalenko, History teacher from Cherkassy region

"My mom had my passport delivered to me at the bridge at Irpin, a very nice suburb just outside Kyiv. I burst out crying when I got there: all the smoke—the tanks, the guns, people on crutches, and babies evacuating, all running from the Russians. Our soldiers had destroyed the bridge to slow the Russians down."

Viktoriia Kadyuk, English teacher from Irpin

"Our quiet town of Sambir is in the west of our country. So, it should be safe from attacks. It wasn't. Kalyniv, a military garrison, is nearby. It was bombed five times. Back on the 24th of February—I woke up and had no idea what was happening. It was terrible—some people packed their things and ran away from Ukraine, some rushed to the supermarkets and bought everything they could... Hundreds of people stood before every ATM. My son is 12, and he was so scared."

Olha Taratula, English teacher from Lviv region



Inna Khomenko
Economics teacher
from Chernihiv region

“We returned after more than a month. Chernihiv is one of the most beautiful cities in Ukraine; it is where I used to inhale the scent of my mother’s flowers. But the roses are gone after the bombardments. Now I just taste something bitter and salty. I still walk around the city, I enjoy its beauty, even if it is wounded. This is my home.

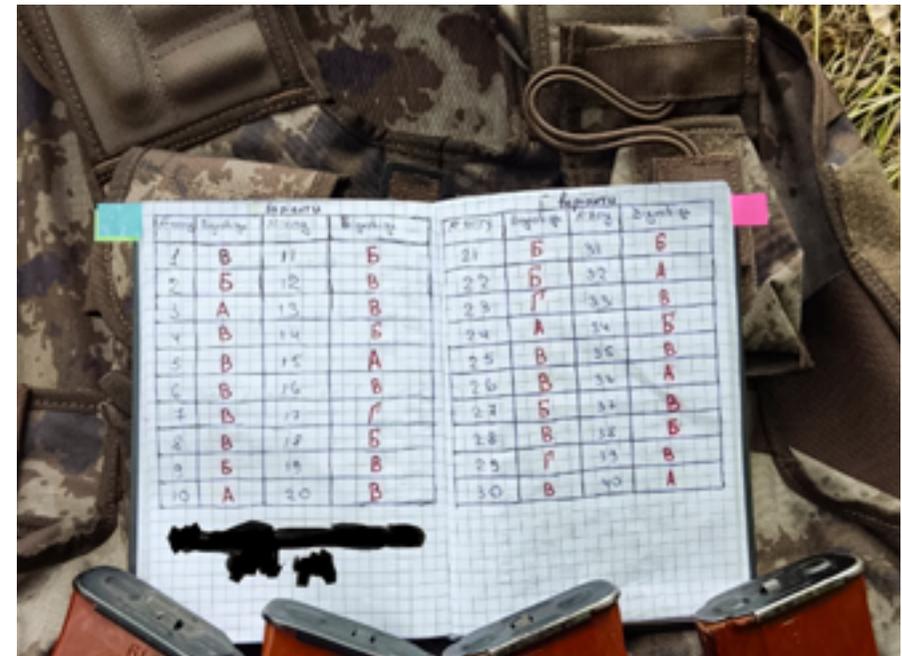
We are trying to return to our normal life, but our house was hit by Russian 120mm artillery. It has been destroyed. It is such a bitter pill to swallow, knowing how you have invested so much love and money and care in your house and garden for so long, and then see it lying there in rubble.

I very much want to attend classes and communicate in person with my students. But now it’s only via Zoom since the war scattered them around the world, although some have come back to Ukraine. You listen to their stories. You understand how these teenagers, so loved and protected, have grown up overnight and had to leave their home for the outside, safer, world, and are now trying to earn a living.

One of my older students volunteered to fight and took a state exam while at the front. And his tests were written just on his lap. He sent me this picture, but I have blacked out his name. What a dedicated student! How horrible that a sweet, sensitive teenager is taking school tests like this. To think that 18-year-olds are sitting in the trenches instead of my classroom.

My own 14-year-old son falls to the ground whenever he hears an airplane, and he covers his ears with his hands. This war changed us all. It ruined our normal lives. But we will continue to fight, and we will win.”

Inna lives in a village just outside Chernihiv, a Ukrainian city the Russians attacked, surrounded, and pummeled in the first week of the war. Inna and her family managed to flee just as the Russians were sealing the city off. By late March, Ukrainian Forces had retaken the area and Inna and her family returned home.



The speakers we learned from



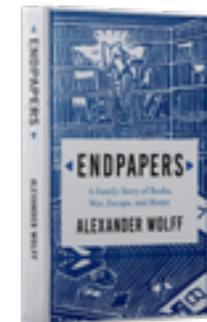
Top left. Journalist Joshua Hammer (author of, among other books, *The Badass Librarians of Timbuktu*) interviews Alexander Wolff. Alex's grandfather was the legendary German Jewish publisher Kurt Wolff. Kurt's father served in the German Army. His mother came from the Merck family, one of the largest pharmaceutical firms in the world. We highly recommend Alex's book, *Endpapers*.

Dr Marta Havryshko is a Ukrainian historian from Lviv, a scholar at the Babyn Yar Memorial Center and is currently a guest lecturer in Basel. She spoke to our group on the history of Jews in Ukraine.

Dr Ulrich Baumann is the managing director of the Memorial for Europe's Murdered Jews. Uli has been a friend of Centropa for more than twenty years and he shared stories with our teachers on how the museum and its educational programs are being used today.



Bavarian-born Professor Dr Michael Brenner is one of Germany's leading historians on twentieth century German Jewish history. He teaches at both American University and in Munich. Michael was kind enough to paint for us a picture of German Jewry in the years just before the Holocaust.



“The keynote lecture on 20th century Germany by Michael Brenner was a very important, and accessible, introduction into German Jewish life, sparking my interest. It was fascinating to listen to Professor Brenner describe the Weimar era. I wanted to know more (and still do) because it helps shape the full picture of how we got to the events of the Holocaust and WWII.”

Andrew Eitel, Randolph, NJ, USA

Walking Berlin's historic Jewish quarter

The old Jewish cemetery

The Oranienburgerstrasse Synagogue

The home of Regina Jonas, the first woman rabbi in the world



It was in 1729 when a fourteen-year-old lad from Dessau arrived in Berlin. Only a few Jews lived in the city then. The teenager's name was Moses Mendelssohn and by the time he died in 1786, he had changed the way a great many Jews saw themselves and related to the outside world. It was Mendelssohn who encouraged his co-religionists to live outside the ghetto—and not just physically. He felt Jews could play a much larger role in the societies in which they lived, and he set his own example by engaging with the most famous philosophers of his time, all while he set about translating the Five Books of Moses into German.

Over the decades that followed, Jews everywhere in Europe began working in the professions and in industry. As the industrial revolution took hold, restrictions against Jews fell in one country after another. By the mid 1800s, they not only studied in universities

they began teaching in them. A booming Prussian state needed all the talent it could get, and after the disparate German states and principalities formed a single country in 1871, Berlin became its capital as well as a magnet for Jews from Eastern Europe. By the twentieth century, some half million Jews lived in Germany and around one hundred seventy-five thousand had settled in Berlin, ranging from poor eastern Jews from East European shtetls to successful publishers and factory owners.

These were the decades when Berlin's Jews built glorious synagogues, a network of high schools, vocational schools, orphanages, and institutes of higher learning.

Berlin had become, in fact, the most important city for Jews anywhere in Europe. Until 1933.

Walking the Holocaust. The destruction of German Jewry

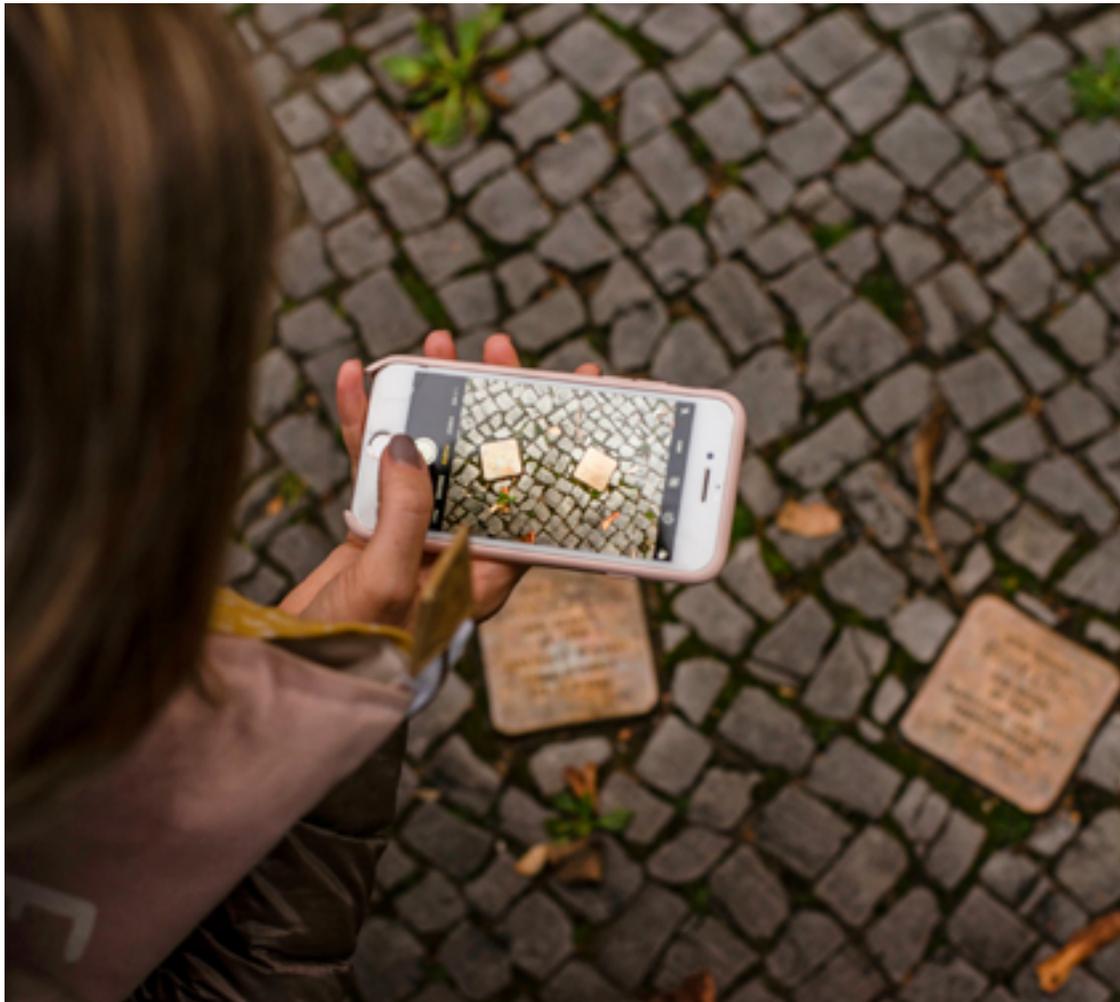
Bebelplatz (where Joseph Göbbels had books burned in May 1933)

The Bavarian Quarter

The Sachsenhausen Concentration Camp

The Topography of Terror (on the grounds of the former Gestapo Headquarters)

The Wannsee Conference Center



That a city could descend from being one of the world's great cultural centers to the epicenter of evil is still hard to fathom. But it's all here in Berlin: Heinrich Himmler's Gestapo headquarters, the infamous house on Lake Wannsee where Adolf Eichmann and Reinhard Heydrich met with top German officials to discuss extermination of an entire people and, just north of Berlin, the Sachsenhausen concentration camp. Throughout Berlin (and scores of other cities in Europe), we found brass stumbling stones, or Stolpersteine, engraved with the names of those Jews taken away and murdered.

"Visiting Sachsenhausen was educational and shocking at the same time, as I visited for the first time such a place. After the excursion I just wanted to be silent. But it was good that I got to sit with teachers from other countries to discuss what we had just seen. That way, we could reflect on the enormity of the crime, and how to bring it up to our students in ways they can cope with. It was so beneficial to talk this through with other teachers." *Olha Taratula, Sambir, Ukraine*

"I loved the Bavarian Quarter walking tour. I have never seen anything like it: just painted icons—a loaf of bread here, a pressed shirt there—all attached to lampposts, and on the back of each we read the law that forbade Jews to do certain things. It's all in an everyday, lovely neighborhood. I plan to use the materials I found online about the project and will show them to my students." *Marta Wasilewska, Bydgoszcz, Poland*



“Sachsenhausen was one of the most difficult places I have visited in my life. I had very mixed feelings before this visit, but I knew I needed to see this piece of history first-hand. I knew it would be hard, and I knew it would be emotional. I felt all the emotions that I expected, but ten-fold. Everything from walking the rocky yards, to seeing the barracks, facing the incinerator, to seeing the everyday local homes that surrounded the camp. I felt like I was walking through a nightmare that so many never woke up from. I am extremely grateful for the visit and the tour, the pain of so many will remain engraved in my brain and in my heart.” *Karina Duenas, El Monte, CA, USA*

“This visit to Sachsenhausen touched my feelings the most. Although I teach the subject of concentration camps in Germany before and during WWII, I was overwhelmed at the site. I took dozens of short videos and I am currently working on creating a film about this camp. The guide was great; he knew his role and it felt like talking with someone who knows what he is doing—and this is so important for the visitors in the camp.” *Yanai London, Rishon Lezion, Israel*







In no other city in the world did the Cold War play such a dramatic role. Every tour of Cold War Berlin should begin in the monumental and eerie Soviet War Memorial in Treptow Park. Hundreds of thousands of Soviet soldiers fought house to house, some eighty thousand died fighting. Three years later in 1948, Stalin tried to force the Allies to give up their hold on West Berlin and instigated a road block to surround the city. Instead of being intimidated, the Allies began the Berlin Airlift, and cargo planes landed in Berlin's Tempelhof airport every two minutes for more than a year.

Then in 1961 the Soviets tried once again to seal off the city with its infamous wall, only to have it fall, along with the Soviet puppet state of East Germany, in 1989.

For history or social studies teachers, visiting such places brings history to life, especially when an American teacher stands side by side with teachers from Hungary, Greece, and Israel and they compare what is taught in their schools, and what isn't—and why.

Providing teachers with content they can use the day they get back to their classrooms



Centropa is unique in that almost all the content we offer today is based on the database of Jewish memory we collected between 2000 and 2009 in fifteen European countries. With more than forty thousand pages of personal stories and twenty-five thousand annotated old photographs, we bring history to life in ways teachers and students can relate to. And our Summer Academies act as platforms for teachers to share best practices with each other.

Pictured above, left, ninety year old Elisabeth Marcuse is speaking in London about the day her father took her to the train station in Cologne, never to see him again.



“The film you showed us on the Kindertransport is unique. It is comprised one hundred percent of Kindertransport refugees telling us about their flight. And it is the perfect length! It isn’t only good for Holocaust lessons. This film brings home to today’s children what it is like to be a refugee.”
Nikos Amanatidis, Thessaloniki, Greece

Below left, that’s Ilay Elmkies, an Israeli teenager playing football (soccer) in the TSG Hoffenheim Academy, where young players are groomed for Hoffenheim’s professional team. We asked Ilay to narrate for us the story of a Jewish family from Hoffenheim, which he did in Hebrew, in German, and in English. Not surprisingly, the film is one of our most successful.

“I know a great many other teachers feel as I do: you actually had a seventeen-year-old Israeli narrate a film on the Holocaust, and the film is deeply moving. Of course, most of us will use this film!”
David Castillo, El Monte, CA, USA

“Because I love these films very much, I have taught them to my Israeli students six times already and will continue to do so in the new school year. Denise and I chose *Zahor* as the primary resource for our project during the CSA, and I am looking forward to working with her in the future. Denise works in Los Angeles, and I am really excited to work with her and her classes, together with my classes, teaching about this movie. We are currently working on a Unit of Work called *Zahor*, where we will focus on the main characters’ perspectives of their stories. I am sure it’s going to be a wonderful experience.”
Yahel Ox, Mazkeret Batya, Israel

Working together: no one teaches a teacher better than another teacher



Jacqueline Messinger of Westfield, NJ, Nikos Amanatidis of Thessaloniki, and Jamie King of Greensboro, NC

„As an Israeli teacher, I have participated in a great many seminars dealing with Jewish history and the Holocaust. What sets the Centropa Academy apart is the variety of teachers who come to it—teachers from different countries, different faiths, and with different levels of knowledge about the topics discussed during the academy.

Even more unique is the fact that the question of the background from which the participant comes is not raised and is, in fact, irrelevant. In addition, I like the variety of topics presented during the CSA. These topics are interesting in themselves, but when presented in combination, they provide a broad perspective on the historical events and social processes presented in the CSA. This makes it possible to link these events to every day, contemporary issues and, more importantly, to my students. All this I get by working alongside seventy other teachers for a very intense learning experience.”

Amikam Peled, Kibbutz Tzora, Israel



“This was truly one of the best seminars I have ever attended. There were lots of practical ideas which can be implemented in the classroom and I met many great teachers I can collaborate with in the future. There are so many positive aspects of the seminar: practicality, experiential learning, sharing ideas, learning about new materials, and an international environment which offers possibilities of working together in the future.” *Biserka Zajec, Varaždin, Croatia*

“Working in my elective group definitely helped me build skills and add to my knowledge base, which is what you said we would do! Working with my two partners and sharing our ideas seemed to come so naturally. I am very happy to say that the three of us clicked right from the beginning. I am looking forward to incorporating Centropa’s resources into my art class for the first time this year and to share my students’ final projects with my partners and their students.” *Karina Duenas, El Monte, CA, USA*

The Cold War Quiz



The Cold War Quiz

Neil Armstrong was the first person in space, true or false?

The Berlin Airlift began in 1948, 1949, or 1950?

Which year was the Cuban Missile Crisis?

What was the name of Che Guevara's East German Jewish girlfriend?

Gennadi Gerasimov, Mikhail Gorbachev's spokesman, said in 1989 that his country was following "the Sinatra Doctrine." What was that?

The thrill of victory. The agony of defeat. On the final day of every Centropa Summer Academy, we lighten the mood and divide our participants into multi-country groups, all in service to exploring the history of the Cold War. Several of our teachers now use the quiz with their own students. Our master of ceremonies was Nikolai Duffield, an MA student in European and Russian Affairs at the University of Toronto.

Our participants

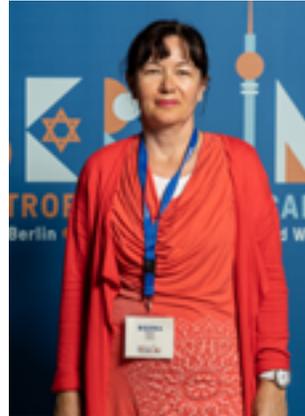
Bosnia and Herzegovina



Anna Kozemjakin



Uma Isic



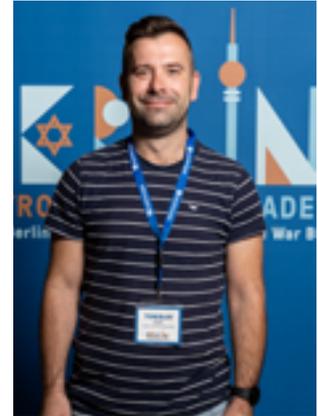
Biserka Zajec



Marina Cvijic



Tamara Jankovic



Tomislav Simic

Germany



Anke Schinner



Stefan Fooss



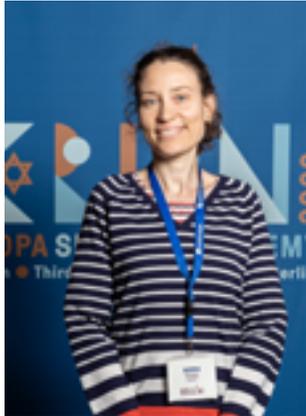
Alexandra Patrikiou



Nikos Amanatidis

Greece

Hungary



Dora Kovacs



Eva Marton



Zsolt István Vódlí



Zsusanna Szabadyné Ligeti



Svetlana Kostetskaia



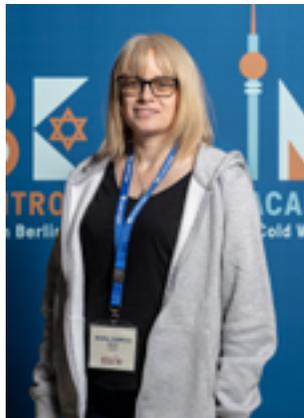
Tatiana Cobileanschi

Moldova

Romania

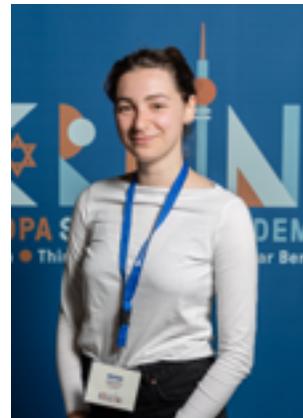


Horatiu Suciú



Maria-Isabella Miron

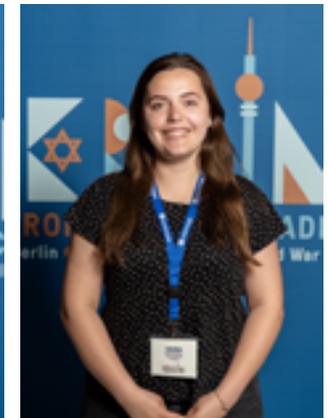
Lithuania



Irina Lapucko



Monika Rupsyte

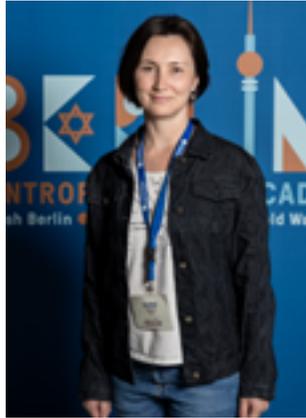


Vaida Rasimaite

Israel



Amikam Peled



Elena Yugova



Ettie Abraham



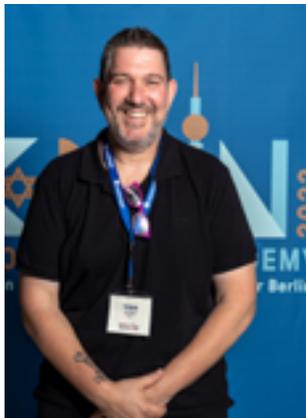
Keren Edrei



Orit Berlin



Yahel Ox



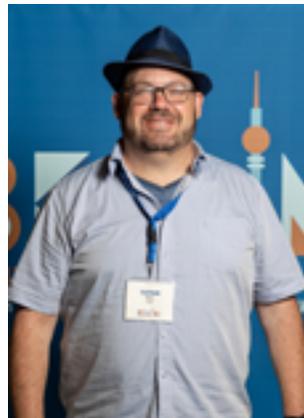
Yanai London



Yarin Raban



Yonat Gross



Yotam Bien

North Macedonia



Daniela Sterjova



Radojka Helman



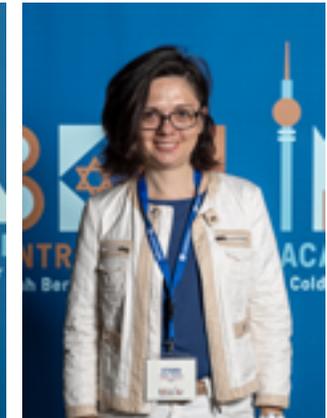
Tamara Petreska



Biljana Albahari



Jelena Krucicanin



Stana Tadic Pantic

Serbia

Poland



Ewa Arendarczyk



Marek Mrozowski



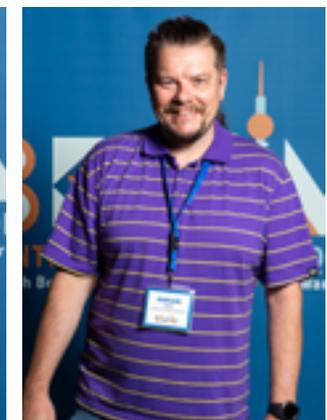
Marta Wasilewska



Marzena Szugiero



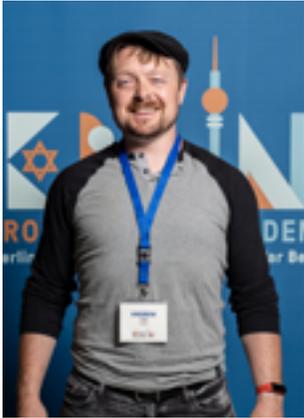
Monika Anuskiewicz



Damjan Snoj

Slovenia

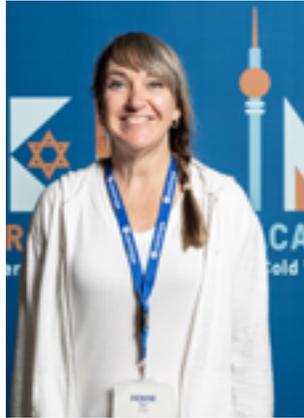
USA



Andrew Eitel



David Castillo



Denise Tarr



Emilee Moss



Emily Bollinger



Eric Gutierrez



Erin Blankenship



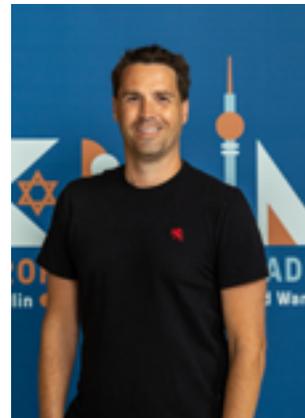
Gabrielle Zuccaro



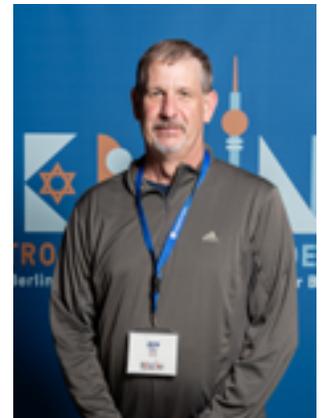
Heather Brougham-Cook



Jacqueline Messinger



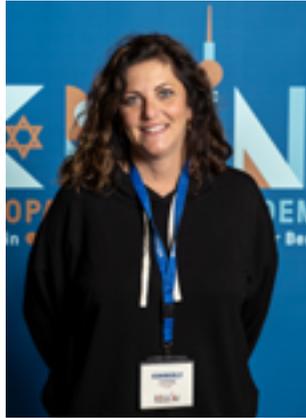
Jamie King



Jeff Fehr



Karina Rose Duenas



Kimberly Coombs



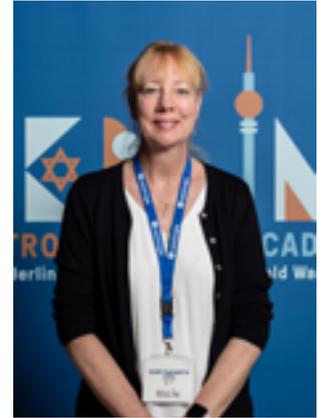
Laurie Garcia



Lhisa Almashy



Margaret Adjoga-Otu



Mary Elizabeth Weide



Sarah Lazarus



Stacy Steele



Yara Lugo

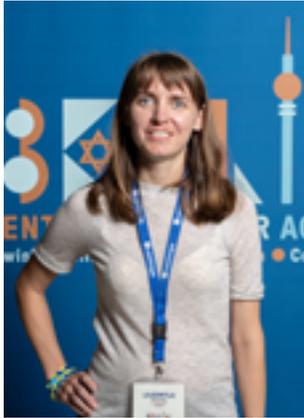


Ellen Mary Resnek

Ukraine



Inna Khomenko



Liudmyla Khomik



Olha Taratula



Valentyna Merzhyievska



Victoria Godik



Viktoriia Kadiuk



Tetiana Moskalenko

Group photos



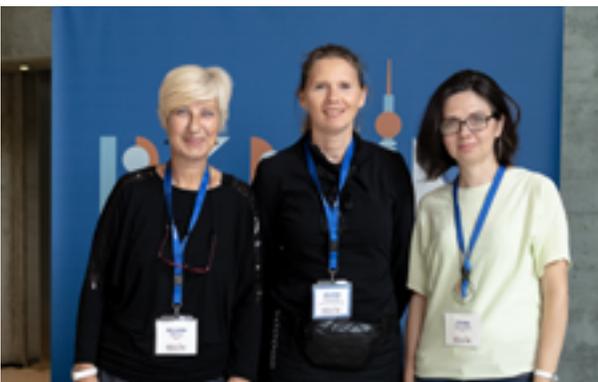
Ukraine



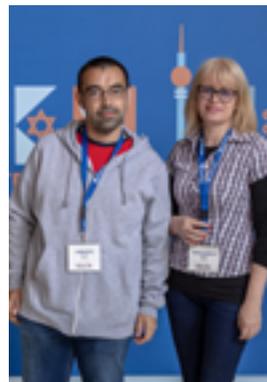
Poland



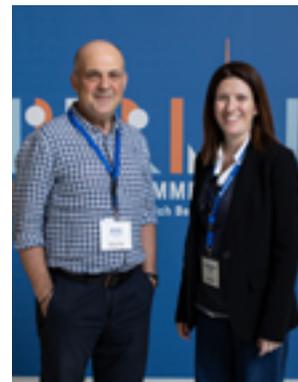
North Macedonia



Serbia



Romania



Greece



Lithuania



All US Teachers



Hungary



Israel

Thanks to those who made this year's program possible



THE FLORIDA HOLOCAUST MUSEUM
RAQUEL FLATOW HAAS AND MICHAEL HAAS, PEPPER PIKE
INSIGHT THROUGH EDUCATION
RENEÉ BRACHFELD AND MARK NOVAK, WASHINGTON, DC
FRANK AND SHELLY WEINER HOLOCAUST EDUCATION TEACHER
TRAINING ENDOWMENT

PAULA AND JERRY GOTTESMAN FAMILY SUPPORTING FOUNDATION
CLASSROOM WITHOUT BORDERS, PITTSBURG
MILTON A. AND ROSLYN Z WOLF FAMILY FOUNDATION
SOUTH CAROLINA COUNCIL ON THE HOLOCAUST
BABBO AND DIDI MILLER FUND, GREENSBORO
HOLOCAUST MUSEUM HOUSTON

