

Final Report

Webinar “How to teach 20th century Polish Jewish history”
 Connecting Polish students & teachers with their heritage, and with their neighbors”
 May 22 & May 29, 2020



In partnership with



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Part one: Foreword

Welcome to our new world. At this writing, in July, 2020, we have witnessed the closing of schools worldwide with teachers taking to video conference calls with their students. Teenagers stuck at home have to make do with dad’s clunky desktop, mom’s tablet, or, preferably for them, their own smart phones. Life isn’t easier for their teachers, who often have to share their work computer with their own children and spouses. And this is the learning landscape they now inhabit.

In these frustrating times, teachers and students need what Centropa was born to give them: easy-to-access content that tells stories that enchant, spellbind and educate. And all of it available at the click of a mouse or the swipe of a finger—in nine different languages.

As Centropa’s director for European educational programs, it is my pleasure to share with you the results of a webinar we conducted over two separate days that brought together 77 teachers from six countries, and we were thrilled with how our Polish, Czech, Ukrainian, Moldovan, Slovak, and Hungarian teachers fed off each other’s energy, shared ideas, and even had some brilliant young students electrify us with presentations.

We hope you will enjoy reading through this report, and we welcome the chance to engage with you as we move forward and expand throughout each of these countries.

Fabian Rühle - Program Director
Magdalena Farnesi – Logistics Manager

Maximilian von Schoeler- Project Manager
Ninja Stehr- Social and Digital Media Manager

“During lockdown, I used the Silberring film in a lesson on Zoom and received great feedback from my students. I will email a detailed lesson plan so other teachers can get the results I got from my students, who responded so positively. Centropa understands that students love learning history through personal stories and even as a teacher I must admit they learn more from films like this than they do from entire history books. Please make us another film soon.- Barnaba Bonati, Lodz

Centropa in Poland: an assessment

Centropa has spent the past 15 years working in education and one of our primary goals is to see that Jewish stories and Jewish history are remembered in the lands where the Holocaust took place. To ensure that happens, our teachers develop their own lesson plans, because when they design their own syllabus, they are far more likely to use it, year after year. That means we are building sustainability in education, and we do so through project-based learning.

We have enjoyed great success in Poland primarily because, thanks to the Claims Conference, the Koret Foundation, and the Taube Foundation, Anka Grupinska and her team interviewed 67 elderly Jews in five Polish cities while digitizing and annotating 1,227 of their old family pictures.

In 2011, the US State Department granted us \$85,000 to produce a multimedia film based on our Polish archive, design and print a traveling exhibition, and develop a Polish language website. With those tools in place, we have held ten teachers’ seminars in four Polish cities for a total of 252 educators. More than half of those teachers have stayed active and engaged since then. Thanks, again, to the Taube Foundation, the Koret Foundation, the Kronhill-Pletka Foundation and the Friedrich-Ebert Foundation of Germany, as they have supported these seminars.

Over the past eight years we have partnered with several organizations but the Galicia Jewish Museum has been the most open, enthusiastic, and thorough as they have recruited teachers and followed up with them. Special thanks to Centrum Taubago in Warsaw, which has been helpful in seminars held there and, recently, the Brama Grodzka Teatr NN in Lublin.

Thanks to the German Foreign Office, we have now expanded our program into Ukraine and Moldova. We rely on our Polish and German teachers to share their best lesson plans with them.

With a decade and a half of experience working in nine European countries, we can state that working in Poland has proven to be our single most rewarding experience. For instance:

--when we offer to host a seminar for 40 teachers, we never see fewer than 95 applications.;

--when we ask for lesson plans (a sign teachers didn’t show up merely to get credit), we have a higher response rate than in any other country;

--and to our delight, when we offer competitions for *My Town’s Jewish History* or a Civil Society Project, we receive more submissions from Polish teenagers than from any other country.

Obviously, we’re all saddened by the extreme rightward turn by the government in Poland, but Centropa’s combination of project-based learning, the use of technology, and digital story telling continues to meet education ministry criteria. We continue to forecast strong growth in Poland.

Teacher training in a time of Covid-19

In 2019, we began holding teachers' seminars in Lublin, and our local partner, Brama Grodzka Teatr NN, along with educators from the Galicia Jewish Museum, designed intensive workshops that combined study sessions, Jewish tours, teachers' presentations, and a site visit to the State Museum Majdanek. The response was so enthusiastic we planned to hold our Centropa Trans.History seminar there in May, 2020. Covid put an end to that.

Much to our surprise, when we offered to hold the seminar online as two webinars, one week apart, well over 100 teachers applied in the first two days, which is when we cut off registration.

77 educators from six countries—Poland, Moldova, Ukraine, Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary—participated in this webinar, and we reached an additional 433 people via our Facebook Livestream. Each webinar session lasted 90 minutes on two separate days, and we provided simultaneous translations for everyone who needed it. We asked participants to give us their feedback afterwards. We then followed up with a more detailed online survey via survs.com, and this report is built around those responses.

What made this seminar so successful

1. Our film on Teofila (or Tosia) Silberring, narrated in Polish by the grand dame of Polish cinema, Anna Polony, is by far our most successful with teachers and students. Tosia died in 2010, and that is when her son, Prof. Dr. Jerzy (or Jurek) Silberring, a neuroscientist, wrote to tell us that while his mother refused to tell him about the horrors she lived through, Jurek learned just about everything from her Centropa interview. Since that time, we have stayed in close touch with Jurek and during this webinar he spoke at length, and eloquently, about what it was like growing up Jewish in postwar Poland with a mother who had survived all that the Third Reich could throw at her. The teachers, were, in a word, riveted.

2. Presentations by other teachers. At Centropa, we live by this dictum: no one teaches a teacher better than another teacher, and we had four presentations by Polish and Ukrainian teachers, who shared the projects that worked best with their students.

3. Presentations by students. When a 13-year-old gives a webinar presentation showing how he or she used the Centropa online database to create his own graphic novel or video, you can count on a strong and positive response from webinar participants.

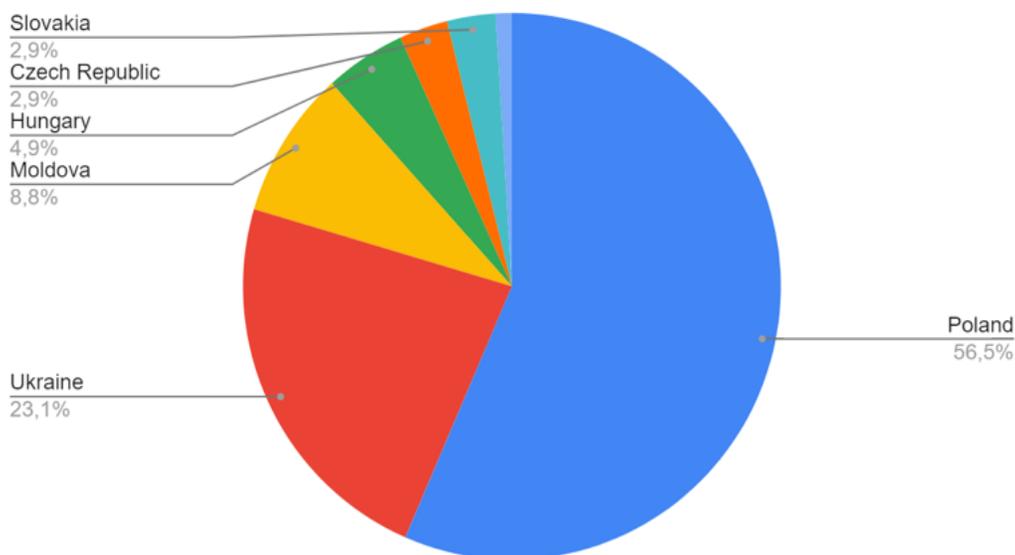
Results of our online survey

- 100 % responded that they would like to attend another Centropa webinar
- 95 % stated that the webinar program matched their expectations
- 90 % found the winning projects of the Youth Competition useful and inspiring
- 87 % stated that Centropa's webinar gave them new ideas on how to teach Jewish history and/or the values of tolerance and non-discrimination
- 74 % rated the webinar as excellent, while the remaining 26% rated it as good.

Where our 77 participants come from

Please see the appendix for a listing of all participant names, cities and countries.

Participation by country



Participants' quotes

"It was a very moving meeting, which gave us the opportunity to understand how the war determined the lives of subsequent generations and influenced the way of raising children and the life choices of those who do not remember the war. The Centropa project allows you to cross borders and get to know people and their stories. The experience of sharing thoughts, projects and the sense of belonging to a community looking for forgotten heroes of the 20th century and the truth about them is invaluable." - Katarzyna Dobrzańska, Poland

"I heard about this organization from a school director in Bialystok who told me: "if you have a chance to work with them, do so. It's one-stop-shopping." Now I know she was right. Centropa and the Galicia Museum people are so inspiring they motivated us all to get involved. I was very touched by what the teachers from Moldova said about preserving Jewish memory."- Iwona Kryczka, Lublin

"The Centropa website features extremely valuable materials documenting the lives of Jewish communities in Central and Eastern Europe. They are available in an attractive form, are presented in various languages, adapted for students of all ages, provided with a methodical framework, they can be used in various subjects and international multicultural projects." - Anna Ciach, Poland

"Stories of people whose memory would be forgotten if not for Centropa."- Andrzej Górniak, Gdansk, Poland

How to run a webinar and keep the participants involved

During this two-part webinar we had several speakers from Poland, Ukraine, and Germany, all of whom presented innovative educational projects on Jewish history. We worked with all our presenters so that the 77 participants, no matter where they were living, could adapt the presentations for their own use—in Poland, Ukraine, Hungary, Slovakia, and Moldova.



Speaker number one: Professor Doctor Silberring

The pre-webinar assignment was for teachers from each of these countries to go online and delve into the Centropa interview/photo database in their language, watch a film set in their country, and then to watch a film that with universal appeal, that of Teofila, or Tosia, Silberring.

From our side, Fabian Ruehle, our EU Program Director, reviewed the databases online with them, and we polled our participants during the webinar: 96% of them had indeed already used it, and 80% stated that they will use the database in classes next September. Most important is that there are family stories to read in each of their languages.



As a pre-webinar assignment, we also asked participants to watch “*So that memory doesn’t die*” about Teofila Silberring, a Holocaust survivor from Krakow. Before the part two of our webinar, participants submitted their lesson plans on how they are using or would use this film, in class. In an engaging Q&A session, Jurek Silberring joined us from Krakow to speak to our participants and answer their questions. In our follow up survey, 90% found this session useful.

Speaker number two: Emil Majuk and a virtual tour of Jewish Lublin



Our local partner from Lublin, Brama Grodzka - Teatr NN, offered three presentations during the webinar. Emil Majuk gave a virtual tour of Brama Grodzka, and its exhibition "Lublin. Memory of the Place" <http://teatrnn.pl/brama-edukacja/en/lublin-memory-of-the-place-exhibition/>.

Emil is pictured here at the Brama Grodzka, once a passage between the Christian and, today non-existent, Jewish districts. It is now home of the "Grodzka Gate - NN Theatre" Centre. This place

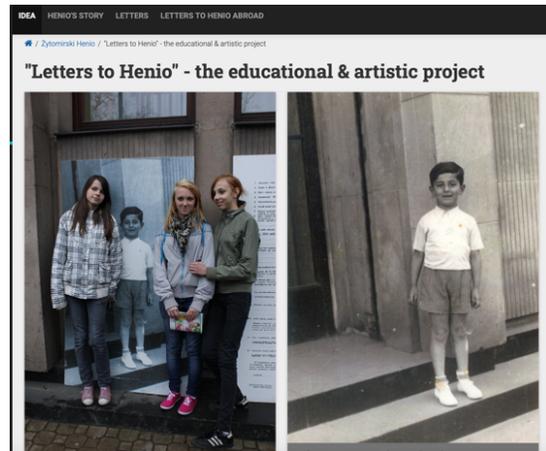
that used to be full of Jewish homes, synagogues and shops, is now an enormous parking lot, with new houses on a busy street. A considerable part of this area has been covered with concrete, under which the foundations of Jewish buildings and the memory of those who once lived here are buried. Over the years, the Gate has become a place where old photos, documents, and testimonies are being preserved for posterity.

Speaker number three: Dominika Majuk on Holocaust commemoration in Lublin



Dominika Majuk spoke about innovative ways to commemorate the Holocaust and its victims through educational activities. She presented Brama Grodzka's project "Letters to Henio."

Teachers warmly welcomed Dominika's talk, as she gave practical, down-to-earth ideas for commemorating Jewish stories in each town.



Speaker number four: mapping your country's Jewish memory



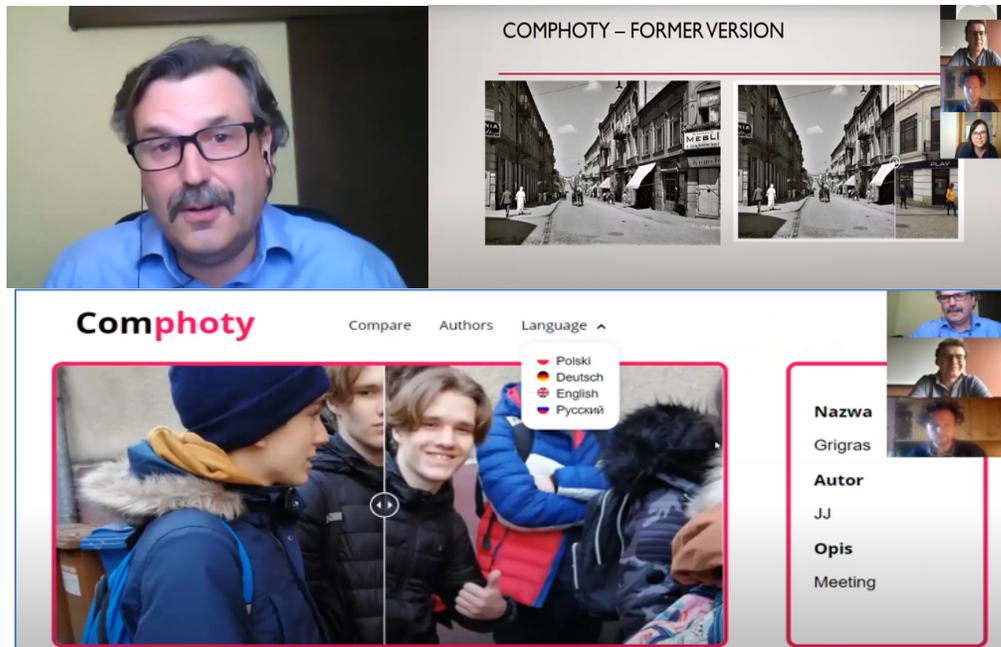
Piotr Nazaruk presented Brama Grodzka's The "Atlas of Memory Maps" project (<https://teatrnn.pl/wystawy/atlas/>), an online exhibition of maps and plans created by former inhabitants (Jews and non-Jews) of cities and towns in Poland, Belarus, Ukraine, Lithuania, Moldova, and Slovakia, who in this way tried to save from oblivion the shape and character of their towns—destroyed or radically altered as a result of World War II and

post-war changes. The exhibition shows the diversity of these maps, but also tries to capture their spirit and the feelings that accompanied their creation. Participants found this especially relevant to their own towns, several of which had been actual shtetls.

The Marketplace of Ideas

The single most popular part of any Centropa seminar is when we offer short presentations by our most innovative classroom teachers. For our **Online Marketplace of Ideas** session, we invited teachers to present best-practice projects.

Jacek Jaros: Kielce



Jacek Jaros, a history teacher in Kielce, spoke about how his students used Centropa's database and built their own multilingual online tool called "Comphoty," which combines old and new photographs. In their updated version, the students added a multi-language feature, so that photo captions can be added in English, German, and Russian.

Anastasiia Belyaeva, Zaporizhia (Ukraine)

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. The main window displays a presentation slide titled "CENTROPA resources: stage 3 (applying) and stage 4 (analysing)". The slide lists four tasks: 1. Students watch the video 'Return to Rivne' (00:00-14:30); 2. draw the timeline of events, write down dates and key words; 3. focus on the images and the events the pictures illustrate; 4. establish feelings and emotions the artist wanted to convey. Below the text are three video thumbnails: a landscape with a blue sky, a map of a town, and a forest scene. To the right of the slide is a vertical stack of three video thumbnails showing other participants. Below the slide is a large video thumbnail of Anastasiia Belyaeva. To the right of her video is a diagram titled "Competency-based lessons planning, Bloom's taxonomy" showing six levels of Bloom's taxonomy in concentric circles with corresponding action verbs: 1 Remembering (define, recall, repeat), 2 Understanding (classify, describe, explain), 3 Applying (choose, demonstrate, employ), 4 Analysing (compare, contrast, discriminate), 5 Evaluating (argue, defend, judge), and 6 Creating (construct, create, design).

Anastasiia Belyaeva, an English teacher from Zaporizhia, Ukraine, found Centropa’s Ukrainian language site and wrote up her own lesson plans on how she used Centropa’s film “Return to Rivne” with her university students. This film is the story of two women, first cousins, who currently live in North Carolina as they travel back to the small town they lived in, and tells the story of how a farmer and his family saved them and their mothers for 28 months during the war.

Krystian Kazimierczuk, Chorzow (PL)



Krystian Kazimierczuk teaches history in Chorzow, a mining town of 100,000 near Katowice. There are no Jews left in the city; our Silberring film afforded Krystian with the content he needed to teach the Holocaust in a personal, meaningful way.

Krystian cares deeply about preserving Jewish memory in Poland. Before, during and after this webinar, Krystian worked with other Polish teachers to help them utilize Centropa’s online toolbox of meaningful content.



Teenagers exploring their own town's Jewish history: Centropa's Trans.History Youth Competition

The photograph above is one of our favorites and it shows the 2018 Polish student winners of our civil society competition. It also reminds us of how fiercely competitive Polish teenagers are. And since Poland has done an admirable job of flattening the Covid curve, we are relatively confident—barring a second wave of infections—that schools will re-open, at least in some form, this September.

The highlight of our online webinar this year was the award ceremony for the Centropa Trans.History Youth Competition, for which we invited students from Moldova, Ukraine, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic to send us projects in one of the three categories:

- Movies
- Graphic novels
- Photo stories

on one of these three topics:

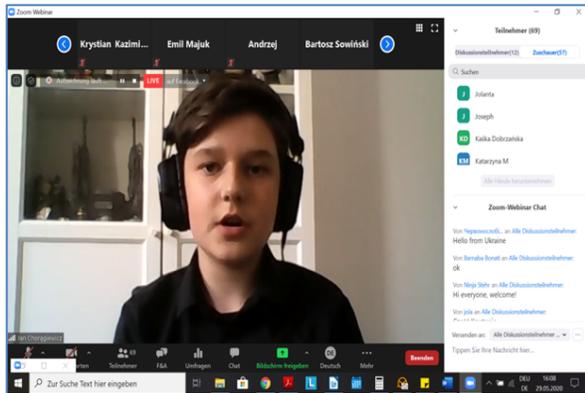
- „Famous Jewish person of my country“
- „(Hidden) Jewish heritage of my region“
- „Righteous Gentiles and the importance of civic courage“

Despite lockdown, despite teenagers being stuck at home, we received 26 projects that were reviewed by an international jury. The winning projects were presented via live screening, and you can find them all at this link: <https://trans-history.org/youth-competition-2019-20/>.

Two First Place Winners

<p><i>“The Story of Anna Mass: My father’s apprentice”</i> Student: Jan Chorągiewicz Lublin Project: Graphic Novel</p>	<p><i>“The Architect of the City’s Soul”</i> Students: Valeria Rosior, Alisa Sadovnicov, Iliia Vivici Teacher: Svetlana Kostetskaia Chişinău, (Kishinev) Project: Video</p>
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The winning students from Poland and Moldova presented their projects to the 77 participants – in English, and with great confidence. Even though there was a Polish interpreting team present, the students even answered the teachers’ questions in English.



Jan Chorągiewicz, a 13-year old student from Lublin, won first place with his graphic novel, *“The Story of Anna Mass: My father’s apprentice.”* Jan researched 20th century Jewish family stories from his hometown in the centropa.org database, and discovered the story of Anna Mass from Lublin. Jan then read and edited her biography—in English!—and started to make drawings of one chapter in her life story. It took him three weeks to complete his work.



"The Architects of the City's Soul" was written, produced, and shot by 10th grade students of the Theatre Lyceum in Chisinau, Moldova, and they also won first place.



Svetlana Kostetkaia (second from right), teaches English, and her students (from left to right) are Alisa Sadovnicov, Ilia Vivici, and Valeria Rosior.

During the Corona lockdown, these three young filmmakers researched the Jewish history and Jewish heritage of Chişinău. They wrote their script, then shot the film themselves in downtown Chisinau. They

created a well-researched and beautifully narrated 10-minute film on the life of a Jewish architect and then gave tours of the buildings he designed in postwar Chisinau. Svetlana Kostetskaia, a veteran of Centropa's seminars, also fielded questions from our webinar participants.



Lesson plans developed during the webinar series

Monika Anuszkiewicz, Warsaw

What things can tell us?



Goal – to see the symbolic meaning in artifacts, memorabilia, everyday items—in our lives, the connection between them and emotions. We do this by finding symbolic meaning in the movie *"So that memory doesn't die,"* and in literature. In the end, students' use their own experiences to tell stories based on specific items they have at home. I work in high school but this could be carried out by older primary school students.

1. Students prepare a word map—different meanings of, for example, memories, rituals, souvenirs. If they get stuck, we watch interview with Bronka Nowicka (in MOCAK, YouTube), where she speaks about different meanings of things in her artistic life.

2. When the word map is ready we watch the Centropa movie *"So that memory doesn't die."* First, the teacher chooses one item from the movie, for example, the picture of Teofila Silberring, and

together with the students they make another word map about the different meanings of this photo. For example - memory, family, care.

3. Students watch the movie again. Now they have to choose another item and make another map. They can work alone or in groups. They can choose for example candle, furniture, dumplings, etc. They present their work. If new meanings emerge, the teacher puts them on the first map.

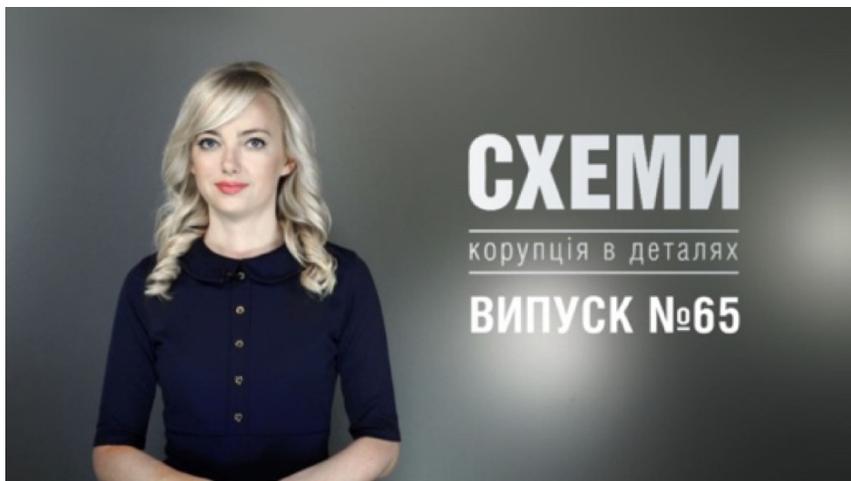
4. Discussion about items and emotions students can bring in for the final part of the lesson.

5. I teach literature so I would add literature to continue, for example "Nakarmić kamień" ("To feed the Stone") by Bronka Nowicka, or "Rzeczy których nie wyrzuciłem" ("Things I Didn't Throw Out") by Marcin Wicha, or war literature such as "Non omnis moriar" by Zuzanna Ginczanka.

6. In the end, the students use their experience to create story. They present an item that is for some reason important for them. They explain why and what kind of associations they have. In the end they will explain it better when they write a story based on those associations or memories. They read it aloud to the class.

Natalia Krat
Hadiach, Ukraine

Interviewing a Holocaust survivor



As a teacher of English and a project coordinator for teaching tolerance and anti-discrimination, inspired by ideas shared by presenters of the seminar, I have planned some activities for students. By way of information, my town of Hadiach has a population of 23,000 and before the war a great many of the residents were Jewish.

1. We are going to interview a former teacher of our school, Lidia Garanska, a Jewish woman (who is 94 now!) and I think she will be a valuable witness of events. Before the WW II, 40% of our town's population was Jewish.

The central part of Hadiach used to be the Jewish part and I think she has some photos to share and we will be able to compare historic photos with contemporary ones. (Creating the map is another challenge!) The ideas shared by Jacek Jaros seem very interesting. Thank you!

2. I often use videos and films during English classes to motivate student to talk and to develop critical thinking skills, along with writing and grammar practice.

The tasks will include:

- If you could interview Teofila, what questions would you ask her?
- Rewrite the story in 3rd person singular
- Write an essay on the topic "Memory doesn't / should not die"
- Reconstruct the events of Teofilas' life in the reverse order
- Write a letter to Teofila

Confirmed participants

Poland

Name	City	Name	City	Name	City
<i>Mirosława Jach</i>	Bogdaniec	<i>Anna Tomalska</i>	Brzeg	<i>Bartosz Stanc</i>	Bydgoszcz
<i>Grzegorz Kacprzak</i>	Bydgoszcz	<i>Marzena Wolschlaeger</i>	Bydgoszcz	<i>Anna Popielewicz</i>	Chełm
<i>Małgorzata Kołodziejczyk</i>	Chełm	<i>Edyta Ślusarczyk</i>	Chmielnik	<i>Edyta Sokołowska</i>	Chmielnik
<i>Krystian Kazimierczuk</i>	Chorzów	<i>Beata Gendek-Barhoumi</i>	Częstochowa	<i>Monika Rozpondek</i>	Częstochowa

<i>Alina Ślimak</i>	Dobre Miasto	<i>Krystyna Michałowska</i>	Ełk	<i>Helena Draganik</i>	Gdańsk
<i>Anna Danilczuk</i>	Grabowiec	<i>Krzysztof Spyra</i>	Jankowice	<i>Anna Wnuk</i>	Jaroszewice
<i>Urszula Bednarczyk</i>	Jaroszewice	<i>Katarzyna Dobrzańska</i>	Jelenia Góra	<i>Izabella Galuba-Bryja</i>	Kalisz
<i>Aleksandra Radecka</i>	Kalisz Pomorski	<i>Andrzej Górniak</i>	Kraków	<i>Ewa Arendarczyk</i>	Kraków
<i>Małgorzata Kucharska</i>	Kraków	<i>Irena Brzeżawska</i>	Krasne	<i>Mariola Pacek</i>	Krosno
<i>Elżbieta Korczyńska</i>	Krynica-Zdrój	<i>Katarzyna Druzba</i>	Łęczany	<i>Barnaba Bonati</i>	Łódź
<i>Marcin Urbanski</i>	Łódź	<i>Robert Dzięcielski</i>	Łódź	<i>Iwona Kryczka</i>	Lublin
<i>Krzysztof Styczyński</i>	Lublin	<i>Bartosz Wójcik</i>	Lublin	<i>Ewa Kozuszek</i>	Lublin
<i>Magdalena Madajczyk-Głowacka</i>	Luboń	<i>Paulina Hącia</i>	Luboń	<i>Iwona Zagórska</i>	Miechów
<i>Rafał Zagórski</i>	Miechów	<i>Paweł Wal</i>	Mielec	<i>Mirosława Gromacka</i>	Olsztyn
<i>Dorota Zaroda</i>	Puławy	<i>Ewa Wziętek</i>	Radom	<i>Beata Walkowicz-Kudłacz</i>	Raków
<i>Anna Miśkowiec</i>	Skomielna Biała	<i>Anna Ciach</i>	Sosnowiec	<i>Katarzyna Mądrachowska</i>	Świdnik
<i>Dorota Jaśkowska</i>	Świdnik	<i>Agnieszka Betleja</i>	Tychy	<i>Dorota Pardon</i>	Tychy
<i>Mariola Rakowska</i>	Tychy	<i>Beata Łakomiec</i>	Warszawa	<i>Monika Anuszkiewicz</i>	Warszawa
<i>Mariusz Czuj</i>	Włodawa	<i>Jolanta Trzebniak</i>	Wrocław	<i>Łukasz Parus</i>	Zagórów

Ukraine

Name	City	Name	City	Name	City
<i>Liudmyla Pospelova</i>	Bohdanivka	<i>Tetyana Moskalenko</i>	Bohuslavets	<i>Varvara Bodnaryuk</i>	Chernivtsi
<i>Anzhela Karimova</i>	Chernivtsi	<i>Tatiana Zavalko</i>	Chervona Sloboda	<i>Larisa Pyshnaya</i>	Domanivka
<i>Natalia Krat</i>	Hadiach, Poltava oblast	<i>Yaryna Vasylyk</i>	Ivano-Frankivsk	<i>Julia Rudenko</i>	Kyiv
<i>Elena Kremer</i>	Kyiv	<i>Andrii Koshelnyk</i>	Kyiv	<i>Nina Avramenko</i>	Losinivska
<i>Renata Hanynets</i>	Lviv	<i>Olga Motorkina</i>	Mykolaiv	<i>Evgenii Moroz</i>	Mykolaiv
<i>Yuriy Fedoryk</i>	not specified	<i>Natalya Gromakova</i>	not specified	<i>Halyna Vykhivska</i>	not specified
<i>Svitlana Sopchuk</i>	Nowa Odessa	<i>Ihor Hulyanovych</i>	Odessa	<i>Julia Kochuk</i>	Poltava

<i>Vitalina Danylchuk</i>	Rivne	<i>Lidiya Voitiuk</i>	Rivne		
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Moldova

Name	City	Name	City	Name	City
<i>Inga Pavlova</i>	Bălți	<i>Svetlana Kostetkaia</i>	Chișinău	<i>Tatiana Cobileanschi</i>	Cimișlia
<i>Lidia Carauș</i>	Cimișlia	<i>Arina Carauș</i>	Cimișlia	<i>Natalia Sincu</i>	Drochia
<i>Gabriela Dyachuk</i>	Fălești	<i>Diana Arbuzneac</i>	S. Săseni	<i>Tatiana Druc</i>	Varnița

Hungary

Name	City	Name	City	Name	City
<i>Szilvia Csanády</i>	Budapest	<i>Éva Marton</i>	Budapest	<i>Zsolt István Vódlí</i>	Sopron
<i>Anita Dobó</i>	Szeged				

Slovakia

Name	City	Name	City	Name	City
Lubica Tomkova	Banska Bystrica	Dániel Péter	Bratislava	Lenka Sismicova	Nitra
Košťálová Miroslava	Nitra				

Czech Republic

Name	City	Name	City	Name	City
<i>Marie Hrebikova</i>	Prachovice	<i>Marie Smutná</i>	Prag	<i>Daniela Vitaskova</i>	Trebic

Germany

Name	City	Name	City	Name	City
<i>Michael Heitz</i>	Sinsheim				

