

LIST OF WORKSHOPS 2016-2017

LEORA TEC

My goal with Bridge To Poland Workshops is to create a safe, engaging and intimate atmosphere in which to explore questions related to Jewish Poland, the Holocaust and our own family histories. Each workshop is unique and is designed to offer participants fresh approaches to these topics.

BTP workshops are interactive and limited in size so that attendees are able to be active participants. They combine discussion, writing and a collective exploration of memory work. I strive to create a warm and supportive atmosphere where people feel welcome to participate to the extent they wish.

1. WORKSHOP:

A KALEIDOSCOPE OF JEWISH POLAND

Poland had a population of 3.3 million Jews before World War II. Ninety percent of those Jews were murdered in the Holocaust. Because of this, some may view Poland solely as a cemetery - a place to grieve, but where nothing new can grow. This workshop offers a glimpse into a renewed relationship with Poland. Participants will be introduced to the work of non-Jewish Poles who are devoting their lives to preserving and cherishing Jewish memory today. Through this lens we will acknowledge the devastation of



the Holocaust, discuss the rich history and culture of Jews in Poland before WWII and explore Jewish life in Poland today. By experiencing a piece of a Bridge to Poland journey, participants will have the opportunity to grapple with difficult questions and the pain of incomplete stories, but also to be buoyed by examples of reconciliation and hope.

2. CLAIMING OUR FAMILY STORIES

How do we carry our family history? To some degree, we can't escape it. It emerges in our upbringing, our world view, even in the way we hold ourselves. But for many of us, that history can also be surprisingly dim. How many of us remember the names of our great grandparents, or their siblings? In this workshop we will explore the family stories that we carry, and also make space for those we have lost or forgotten. Through story-telling, writing, and listening, we will experiment with ways of remembering and engaging with our own family history, while also learning about each other and the myriad unique ways we carry the stories that have shaped us.

Please bring an object that reminds you of a relative...or one that represents how you would want to be remembered. And if this workshop intrigues you, please come even if you think you have no stories!



3. THE LANGUAGE OF THE HOLOCAUST: TAKING A SECOND LOOK

One of the most difficult things about Holocaust history is finding words to describe both the atrocities that occurred, and the extraordinary courage and heroism that arose in the face of those atrocities. Traditionally we have used labels, such as “survivor,” “victim” and “rescuer” to help us name and understand the Holocaust. But what if we want to ensure that those labels do not diminish the complexities, the nuances and the difficult-to-name parts of this history? This workshop provides an opportunity, using real stories, to test and stretch these labels, and to challenge ourselves to seek fresh and honest language for these events— language that encompasses the full humanity of those who experienced them.

4. JEWISH POLAND: DIFFICULT QUESTIONS AND RIPPLE EFFECTS

Jews who have a family history in Poland may have complicated feelings about the Polish part of their identities. Must they reject the place that was the homeland of their ancestors for hundreds of years because it is the country where 90% of their brethren were murdered?

Many Americans can easily claim their hyphenated identities: Irish-American, Italian-American. But what do Jews of Polish descent do with their Polishness? Many simply ignore it and claim only the Jewish part of themselves.

In this workshop we will create a safe space for those who wish to explore these complex and often troubling issues of identity. Participants will have an opportunity to share with others who have similar backgrounds, and to put their questions and ambiguities into words. Through confronting the scattered and sometimes painful aspects of our identity together, my hope is to foster connection, inclusion, and the possibility for a renewed perspective on our complex individual and collective histories.

Leora Tec has presented recently at:

Boston College Symposium Memory and the Shoah	Interpret Europe: Sensitive Heritage, Sensitive Interpretation, Kraków, Poland
Jewish Genealogical Society of Greater Boston	Conference in Memory of Sugihara, Warsaw, Poland
Newton Public Library, Newton, MA	Memory-Place-Presence, Brama Grodzka, Lublin, Poland
Lexington Community Education, Lexington, MA	Jewish Arts Collaborative—Hebrew College, Newton, MA
Holocaust and the Contemporary World, Kraków, Poland	

Listening to Leora Tec talk of honoring the memories of the lives lost and lived through the Holocaust is like opening a scene to the past. Her personal reflections and richly detailed primary research provide authenticity that brings one directly into individual lives. We imagine the sounds, the sights, and the fullness of life. This is important because every aspect of Ms. Tec's presentation entices the listener to lean forward, to connect with a voice, to hear a melody, or imagine the sights and sounds of a bustling neighborhood. Her passionate stories layered with the insights of contemporary Poles, invite us to reflect deeply as we honor the victims and survivors we would all have wanted to know.

- Sabine C., Lexington, MA

Leora Tec

As the founder and director of Bridge To Poland (BTP), Leora creates small group study tours to Poland that examine 1000 years of Jewish life in Poland and how non-Jewish Poles today are commemorating that history. Leora is the daughter of Holocaust survivor and Holocaust scholar Nechama Tec. She views her work as the second generation of her mother's work on rescue and resistance during the Holocaust. (Nechama Tec is the author of the book *Defiance*, which was made into the 2007 film starring Daniel Craig). Leora is currently working on a book about her Polish identity entitled, *I'm Not Polish: My Discovery of Identity*. She holds a B.A. from Wellesley College and a J.D./LL.M. from Duke University School of Law.

