

Literature

- Václav Bednář: Poznámky k provedení holocaustu hranických Židů, in: *Židé a Morava*. 1997.
- Václav Bednář: Osudy hranických židů po II. světové válce, in: *Židé a Morava*. 2003, 2004 a 2006.
- Václav Bednář: Okolnosti pobytu Edith Steinové v Hranicích v roce 1915, in: *Sborník Státního okresního archivu v Přerově*, Přerov 2004.
- Jiří Fiedler: *Židovské památky v Čechách a na Moravě*. Praha 1992.
- Bohumír Indra: Židovská obec v Hranicích do roku 1939, in: *Vlastivědné listy*, 1989, č. 2.
- Bohumír Indra: Židovská náboženská obec v Hranicích za okupace republiky a její násilná likvidace nacisty v roce 1942, in: *Vlastivědné listy*, 1990, č. 1.
- Bohumír Indra: *Historie hranických domů*. Hranice 2005.
- Miroslav Marada: Židovský hřbitov v Hranicích, in: *Hřbitovy v Hranicích a Drahotuších*. Hranice 2006.
- Tomáš Pospěch: *Architecture of the Hranice 1815-1948*. Dost, Hranice 2001.
- Tomáš Pospěch: *Hranice. Sightseeing of the town*. Dost, Hranice 2002.
- Jakob Rabbinowicz: Geschichte der Juden in Mähr. Weisskirchen, in: Hugo Gold: *Die Juden und Judengemeinden Mährens in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart*. Brno 1929.
- Karel Rosenbaum: Záznam o tragickém osudu židovstva z hranického okresu, rkp. 1957.



◀ A seal of the Jewish Community in Hranice dating back to the year 1786. It bears the Star of David and the Hebrew wording KEHAL REJNIC (Hranice Town). Foto: B. Beilová



Jews in the Hranice region

Text: Václav Bednář, Tomáš Pospěch (architecture)
Editor: Jiří J. K. Nebeský
Bohumír Indra's texts were utilized for the older period; the texts of Jiří Fiedler, Jaroslav Klenovský and Miroslav Marada were utilized for the post-war period.
Photography and maps: Vladimír Hynčica, Milan Mráz, Tomáš Pospěch, Hranice Building Authority, State District Archives of Přerov, Territorial Archives of Opava (B. Indra Fund), Hranice Municipal Museum and Gallery
Graphic design: Kateřina Holá

Published by DOST Publishers for the Town of Hranice, Hranice 2007.
ISBN 978-80-902942-4-0
© Tomáš Pospěch / DOST 2007

Jews in the Hranice region



▼ Židovská (Jewish) Street, detail of the map from the 1830.





- 1. Židovská (Jewish) Street, today called Janáčkova Street
- 2. The Synagogue, today it is a Town Museum, Janáčkova Street no. 728
- 3. The Jewish Cemetery, Zborovská Street
- 4. Světlíkovský Manor, the Monika Restaurant stands here today
- 5. The House of JUDr. Leopold Weinberg, Farň Street no. 42
- 6. Heller's apartment house, Mostní Street no. 224
- 7. Heller's textile factory
- 8. The place where Hein's liqueur factory used to stand

Hranice rabbis

- 1770 Josef ben Menachem Mendel, originally from Lipník
- 1780 Israel, son of David (his children used the surname Deutsch)
- 1790 substitute Rabbi Jacob Toff, previously Rabbi in Bystrice pod Hostýnem
- 1792 Moses Aron Deutsch (1752-1799), originally from Mikulov
- 1812-1827 Abraham Trischet (1753-1827), originally from Třešť
- 1827-1833 substitute Rabbi Markus Trischet, son of the previous rabbi, later rabbi in Dolní Kounice
- 1833-1840 Abraham Placzek (1799-1884), originally from Přerov, later rabbi in Boskovice
- 1840-1857 Isaias Reiniger (1783-1857), originally from Strážnice, previously rabbi in Kojetín
- 1859-1867 Markus Pollak (1830-1895), Kolín native, later in Vienna
- 1867-1887 Dr. Moritz Deutsch, previously Rabbi in Plzeň, later rabbi in Vienna
- 1887-1892 rabbinat administrator Herman Reiniger (†1897)
- 1892-1894 Dr. Adolf Leimdörfer, previously rabbi in Česká Lípa, later rabbi in Těšín
- 1894-1935 Dr. Jacob Rabinowicz
- After Dr. Rabinowicz retired, the office of rabbi was never filled.

Representatives of the Jewish community

In 1850 a new organization of laws, and judicial and executive powers came into effect in the Habsburg monarchy.

In 1885 the Jewish political community and Jewish religious community were separated.

Mayors of the Jewish community

- 1850-1854 Sigmund Wolf
- 1856-1865 Abraham Wolf
- 1865-? Dr. Wilhelm Wolf
- ?-1885 Noe Stross
- 1885-1893 Simon Stross
- 1893-1912 Salomon Schlesinger
- 1912-1913 Adolf B. Adler
- 1913-1919 Adolf Schlesinger

Representation of the Jewish religious community

- 1885-1897 Noe Stross
- 1897-1899 Salomon Ehrlich
- ?-? Benjamin Silberger
- ?-1903 Bernard Wolf
- ?-? JUDr. Josef Rein
- ?-1925 Samuel Kober
- 1925-1941 Sigmund Benisch
- 1941 - 5. 3. 1942 Sigmund Pollak
- 5. 3. - 21. 6. 1942 Alfred Hein

The Jewish Cemetery prior to demolition, 1980s.
Photo: J. Solnický



A tombstone bearing the symbol of blessing clerical hands. (Chaim, son of Izaiáš Kohn from Vsetín, 1857).
Photo: Milan Mráz



Group of spectacular steles dating back to the second half of the 19th century. (To the left stands the monument of Noe Stross, a Hranice textile entrepreneur and representative of the Jewish Community). Photo: Milan Mráz





▲ The original Světlíkovský Manor at the corner of today's Třída 1. máje Street and Plynářská Street during demolition in 1975. Towards the end of the 18th century, it first served as a faience manufactory and then as a Jewish Colony. Photo: Ludvík Novotný

Jews in society Medieval society was divided into castes, which differed in the rights and obligations of its members. One of them was the Jews. On the one hand, they were tolerated as professors of the Jewish faith, in which even the founder of Christianity, Jesus Christ, was born. On the other hand, they were driven out and murdered as those who “crucified Jesus”. Similarly in the economic sphere, they fulfilled the important role of lender, because Christians were forbidden to lend with interest. But for the same reason they were hated as extortionists. Thus the life of Jews was constrained not only by internal religious rules, but also by many limitations imposed by the Christian majority. While burghers resisted Jews settling in towns, the suzerain, on the contrary, often supported this. Thus, in the 17th century, one of the Jewish communities in Moravia came into existence in the town of Hranice. It was among the smallest ones, but in spite of this, during the three and a half centuries of its existence, it left a distinct mark, and not only in the history of Hranice, which the local Jews called Reiniz or Hreiniz.

The beginnings of the Jewish community The first Jews came to Hranice from the neighbouring, large and important, Jewish community in the town of Lipník nad Bečvou, founded at the end of the 15th century. During the entire 16th century, Lipník Jews maintained vigorous trade and creditor relations with Hranice merchants and burghers. Between 1611-1621 the Jews Josef, Caspar, Solomon, Lazar, and Isaac acquired houses in Hranice. However, during the war years, 1621-1627, they all left the town and abandoned the buildings. Only after conditions again calmed down did the Jew Isaac and Sarah, widow of Lazar, return to their houses. Also who came were the sons of the Jew Isaac, Moses and Jacob Sraul, and his son-in-laws Daniel and Jocy. Up until 1637, Markus Macerle, Aron, Lewek Žid glassworker, Adamek Žid, and Abraham Žid also settled here. In the 1630s, a total of approximately 200 Jews lived here besides these house owners. However, all of them ran away during the Swedish invasion in 1643 in fear of incurring the same fate as the community in Lipník, which was inflicted with a great pogrom. Jews only returned to Hranice at the end of the Thirty Years War in 1648.

The creation of Židovská (Jewish) Street Jews acquired the first houses from the suzerain by paying considerable sums for houses conveniently located on the main arteries of the inner town. They acquired others during the Thirty Years War by buying them from indebted burghers, or by seizing them from owners who could not pay a debt by the agreed upon deadline. Around 1635, Jews owned all the houses on today's Janáčkova Street and acted as an independent Jewish community. With the approval of the suzerain, they established a synagogue, school and cemetery on today's Zborovská Street. In 1637, the ban on selling other houses to Jews was confirmed, and thus the number of Jewish houses stabilized at seventeen.

The Jews and Christians Hranice burghers perceived the Jewish community with dislike, which was invoked by xenophobe stereotypes and the awareness of the economic losses that the burghers incurred due to the presence of the Jews. Jews bought burgher houses that were destroyed during the war. However, in the beginning they did not rebuild them but were satisfied with makeshift cottages, for which they refused to pay municipal tax. They adversely interfered with the economy of the town by not respecting the guild system. The relations with the Christian community was gradually arranged so that Jews were forbidden to carry on municipal trades, with the exception of two butchers and one Jewish tailor, however, they were not allowed to offer their goods outside of the Jewish community. The primary source of livelihood for the Jewish community

became commerce, which by the end of the 19th century proved to have better prospects than trades, for which the Christian burghers fought so fiercely.

Autonomous community The Jews were the most productive subjects of the suzerain, both as payers and as ready creditors when the suzerain needed a quick monetary loan, and skilful merchants with the agricultural products of the suzerain's manor, in Hranice this was primarily sheep's wool. The princely family of the Dietrichsteins, who acquired the Hranice manor in 1622, supported the Jewish Community on their manor, as attested to by the Jewish community in the Mikulov settlement in the nearby town of Lipník nad Bečvou. The Jews in Hranice were able to acquire a charter in 1637, thus confirming the autonomy of the Hranice Jewish community and its independence of the Christian community.

Charter expansion With the accession of Prince Ferdinand Josef of Dietrichstein, in 1656 the Jewish community was able to expand the extent of their charter - they were able to freely send their sons to study in other towns and to marry off their daughters outside of the manor. In 1659, the complete independence of the Jewish community was confirmed along with the full right of Jewish burghers to participate in the weekly town markets, which were moved to Friday due to the Jewish holy Saturday. The up to now practice of limiting the entire Jewish community for the debts of individual Jews was prohibited. An elected Jewish reeve was placed at the head of the community, confirmed by and accountable to the suzerain, who with two deponents and four observers administered all the matters and affairs of the Jewish community; and as the representative of the suzerain, also righted the legal disputes of its members. This administration model lasted until 1850.

Jews in the ghetto The primary problem the Jewish community had in the 18th century was the lack of housing space. The number of Jewish houses was firmly set and it was not possible to increase it, even though the number of residents increased, not only via

House no. 740 in Židovská Street in 1927. ► At that period in time it was Morgenstern's locksmith's workshop, but it was originally a Jewish ritual bathing pool (Mikveh). It was torn down in 1951. Photo: Tomáš Oplocký



natural reproduction, but also via the arrival of refugees from Austrian lands at the end of the 17th century and from Polish lands at the beginning of the 18th century. The cramped housing conditions forced them to divide houses into sections and to sell individual rooms and ground-floor shops to several families. Thus, up to ten families lived in one house. Due to the danger of the importation of diseases into the town, the Jewish community, at the order of the suzerain in 1691, created a so-called hospital for the sick in a deserted suburban house opposite the Jewish cemetery. Jews who were only passing through the town also had to sleep there. The state responded to the numerical growth of the Jewish population with the Familiant laws of 1726, according to which only the eldest son of a family could receive permission to marry, the others were allowed to marry (and thus bear children) only if they went abroad. At this time the so-called separation of Jews also occurred. This was the distinct separation of Jewish ghettos from Christian towns. In 1728 in Hranice, the number of Jewish families was set at 115; in 1789 this was increased to 120. At the beginning of the 19th century, two suburban locations, which the suzerain sold to the Jews, became part of the Jewish community, - the complex called Dílny, at the corner of today's Teplická and Na Přísadech Streets, demolished in 1957, and the so-called Světlíkovský dvůr, on today's Plynářská Street, formerly a manufacturing works of Faince earthenware, demolished in 1975, where the auxiliary synagogue was located during the 1st half of the 19th century.

At the end of the 18th century, the state's approach began to change - assimilation replaced segregation. Schools where lessons were taught in German were created for the Jewish population, and the Germanization of a greater proportion of the Jewish population in Czech lands gradually occurred. This process included the order to accept a new surname, usually German. So, for example, Hranice merchant David ben Hessel, who in the middle of the 18th century began exporting large quantities of the production of Hranice cloth makers to the markets in Hungarian lands, which laid the foundation for the large growth and development of Hranice cloth production, was also called David Vraclavský, Breslauer in German, evidently according its origin from the Silesian Vratislav. During Joseph's reforms, his family received the surname of Stross. Gradually, starting in the 1780s, various limitations that applied to Jews were abolished and in 1867 they achieved full civil rights. The abolishment of the Familiant law in 1849 had decisive meaning for the Jewish community, which, together with the right to freely acquire housing property and with the sweeping abolishment of subjugation, meant the end of ghettos and the possibility of moving freely. The administrative reform of 1850 then provided Moravian Jews with political autonomy, which lasted until 1919. Two opinions crystallized in the Jewish com-

munity in response to these changes, opinions that could also be seen in the Hranice community. Important figures in the Jewish enlightenment (Haskala), which endeavoured to incorporate Jews as much as possible into the economic and social life of the majority of society, included Hranice natives Ahron Chorin (1766-1844) and Moses Bruck (1812-1849). The other opinion endeavoured to preserve the specific elements of Judaism as much as possible. Representatives of this opinion included Hranice Rabbis Abraham Placzek (1799-1884) and Isaias Reiniger (1783-1857).

The size of the Jewish community 659 Jews lived in Hranice in 1830. In 1857 their number increased to its maximum - 802 people, which represented 13 % of all residents of the town. In the second half of the 19th century the number of Jews declined - in 1880 they numbered 522 (7 %), and in 1900 that number was 462 (5.6 %). In 1930, only 192 people (1.7 % of the population) in Hranice professed to be Jewish. The decline was caused by the marked emigration of people from their native town, due to work and to assert themselves. Hundreds of Hranice Jews headed for all four corners of Europe and across the ocean. Between 1850-1914, 17 local doctors and 9 lawyers moved just to Vienna. More than one hundred Jewish merchants left Hranice during that same period. Out of all the Hranice natives that achieved success beyond the borders of their town, we name journalist Berthold Hirschel, publisher Isidor Singer, Rabbi Herrman Reiniger, Judaism historian Nachman Weinstein, Košice distiller Adolf Adler, one of the primary builders of Vítkovice ironworks Berthold Adler, Kroměříž factory owner Wilhelm Knöpfelmacher, photographer Oscar Kulka, and chemist Jenny Riesenfeld. The decline of the number of Hranice Jews was also due to the assimilation and conversion of part of the mainly secular educated intelligentsia.

Industry and trade in the 19th century The Jewish share of the growth and development of local industry and trade in the 19th century was very significant. One of the first Jewish entrepreneurs, who crossed the boundaries of the ghetto, was the reeve of the Jewish community Isaac Siebenschein. In 1806 he began with the sale of beer and spirits in the suzerain's gamekeeper's lodge in Horní brány. He tried doing business in other fields but ran into resistance from the Christian majority, which culminated with his expulsion from the town in 1822. However, the Dietrichsteins were aware of the financial benefits of the Jews doing business - In 1814 they permitted Benjamin Adler to operate a workshop for the spinning of Harasov yarn in the Christian community, and three years later they permitted David Knöpfelmacher to have a shop with steel. After the

Napoleonic wars, local Jews became interested in cloth production, a traditional manufacturing field of Hranice burghers. The factory for cloth and cashmere, established in 1817 by Salomon Dittel, was yet to be successful and in 1820 had to stop production. In the 1840s, near the confluence of the Velička and Bečva Rivers, two factories were established for the processing of cloth (Noe Stross and Salomon Heller), which after merging, completely liquidated the family trade of cloth production in Hranice. This Heller textile factory, founded in 1844, became a part of the Karnola concern in 1948. Other important Jewish works were Eppler's dye house on Mostní Street, Sommer's wooden furniture production plant (part of the Mundus company from the beginning of the 20th century), Wolf's distillery in the agricultural buildings of the chateau, founded in 1836, and Fischer's distillery on today's Třídě ČSA (Czechoslovakian Army Avenue), founded in 1901.

Jews and the battle for the Hranice Town Hall Czech-German tension appeared in the Austrian part of the monarchy starting with the events of the revolution in 1848, and after 1867 led to political parties and associations being formed on a national basis. In Hranice, the national fight flared up in 1885, when the German Liberal Party came into the control of the town, having a majority of Czech residents, with a smart campaign tactic. The Czech National Party, an offshoot of the Prague Old Bohemia Party, represented the political efforts of the Czech speaking residents of Hranice. Hranice Jews, at that time, strongly supported the local German politicians. Although most of them could communicate in Czech, they could not handle literary Czech and they preferred German in everyday communication. Only at the end of the 19th century in Hranice did the local Czech economic, social and cultural associations start to even out the German head start and Czech stopped being the disparaged "language of servants and labourers". The Czech party labelled the German administration of the town as "Renegade-Jewish" and resorted to indiscriminate anti-Semitism in its printed matter. After the victory of the Czech majority in 1903, Czech-Jewish tension began to abate. This was also in connection with growing anti-Semitism on the part of the Germans.

The Jewish school The so-called trivial Jewish-German one-class school was established around 1770. In 1865 it was changed to a three-class Hebrew-German national school. A year earlier, 39 boys and 26 girls studied here. From the beginning of the 1870-1871 school year, teaching occurred in only two classes. In 1874 the school changed again to a one-class school and teaching in it took place for only half a day. Daylong teaching was renewed only in the 1897-1898

school year. In 1908, 28 children attended the school. At the end of 1892 Berthold Thorž became the schoolmaster, who ran the school until it was liquidated on 5 November 1919. Many Jewish children, after completing primary school, studied at the Hranice German secondary school, from which 166 Jews, out of a total of 572 students, graduated between 1871-1922.

Entry to Židovská Street from the south after ►
1910. On the left stands the Jewish Town Hall building no. 728, which still stands today, and the rear wing of townhouse no. 122 (Česká spořitelna savings bank) stands to the right.

Photo: Ferdinand Helsner



Federal life After the separation of the Jewish political and religious communities in 1885, cultural and political associations came into being within the Jewish religious community. The following were the most noteworthy: the Chevra Kadischa Burial Society, founded in 1875 by Rabbi Dr. Moritz Deutsch and entrepreneur and financier Noe Stross; Israel's Women's Association, founded in 1896 by Regina Singerová and Frederika Hausová; and the Emunach Order of Zion, founded in 1919 by Alfred Hein, Sigmund Pollak and David Donnebau.

The constructional development of Židovská (Jewish) Street In the 18th century all buildings on Židovská Street were brick-walled and were two-storeyed (two of them were three-storeyed), covered with shingles, and on the ground they had low house arcades, which enable one to pass through all houses from the chateau to the large square. Today, this low arcade of the Jewish houses has been preserved only on House No. 728. In 1817, stairs were built leading from Židovská Street, outside of the fortifications, to the Velička Stream. Starting in the middle of the 19th century, the individual houses on Židovská Street began changing, so by the 1930s the street completely changed from its former character. Distinguished among these houses is the commercial and residential building with rich Art Nouveau sgraffito floral ornamentation on its façade, which was built on the location of three demolished Jewish houses in 1910 by businessman Karel Baron (today Janáčkova Street No. 734). In the 1950s, several dilapidated houses were demolished and nothing was built in their place. The so-called Jewish colony at the locations of Dílna and Světlíkův dvůr met the same fate.

Synagogue

The small brick-walled synagogue with a wooden cupola and covered with shingles had stood behind house No. 728 since the 1630s. At the beginning of the 19th century, the number of Jewish residents increased so much that space in the existing synagogue was wholly inadequate and no longer could accommodate the amount of worshippers. In spite of this, several requests to expand it were denied. Only in 1864 did the Jewish community receive permission to build a larger one in its place. This was built in the Moorish-Byzantine style of Romantic historicism according to the design of Vi-

ennese architect Franz Macher. The building, adjoining the back part of a house and having the dimensions of 20 x 14.5 metres, does not face in the direction of Jerusalem, but due to insufficient space, faces east to northeast. The choice of the unusual Moorish-Byzantine style was more or less practical for the town, with the objective of markedly differentiating the Jewish synagogue from the appearance of the surrounding civil houses. The building closely follows the tradition of Jewish synagogues that expanded into Moravia from the Viennese environment, such as the synagogues in Brno (1852), in Bzenec (1859-1863), in Jihlava (1863), and in Břeclav (1868). The Hranice synagogue from 1864 precisely falls into the line of development of these named buildings. Byzantine heritage also had the greatest influence on the ornamentation of the interior of the synagogues, where plant decor dominates. However, today it is only perceptible on the main columns decorated with leaves, and also on the ceiling paintings uncovered during reconstruction of the building.

During Nazi occupation, the synagogue was closed in 1940 and its furnishings removed; however, it was not demolished. Via a ruling by the then German com-



missioner of the town, in 1943 it was reconstructed and the municipal museum was located here. Nowadays, it is the property of the Czechoslovak Hussite Church and the Municipal Museum and Gallery in Hranice utilizes it. This museum, founded in 1905, besides holding exhibitions, has approximately 22 thousand exhibits, which include a stone municipal coat of arms from 1561, a pennon (flag) from the chateau tower from 1604, the extensive Gallaš's library, a collection of Faince earthenware, and a collection of paintings. Today, the synagogue is one of the most valuable buildings built in Hranice during the 19th century and is registered in the State List of Cultural Real Estate Monuments.

The Synagogue, ►
the way it looks today.
Photo: Tomáš Pospěch



World War I Anti-Semitic feelings in Hranice again escalated during the course of World War I. Besides the hundreds of years of prejudices, these feelings in Hranice had two specific causes. In the autumn of 1914, almost 3,000 refugees fled from Haliče, occupied by the Russian army, to Hranice. A considerable proportion of them were Jews, who were afraid of pogroms, looting, robbery, and assault. The arrival of such a large number of residents dramatically worsened the already critical supply, housing and hygienic situation in the town. A portion of Hranice Jews observed Hasid customs and unintentionally provoked with their archaic appearance and clothing in the endless bread lines. It also was not a secret that most local Jews considered the war against czarist Russia as just, whereas the war against Russia's "Slavic Oak" and against the southern Slavic Serbia had little support among the Czech speaking population of Hranice. That is also why the pro-state German and Jewish residents organized a Chinese lantern procession in honour of Russia's retreat from Haliče in 1916, which the Czech residents boycotted.

The First Republic In 1919, the Hranice Jewish political community was abolished, Jewish houses were assigned municipal descriptive numbers, and the up to now members of the Jewish community from that time on elected candidates to the representative bodies of the town. The Jewish religious community was preserved. The accommodating approach of the First Republic towards Jews, it was the only European country to recognize them as a national minority, led to



most of the Jews identifying with the new country. A manifestation of this position in Hranice was the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the birth of the Republic in 1928, when Rabbi Dr. Jacob Rabbincowicz, in the local synagogue, made the celebratory speech in Czech for the first time.

- ▲ House no. 755 situated in the locality known as Dílna (Workshop) (at the corner of Teplická Street and Na Přísadech Street), which was part of the Jewish Community from the beginning of the 19th century. Apartment houses nos. 1339-1341 were built here in 1959 instead.

First Republic villas Some citizens with Jewish ancestry, particularly businessmen, lawyers and doctors, built single-family houses in Hranice and Teplice nad Bečvou between 1918-1938, many of which belong among the most noteworthy houses in the towns today. Each house harbours its own personal story. The single-family houses were tailor built for their occupants. For example, sometimes the correspondences between the family and the architect were preserved. In the letter, the architect is interested in the interests of the occupants, their habits, way of life, and individual wishes. Often, the owners did not live in the houses for very long and their fates were often tragic. That is why the villas of Hranice are distinctive mementos: They commemorate the specific fates of our fellow citizens, their desire for a nice life, several years before their tragic end. Sometimes they were able to emigrate or survive prison; however, they rarely got back their property.

Noteworthy Brno architect Arnošt Wiesner designed JUDr. Weinberger's terraced house and in 1933 it was built by Hranice builder Vladimír Hudec at Farní Street No. 10. In 1939, head spa doctor Oscar Leo Stern had a single-family house built in Teplice nad Bečvou. It was designed by Prague architect Karel

Caivas, who designed six more houses in the subsequent three years, including the villas of JUDr. Stanislav Tomanec (Jurikova No. 246) and the Seidel single-family house on Skalní Street.

Anti-Semitic feelings Hundreds-of-years-old anti-Semitism culminated in the ideology of German Nazism. The post-Munich, so-called Second Republic, under the pressure of the Germans, commenced keeping records of the population according to racist keys. Anti-Semitic feelings also manifested themselves in Hranice, where 143 people professed to be Jewish in 1938 (after the annexation of the Sudetenland, this increased by another 80 Jews from nearby districts). On Thursday, 3 November 1938, the shop windows that were owned by Hranice Jews were painted with anti-Semitic writing. On the night of the 11th to the 12th of November 1938, the notorious “Crystal Night” took place in the nearby and already “imperial” town of Nový Jičín. The Nazis demolished the synagogue and arrested and severely beat several tens of Jewish fellow citizens, some of who had relatives in Hranice. How the residents of Hranice regarded their Jewish fellow citizens at that time is illustrated by the text of the then municipal historian, who captured the situation on the day of 15 March 1939: “A handful of raging German young men walked through town with a ladder and painted over Jewish companies, right on the first day. Residents smiled upon this as being a boyish prank. They felt sorry for those Jews that decidedly demonstrated in the past few years their favourable position regarding the Republic, but wished disgrace upon those who up to the last moment professed Germanism and were, during the years of fighting for Hranice, the most ardent supporters of the German minority that controlled the town.”

A picture taken from Židovská Street ► in 1900. The Austrian eagle on the building to the immediate left marks a German Jewish school (today building no. 733). This is followed by a two-storied and a single-storied house, which were replaced in 1910 by Baron's Art Nouveau shopping center (building no. 734, Paragan today). The porch that stands to the right belongs to the Jewish ritual bathing pool.
Photo: Ferdinand Helsner



Anti-Semitic measures The protectorate government ratified Nazi anti-Semitic measures. So immediately in March 1939, Jewish doctors and layers were forbidden to practice - in Hranice these were MUDr. Oscar Leo Stern (1900-1972), MUDr. Johann Schönbeck (1868-1944), MUDr. Arthur Glück (1896-1944), MUDr. Oscar Weissbrod (1905-1942), JUDr. Otto Benisch (†1953), and JUDr. Leopold Weinberg (†1942). The representative of the Jewish Party in the town's representative body, Dr. Sigmund Benisch, was forced to resign from his membership in the municipal representative body; all substitutes were also forced to resign. Jewish shops were marked with the words "Jüdisches Geschäft - Jewish Shop". Leopold Baron's clothing shop on Židovská Street, Moritz Baar's cloth wholesale shop, and Max Gessler's dry goods shop on the square, along with Bedřich Schlesinger's shop with general merchandise and bakery next to the chateau, and Henry Gelb's butcher shop on Zámecká Street were "Aryanized", smaller shops were closed down. In December 1939, Židovská Street was renamed Janáčkova. The Ten Commandments were removed from the façade of the synagogue. In the autumn of 1940, religious services were forbidden in the synagogue. In 1941, all Jewish religious services were forbidden and all Jews older than six years were forced to wear in public a yellow hexagram (six-pointed star) the size of a palm, traced in black, with JUDE written in black. It had to be visibly worn and firmly

sewn on, on the left breast of clothing. Defiance of this order was punished via concentration camp. Jews were forbidden to leave the land registry territory of the town of Hranice, and to go to the cinema, theatre, hotels and restaurants, swimming pools and sports facilities, enter the buildings of the Teplice nad Bečvou Spa, and to enter adjoining parks. They were even assigned, along with their non-Jewish wives, time periods for



▲ A shop-window of Baron's shopping center (Paragan today) in April 1939.
Photo: Bohumír Indra

shopping in shops. All their securities, savings books, precious metals and articles, fur coats, paintings, radios, automobiles, motorcycles, sewing machines, bicycles, etc. were confiscated. They were not allowed to travel railway and bus public transport except in relegated compartments. They were assigned reduced food rations.

The slaughter of Hranice Jews The displacement of the majority of residents with Jewish ancestry from Hranice, Drahotuše and Kelč was carried out via an AAF transport on 22 June 1942. A total of 202 people entered the transport and were transported to a holding camp in the town of Olomouc. In subsequent days, another 10 people who had a right of domicile in Hranice joined them. Everyone who was interned was allowed to take with them hand baggage weighing up to 50 kg. From Olomouc they were transferred to Terezín, where all their valuables were confiscated and they were divided according to gender and sent to dormitories, which were quickly created in former barracks and residential houses and buildings. At that time, the Nazis already had devised a precise plan of the physical liquidation of Jews in Europe. 46 Hranice residents were dispatched “to the East” from Terezín in transport AAx on 14 July 1942. All were murdered at an unknown location in the capital of Belarus, Minsk. 22 Hranice Jews from transport Bc, dispatched from Terezín on 25 August 1942, were murdered in a forest near the former Malý Trostinec collective farm near Minsk, along with another 7 Hranice residents from transport Bk (8 September 1942). 15 people found death in the forest near Raasiku-Jägala - the transport departed from Terezín on 1 September 1942 and was marked Be. 29 interned people were suffocated with exhaust gases in Treblinka - the first of the transports in which there were also Hranice Jews were dispatched to Treblinka on 8 October (marked Bu), another on 15 October (Bv), and the last on 22 October 1942 (Bx). Primarily old citizens were murdered in Treblinka. The oldest was almost blind 91-year-old Tobiáš Buchsbaum, former policeman in the Jewish community and the Shames - the synagogue manager, at the local synagogue. The largest number of Hranice Jews that were murdered (a total of 62), were murdered with gas in Auschwitz - they were part of the transports that occurred from 26 October 1942 to 23 October 1944. A total of 17 people died in Terezín. Ten of them were older than 70. The oldest was 92-year-old Karel Taussik, owner of a shop with colonial goods. The 51-year-old son of Hranice doctor George Glück also died here, he died of typhoid. Several Hranice Jews died in concentration camps, into which they were put for not wearing stars or for illegally leaving the land registry territory of the town. A total of 216 people with Jewish ancestry died, 197 of which professed to be of the Jewish faith.



▲ House no. 731 before demolition.
MUDr. Artur Glück had a family house
built in its place in 1936.

Survived After the defeat of Nazism in 1945, 26 citizens with Jewish ancestry gathered in Hranice, 14 of which professed to be of the Jewish faith and 12 who were considered to be Jewish during the Nazi period on the basis of the Nuremberg Race Laws. 9 people survived the transport to Terezín and extermination camps, the remaining 17 were spared deportation, most often because they lived in a mixed marriage with “Aryan” partners. Men younger than 60, who had “Aryan” wives, first cleaned out abandoned Jewish residences, then were transferred to labour camps, and at the beginning of 1945 to Terezín, where all of them survived until the end of the war. Pre-war soap powder merchant Berthold Liebel was saved thanks to Mr and Mrs Roubal and Mr and Mrs Machač, where he hid and ate. After his hiding place was discovered, he hid in the surrounding forests and joined the partisans. He was in a partisan unit until the defeat of Nazism. Rare was the case of the kindred innkeepers Max Weissbrod, Theresa Weissbrodová-Neumannová and Sigmund Neumann. In 1942, they were transported to Terezín and here they survived until liberation came because the Nazis were not sure whether their grandmother was Jewish. Tailor Rudolf Fuchs also lived to see liberation in Terezín. Four young women and one young man returned from extermination camps.

The post-war period Most Hranice Jews utilized German as their mother tongue, so President Beneš's Decree No. 108 applied to them. According to the Decree, all those who could be considered to be a German were stripped of their Czechoslovakian citizenship. That is why during a period when they were

only finding out which members of their family did not survive the Nazi rampage, most of them had to undergo the demeaning procedure of applying for Czechoslovakian citizenship. Without it, their property that was confiscated by the Nazis could not be returned to them. In fact, the bodies of the Hranice Local National Committee were not averse to refusing the restitution applications of the survivors of Nazi rampage victims



◀ Contemporary view of Janáčkova Street when driving in from Masarykovo náměstí town square. Photo: Tomáš Pospěch

by stating that the deceased was a “nationally unreliable person”. This applied to a total of twenty houses in Hranice. The latent anti-Semitism of the regime then culminated in connection with the staged processes of the leading officials of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia with Jewish ancestry, led by General Secretary Rudolf Slánský.

Epilogue In spite of the small number of people of the Jewish faith, the Jewish religious community was renewed after World War II, but was soon changed to only the synagogue committee, which functioned until 1975. Because the municipal museum had been located in the synagogue building since 1943, religious ceremonies took place in other areas. The last house of prayer was on the square in House No. 8/9 between the years 1955-1969. The number of Jewish believers declined via death, departure for Palestine (Israel), and assimilation. The last head of the committee was JUDr. Karel Rosenbaum (1892-1972), and the last Jewish cantor was Ing. Josef Goldstein (1900-1972). The last funeral at the local cemetery took place in 1965. In 1984 the cemetery was

sold to the town, which wanted to change it into a park. Changing it to a park was qualified by several conditions, which included the creation of a collection of selected historic and artistically valuable gravestones, the suitable storage of the other gravestones, and the creation of memorial plaques. However, in the beginning of November 1989, without regard to these conditions, the demolition of a greater part of the cemetery occurred. Via intervention by the District Department of the State Monument Care and the Protection of the Environment in Olomouc, the work was stopped, and in the new political conditions, the intention was reconsidered, so the cemetery was partially reconstructed and in 1994 reopened.



▲ Contemporary view of Baron's shopping center.

Photo: Tomáš Pospěch

Personalities

• **David**, Jakob Julius, Dr. (8. 2. 1859 Hranice - 20. 11. 1906 Vídeň) Jeho otec byl trafikantem a výběřčím mýta při plavení vorů se dřevem z Valašska po řece Bečvě. Po gymnaziálních studiích v Těšíně, Opavě a Kroměříži dosáhl v roce 1894 doktorátu z filozofie ve Vídni a začal se věnovat novinářské práci a literatuře. Psal německy, jeho sebrané spisy vyšly v letech 1908-1909. Část prozaické tvorby věnoval dětství a mládí na rodné Moravě.

• **Deutsch**, Moritz, Dr. (1834-1897) He was born in Slovakia. He studied Judaism at yeshivas in Eisenstadt and Karlsruhe, and his university studies took place in Würzburg and Heidelberg, where he graduated in 1861. Between the years 1861-1867 he was rabbi in Plzeň, and between 186-1887 in Hranice. Here, he was also the co-founder of the Chevra Kadischa Burial Society. In 1887 he became rabbi in the Viennese district of Ottakring. He significantly took part in the preparations of the visit, and the visit itself, of Emperor František Josef II in Hranice on 10 June 1880. Shortly before the visit, he published a celebratory testimonial in German, in Hranice, for the 25th anniversary of the marriage of Emperor František Josef I and Elizabeth Bavorská (1879). He also published several studies in Plzeň and Prague concerning Biblical issues.

• **Falk**, Norbert (5 November 1870, Hranice - 16 August 1932, Berlin) He was born Isidor Kohn. In 1897 he had his surname changed to Falk, and in 1901 his first name was officially changed to Norbert. He worked as the editor of the Berliner Morgenpost newspaper, and wrote theatre scripts, novels, and humorous books (Susanne Strazy, Book of Laughs, etc.). At the beginning of the 20th century he began working with film director Ernst Lubitsch. In collaboration with Hanns Krähl, he wrote screenplays for his silent films Carmen (1918), Madame Dubarry (1919), Anna Boleyn (1920) and Pharaoh Woman (1921). During the advent of talking films, he co-authored a screenplay with Robert Liebmann, which went on to become one of the best known and most successful German projects of the 30s, the historical romance Congress Dances (1931), which was filmed in several language versions with an international cast.

• **Hein**, Walter (22 September 1908, Hranice - 30 June 1987, Hranice) The older of the two sons of Alfred Hein and Martha Fischer (daughter of the founder of the Hranice distillery Leopold Fischer, Jr.), who were murdered during the Holocaust. His younger brother Egon died in Auschwitz. Walter was not placed into the death transports thanks to his marriage to his "Aryan" wife, which broke up after the war. Up to the communist nationalization he ran a successful family distillery. He then worked in various positions, his last as the caretaker of the Bečva spa building in the Teplice nad Bečvou Spa. He particularly devoted his time to the organization of cultural and sports life in the town. As an outstanding pianist, he was the founder of several local jazz and popular music bands. He deserves the credit for the post-war flourishing of amateur boxing in Hranice (Olympic athlete František Majdloch); he also organized

and played chess, bridge and tennis. His son, Milan Hein, is the owner and art director of the Prague theatre Ungelt.

- **Heller, Richard** (1862-1933) In 1906 he took over the Heller - widow and son, family plant for the manufacture of cloth, flannel and fashion goods, founded in 1844 by Salomon Heller. He markedly modernized the plant. He was exemplary in his care for the social needs of employees. For the rest and hygiene of employees, he built the first indoor swimming pool in Hranice in the complex of the plant. Before and during World War I, he carried out occasional diplomatic activities for the Habsburg monarchy. After the creation of the Czech-Slovak Republic, he fully applied himself in the services of this country and actively worked in the municipal representative body and its commissions. He, along with his wife Adele, converted to Christianity and is buried in the municipal cemetery in Hranice. A great cultural loss for the town of Hranice was the "Aryanization" of his private gallery. The company was passed on to and taken over by his son Štěpán, who was able to emigrate to Great Britain in 1939, where he entered the Czechoslovakian army. The Nazis "Aryanized" the company. After the war it was placed under national administration, and in 1948 nationalized. It became part of the Karnola concern. Štěpán's mother emigrated to the Caribbean island of Antigua, and from there until her death in 1948 requested in vain that the Hranice Local National Committee allow her to return to her native town.

- **Kafka, Oscar** (1884-1901) He was the son of the successful Kolín entrepreneur Phillip Kafka, uncle of the writer Franz Kafka. Cousins Oscar and Franz often saw each other during childhood and when they were young because they were almost the same age and Franz liked to go to the town of Kolín. Oscar started infantry cadet school in Prague in 1899. In 1901 he tried to transfer to the cavalry cadet school in Hranice. When he was not accepted, he committed suicide by shooting himself in Hranice on 15 September 1901. During his tragic stay in Hranice, he was accommodated at Anna Blaschke's hostel, in no longer existing house No. 186 (today the Bonver Casino). He is buried in grave No. 1425 in Hranice's Jewish cemetery. Franz Kafka incorporated Oscar's fate, in transformed form, in the novel *The Man Who Disappeared* (Amerika).

- **Placzek, Abraham** (1799 Přerov - 1884 Boskovice) He attended the yeshiva of the renowned Rabbi Moses Perls in the town of Kojetín. He was rabbi in the town of Přerov, and in Hranice between 1834-1840. From here he went to Boskovice, where in 1851 he was elected Provincial Rabbi for the Moravian Margravate. He transferred the office of Provincial Rabbi from Mikulov to Boskovice. He was an opponent of Jewish enlightenment and belonged to the most important representatives of the orthodox trend of the then Judaism in Moravia. His son Baruch (5 October 1834 Hranice - 7 September 1922 Brno) graduated from secondary school in the town of Brno and continued in university studies of philosophy in Vienna and Lipsko, where he

graduated with a doctorate in philosophy in 1856. He then taught at Jewish schools in Frankfurt am Main and Hamburg. In 1860, he became rabbi in Brno. In 1884, he replaced his father in the position of Moravian Provincial Rabbi. He was known as an outstanding preacher, translator from Hebrew, poet, and naturalist. His preaching came out in print, along with his speeches over coffins, a collection of poems dedicated to his father, and also in the last years of his life, a series of expert naturalist studies.

- **Rabbinowicz**, Jacob, Dr. (15 January 1863, farmstead near the Lithuanian village of Selwa - 1947 Rishon LeZion) He graduated from secondary school and rabbinical school in Frankfurt am Main and studied orientalism, philosophy and history in Prague and Marburg. He also attended Talmud-halakhic school. He graduated in 1889. Between 1889-1894 he was rabbi in the town of Rakovník. In 1894, he became rabbi of the Jewish religious community in Hranice and Valašské Meziříčí, with its seat in Hranice. In 1909, the title professor was bestowed upon him because he taught Judaism at the German secondary school in Hranice. He was literarily active. In Hranice he wrote primarily fiction in German, returning in memory to his native country. He acquired permanent praise for his compilation of the history of the Jewish community in Hranice for Hugo Gold's book *Die Juden und Judengemeinden Mährens in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (1929). After retiring in 1937, he moved with his son Alexander to Palestine.

- **Redisch**, Hugo (5 June 1904, Hranice - 8 March 1943, Sokolovo) He was born in the family of Berthold Redisch, chief clerk in Sommer's bent-wood furniture factory. In 1920, the Town Council denied his father's application for acceptance in the State Union of the Czech-Slovak Republic and the family moved to Vienna. During the war, Hugo Redisch joined the Czechoslovakian army in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. As lance-corporal he carried out the duties of observer and communication officer for the company commander, Lieutenant Jaroš. In the battle near Sokolovo, he was able to renew interrupted radio and telephone communication. Thanks to this, the remainder of Lieutenant Jaroš's unit received the order to retreat behind the Mže River, thus saving these soldiers. During the battle, Hugo Redich was mortally wounded. Posthumously, he was decorated with the Soviet Order of the Red Banner, Czechoslovak War Cross 1939, and the Sokolovo Memorial Medal.

- **Reiniger**, Isaias (1783 Strážnice - 28 February 1857, Hranice) He studied first under Wolf Boskowicz in the Hungarian town of Bonyhád and then under the renowned Bratislava Rabbi Chatam Sofér (Moses Schreiber), the famous immortal opponent of the Judaism reform movement. In 1826, he became the assistant of the rabbi in Boskovice, 1834-1841 he was rabbi in Kojetín, and 1841-1857 rabbi in Hranice. He is considered a noteworthy anti-reform author. He was popular all-round for his wisdom and his friendly cheerful nature. He had three sons. The oldest, Jacob, became rabbi

in Moravskom Svätom Jánu in Slovakia. Herman was also a rabbi. Josef, the youngest, was the mayor of the Jewish community in Strážnice.

- **Schlesinger**, Salomon (28 May 1836, Slezsko - 11 July 1912, Hranice) The founder of the Schlesinger family baker's tradition in Hranice. He received right of domicile in Hranice in 1858. At the end of his life he was the mayor of Hranice's Jewish community. His son Adolf Ignaz Schlesinger (10 March 1868 Hranice - 29 August 1931 Hranice) held the same position until 1919, when the Jewish community was integrated with the town of Hranice. His heir was Bedřich Schlesinger (8 February 1900 - 16 October 1944), who consummated the blooming of the family bakery in House No. 737 when he connected it with its own mill.

- **Singer**, Isidor (10 October 1859, Hranice - 1939 New York) Son of Hranice merchant Josef Singer. He attended the Jewish school in Hranice and secondary schools in Opava and Kroměříž. He belonged among the best students and displayed extraordinary talent when studying languages. He graduated from the university in Vienna, majoring in philosophy and philology. During his studies, he sent contributions to Viennese and Berlin newspapers and magazines. In 1859 he moved to Paris, and later worked as a journalist in Berlin, Vienna, Prague, and Italy. From 1895 until his death he lived in the USA, where between 1900-1909 he published a twelve-part Jewish encyclopaedia. In 1922 he founded the American League for the Rights of Man. After the death of his mother, Lotti Singerová in 1888, in Paris he published a book of memoirs in Hebrew, "My Mother's Grave". Lotti Singerová's gravestone has been preserved at the Hranice cemetery (No. 2502).

- **Stein**, Edith / Saint Teresa Benedict of the Cross (12 October 1891, Breslau - 9 August 1942, Auschwitz) In Hranice she was a voluntary nurse at the so-called reserve military hospital for the Eastern Front from 7 April to 1 September 1915, primarily in the most dangerous, typhoid, ward. During her stay in Hranice she considered herself an atheist even though she formally observed the rituals of Judaism. Her horrible experiences with the human suffering of wounded and ill soldiers, and becoming acquainted with Christian ethics in the philosophical work of Max Scheler were the first steps to her conversion to the Roman Catholic faith and swing towards the mystical understanding of religion. She pursued phenomenological philosophy. In 1934 she entered the Carmelite Order. In 1998 she was declared a saint, and a year later the patron of Europe.

- **Stern**, Oscar Leo, MUDr. (1900 - 25 November 1972, Mexico City) Between 1931-1939 he was the head doctor at the Teplice nad Bečvou Spa. During the summer of 1940 the Nazi authorities allowed him, as the last Jew, to travel with his entire family to Mexico. However, he had to leave behind a newly built single-family villa, No. 67, in the town of Teplice nad Bečvou, which passed house inspection in January 1939. In Mexico's capital city he pursued internal medicine and cardiology and became a

distinguished doctor in Mexico's National Institute of Cardiology. He was president of the Mexico-Czechoslovakia Friendship Society, from which he resigned in 1948 in protest against the enthronement of communist totality. His son, Ivo Stern-Bečka, pursues pharmacy, and he is a member of the World Organization of the Scout Movement headquartered in Geneva. His adoptive daughter Miroslava Stern (26 February 1926, Prague – 10 March 1955, Mexico City) attended public school in Zbrašov and for three years the State Secondary School in Hranice. In 1945, in Mexico City, she was crowned beauty queen, which opened doors for her in a career in films, although she studied architecture and decoration in New York. In Mexico she became an admired star in the famous post-war period of Mexican cinematography. The peak of her career was a short collaboration with Luis Buñuel.

- **Stross**, Noe (1822-1897) Originally a Jewish cantor, he took over the cloth manufacturing works from his father, Jacob Stross, and expanded it to a plant with more than 200 employees and incorporated it into the textile company Heller - widow and son, where he then successfully executed the position of business manager. He belongs among the most generous patrons of the town. Primarily because of him, the local secondary school was not closed down for financial reasons in 1875. He was named honorary citizen of Hranice for this noble deed. Between 1885-1897 he was the mayor of the Hranice Jewish community. He is the co-founder of the Chevra Kadischa Burial Society. Between 1888-1895 he represented the Jewish community at the District School Council. In 1873 he initiated, in the local Jewish community, the founding of the Archduchess Gisela Foundation, and shortly before his death, together with his wife Josephine (1827-1895), he founded the Stross Husband and Wife Foundation, which supported gifted students until the Nazis confiscated its assets. He lived with his family in House No. 203 on today's Třídě ČSA (Czechoslovakian Army Avenue).

- **Wolf**, Abraham (1803-1865) Between 1856-1865 he was the mayor of the Jewish Community. In 1835, he bought, with his brother, the suzerain's distillery in the Hranice chateau complex, which the Wolf family had rented years before. After renovation in 1836, he started producing rum, slivovitz and liqueurs. The plant prospered until the Nazi period. The last owner was Oscar Wolf (1878-1942), who died during the Holocaust. After 1945, the distillery was in so-called national administration. It was later nationalized, which led to its liquidation. After 1945, the Hranice Local National Committee systematically rejected the claims of Jews seeking restitution with the absurd statement that "the deceased was a nationally unreliable person". The second born son of Abraham Wolf was composer Maxmilian Wolf (28 March 1840, Hranice – 23 March 1886, Vienna). He studied composition under the acclaimed musical pedagogues A. B. Marx and O. Dessau. He is considered to be among the "lesser masters" of the golden age of Viennese operetta.