

Twice Betrayed: The Historical Memory of the Holocaust in Moravian Slovácko

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ABSTRAKT

Tato bakalářská práce se zaměřuje na události, které vedly ke zničení židovských obcí na jihomoravském Slovácku v dobách fašismu a komunismu. Práce se rovněž snaží objasnit, jaké motivy vedly místní nežidovské obyvatelstvo k účasti na úmyslném zničení a vymazání židovských dějin z místní historie. Kulturně a historicky bohaté židovské obce se staly oběťmi hluboce zakořeněného a přetrvávajícího antisemitismu, nejen pod nadvládou fašistického režimu, ale také v dobách komunismu, kdy místní obyvatelstvo zarytě diskriminovalo přeživší Šoa. To vedlo k úplnému zničení početných židovských obcí, včetně těch v Uherském Brodě a Kyjově. Vina nežidovských obyvatel byla úmyslně ignorována do té míry, že v dnešní době mají lidé na Slovácku pouze neúplné informace o kdysi významném vlivu Židů na jejich města a rolích, které mohli sehrát jejich předci a sousedé při zničení židovské kultury.

Klíčová slova: Nacismus, komunismus, Židé, Češi, Němci, židovská komunita, odboj, kolaborace, antisemitismus, Uherský Brod, Kyjov, Slovácko, Morava, Šoa, Holocaust historická paměť

ABSTRACT

This bachelor's thesis focuses on events that led to the destruction of the Jewish communities in the Slovácko Region of southern Moravia during the Nazi and Communist regimes, as well as the particular motives that led the local non-Jewish inhabitants to participate in the deliberate and efficacious deletion of the region's Jewish past from its official history. Historically and culturally rich Jewish communities in the Slovácko Region were victimized by deeply-rooted and prevailing anti-Semitism, not only under the Nazi regime but also during the Communist era when many gentile inhabitants unrelentingly discriminated against Shoah survivors, leading to the final and complete destruction of numerous Jewish communities, including those in Uherský Brod and Kyjov. Furthermore, the culpability of these gentiles was intentionally disregarded to the extent that the present-day inhabitants of Slovácko have only vague information about the once-powerful Jewish presence in their home towns and the roles that their ancestors and neighbors may have played in its disappearance.

Keywords: Nazism, Communism, Jews, Czechs, Germans, Jewish community, resistance, collaboration, anti-Semitism, Uherský Brod, Kyjov, Slovácko, Moravia, Shoah, Holocaust, historical memory

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INTRODUCTION

“We did not know what is ahead of us ... when we returned back to our hometown from Theresienstadt, nobody welcomed us with open arms” Věra Weberová, 2013¹

Věra Weberová (née Baderová), born in 1934 in Kyjov, is a Shoah survivor and an only child, who returned to her hometown after the Second World War. Earlier, on January 18, 1943, she was deported along with her family and 500 Jews from Kyjov to Uherský Brod, which served as a temporary ghetto and a gathering place for Jews from the Moravian regions of Slovácko and Wallachia. Instead of a joyous childhood gathering experience behind the school desk, Věra was exposed to death soon after her departure from Kyjov. In Uherský Brod, squeezed in the local high school along with 2,838² Jews before deportation, she witnessed cruel beatings by the Nazis. A few days later, in bitter cold, her people were led by armed SS to the train station and sent to the Theresienstadt concentration camp outside of Prague. From there, the majority of Jews were sent to the death camps in the East. Unlike most of her family, Věra was spared transport. She and her mother survived in Theresienstadt until the liberation. However, the happiness of survival and the hope to start a normal life was mixed with the sadness of the loss of her closest family members. Furthermore, the belief that the non-Jewish inhabitants of Kyjov would warmly welcome Věra and her mom was quickly shattered, replaced by bitterness and disillusionment. Penniless, the two faced anti-Semitic and extremely hostile attitudes from the locals. Additionally, those who complicated their lives during the Second World War continued to do so, under the umbrella of the communist regime. Similar fates awaited Jewish survivors from Uherský Brod, where they became unwelcomed guests.

Both Jewish communities, numbering about 500 each before the war, had rich and vibrant histories. Both helped to enrich the Slovácko Region culturally, yet both were almost completely destroyed and sank into oblivion during the four decades of totalitarianism. However, it was not only the Nazis and Communists to blame, but also the local Czech gentiles who utilized both regimes to gratify their deeply-rooted anti-

¹ Věra Weberová, interview by author, Kyjov, November 16, 2013.

² Radek Tomeček, Jan Gazdík, and Alexandra Zpurná, *Uherský Brod: Očima dobových fotografií 1865 – 1945* (Uherský Brod: Muzeum Jana Amose Komenského, 2010), 358.

Semitism.³ These Czechs thus became the instruments of destruction of the local Jewish communities. To conceal their culpability, the locals deliberately erased the Jewish presence from their towns' histories. As a result, current inhabitants of Uherský Brod and Kyjov are only vaguely familiar with Jewish history and the tragedy that local Jews experienced under Nazism and Communism. The truth was largely erased from the local collective memory. Hopefully this thesis will begin to right this wrong.

³ Česká televize, "13. komnata Valtra Komárka" Videoarchiv 13. komnata Adobe Flash Player video file, 18:10, <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/porady/1186000189-13-komnata/210562210800027-13-komnata-valtra-komarka/> (accessed December 12, 2013).

1 HISTORY OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN UHERSKÝ BROD

1.1 Uherský Brod as a Jewish community with a rich history

1.1.1 The Jewish settlement in Uherský Brod

The Jewish community of Uherský Brod was one of the most significant Jewish communities in Moravia along with towns such as Mikulov, Boskovice and Třebíč.⁴ According to historian Tomáš Pěkný, the first Jewish families settled in Uherský Brod in 1348.⁵ Other sources, however, date the Jewish settlement to 1470.⁶ The thirteenth and fourteenth centuries were generally kind towards Jews because officials valued their sense of business.⁷ Jewish traders probably found Uherský Brod attractive due to its strategic location along trade routes connecting the German lands and Bohemia with Austria and Upper Hungary. As these connections increased over time, so did the Jewish inhabitants in Brod.⁸ In 1595, five Jewish families lived in the town, whereas in 1671, forty houses were occupied by Jews.⁹ Such a rapid increase was mainly caused by two historical events. Firstly, The Battle of White Mountain resulted in an exodus of evangelicals from the Czech lands, and the Jewish community of Uherský Brod increased in influence. Jews bought abandoned houses and established a new Jewish quarter.¹⁰ The second increase in the local Jewish population was the result of the expulsion of Jews from Vienna in 1670, many of whom found new homes in Brod.¹¹ The number of Jews continued to increase, and in the second half of the seventeenth century Uherský Brod became the second largest Jewish community in Moravia after Mikulov.¹² Indeed the town witnessed a great influx of Jews as a consequence of advantageous economic conditions, but difficult times were ahead.

⁴ Eva Hanáková, "Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století," MA thesis, Palacký University Olomouc, 2004, 12.

⁵ Tomáš Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě* (Praha: Sefer, 2001), 27.

⁶ "Uherský Brod," Holocaust.cz, accessed August 28, 2013, http://www.holocaust.cz/cz/resources/jcom/fiedler/uhersky_brod.

⁷ Livia Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia: Facing the Holocaust* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 8.

⁸ Michael L. Miller, "Uherský Brod," YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe, accessed August 28, 2013, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Uhersky_Brod.

⁹ "Uherský Brod," Holocaust.cz.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Isaac Ze'ev Kahane and Yeshayahu Jelinek, "Uhersky Brod," Jewish Virtual Library, accessed October 20, 2013, http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/judaica/ejud_0002_0020_0_20159.html.

¹² Hanáková, "Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století," 13.

1.1.2 Thököly's attack and burdens for the Jewish community

In 1683, Jewish citizens of Brod faced two particular hardships. First, a plague struck the town, allegedly killing 438 Jewish inhabitants.¹³ Second, on 14 July 1683, Kuruc troops led by Hungarian rebel Thököly attacked and pillaged the town, destroying property and killing both Catholics and Jews alike. Approximately one hundred Jews died in this assault, while several others were kidnapped.¹⁴ Sixty-five Jewish homes were destroyed.¹⁵ Furthermore, Rabbi Nathan Nata, recently settled in Brod,¹⁶ was brutally murdered.¹⁷

A financial burden imposed on the Jews by the nobility created yet another hardship. Jews were forced to pay taxes and payments for protection. They went to Vienna to complain, but to no avail.¹⁸ Moreover, Jews were obliged to provide the manor kitchen with spices or to pay for maintenance of the town walls. Disputes within the community were solved by the rabbi, but the nobility always had the last word.¹⁹ Last but not least, the local Christians often complained to the nobility about increased economic competition from Jews.²⁰ Despite such hardships, the Jewish Community of Uherský Brod adapted and thrived.

1.2 The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries – the expansion of the Jewish community and gradual emancipation of Czech Jewry

1.2.1 Adaptation of the community to restrictions

The Jewish population in the Czech lands had not had it easy due to several restrictions, though some of the laws brought at least somewhat favorable rights for the Jews during the eighteenth and especially the nineteenth century. Furthermore, as a consequence of the Czech national awakening, Jews were treated by gentiles with scorn. Even so, the Jewish community of Uherský Brod proved flexible. On one hand, the raid of Kuruc troops undoubtedly had a horrific impact on the local Jewry, but on the other,

¹³ "Uherský Brod," Holocaust.cz.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Miller, "Uherský Brod."

¹⁶ Kahane and Jelinek, "Uhersky Brod."

¹⁷ Vilibald Růžička, *Z doby okupace města Uh. Brodu* (Uherský Brod: Muzeum Jana Amose Komenského, 1968), 94.

¹⁸ Hanáková, "Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století," 14.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

since many Jews were forced to leave for other places, this event helped to spread the community and religion to neighboring towns. New settlements were established in Trenčín, Nové Mesto nad Váhom, and Vrbové and were religiously managed by the community of Uherský Brod for fifty years.²¹ In 1724, the Jewish quarter was surrounded by a wall, and to fully distinguish the line between the town and the quarter, a deep trench was dug.²² By 1745, Uherský Brod was home to 936 Jews.²³ During that period, Empress Maria Theresa introduced laws restricting the power of the nobility. Jews, however, were still burdened by heavy taxation. Moreover, Marie Theresa expelled the Jews from Prague in 1744 for espionage in the Prussian War.²⁴

These events and restrictions did not discourage Uherský Brod's Jewish community from building a new and more spacious synagogue in 1767 (see appendix P II). The construction was initially financed by Maximilián Ondřej from Kounic, but later on the Jewish community repaid him.²⁵ Furthermore, Emperor Joseph II, not as anti-semitic as his mother, introduced new policies. German became the official language of the empire and Jewish judicial autonomy was suspended.²⁶ More, the 1782 Toleranzpatent brought more favorable rights for Jews.²⁷ According to historian Livia Rothkirchen, the emperor utilized "the Jews' potential to the benefit of the state economy."²⁸

1.2.2 The flourishing of the community as a result of increased legal rights

Although the number of Jewish families living in Brod was officially restricted to 160 in the period between the end of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century, this order was most likely violated.²⁹ One year before the 1848 Revolution, the 827 Jews living in the town comprised 38 percent of the total population, making them a sizeable and powerful minority. The revolution itself resulted in riots in Uherský Brod against the local Jewry.³⁰ In response to the growth of the Jewish community, the local Christians utilized the revolution as an excuse to attack the Jews. In

²¹ Miller, "Uherský Brod."

²² Hanáková, "Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století," 15-16.

²³ Miller, "Uherský Brod."

²⁴ Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 11.

²⁵ Tomeček, Gazdík, and Zpurná, *Uherský Brod: Očima dobových fotografů*.

²⁶ Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 11; Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 109-110.

²⁷ Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 11.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ "Uherský Brod," Holocaust.cz.

³⁰ Kahane and Jelinek, "Uhersky Brod."

addition, as the sense of Czech nationalism increased, Jews were often accused by Czechs of being on the same side with Germans. Germans, however, tended to view Jews as strangers.³¹ In 1848 the borders between the ghetto and the core of the town became blurred and as a result, the Jews were able to move to other parts of Uherský Brod. Consequently, the Jewish community in Brod reached its population nadir. In 1857, some 1,068 Jews lived in the town, amounting to 26 percent of the overall number of inhabitants.³² In the 1860's, local Jews gradually gained more rights, culminating in equal rights in 1867. Such a phenomenon, as Pěkný observes, had a positive impact on their legal, economic, and social status, but proved detrimental to the maintenance of long held cultural values.³³

1.2.3 Impact of the laws on the Jewish community in Uherský Brod

Uherský Brod was reportedly one of the most Orthodox communities in Moravia and had the honor of hosting famous rabbis from cities such as Vienna, Frankfurt, or Krakow.³⁴ Newly acquired rights influenced the formation of the community, which gradually split between liberal and traditionalist factions, both having different religious views and opinions. Then, such a seemingly simple measure as the relocation of a synagogue podium led to a disagreement between factions that resulted in separate services.³⁵ In a recent interview, Věra Weberová, a Holocaust survivor from nearby Kyjov, explained that the religious services in her synagogue were attended mostly by liberals. She also recalled that Czech Jews were more liberal than those originating in Ruthenia, who were more Orthodox.³⁶ Disputes between the two separate Jewish communities in Uherský Brod lasted many years after the initial rupture. For instance, the orthodox branch had its own rabbi and a small temple in one of the houses in the Jewish quarter.³⁷ In general, the spate of laws passed between the 1840s and 1860s had a great impact on the Jewry of Brod not only externally in terms of relationships between Germans and Czechs, but also internally.

³¹ Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 14.

³² Hanáková, "Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století," 16.

³³ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 127.

³⁴ Kahane and Jelinek, "Uhersky Brod."

³⁵ Hanáková, "Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století," 16-17.

³⁶ Weberová, interview by author, Kyjov, November 16, 2013.

³⁷ Hanáková, "Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století," 16-17.

1.3 The Jewish Community between 1867 and 1915

For Czech Jews, the period from 1867 up until the First World War might be characterized as a search for identity.³⁸ Such a search was widespread, and the Jewish community of Uherský Brod was no exception. It is vital to understand this quest for identity because it sheds light on the behavior of Czech gentiles towards Jews in the first half of the twentieth century.

1.3.1 Jews as participants in public life

After hundreds of years behind the walls of ghettos, Jews were given an opportunity to participate in and influence society not only within the Czech lands but also throughout the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which came into existence in the same year the Jews fully acquired their rights – in 1867 when the so-called *Ausgleich* was signed.³⁹ This event prepared the ground for vital decisions within Jewish communities in the Czech lands. Jews found themselves in a situation where the Czech national enlightenment was in full swing and where the influence of Germanization, declared by the emperor, created a conflict of interests. On one hand, Jews were immensely grateful to Joseph II for the opportunity to participate in public life and in the process of Germanization. On the other hand, they often felt themselves to be full-blooded Czechs, wholly aware and supportive of Czech heritage and traditions. In other words, notes Tomáš Pěkný, Jews were “caught in the crossfire.”⁴⁰

1.3.2 Jewish identity between Czechs and Germans

For Jews, the mere choice of a language was a momentous decision, since it suggested an inclination either towards the Czechs or the Germans.⁴¹ According to law, the language of instruction in Jewish schools had to be German, and Jews were required to pass a German language exam before getting married.⁴² In Uherský Brod both the Jewish primary school and Yeshiva⁴³ used German solely in their classes.⁴⁴ Other examples of embracing the German language were the act of renaming from Hebrew to

³⁸ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 487.

³⁹ Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 14.

⁴⁰ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 497.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 496.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 488.

⁴³ A yeshiva is an Orthodox Jewish school providing religious and secular instruction.

⁴⁴ Max Mannheimer, interview by Adam Drda, *Rozhlas.cz*, December 8, 2013, accessed January 28, 2014, <http://prehravac.rozhlas.cz/audio/3020887>.

German sounding surnames or an obligation to keep birth registries and account books in German. Moreover, the German language resembled Yiddish, and holy Jewish books were first translated into German. German language was also required at universities. And as Pěkný explains, in Jewish families at least one of the sons was required to study at university.⁴⁵ Naturally, the German language provided Jews with an opportunity for proper education and also signified another step from the ghetto to the public sphere of business and office work.

Accordingly, Jews were often accused by Czechs of an inclination and exaggerated devotion towards the German culture.⁴⁶ Besides, according to Pěkný, Jews utilized their morality, influenced (negatively or positively) by hundreds of years spent in ghettos, in public spheres of business, finance, politics, science and culture. He further suggests that as a result some of them were snobbish, inconsiderate in business, and maintained an exaggerated sense of nationalism and assimilation.⁴⁷ Therefore, after emancipation, Jews were in an uneasy situation due to the accusations and prejudices of Czech gentiles.

1.3.3 Public tension and uprising of Zionism

At the turn of the twentieth century, Jews experienced a wave of anti-Semitism despite their initial efforts to assimilate into Czech society.⁴⁸ At that time, the sense of Czech nationalism and hatred towards everything German peaked, and Jews were victims of aggression from Czech nationalists. One reason behind such an outburst of belligerence was most likely the fact that many Catholic clubs issued pamphlets in critical of Jews.⁴⁹ In addition, after the fall of Kasimir Badeni's government, ruthless attacks against Jews and Germans occurred not only in Bohemia but also in Moravia. A state of emergency had to be declared.⁵⁰ In 1899, Leopold Hilsner from Polná in the Vysočina Region of Bohemia was accused of a ritual murder which resulted in a hostile, anti-Semitic atmosphere among Czechs. Further attacks occurred between 1904 and 1908. According to one scholar, Czech anti-Semitism was widespread among small business owners, blue-collar workers, peasants, and clerks.⁵¹ Apparently, as in the past, the waves

⁴⁵ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 488, 490, 498.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 494.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 487-488.

⁴⁸ Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 15-16.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁵⁰ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 509.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 509, 511.

of anti-Semitism were roused mostly by economic and religious motives. Nonetheless, Czech Jews tried for overall acceptance, and new political trends were a likely path.

Indeed, the idea of modern Zionism introduced by Theodor Herzl towards the end of the nineteenth century reacted not only to pogroms in Russia but also to issues of anti-Semitism and assimilation in Europe – such as the case of Czech Jewry.⁵² Herzl himself was aware of the situation of Czech Jews, which he described in writing.⁵³ Some Czech Jews, living in a multinational society, began to embrace Zionism as a last resort.⁵⁴ As a result *Jüdischer Akademische Verbindung Veritas*, the first Zionist student organization (influenced by Herzl's lectures in Vienna), was established in Brno in 1894.⁵⁵ Since Uherský Brod is situated near Brno, it was quite natural that similar organizations appeared there as well. Kieval confirms that Zionism “was gaining popularity among small-town merchants and professionals.”⁵⁶ Furthermore, Pěkný suggests that the first wave of Zionism served as a sort of religious and cultural renaissance for European Jewry. He further notes that it was different from the second wave which was rather in the spirit of Aliyah.⁵⁷ In fact, both waves not only had a great impact on the character of Jewry as a whole, but also on the destiny of Jews before World War II.

1.3.4 Zionist organizations and education in Uherský Brod

The presence of many Zionist organizations and Jewish schools was proof that the Jewish community in Brod was among the most progressive and important communities in Moravia. Above all, the organizations later served as a medium for Jewish emigration before and during the Second World War. One such organization was Chorebb, established in 1891 with the purpose of organizing lectures in Hebrew. An organization called Bikur Cholim, established in 1892, supported the poor, while another, Aguda, provided community members with education. The Women's International Zionist Organization and Makkabi, an athletic club, were also significant organizations.⁵⁸ Last but not least, the community had its own Jewish school and Yeshiva established by Rabbi

⁵² Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 488.

⁵³ Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 21.

⁵⁴ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 521.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Hillel J. Kieval, “In the Image of Hus: Refashioning Czech Judaism in Post-Emancipatory Prague,” *Modern Judaism* 5 (May 1985): 147, accessed January 15, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1396392>.

⁵⁷ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 523 – 524. Aliyah is the proces of immigration to Eretz Israel.

⁵⁸ Hanáková, “Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století,” 17.

Moritz Jung, who modernized schooling in Ruthenia and later served as a rabbi in London.⁵⁹ The school, however, was soon closed due to an insufficient number of students. Such organizations were central to Jewish cultural life; later they shifted their focus towards saving Jews from the Nazis.

1.4 The Jewish community between 1918 and the Munich Betrayal

The existence of the Jewish community in Uherský Brod prior to the Second World War might be characterized as favorable for the following reasons. First, the freedom of Jews was reaching its peak. Secondly, as Pěkný suggests, those Jews who assimilated with the Czechs in the last quarter of the nineteenth century generally achieved higher social status.⁶⁰ Above all, it was during the rule of Tomáš G. Masaryk, president of Czechoslovakia, that the Jewish community in Uherský Brod (as well as in other towns across the country) flourished.

1.4.1 The plundering of Jewish shops during the coup in 1918

After World War I but preceding the establishment of Czechoslovakia, the gentile inhabitants of Uherský Brod and surrounding areas attacked Jewish-owned shops. Anti-semitic local chronicler Vilibald Růžička depicts the period as one of cruel poverty characterized by a shortage of flour, sugar, meat, and milk. He further notes that Jews, however, did not experience such hard times.⁶¹ At that time the town was full of newcomers from Galicia who helped the local Jews Germanize. In addition, the entire Jewish community was, unlike the Czech gentiles, sad because of the loss of Austria. They believed it was their anti-Slavic and pro-German attitudes that prompted the locals to storm their shops. The attacks were so severe that the shops had to be guarded by *Sokol* members and firefighters. Furthermore, the attacks spread to nearby Nové Mesto nad Váhom⁶² – a town established by Jews from Brod. The violence, however, did not prove fatal, as in nearby Holešov where two Jews died during pogroms.⁶³ Although Jews in Brod were spared from escalated pogroms at the turn of the century and had to “merely”

⁵⁹ Miller, “Uherský Brod”; Hanáková, “Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století,” 18-19.

⁶⁰ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 518.

⁶¹ Vilibald Růžička, *Obráz města Uherského Brodu a kraje Komenského v převratových dnech roku 1918* (Uherský Brod: Muzeum Jana Amose Komenského, 1968), 2-3.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 2, 5, 10-11, 14, 16.

⁶³ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 512.

listen to the complaints and criticisms of their gentile neighbors, the postwar situation clarified the positions of some local gentile inhabitants.

1.4.2 T.G. Masaryk's attitude towards the Jews

Post-war disturbances were calmed by the new President Masaryk, the father of the nation and a supporter of Jews. However, Masaryk's motives were not altogether altruistic. As Kieval observes, "Masaryk's pious Catholic mother had taught her children to fear Jews."⁶⁴ This fear did not subside until secondary school, where he encountered Jewish students that changed his opinion⁶⁵ and caused him to become interested in Zionism. As a result, Jews for the first time in history could choose among Czechoslovakian, German and Jewish nationalities which was met with enthusiasm among many Czechoslovakian Jews.⁶⁶ For instance, in the 1910 census, 624 inhabitants of Uherský Brod claimed German nationality and 4,563 Czech nationality. In the 1921 census, the ratio was wholly different. Only 50 inhabitants claimed German nationality, whereas 499 claimed Jewish nationality, and 4,900 Czech nationality. Such a political decision had, as Hanáková suggests, practical reasons since in the 1921 census, 26 percent of Czechoslovak Jews chose Jewish nationality. Consequently, the number of inhabitants stating Hungarian or German nationality decreased.⁶⁷ Another example of Masaryk's ambiguous attitude towards Jews was his remarks on the Hilsner Affair, which clearly suggested he supported the Jews because it was in his political interest to do so.⁶⁸ Also, during the formation of the new government, politicians (including Masaryk) contemplated whether it was advisable to incorporate Jews into the government or not.⁶⁹ Kieval concludes that "Masaryk's attitudes turned on the dichotomy between his affective, or emotional, disposition and his rational, ideological convictions. Emotionally, Masaryk never completely overcame the mistrust and suspicion of Jews he had learned as a child."⁷⁰ As Masaryk could not avoid certain prejudices,⁷¹ neither did the gentiles of Uherský Brod during the three decades prior to World War II.

⁶⁴ Hillel J. Kieval, *Languages of Community. The Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 206.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 516.

⁶⁷ Hanáková, "Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století," 21.

⁶⁸ Kieval, *The Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands*, 206-207; Ruth Bondy, *Trapped: Essays on the History of the Czech Jews, 1939-1943*, (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2008), 201.

⁶⁹ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 512-513.

⁷⁰ Kieval, *The Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands*, 216.

1.4.3 A golden era within the Jewish community in Uherský Brod

The success of Jewish businesses and the participation of Jews in local government were proof that the Jewish community actively participated in the public life of Uherský Brod – often to the antipathy of the locals. More, the Jewish quarter fully merged with the town in 1919 and some Jewish shops were located on the main square.⁷² The common Czech stereotype that Jews were wealthy was not prevalent in Brod (see appendix P III).⁷³ As Růžena Hanáčková recalls from her mother's stories, in Brod there were both poor and rich Jews. Furthermore, wealthy Jews usually entered into marriage with other prosperous families and marriages were arranged.⁷⁴ Local Jews were employed as millers, merchants, haberdashers, grocers,⁷⁵ butchers, bakers,⁷⁶ and restaurant and hotel proprietors.⁷⁷ Proof that the Jews had a considerable impact on the Czech economy is confirmed by Rothkirchen, who estimates that between 30 and 40 percent of industrial investment in Czechoslovakia was by Jews.⁷⁸ Also, their remarkable presence at universities (eighteen percent of all students in 1935)⁷⁹ might have been perceived as a growing threat in the eyes of Czechs, along with the Jewish presence in politics, writing, publishing,⁸⁰ and business.

Jewish inhabitants adjusted to the traditions of the Moravian countryside and engaged in wood processing, coal trading or distilling. Although Hanáčková claims that relations among local Christians and Jews were relatively good in the pre-war times, she further notes that it was not always the case. Similarly historian Radek Tomeček claims that the attitude of the local Christians toward Jews was not entirely positive. For instance, the members of the local Sokol agreed to boycott Jewish-owned

⁷¹ Bondy, *Trapped*, 201.

⁷² Hanáčková, 18; Metoděj Zemek, *Uherský Brod: Minulost i současnost slováckého města*, (Brno: Nakladatelství Blok, 1972), 227.

⁷³ Česká televize, "Nekupujte u Židů cukr, kafe, mouku..." Videoarchiv Historie.cs Adobe Flash Player video file, 18:10, <http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/ct24/exkluzivne-na-ct24/historie-cs/164400-nekupujte-u-zidu-cukr-kafe-mouku/> (accessed December 8, 2013).

⁷⁴ Růžena Hanáčková, interviewed by author, Uherský Brod, October 17, 2013.

⁷⁵ Hanáčková, "Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století," 22-23.

⁷⁶ Tomeček, Gazdík and Zpurná, *Uherský Brod*, 372.

⁷⁷ Věra Andrášková, "O historii restaurací a hotelů se žlutou hvězdou v Luhačovicích – jak se vaří macesové knedlíčky" (lecture, Muzeum luhačovického Zálesí, Luhačovice, February 20, 2014). See also <http://www.muzeum-zlin.cz/cs/objekty/muzeum-luhaovickeho-zalesi/vystavy/>.

⁷⁸ Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 37.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 38.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 39-41.

establishments.⁸¹ Also, at least one local anti-Semite blamed the Jews for their German nature and for speaking German.⁸² Thus, the attitudes and opinions of local gentiles towards their Jewish counterparts remained deeply rooted in their mentality from the past, despite the fact that the Jews were headed towards assimilation and many of them were bilingual. The Jewish population of Czechoslovakia did not enjoy prosperity under the rule of Masaryk for long. Over the next two decades, it would gradually dissipate.

1.4.4 Zionism and emigration to Eretz Israel

Emigration from Uherský Brod might be divided into two different stages, both closely connected with Zionist organizations. Jews in the first wave were keen Zionists, usually members of various Zionist clubs in Brod and people who identified with the philosophy of Zionism. They were trained to become Halutzim⁸³ and had the will to perform Aliyah.⁸⁴ The second wave of emigrants to Eretz Israel was characterized by its urgency and was carried out hastily as Jews attempted to flee the Nazi threat. For instance, Tchelet Lavan, also present in Brod, was a well-known club training young Halutzim in agriculture. Skills in working the land were, apart from knowledge of Hebrew and required team spirit,⁸⁵ a cornerstone for building a new state. Above all, training in agriculture was crucial for obtaining emigration permission from the British authorities in Palestine.⁸⁶ The most widespread organization was Makkabi at that time (see appendix P IV). The majority of Brod's young Jews exercised to strengthen their bodies under the supervision of secondary school teacher Vladimír Havránek, who later collaborated with the Germans.⁸⁷ One primary source recalls that the purpose of the Keren Kajemet Lejisrael (Jewish National Fund) was to collect money, buy land in Palestine, and support emigration.⁸⁸ As early as 1933, the first group of Zionists from Uherský Brod left for Palestine.⁸⁹ One of them, Honza Donnerbaum, was not only a keen Zionist but also a Communist, and because of his radical opinions he was sent back to

⁸¹ Radek Tomeček, interviewed by author, Uherský Brod, October 17, 2013.

⁸² Hanáková, "Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století," 26.

⁸³ Halutzim is a Jewish pioneer in the agricultural settlements of modern Israel. See <http://www.yourdictionary.com/halutzim>.

⁸⁴ A Jewish term for immigration to Israel.

⁸⁵ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 529.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Hanáková, "Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století," 28.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 30.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 32.

Czechoslovakia.⁹⁰ Another of Brod's Halutzim was Ludvík Schön, who left the town in 1936. Furthermore, Pavel Winterstein, from a family whose business was the production of stockings, was an enthusiastic Zionist. He did not identify with the Czechoslovakian nation and was determined to leave for Palestine. After studying at Charles University, he moved to Paris where he supposedly realized the First Republic would be betrayed in Munich, which disillusioned him. Also, for his Zionist activities in Prague he was later pursued by Germans, which gave him a real incentive to move to Eretz Israel. As Hanáková suggests, Winterstein was a typical example of a person who contemplated moving to Eretz Israel earlier in the thirties but did not do so until his life was in real danger.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Ibid., 33.

⁹¹ Ibid., 31-32.

2 1938 – 1945: EMIGRATION, RESISTANCE BY THE LOCAL JEWRY, AND THE SHOAH

The ideology of Nazism spread quickly like a cancer across Germany, and it was only a question of when the Czechoslovak Republic would become a part of Hitler's Third Reich. Nevertheless, most could not imagine that Czechoslovakia would be "sold" during the Munich Agreement on 30 September 1938 and later annexed by Germany. For instance, Max Mannheimer, a Jew born in the small Sudetenland town of Nový Jičín, recalls that as early as in the mid-1930s his classmates were inclined to Nazism. One of his classmates at German business school, a girl, carried Hitler's photograph and looked upon him with admiration during classes. He further claims that he was aware of anti-Semitism in Germany but did not foresee any threat to Czechoslovakia at that time.⁹² Not only did many European Jews not realize the consequences of Nazism, but neither did countries granting permissions and visas see a real threat in Hitler. For instance, Martin Gilbert cites the view of British official Patrick Reilly on emigrants who reached Poland from Czechoslovakia, stating that "a great many of these ... are not in any sense political refugees, but Jews who panicked unnecessarily and need not have left."⁹³ By then the Aryanzation of Jewish property,⁹⁴ killings, or putting Jews into concentration camps and depriving them of rights were already occurring under Hitler's five-year reign of Germany.⁹⁵ Furthermore, Austrian Jews had to face similar anti-Jewish restrictions after the annexation of Austria on 15 March 1938.⁹⁶

Czechoslovakia experienced the same stroke of fate exactly one year later when Nazism engulfed the country. Shortly after that, restrictions for Jews became a daily routine, leading to the nearly complete extermination of the Czech Jewry. According to one source, of the 92,199 Jews living in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia before the deportations began, 78,154 died during the Holocaust.⁹⁷ Czech Jews, as previously in history, ended up as scapegoats in the midst of conflict. During the war, Czechs were

⁹² Max Mannheimer, *Vzpomínky* (Obrys Kontur – PmD, 1986), 15.

⁹³ Martin Gilbert, *The Holocaust* (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd, 1986), 81.

⁹⁴ Arthur Schweitzer, "Big Business and Private Property Under the Nazis," *Journal of Business of the University of Chicago* 19 (April 1946): 105-106, accessed January 15, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2350401>.

⁹⁵ Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, 57.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

⁹⁷ "Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia," YadVashem.org, accessed August 25, 2013, http://www.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%206071.pdf.

divided in their loyalties. One group perceived the war as an opportunity to achieve a certain status or even enrich themselves, whereas the others rather resisted the Nazi regime. This time, however, Czech Jews did not stay out of harm's way. Within a few years, Bohemia and Moravia lost a centuries-old cultural heritage.

2.1 Fleeing from Nazism to Uherský Brod.

Czechoslovakian towns provided a refuge for the Jewish escapees from the ever increasing power of Adolf Hitler, and Uherský Brod was no exception. As Livia Rothkirchen states "Czechoslovakia became in the thirties host and haven to refugees of all categories." She further notes that "many of these were intellectuals, writers, journalists, and artists who became active in the anti-Nazi campaign."⁹⁸ From a historical point of view, the Jewish community in Uherský Brod was closely connected with Vienna. For that reason, many Brod-born Jews went to Austria's capital to pursue their careers. Some also went to Germany for similar purposes. Once native Brod Jews sensed the danger of Nazism, they sought refuge with their family members in Uherský Brod. Between 1937 and 1939, fifty three refugees⁹⁹ found shelter with their relatives or acquaintances and thus increased the number of Jews living in the town to around five hundred.¹⁰⁰

Meanwhile Prague faced serious problems with a great influx of refugees from Austria and Germany, of whom many were sick, hungry and depressed.¹⁰¹ According to Gilbert twenty-five thousand Austrian and German Jewish refugees settled in Prague before Bohemia and Moravia were entirely occupied.¹⁰² The Jewish community of Uherský Brod was aware of the alarming situation and sent financial support to the council in Prague.¹⁰³ After the Munich Agreement, the Sudetenland with its German population of three million¹⁰⁴ was annexed to Germany. In the beginning of the 1930s, approximately thirty thousand Jews lived in the Sudetenland. Before November 1938,

⁹⁸ Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 54.

⁹⁹ Hanáková, "Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století," 38.

¹⁰⁰ "Uherský Brod," Holocaust.cz.

¹⁰¹ Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 54.

¹⁰² Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, 78.

¹⁰³ Minutes from a Meeting of the Jewish Community in Uherský Brod, September 7, 1938, Muzeum Jana Amose Komenského, Uherský Brod.

¹⁰⁴ Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 63.

some twelve thousand moved inland¹⁰⁵ - most of them spoke German. This, according to Rothkirchen, created a wave of discrimination among Czechs since those “Jews who had claimed German nationality in the last official census were blamed for the loss of territories.”¹⁰⁶ As Vilibald Růžička states in his chronicle, after the Munich Betrayal anti-Jewish sentiment overwhelmed Uherský Brod. For instance, Jewish caricatures and signs stating *Vyžehťe Židy* (Get rid of Jews) spread across the town. Interestingly, the author claims that the Jews only then realized that they were enemies of the locals. In addition, he suggests that Jews threatened the locals in terms of business and Germanization during the First Republic.¹⁰⁷ Certain parallels exist in the behavior of Uherský Brod’s inhabitants and the attitude of the Czech gentile population towards Jews after the Munich Betrayal.

The annexation of the Sudetenland brought eighty-one Jewish refugees to Brod. Some of them were immediately accommodated in the gym of the local Jewish school.¹⁰⁸ Similar to Prague, the Jewish community in Brod had to deal with the influx of Jews from Austria, Germany and the Sudetenland simultaneously. The seriousness of the situation in Bohemia and Moravia was intensified by the resignation of President Beneš. Additionally, the whirlwind annexation caused a sudden loss of economically strategic border areas, which resulted in an unfavorable nationwide financial situation.¹⁰⁹ Support of immigrants became increasingly difficult. The main topic of a November 1938 community meeting was refugees financing. For instance, Olga Fröhlichová, a refugee from Vienna, was paid 120 crowns a month to take care of other refugees and clean the poorhouse. Also, each member of the community had to make a donation in support of refugees. Some rooms had to be made available for accommodation and medical care.¹¹⁰ Apart from financial contributions sent to Prague, the Jewish community in Uherský Brod was helpful to its own refugees in increasingly demanding times.

Fred Deutsch from Moravská Ostrava, Max Mannheimer from Nový Jičín and their families were among eighty-one refugees from the Sudetenland to move to Uherský

¹⁰⁵ Alena Míšková, “Židé v Sudetech – od Šöhönerera ke genocidě,” Holocaust.cz, accessed January 12, 2014, http://www.holocaust.cz/cz2/resources/ros_chodes/1998/03/sudety.

¹⁰⁶ Livia Rothkirchen, “Czech Attitudes toward the Jews during the Nazi Regime,” in *Yad Vashem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe and Resistance* 13, ed. by Livia Rothkirchen, 287-320 (Jerusalem: Alpha Press, 1979) 303.

¹⁰⁷ Růžička, *Z doby okupace města Uh. Brodu*, 35.

¹⁰⁸ Eva Kalousová, “Životní příběh Arnošta Šöhöna z Uherského Brodu,” (paper presented at the annual meeting Židé a Morava, Kroměříž, November 15, 2006).

¹⁰⁹ Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 69.

¹¹⁰ Minutes from a Meeting of the Jewish Community in Uherský Brod, November 2, 1938, Muzeum Jana Amose Komenského, Uherský Brod.

Brod. Similar to refugees from Austria and Germany, they also had roots there – Deutsch’s father moved from Uherský Brod to Ostrava where he became a renowned dentist, while Mannheimer’s mother married a Polish Jew with whom she ran a shop in Nový Jičín. The latter was the oldest of five children. The family spoke German, and Max remembers that his mother cooked kosher food and prayed from German books.¹¹¹ The Mannheimers’ lives changed overnight on 10 October 1938 when the Sudetenland was occupied. Flags with swastikas and banners with pro-Nazi slogans suddenly “decorated” Nový Jičín. Apart from that, “*Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!*” echoed throughout the town. The family’s company car was expropriated by the Nazis. Their driver then worked for Nazis, but his salary was still paid by the Mannheimers. German canned meat from their shop was confiscated for “starving” locals.¹¹² In addition, some Germans claimed that they could no buy food in their shop, and some Czechs suddenly realized they had German ancestors and changed their Slavic-sounding surnames to German.¹¹³ Shortly after *die Kristallnacht* (the Night of Broken Glass), Max’s father was taken into custody where he had to commit to leaving town with his family.¹¹⁴ The Mannheimers packed their possessions moved to Uherský Brod on 27 January 1939. Mannheimer bought a two-room flat on the square, and the entire family squeezed into it. Fred Deutsch was six years old when his parents and family moved to Uherský Brod. He remembers that people from Moravská Ostrava started to emigrate, anticipating Hitler’s expansionary steps. Deutsch wonders: “why some people were guessing correctly, I do not know. My father unfortunately was not one of those that guessed correctly. He always thought that whatever exists is only a temporary situation and it will pass away. And, therefore, we stayed.”¹¹⁵ In retrospect, those Jews from the Sudetenland who managed to emigrate to Palestine were extremely lucky. As Pěkný suggests, the British issued only 2,500 permits for the Sudetenland’s Jews. Only 1,000 of them, as Pěkný stresses, were assigned before 15 March 1939.¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, the Deutches as well as Mannheimers moved to Uherský Brod hoping that they would be safer.

¹¹¹ Mannheimer, interview by Adam Drda, Rozhlas.cz.

¹¹² Mannheimer, *Vzpomínky*, 17-18.

¹¹³ Mannheimer, *Vzpomínky*, 19.

¹¹⁴ Mannheimer, interview by Adam Drda, Rozhlas.cz.

¹¹⁵ Fred Deutsch, “Oral History Interview with Fred Deutsch” (video interview, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, August 18, 1995), accessed January 21, 2014, <http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504758>.

¹¹⁶ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 568.

2.1.1 March 15, 1939 – The fateful day for Czechoslovakian Jews

However, March 15 1939 was a bitter pill for Jews in Brod and especially for those who once left their homes in order to escape. On March 14, Slovakia became independent, and one day later Sub-Carpathian Ruthenia was transferred to Hungary. The next day, Hitler visited Prague and signed a document proclaiming the Reich Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.¹¹⁷ As a result, nothing remained of former Czechoslovakia, and the lives of Czech Jews were in the balance. On 17 March, the Nazi army appeared in Uherský Brod,¹¹⁸ and as Max Mannheimer recalls, the situation resembled the one in Nový Jičín some months prior. The square in Brod was decorated with swastika flags and renamed Adolf Hitler Square.¹¹⁹ Germans immediately utilized the funeral of a local Sokol member for the purposes of propaganda. They photographed the folk procession, and a few days later the headline “Sokol Welcomes Wehrmacht in Uherský Brod” appeared in Vienna’s newspapers.¹²⁰ On March 20, signs *Jüdisches Geschäft* appeared in Jewish-owned shop windows.¹²¹ Two days later, Germans confiscated military supplies, guns, and tires in Uherský Brod. By April 1939, Germans had taken materials worth an estimated eighty million crowns from the Maršnerka power plant.¹²² Also, Gestapo were present in the town.¹²³ As Růžička remembers in his memoir, German officers had maps of Moravian towns such as Holešov, Uherské Hradiště, and Uherský Brod marked as towns with German minorities. He further points out that the Wehrmacht utilized the 1910 census, in which out of 5,297 inhabitants in Brod, 624 were German speaking – most of them Jews.¹²⁴ Apparently, from the very beginning the Nazis had their own plans for Jewish communities across the region. Some Jews, aware of the outcome of the Nazi rage in the Sudetenland, realized how dire the situation had become. From that point on, emigration from the Protectorate seemed the most viable option.

¹¹⁷ Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 97-98.

¹¹⁸ Zemek, *Uherský Brod*, 265.

¹¹⁹ Mannheimer, *Vzpomínky*, 22-23.

¹²⁰ Zemek, *Uherský Brod*, 265.

¹²¹ Růžička, *Z doby okupace města Uh. Brodu*, 60.

¹²² *Ibid.*, 67.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 62.

2.2 Resistance of the Jewish Community in Uherský Brod and the last minute emigration

2.2.1 Obstacles to legal emigration and its impact on Jews from Uherský Brod

Jews who did not escape before Nazis engulfed the country now had their last chance to emigrate abroad legally. After 1939, leaving the Protectorate became difficult, and illegal emigration increasingly became the only means of survival. Mostly wealthy Jews were able to flee the country. This outflow collided with anti-Semitic propaganda and efforts of the Czechoslovak government in exile to speed up the emigration process. For this reason, *Ústav pro péči o uprchlíky* and the Central Bank deducted quite significant amounts from money transfers designated for emigration to the benefit of the state.¹²⁵ According to available records, 19,016 Czech Jews managed to emigrate legally in 1939, whereas in 1940 the number dropped to 6,176 legal emigrants. In 1941, the number decreased rapidly to 535 legal emigrations.¹²⁶ Also, that was the time when the idea of Aliyah fully emerged, as a result of pressure and circumstances in the Protectorate. The core of Aliyah resided in Zionist movements, which turned into an island of hope for potential emigrants. The main destination for emigrants was Palestine. However, the British regulated the number of immigrants allowed into the country. As Dalia Ofer notes, “The White Paper of May 1939 limited Jewish immigration to a maximum of 75,000 in the next five years. This number was far below the individual applications and the request of the Jewish agency.”¹²⁷

As result, only one Jew from Uherský Brod obtained official permission for immigration to Palestine. It was a son of Brod’s Rabbi Kalman Nürnberger, Kurt Nürnberger, who was saved from the “Final Solution.”¹²⁸ Other Jews from Brod were forced to utilize various, mostly illegal ways to escape the Nazi threat. For instance, a keen Zionist and fighter against early Nazism in Prague, Brod-born Pavel Winterstein, managed to escape shortly after the Gestapo issued a warrant for his arrest on March 16

¹²⁵ “Druhá republika a židovští uprchlíci,” Holocaust.cz, accessed December 8, 2013, http://www.holocaust.cz/cz2/resources/texts/druha_republika_uprchlici.

¹²⁶ “Protižidovská politika po zřízení Protektorátu Čechy a Morava,” Holocaust.cz, accessed December 28, 2013, <http://www.holocaust.cz/cz2/history/jew/czech/prot>.

¹²⁷ Dalia Ofer, “The Rescue of European Jewry and Illegal Immigration to Palestine in 1940. Prospects and Reality: Berthold Storfer and the Mossad le’Aliyah Bet,” *Modern Judaism* 4 (May, 1984): 159, accessed January 5, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1396459>.

¹²⁸ Hanáková, “Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století,” 53.

1939. His transport to Palestine was organized by the Makabi Hacair movement. As he recalls, he realized how it was like to be an emigrant, dependent on others, especially when their transport was stopped in Italy for eleven days or when the British Navy prevented their small vessel from landing on the shores of Palestine.¹²⁹ Furthermore, because Rabbi Nürnberger most likely did not manage to gain permission for his daughter Herta, to emigrate he arranged her marriage with Aharon Mittelman of Tel Aviv. The couple was wed on March 12 1939, and shortly after they moved to Palestine.¹³⁰ Although Rabbi Nürnberger seemingly anticipated the future of Jewish destiny in the Protectorate, he and his wife did not manage to escape death in the gas chambers of Auschwitz.¹³¹ Among others who managed to escape were Gabriel Bock, active Zionists, and sisters Mia and Golda Vogls (see appendix P V).¹³² The Vogls, along with another four Brod Jews, fled the Protectorate and illegally travelled to Palestine through Yugoslavia. Their vessel was caught by the British, and they were deported to Mauritius.¹³³ According to Françoise Lionnet, 1,581 European Jews arrived in Mauritius on two Dutch vessels on 26 December 1940.¹³⁴ However, as he further points out, this part of Mauritian history was rather hidden to the public because “the British colonial government had no interest in encouraging public scrutiny of the ‘classified’ events that led to the Jews’ exile on the island.”¹³⁵ Leopold Donnenbaum from Uherský Brod made a rather radical step to escape from the Protectorate. Without any permission, merely with a passport, he got on a ship heading for Chile on which he luckily met the wife of a Chilean diplomat who provided him with the necessary papers.¹³⁶ Donnenbaum’s brother Herry managed to avoid the “Final Solution” and immigrated to Argentina.¹³⁷ Honza Donnenbaum, previously expelled from Palestine, saved his life by marriage with a

¹²⁹From letters by Elhanan Gafni (Pavel Winterstein) dated February 14, 2004, in Hanáková, “Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století,” 53-54.

¹³⁰Ibid., 53.

¹³¹Ibid.

¹³²Minutes from a Meeting of the Jewish Community in Uherský Brod, October 29, 1939, Muzeum Jana Amose Komenského, Uherský Brod.

¹³³Hanáková, “Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století,” 54-55.

¹³⁴Françoise Lionnet, “‘Dire exactement’: Remembering the Interwoven Lives of Jewish Deportees and Coolie Descendants in 1940s Mauritius,” *Yale French Studies* 118/119 (2010): 121, accessed January 22, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41337083>.

¹³⁵Ibid., 124. It is noteworthy that before the influx Jewish refugees to the island, a Lithuanian Jew, Isaac Birger, settled on the island in 1937 and worked for the Bata Shoe Company. See page 123.

¹³⁶From a personal interview with Willy Bock dated October 19, 2004, in Hanáková, “Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století,” 57. Leopold Donnenbaum worked for Baťa’s subsidiary in Chile and later on he established his own firm for zipper making.

¹³⁷Hanáková, “Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století,” 57.

Christian woman.¹³⁸ Furthermore, it was a priority for Czech Jews to protect their children from any possible danger. Therefore, many of them decided to send their children abroad. For instance, transports organized by Englishman Nicholas Winton managed to save 664 children.¹³⁹ According to Hanáková, three children from Uherský Brod were sent by transports to Palestine and, thus, their lives were saved.¹⁴⁰ In contrast, a few Jewish children from Brod might have been spared, but their parents did not admit that the situation was critical.¹⁴¹ Hanáková mentions some twenty Jews who managed to flee from Brod,¹⁴² whereas according to Zemek, approximately fifty Jews managed to escape prior to the Shoah.¹⁴³ In retrospect, Brod's Jews who managed to escape in the early phase of Nazi rule were lucky. Later on, escapes were rather acts of hopelessness, as the Protectorate became completely isolated and almost impossible to escape from.

In Prague, Jewish communities joined forces and created a department for emigration. Since permissions issued for Palestine were scarce, Prague Jewish leaders sought alternative ways of emigration. Rothkirchen suggests that the main aim of the communities was getting hold of money from Jewish organizations abroad, and selecting countries for emigrants.¹⁴⁴ Indeed, the Department for Emigration had some fifty-seven countries to choose from.¹⁴⁵ In the weekly *Židovské Listy* (*Jüdisches Nachrichtenblatt*), issued for the first time on 24 November 1939,¹⁴⁶ the authorities from the Jewish community in Prague encouraged emigration to several, mostly exotic countries.¹⁴⁷ No wonder Czech Jewish leaders strived to find a solution wherever they could, even though their efforts were often rather desperate.

Even countries such as Great Britain or the United States created obstacles for potential emigrants, making it more difficult for Jews to escape from the Protectorate. Britain implemented restrictions not only on immigration to Palestine, but also on the number of immigrants from the former Austria or Czechoslovakia. As Susan Cohen points out, "it is a depressing fact that uppermost in the mind of the Home Office was

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 82.

¹⁴⁰ Hanáková, "Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století," 59.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 62-64.

¹⁴² Ibid., 52.

¹⁴³ Zemek, *Uherský Brod*, 268.

¹⁴⁴ Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 117.

¹⁴⁵ Bondy, *Trapped*, 33.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., 15.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 31-34.

how best to minimize this influx of people without being uncharitable.”¹⁴⁸ Scholars Efraim Karsh and Rory Miller claim that the British fight “during the war highlights both the indifference to Jewish suffering and the solidarity of the anti-Zionist position irrespective of the scale of the tragedy.”¹⁴⁹ They further suggest that the main concern of Brits was to close Palestine and rather co-opt the Middle East in their possible fight against the Nazis.¹⁵⁰ And since it was almost impossible for Czech Jews to obtain permission from Brits, they strived to obtain visas from the United States. Nonetheless, a great number of the 32,000 applicants waiting for visas after December 1938¹⁵¹ did not receive them. More, Czech Jews were required to confirm that they would not be a financial burden on the United States. Additionally, excessive paperwork diminished their chances to flee the Protectorate.¹⁵²

A mirror-like situation occurred in Great Britain when Brits welcomed merely those Jews whom they deemed useful to the country.¹⁵³ Czech writer and Holocaust survivor Ruth Bondy wonders how many Jewish lives might have been saved without such restrictions.¹⁵⁴ Currently available government documents confirm that not only Allies failed to rescue Jews before the Holocaust, but also the Vatican and Red Cross were reluctant to take any concrete steps for their rescue.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, because of the German invasion of France and the closure of the crucial ports of Genoa and Trieste, emigrants lost access to the sea.¹⁵⁶ As a result, Czech Jews were trapped in the Protectorate, and the restrictions imposed by the Nazis, as well as the strict immigration policies of Allied countries, largely negated their chance to escape increasingly inhumane conditions.

¹⁴⁸ Susan Cohen, review of *Whitehall and the Jews 1933-1948: British Immigration Policy and the Holocaust* by Louise London, *Jewish Quarterly Review* 93, 3-4 (January – April, 2003): 598, accessed January 18, 2014,

<http://web.b.ebscohost.com.proxy.k.utb.cz/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&sid=02bcc955-19c6-4f52-a67a-f6acc0ad2bc2%40sessionmgr110&hid=108>.

¹⁴⁹ Efraim Karsh and Rory Miller, “Freya Stark in America: Orientalism, Antisemitism and Political Propaganda,” *Journal of Contemporary History* 39 (July, 2004): 316, accessed January 20, 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3180731>.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Bondy, *Trapped*, 34.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Cohen, review of *Whitehall and the Jews* by Louise London, 598-599.

¹⁵⁴ Bondy, *Trapped*, 37.

¹⁵⁵ Karsh and Miller, “Freya Stark in America,” 284.

¹⁵⁶ Bondy, *Trapped*, 35. France was invaded in May-June, 1940.

2.2.2 The Jewish Community in Uherský Brod under Restrictive of the Nazi Rule

The restrictive anti-Jewish legislation in the Protectorate imposed by Nazis had a negative impact on the lives of Jews. Apart from the aforementioned visible marking of Jewish shops in Brod shortly after arrival of Germans, lawyers, doctors, and government employees of Jewish origin were gradually deprived of their rights. Also, following the Nuremberg Laws from 1935, the Reichsprotektor Konstantin von Neurath put racial laws into practice in June 1939.¹⁵⁷ From then on, the deprivation of Jewish rights gained momentum, leading to their exclusion from the public and economic spheres. Jews in Brod were banned from visiting restaurants, cinemas, parks, and public swimming pools, and they were given an 8 pm curfew.¹⁵⁸ Also, Rothkirchen mentions that “all persons considered Jews were registered, and their ration books were stamped ‘J.’” Fred Deutsch describes the food situation in Brod: “Let’s say one week you were scheduled to obtain marmalade. Glass was not available, so you went to a grocery store and they put a piece of wax paper and weighed in to it marmalade. By the time you came home, not much was left.” Deutsch also recalls that the bread Jews obtained was so stale, that they used it as chess pieces. As food was scarce for Jews, they had to acquire it on the black market. This market, notes Deutsch, “flourished in an unbelievable fashion ... and many people enrich[ed] themselves by being black marketeers.”¹⁵⁹ Also, Rothkirchen suggests that amounts of rations or clothing were restricted, and that Jews were obligated to conduct rather menial work.¹⁶⁰ Max Mannheimer recalls that he was obliged to work on road construction in nearby Luhačovice. His thirteen-year-old brother wanted to become the next Tomas Baťa, and so his father asked a local shoemaker to employ him as an apprentice. However, the gentile craftsman, influenced by prejudices, at first refused him, stating that he would never employ a Jew. He argued that Jews would learn the craft and then create competition for him. It took the Mannheimers extensive effort to convince the shoemaker to train little Edgar, and the craft he learned later saved his life in Auschwitz.¹⁶¹ Also, Pěkný claims that rather perverse obstructions were imposed – such as the prohibition of owning domestic pets or a smoking ban for Jews.¹⁶² Additionally,

¹⁵⁷ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 341.

¹⁵⁸ Zemek, *Uherský Brod*, 268-269.

¹⁵⁹ Deutsch, “Oral History Interview with Fred Deutsch.”

¹⁶⁰ Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 110.

¹⁶¹ Mannheimer, interview by Adam Drda, Rozhlas.cz.

¹⁶² Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 341-342.

Fred Deutsch recalls that Germans removed tubes from radios owned by Jews. As a result, Jews were forced to listen to radio stations of countries already annexed by Nazis. And he adds, “then you had another problem. You did not know exactly what [wa]s propaganda and what is reality.”¹⁶³ Since August 1940, Jewish children could not attend German and Czech schools.¹⁶⁴ One year later, on September 1, 1941, Jews were obliged to wear a star of David visibly on the left side of the chest.¹⁶⁵ Until the beginning of deportations, limitations imposed on Jews gradually increased.¹⁶⁶

One of the main aims of Nazis was to seize Jewish properties for the betterment of the Reich.¹⁶⁷ However, not only Germans desired to enrich themselves. As Rothkirchen points out, “Czech Fascist circles made vigorous efforts to gain control over Jewish property themselves, forestalling the Germans.”¹⁶⁸ Nonetheless, Germans ensured that Jewish properties would fall solely into their hands. The process of Aryanization was chronologically divided into three phases. The infamous confiscation of Jewish property began as soon as Germans occupied Czechoslovakia and led to the gradual economic devastation of Czech Jews. First, Nazis seized the property of the ten most prosperous families in the Protectorate, which owned important banks and industrial premises.¹⁶⁹ Second, the Nuremberg Laws of June 1939 obligated Jews to register their property.¹⁷⁰ Also, their ownership rights were significantly restricted.¹⁷¹ As a result, the large-scale confiscation and transfer of property into hands of so-called *Treuhänder* began. As Pěkný points out, the Aryanization of Jewish properties caused several clashes between Protectorate Germans and nearly 500,000 Germans who immigrated to the Protectorate

¹⁶³ Deutsch, “Oral History Interview with Fred Deutsch.”

¹⁶⁴ “Ghetto bez zdí,” radio.cz, accessed September 8, 2013, <http://www.radio.cz/cz/static/protektorat/ghetto-bez-zdi>. By 1942 Jewish children were banned from attending Jewish school and taught privately. This order was violated very often.

¹⁶⁵ Bondy, *Trapped*, 30; Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 342.

¹⁶⁶ From 1942, Jews were forbidden to use public transportation, dry cleaning services, to buy suitcases, which were necessary for the transports, sale of Czech or German newspapers as well as use of public phones. For other restrictions see Bondy, *Trapped*, 28-30.

¹⁶⁷ Livia Rothkirchen, “Czech Attitudes toward the Jews during the Nazi Regime,” in *Yad Vashem Studies on the European Jewish Catastrophe and Resistance*. 13, ed. by Livia Rothkirchen, 287-320 (Jerusalem: Alpha Press, 1979) 306.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 307.

¹⁶⁹ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 366.

¹⁷⁰ Also, Rothkirchen suggests, that in April 30, 1940 Jews were obliged to “register and sell all gold, platinum, silver, precious stones, and pearls ... and to deposit all their stocks, bonds, and securities at a foreign currency bank.” See Rothkirchen, *The Jews of Bohemia and Moravia*, 108.

¹⁷¹ “Arizace,” Holocaust.cz, accessed December 28, 2014, http://www.holocaust.cz/cz/resources/ros_chodes/1999/11/arizace.

from the German Reich.¹⁷² Apparently, not only Czechs but also two groups of Germans were interested in personal enrichment. Additionally, the Gestapo often made raids on Jewish homes and businesses to make sure that nothing remained concealed. All attempts of Jews to avoid losing their property resulted in, as Pěkný claims, arrests, tortures, and finally, internment in concentration camps.¹⁷³ The third phase of the Aryanization process commenced in October 1941 when plans for mass deportations took shape. While in concentration camps, Jews were forced to entitle the Nazis to seize their deposits, and their flats including all equipment.¹⁷⁴ The overall estimated value of confiscated Jewish possessions varies from scholar to scholar. According to some reliable estimates, Czechoslovak Jewish property worth between 17 and 20 billion crowns was seized by the Nazis.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, Pěkný notes that some scholars believe that economic motives played as important a role as racial hatred during the Final Solution in the Protectorate.¹⁷⁶

Despite local strategic efforts, Brod Jewish properties were seized by the Nazis. According to Pěkný, the definition of Jewish-owned property was purposely implemented not only on Jewish property but on property even partly owned by them. In bigger companies, only one Jew serving on the board of directors entitled Germans to seize the entire company. Furthermore, a rather free interpretation empowered the Nazis to seize a property if, according to an evaluator, it was under Jewish influence.¹⁷⁷ The German army not only seized the army supplies in the Maršnerka warehouse, but it also took over the local armory and began producing guns for their purposes.¹⁷⁸ Neither of these premises were under Jewish influence. Also, all residents of Uherský Brod had to surrender old tires and leather luggage. Fred Deutsch remembers that an African contingent passed through Uherský Brod, and shortly thereafter such an order appeared. All the leather-made goods were transformed into shoes to be sold on that contingent, the proceeds of which would help fund the German war effort. Deutsch depicts the desperate situation in the town: “People who used to have bicycles became very inventive ... they mounted on a wire in very close proximity to each other, corks from bottles, and rode the

¹⁷² Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 368-369.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ “Arizace,” Holocaust.cz.

¹⁷⁵ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 370; “Arizace,” Holocaust.cz.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 367.

¹⁷⁸ Růžička, *Z doby okupace města Uh. Brodu*, 69.

bicycle on corks.”¹⁷⁹ Furthermore, once Germans ran out of metal for gun making, they ordered every bell in the town to be sent by train to Prague.¹⁸⁰ Jewish-owned businesses such as pubs, groceries, lumber mills, wholesale stores, etc., were controlled by the regime. For instance, in nearby Strání-Květná, the German owner of a glass factory, Emanuel Zahn, Aryanized the distillery and pub owned by Vítězslav Kien¹⁸¹ and forced him, his wife, and their small child to leave their house within twenty-four hours.¹⁸² This sudden loss of property led Kien to actively resist the Nazi regime. Also, Věra Weberová’s parents in nearby Kyjov lost their livelihood overnight, when goods worth more than one million Czech crowns in their grocery store was confiscated by Germans. Also, Alois Schweiger,¹⁸³ a renowned Jew born in Brod, had provided the local Jewish community with twelve million Czech crowns after his death. As a result, the Schweiger Foundation was established in order to provide Jewish students with scholarships, and to support the poor and infirm (see appendix P VI).¹⁸⁴ The foundation also owned local property. After 1938, its priority became the support of refugees from Austria, Germany, and the Sudetenland, as well as financial support for emigrants to Palestine.¹⁸⁵ However, the wealth and activities of the Foundation soon attracted the attention of the Germans,¹⁸⁶ who confiscated the foundation’s assets in March 1941,¹⁸⁷ which increased the already desperate situation of the Jewish community in Uherský Brod.

2.2.3 People smuggling and Resistance by the Jewish Community in Uherský Brod

Uherský Brod, a town surrounded by hills and deep forests, became an important location for illegal border crossings to Slovakia, from which refugees went on to Palestine. The willingness and courage of Jews from Uherský Brod to save their Jewish

¹⁷⁹ Deutsch, “Oral History Interview with Fred Deutsch.”

¹⁸⁰ Tomeček, Gazdík, and Zpurná, *Uherský Brod: Očima dobových fotografů*, 390.

¹⁸¹ Kien married a Christian woman in 1936 and converted to Christianity in 1939, presumably hoping that anti-Jewish legislation would not affect him.

¹⁸² Libor Bílek, “Pokus Vítězslava Klímy ze Strání o protikomunistický odboj na přelomu 40. a 50. let,” *Šestnáct příspěvků k dějinám (Velké) Moravy* (2011): 155, accessed January 5, 2014, <http://www.ped.muni.cz/whis/16p.pdf>.

¹⁸³ Alois Schweiger was born into a poor Jewish family, and in his early twenties he moved from Vienna to Mumbai where he became a successful trader of Czech glass and other goods from Austria. He also established a fashion house in Milan.

¹⁸⁴ Tomeček, Gazdík and Zpurná, *Uherský Brod: Očima dobových fotografů*, 374.

¹⁸⁵ Minutes from a Meeting of the Jewish Community in Uherský Brod, December 8, 1938, Muzeum Jana Amose Komenského, Uherský Brod.

¹⁸⁶ Jüdische Kultusgemeinde in Prag to Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung, letter correspondence, 29. October 1939, Muzeum Jana Amose Komenského, Uherský Brod. See appendix P VI.

¹⁸⁷ Tomeček, Gazdík and Zpurná, *Uherský Brod: Očima dobových fotografů*, 374.

counterparts from the Protectorate as well as the presence of several underground organizations in the area, established “favorable” conditions for resistance against the Nazis. Surely, illegal crossings were not feasible without the help and risk-taking of local gentiles and peasants from the borderlands. In contrast, prejudices and anti-Semitism were deeply rooted among some gentiles in Brod. As Mirko Tuma confirms, “while a number of non-Jewish Czechs were heroic in assisting the Jews, some of the latent anti-Semitism suddenly emerged. There were many Czechs who, while hating the Germans, were quite happy to get rid of the Jews.”¹⁸⁸ Therefore, any Jewish activity violating the Reich’s laws became extremely dangerous as some gentiles were watchful and ready to betray Jews.

Many Jews were not able to reconcile to the humiliating rule of the Nazis in Uherský Brod. For that reason, mostly young Jews decided to join forces with the local branches of underground movements and fight against the regime. As Poláková observes, the *Obrana Národa* movement chose young people of Jewish origin to help with people-smuggling to Slovakia.¹⁸⁹ Kien, living right on the border with Slovakia, laid foundations for people-smuggling, as he was contacted by ON from Brod shortly after the declaration of the Protectorate. His companion became an eighteen-year-old man, Ernst Kann, from Uherský Brod. Additionally, according to Poláková, Kien was able to obtain financial support for the resistance movement from other Jews in Brod.¹⁹⁰ Also, the gentile town mayor of Brod, Bohuslav Luža, resisted the regime by joining forces with ON,¹⁹¹ making the resistance stronger. During the course of 1939, traffickers created meetings with Slovaks on the Javořina hill located between Strání and Stará Turá on the other side of the border. Within a short period of time, Jews from Uherský Brod and its surroundings, and members of ON from nearby Uherské Hradiště, Bojkovice, Slavičín, Valašské Kloubouky and Velká nad Veličkou, established a well-developed network of routes and ties with people who concealed refugees.¹⁹² Although the Gestapo relocated and the *Oberlandrat* was established in Zlín towards the end of April 1939, its agents regularly

¹⁸⁸ Mirko Tuma, “Memories of Theresienstadt,” *Performing Arts Journal* 1 (Autumn, 1976): 13, accessed December 12, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3245031>.

¹⁸⁹ Miroslava Poláková, “Protifašistický odboj na Uherskobrodsku v letech 1939-1945,” PhD diss., Masaryk University Brno, 2008, 26.

¹⁹⁰ Poláková, “Protifašistický odboj na Uherskobrodsku v letech 1939-1945,” 63.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, 43-44.

commuted to Uherský Brod from a Gestapo branch in Uherské Hradiště.¹⁹³ Therefore, any action of resistance must have been performed under a cloak of secrecy. Nonetheless, since June 1939 the Gestapo collected information about persons deemed inconvenient for the regime, and on September 1, 1939, Luža and his three companions were arrested, along with three Jews from Brod. One of them, Leo Bock, was the head of the Schweiger Foundation.¹⁹⁴ The aim of Germans to confiscate money from the foundation was thus made clear. Poláková claims that during the arrests, the local police force was present to evoke a sense of order.¹⁹⁵ However, Deutsch provides additional information regarding the police in Brod: “Some Czech policemen remained faithful to the fact that they were policemen and not Nazis. Others saw an opportunity to enrich themselves and joined the side of the Germans against the Jews.” He further adds, that “the Gestapo came many times and arrested people without any specific reason ... Usually you never saw that person again or that family again.”¹⁹⁶ For instance, on July 20, 1940, several Jews were arrested for talking to their neighbors after 8 PM; perhaps some local gentile reported them.¹⁹⁷ Furthermore, Erich Mannheimer,¹⁹⁸ who worked as a waiter in Hotel Smetana, which was one of a few public places where Jews from the community were allowed to arrange meetings, used to provide people with information about the routes across the surrounding White Carpathians. This, however, proved to have deadly consequences for Mannheimer, as one of the traffickers was caught on the Hungarian-Slovakian border and taken to the Gestapo in Hradiště where he was forced to snitch on Mannheimer. For the majority of those caught by the Gestapo, the way to concentration camps went through brutal interrogations in Hradiště and Kaunic’s hall of residence in Brno. Erich Kulka¹⁹⁹ experienced a similar fate after he was arrested by the Gestapo for trafficking in Nový Hrozenkov, which is in nearby the Vsetín region. He claims that tortures in Brno were so severe, that he did not experience something similar during the following five years in

¹⁹³ Vilibald Růžička, *Z doby okupace města Uh. Brodu*, 69; Deutsch, “Oral History Interview with Fred Deutsch.”; Poláková, 27; Zemek, 268.

¹⁹⁴ Poláková, “Protifašistický odboj na Uherskobrodsku v letech 1939-1945,” 62, 64-65.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 65.

¹⁹⁶ Deutsch, “Oral History Interview with Fred Deutsch.”

¹⁹⁷ Kalousová, “Životní příběh Arnošta Schöna z Uherského Brodu.”

¹⁹⁸ Erich Mannheimer was Max’s brother.

¹⁹⁹ Erich Schön renamed to Kulka in 1946. He had a cousin, Arnošt Schön, in Uherský Brod who was arrested for talking to neighbors after 8PM along with other Jews from Brod,. Arnošt and Erich met each other in Dachau concentration camp. See Kalousová, “Životní příběh Arnošta Schöna z Uherského Brodu.”

concentration camps.²⁰⁰ Many member of Brod's resistance movement underwent the same difficulties. Afterwards, Mayor Luža and others ended up in Buchenwald,²⁰¹ whereas Erich Mannheimer was executed in Auschwitz in 1943.²⁰² Furthermore, another large group of the Jewish resistance movement, including the Jewish community chairman and the owner of the Hotel Smetana, was arrested. One of the movement members was caught, and tortured, and the Germans found his hand-written notes concerning other organization members. As a result, eight Jews were sentenced to death. According to Kalousová, that particular group of Jews was connected with a non-Jewish resistance organization called Vela.²⁰³

A web of traffickers and crossing points stretching across the entire Slovácko Region was strategically utilized by various underground movements from the Protectorate. According to Poláková, villages and towns in the region such as Veselí nad Moravou, Velká nad Veličkou, Bylnice, Bojkovice, Slavičín or Štítná nad Vláří were used as strategic places for escapings to free Slovakia in the beginning years of the Protectorate.²⁰⁴ Furthermore, the most used ways from Brod went through Horní Němčí, Korytná, Strání-Květná or Březová, Lopeník, and Starý Hrozenkov. The majority of paths met at one point – a chalet called *Holubyho Chata* on the Javořina hill. Refugees then went on through nearby Slovakian towns such as Drietoma, Nové Mesto nad Váhom or Stará Turá. For Jews the main aim was to get to Balkan countries, which was still feasible before Yugoslavia was occupied in 1940.²⁰⁵ Later, European Jewish leaders strived to transport Jewish refugees across Hungary and Romania to the Black Sea and Palestine.²⁰⁶ However, as a result of the tense situation and under the suppressive rule of the Nazis, disagreements concerning emigration arose among the leaders. For instance, Jewish leaders such as Jakob Edelstein from Prague took emigration into their own hands.²⁰⁷ Hence, the entire Slovácko Region became a strategic place in terms of rescue of the

²⁰⁰ Erich Kulka, "Oral History Interview with Erich Kulka" (video interview, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, June 8, 1990), accessed January 22, 2014, <http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504613>.

²⁰¹ Poláková, "Protifašistický odboj na Uherskobrodsku v letech 1939-1945," 64.

²⁰² Eva Kalousová-Hanáková, "Cesta ke svobodě (ilegální převody židovských uprchlíků přes Bílé Karpaty)," (paper presented at the international conference Rezistence československých Židů v letech druhé světové války, Prague, October 17-18, 2006).

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Poláková, "Protifašistický odboj na Uherskobrodsku v letech 1939-1945," 44.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Ofer, "The Rescue of European Jewry," 166-167.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 173.

Protectorate Jews. But not only that, the area served its purpose for crossings of underground movement members, which enabled them to obtain information from Western Europe in unoccupied Hungary. Irena Bernášková from Prague, the daughter of the renowned painter Vojtěch Preissig, published an anti-Nazi magazine called *V boj*, which was illegally distributed across the Protectorate. The importance of the web of routes near Uherský Brod was demonstrated by her frequent use of it. Bernášková was most likely in contact with organizations from the West and gathered information in Budapest. Also, as she was familiar with the terrain in Brod and the surroundings, she herself smuggled several prominent people across the border.²⁰⁸ The magazine *V boj* was published with the help of her family and Jindřich Waldes,²⁰⁹ an industrialist of Jewish origin who established a company nowadays known as Koh-i-Noor.²¹⁰ For cooperating in the publishing of *V boj*, Waldes's industrial complex in Prague was confiscated, and he was imprisoned in Buchenwald and Dachau. His family paid an eight million Czech crown ransom for his liberation. Although Waldes managed to emigrate, he was poisoned on a ship and died in Havana in 1941.²¹¹ Also, Bernášková paid a high price for her resistance. She was guillotined in Berlin in 1942.²¹² The illegal actions of *V boj* demonstrate under which circumstances underground movements functioned in the Protectorate. More importantly, Bernášková's example confirms that the web of underground route in the Slovácko Region was a significant instrument for resistance against the Nazi regime.

Uherský Brod and its Jewish community proved to be vitally important for the rescue of Jews from the Protectorate. Smuggling across the Protectorate border to Slovakia was managed by Ariel Eisen, Richard Mayer (who arrived in Brod after the Anschluss of Austria), and Vítězslav Roth.²¹³ Brod's Jews were closely connected with the Hechaluc organization in Prague. For instance, Eisen took refugees from Prague by train to Brod, where they, with the help of local Jews, stayed overnight and then crossed the White Carpathians to Slovakia. Mayer along with Eisen took turns in travelling

²⁰⁸ Neznámí hrdinové, "Irena Bernášková – V boj," accessed January 15, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSaiZrtFX0A>.

²⁰⁹ Ibid.

²¹⁰ "Jindřich Waldes – pražský Baťa," Remeslo.cz, accessed January 15, 2014, <http://www.remeslozije.cz/remeslnikum/historie-remesla>.

²¹¹ Neznámí hrdinové, "Irena Bernášková – V boj."

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Vítězslav Roth was the grandfather of Růžena Hanáčková, who is nowadays one of the few inhabitants of Jewish origin in Uherský Brod.

between Prague and Brod, and communicated via telegrams in secret codes. On the Slovakian side of the border, a taxi driver dressed up as a member of the Hlinka Guard picked up refugees and drove them to a hotel in Nové Mesto nad Váhom, where the Hechaluc organization rented a room and paid the owners a great deal of money. That way they avoided betrayal. Also, Brod traffickers strived not to learn much information about refugees or clerks who led Jews through mountains in order to avoid revealing information under torcher in case they would be snitched on by gentiles or caught by the frontier police. Exposed to such threats, in one instance they had to guide sixteen refugees at the same time and during the winter. Later, Mayer himself tested the usual way across the border but was caught, arrested by the Gestapo and executed along with two other people. Eisen was wanted by the Gestapo and escaped on March 5, 1940 to Slovakia where he lived legally since he was a holder of Slovakian citizenship. As Kalousová claims, he purposely lived in nearby Brezová pod Bradlom, which was a village of Protestants and, thus, anti-Semitism in that area was not as prominent as elsewhere. Subsequently, Eisen escaped to Palestine in September 1940 in a mass transport of 1,800 Jewish refugees.²¹⁴ Also, Poláková claims that Kien was forced to move from Strání to Uherský Brod even though the ghetto was not officially established yet. Despite that fact, in 1941 Kien was still able to arrange a crossing of three Jewish women from Prague and save them before the transports to Theresienstadt.²¹⁵ According to Kalousová, Jewish traffickers from Brod managed to save some three hundred Protectorate Jews.²¹⁶

The Jewish community in Brod experienced betrayal from gentiles when the secondary school teacher and instructor in Makkabi - Vladimír Havránek, collaborated with the Nazis and became the town mayor in the spring 1941.²¹⁷ Havránek was appointed to the position after one of the local town officials wrote a letter to *Oberlandrat* in Zlín, claiming that the current municipal council proved incapable of controlling in the town.²¹⁸ As a result, municipal representatives were forced to resign, and the Nazis appointed people favorable to their regime²¹⁹ – Havránek and the Sudeten German

²¹⁴ Kalousová-Hanáková, "Cesta ke svobodě."

²¹⁵ Poláková, "Protifašistický odboj na Uherskobrodsku v letech 1939-1945," 63.

²¹⁶ Kalousová-Hanáková, "Cesta ke svobodě."

²¹⁷ Růžička, *Z doby okupace města Uh. Brodu*, 88.

²¹⁸ Poláková, "Protifašistický odboj na Uherskobrodsku v letech 1939-1945," 82.

²¹⁹ Ibid.

Reinhold Wendt.²²⁰ For instance, Havránek fully distinguished his inclination towards Germans by signing documents as Waldemar Hawranek.²²¹ Poláková claims that tendencies of gentiles from Uherský Brod to collaborate with Germans strengthened in 1941.²²² In the beginning of February 1941, all Jews from the town were obliged to leave their homes and move to the Jewish quarter called *Židovna*.²²³ Later that year, all Jews from surrounding villages, the spa town Luhačovice and the Uherské Hradiště district, moved to a newly forming ghetto in Brod.²²⁴ According to the USHMM, “From the outset, the ghettos were conceived not as a permanent solution to the ‘Jewish question’ but as a provisional measure to control, isolate and segregate Jews pending their complete removal from territories under German control.”²²⁵ Deutsch recalls when the Jewish population in *Židovna* increased:

Every day there were more and more people in that part of town ... It never occurred to me to ask why the population of that part of town keeps increasing. It simply didn't signal anything unique. The house which we occupied ... also got additional tenants, so that finally we were squeezed into one room. We shared the house with people from other towns throughout the region.²²⁶

More, under the rule of Hawranek, anti-Jewish protests occurred in Brod. According to Růžička, the Nazis used Hitler Youth as an instrument for such protests.²²⁷ At various places in the town, signs such as *Tod dem Judentum, Jude verrecke, Nieder mit dem Judentum – Kempf gegen Juden bis zu seiner Vernichtung* appeared (see appendix P VII). Also, behind one of the Jewish shop windows, an anti-Jewish display with collages, photos and signs *Europas Todfeind* or *Hinter den Feindmächten der Jude* was installed to provoke an anti-Jewish attitude of Czech gentiles towards Jews.²²⁸ On the night of July 18, 1941, the Nazis set the Jewish synagogue on fire. As the extinguishing of the fire was forbidden by Hawranek and Wendt, the building burnt to the ground. Additionally, precious religious objects disappeared (see appendix P VIII).²²⁹ Furthermore, several

²²⁰ Růžička, *Z doby okupace města Uh. Brodu*, 88.

²²¹ Ibid.

²²² Poláková, “Protifašistický odboj na Uherskobrodsku v letech 1939-1945,” 82.

²²³ Vilibald Růžička, *Z doby okupace města Uh. Brodu*, 90.

²²⁴ Poláková, “Protifašistický odboj na Uherskobrodsku v letech 1939-1945,” 63.

²²⁵ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Nazi Ideology and The Holocaust* (Washington: United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2007), 134.

²²⁶ Deutsch, “Oral History Interview with Fred Deutsch.”

²²⁷ Růžička, *Z doby okupace města Uh. Brodu*, 90.

²²⁸ Ibid., 91.

²²⁹ Ibid., 92.

arrests of Jews in 1942 confirmed that local gentiles co-operated with Germans willingly. For instance, Walter Tauss was arrested for crossing one of the streets forbidden for Jews to enter. Although he believed nobody noticed his violation of the rules imposed by Germans, some local must have reported him as he was arrested by a Brod policeman a few days later. After a three-days captivity in Brod without water, food and a toilet, he was sent to a court and sentenced by a collaborating Czech judge to another ten-day imprisonment.²³⁰ Furthermore, twelve Jews paid a high price for their participation in trafficking and underground movements when they were arrested in spring 1942. The duo of traffickers Kien and Kann were informed about the planned arrests in advance and managed to escape to Slovakia at the last moment.²³¹ Another trafficker, Roth, learnt about his upcoming arrest and fled across the border to Slovakia. Consequently, he joined the RAF in Britain. However, His wife Erna was arrested by the Gestapo on 12 May 1942 after providing another Jewish trafficker with information about crossings through nearby Strání. Although her information helped Jewish refugees to cross the Protectorate border, they were later caught in Hungary and forced to reveal the names of people who helped them in their escape. As a result, Erna Roth was taken into custody and consequently transported to Auschwitz where she was executed.²³² According to Růžička, forty people from Brod, regarded by Germans as terrorists, were killed for resisting during the war years.²³³ Poláková knows of nineteen Jews from Brod and six from Hradiště who died prior to the transports.²³⁴

2.3 The Solution for the “Jewish Question”

A long-term goal of the Nazi regime was to rid Europe of Jews and solve the “Jewish question.” As the USHMM suggests:

It was the culmination of a process in Nazi anti-Jewish policy that began with legal discrimination against Jews in Germany, transitioned to coercive emigration and schemes for mass expulsion, and then escalated from the mass murder of the Soviet Jews to the attempted annihilation of the entire Jewish population of Europe.²³⁵

²³⁰ Kalousová, “Životní příběh Arnošta Schöna z Uherského Brodu.”

²³¹ Kalousová-Hanáková, “Cesta ke svobodě.”

²³² Ibid; Hanáková, interviewed by author, Uherský Brod, October 17, 2013.

²³³ Růžička, *Z doby okupace města Uh. Brodu*, 80-82.

²³⁴ Poláková, “Protifašistický odboj na Uherskobrodsku v letech 1939-1945,” 89.

²³⁵ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Nazi Ideology and The Holocaust*, 139-141.

Indeed, within a few years of German suppression, Jews from Uherský Brod were deprived of basic human rights and became economically exhausted. Any sign of the resistance against the Nazi regime was mercilessly punished and Jews paid the highest price. According to the USHMM, the origins of “Final Solution” are still debated among scholars, but visions of defeated Soviets and the successes of the Germans in military throughout Europe in the summer 1941 apparently helped to stimulate a solution to the “Jewish question.”²³⁶ It was with Hawranek’s appointment to the post of town mayor in 1941 when the rapid terrorization of Jewish inhabitants began in Brod. At the same time, local gentile tendencies to collaborate with the Germans increased, most likely due to the fact that they were aware of the successes of the German army. Sympathizing with the Nazis gave them the prospect of gaining societal status or personal wealth. Furthermore, prevalent anti-Jewish propaganda, the pillaging and the subsequent burning of the synagogue, waves of arrests, raids on Jewish flats, and finally the formation of the ghetto in the Jewish quarter were all steps towards the Nazi’s fulfillment of their long-term goal.

German experiences from mass killings in the Soviet Union proved insufficient, as “murder by shooting in open-air pits was slow, inefficient, and psychologically traumatic for some of the shooters.”²³⁷ The Nazis strived to hide the atrocities from public and, therefore, chose locations remote from Jewish ghettos, Germany and Western Europe. Gassing with Zyklon B, performed “inside secured enclosures, surrounded by barbed wire and guarded on the perimeter,”²³⁸ proved to be much more efficient than economically and physically demanding mass shootings. The first largescale gassing exterminations commenced at Chelmno, Poland, on December 1941.²³⁹

The Nazis did not procrastinate in terms of the “Jewish question” and strived to achieve their goal of the annihilation of the Protectorate Jews. Bondy suggests that Hitler first revealed his intention to expel Jews from the Protectorate on 17 September 1941.²⁴⁰ Furthermore, a few days later at a press conference in Prague in front of German press and collaborating Czech journalists, Reinhard Heydrich admitted that some 5,000 Jews would be deported to the East soon.²⁴¹ In preparation for Hitler’s plan, Germans

²³⁶ Ibid., 141.

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid. 142.

²³⁹ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Nazi Ideology and The Holocaust*, 142.

²⁴⁰ Bondy, *Trapped*, 123.

²⁴¹ Ibid.

conducted a census in the beginning of October that identified 88,105 persons who qualified under the Nuremberg Laws in the area of the Protectorate.²⁴² Afterwards, the first deportations from the Protectorate towards the unknown East began in October 1941.²⁴³ For instance, by the end of 1941, more than 160,000 Jews,²⁴⁴ including Czechoslovak Jews, faced hunger, disease, and cold weather in the Lodz Ghetto in Poland. Meanwhile, in November 1941, an *Aufbaukommando* of 342 Jewish men from the Jewish Community in Prague was deported to Theresienstadt to build a camp.²⁴⁵ This is when the Theresienstadt Ghetto came into existence. By the end of 1941, Germans had transported another 8,000 prisoners to the ghetto,²⁴⁶ and according to Kárný, one year later, “three quarters of the entire Jewish population in the territory of the Protectorate” were sent to Theresienstadt.²⁴⁷ Also, the ghetto itself served as a suitable instrument for Nazi propaganda²⁴⁸ to hide atrocities of concentration camps in the East. The Nazis called Theresienstadt as a camp for elderly or *Theresienstadtbad*, a spa. In fact, the living conditions, constant hunger and serious diseases were far from the idealistic footages presented in Nazi propaganda films.²⁴⁹ Interestingly, the Germans planned to establish a camp in Kyjov in Moravian Slovácko but stuck to the idea of Theresienstadt as the place where Jews would be concentrated before sent to death.

2.3.1 The Wannsee Conference - the origin of the systematic extermination of European Jews

The feasibility of the “Final Solution” was debated among the Nazi officials at the Wannsee Conference on 20 January 1942. Meanwhile, gassings of Jews and Gypsies was in full swing at Chelmno, totaling 40,000 victims within the first 44 days of the camp’s existence. Although the goal of the Nazis apparently was already being fulfilled, the officials gathered to clarify “organizational, factual and material essentials in

²⁴² Miroslav Kárný, “The Genocide of the Czech Jews,” accessed August 30, 2013, http://old.hrad.cz/kpr/holocaust/hist_zid_uk.html.

²⁴³ Bondy, *Trapped*, 123.

²⁴⁴ Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, 249.

²⁴⁵ Matěj Stránský, “The Aufbaukommando: The First Transport to the Terezín Ghetto, 24 November 1941,” Holocaust.cz, accessed August 30, 2013, <http://www.holocaust.cz/en/history/events/ak>.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Miroslav Kárný, “The Genocide of the Czech Jews.”

²⁴⁸ Theresienstadt Propaganda, “The Life of the Jews in the Concentration Camp Theresienstadt,” accessed September 8, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9UDicS0zme8>.

²⁴⁹ Bondy, *Trapped*, 137.

consideration of this final solution.”²⁵⁰ Heydrich outlined that the “Final Solution” would encompass 11 million European and North African Jews.. Also, Heydrich defined the role of Theresienstadt by claiming that “for the moment, the evacuated Jews will be brought bit by bit to so-called transit ghettos from where they will be transported farther to the east.”²⁵¹ Essentially, Theresienstadt would serve as a gathering place for the majority of Jews from Western Europe. The Nazis made sure that every piece of the puzzle would fit, under the supervision of Adolf Eichmann.²⁵² In short, a well-planned and efficient killing machine would ensure a smooth extermination process. The Nazis also counted on the help of, as the USHMM suggests, “countless regular citizens who came from all walks of life and all levels of society,” including those who sympathized with the Nazis or those, who “justified their actions as a defense of their nation, society and culture against Soviet communism; and, finally some were motivated by personal gain, jealousy, or revenge.”²⁵³ Once the officials agreed upon the implementation of the mass killing process, the establishing of the concentration camps began. Jews from Brod arrested in 1940, including Adolf Rosenfeld, Oto Kraus, Arnošt Schön and his cousin Erich from Vsetín, were transported from Dachau and Hamburk to build Auschwitz II-Birkenau.²⁵⁴ The most strategic camps were additionally equipped with gas chambers soon after the Wannsee Conference. Such camps were then located at important railway junctions for the efficient linking of ghettos with death camps.²⁵⁵ Also, the Nazis were economical not only in terms of the killing processes they employed, but also in the transportation of Jews. As the USHMM claims, “the Germans used both freight and passenger cars for the deportations and doubled the number of passengers who could fit in each car to maximize the efficiency of each trip.” The Nazis invented a system of mass killing that helped to solve the “Jewish question” and fulfilled the Führer’s wish to wipe out European Jews. As Hitler declared a few days after the conference, “the war would end with 'the complete annihilation of the Jews'.”²⁵⁶

²⁵⁰ Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, 280.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 280-281, 282.

²⁵² *Ibid.*, 283-284.

²⁵³ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Nazi Ideology and The Holocaust*, 142-143.

²⁵⁴ Later, this group of Jews played an important role in saving lives of Jews who were deported to Auschwitz. See Kalousová, “Životní příběh Arnošta Šöna z Uherského Brodu.”

²⁵⁵ Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, 280.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 285.

2.3.2 The Shoah – death camps as the final destiny for Jews from Uherský Brod

Uherský Brod seemingly met requirements proposed by the Nazi officials at the Wannsee Conference as a place suitable for the temporary concentration of a large number of Moravian Jews. First, Brod had a quite large Jewish community and the town is located on the railway. Second, the collaboration of Czech gentiles and the dedication of the town mayor Hawranek most likely played an important role in the eyes of the Nazis. The importance of Brod as a gathering place was evident. It was one of only a few Moravian towns, along with much larger towns such as Brno, Olomouc and Moravská Ostrava, in which Jews were concentrated before deportation.²⁵⁷ Also, Uherský Brod was integrated into the web of more than 400 ghettos established in countries controlled by the German forces by the summer 1942.²⁵⁸ The ghetto in *Židovna* was characteristically short-lived. According to the USHMM, such ghettos were dissolved by the Nazis “after a short period of time, either [by] shooting the inhabitants or deporting them to concentration camps or killing centers.”²⁵⁹ Gradually, the number of Jews in *Židovna* reached 1,200 persons by the end of 1942.²⁶⁰ Comprehensibly, living conditions in the ghetto worsened as the number of Jews doubled. Later, the Nazis issued an order for all Jews in the ghetto to register at the local high school. As Deutsch recalls:

There you obtained a number, a registration number which gain didn't mean very much to me. With the registration number, you were given a list and that list stated that the registration number will be your personal ID from here on and you should prepare for the relocation to the east. In order to provide supplies for the relocation, you were permitted to take with you no more than 50 kilograms per person ... It left the relocation date open, but you should slowly get ready for it.²⁶¹

Similar orders were issued in other towns and villages in Moravian Slovácko and in the Wallachian region. All Jews were obliged to report their names and property, and were allowed to take no more than 50 kilograms per person of luggage. However, nobody knew what to pack and for how long they would be gone. Soon, they would be transported to Uherský Brod. As Věra Weberová from nearby Kyjov remembers, all Jews from the town were loaded on a train on 18 January 1943 and were deported to Brod. Weberová, as a six-year-old child, saw a dead person being callously loaded on their train

²⁵⁷ Hanáková, “Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století,” 88.

²⁵⁸ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Nazi Ideology and The Holocaust*, 143.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁶⁰ Tomeček, Gazdík, and Zpurná, *Uherský Brod: Očima dobových fotografů*, 381.

²⁶¹ Deutsch, “Oral History Interview with Fred Deutsch.”

to Brod. Germans ordered them to take food supplies for three days.²⁶² In Uherský Brod, the staff of the Prague Jewish community Transports Department helped the local Jewish community with the administration. According to the Yad Vashem Museum, “they prepared a list of deportees, registered Jewish property, issued notices regarding the date of deportation and assisted in packing and carrying luggage.”²⁶³ Jews in Brod suffered from a shortage of leather luggage, as Germans had recently confiscated their luggage for war purposes. They also concealed their most precious belongings with their gentile neighbors, hoping that they would hold them for them until their return.

Some Jews did avoid transports from Uherský Brod to the unknown. Among them were Fred Deutsch and his family, and Valtr Komárek from Hodonín. Even though means of communication basically disappeared during the Nazi rule, Deutsch’s grandfather from Nové Mesto nad Váhom learnt that the family was being prepared for deportation. A grandfather, doctor in Strání-Květná’s glass factory before its closure, he had good relationships with many Czech and Slovak gentiles. He used these connections to save the Deutsch family merely three days before the transport. Deutsch recalls the risky escape:

We walked through the town which was already dark and heavy snow. We knew that we are out after 8PM if we got caught. That would be the end of it. But nobody paid too much attention to us. Because we are not situated geographically in the Judenstadt, that was in our favor. So, we in that evening broke all the rules and we broke through the edge of the town, where that gentleman had a car, a taxi.

The Deutches were then joined by their grandparents. Since then, overall six people moved as a unit from farm to farm and lived in hiding in Stará Turá, Nové Mesto, Myjava and Bzince pod Javorinou.²⁶⁴ Their actions were life-threatening not only for themselves but for the farmers who hid them. Unfortunately, one day the Deutches were accidentally discovered by German and Slovak mixed unit during their raid on partisans. Surprised by the unexpected discovery, the commandant ordered the entire family to voluntarily report in barracks of that unit the next day. Deutsch wonders why they were not shot immediately: “In all likelihood ... he did not want to abort his raid and bring six Jews ... and show this as a product of days of work.” However, before the unit left, as Deutsch

²⁶² Weberová, interview by author, Kyjov, November 16, 2013.

²⁶³ “Transport Cp from Uhersky Brod,” Yadvashem.org, accessed September 15, 2013, <http://db.yadvashem.org/deportation/transportDetails.html?language=en&itemId=5092010>.

²⁶⁴ At one point Deutsch’s sister left the family and lived under forged papers in Bratislava.

recalls the traumatizing situation, “the commandant ordered one of the soldiers to rape my mother. Her father, her husband and her son had to watch it.” The Deutches knew what was in store for them. They left as soon as the unit went on in their raid and hid in a deep forest, where they were hidden in an underground bunker. Although the Deutches avoided probable execution, the farmer who helped them did not. As Deutches learnt two days later from another farmer who brought them food to the bunker, the unit shot the farmer and his family, and set the farm on fire. Later, when Slovakia was already supposed to be free of Jews, Deutsch started to go to school and lived under a false identity in a house of Lutheran minister. However, suspicions raised and one woman from the village made him show his penis to see whether it was circumcised or not. The Lutheran minister then informed the Deutches that Fred should return back to forests and hide. Constant escaping and hiding was very stressful and as Deutsch points out, “the danger of course remained constantly that somebody will sell you out for reward. That held true until the very end. That never ceased.” The entire family survived the war until the liberation of Soviet-Romanian army.²⁶⁵ Furthermore, Valtr Komárek, a Jewish child raised by Catholic parents, was transported to Uherský Brod along with more than 600 Jews from nearby Hodonín. Komárek’s Catholic parents strived to save Valtr at any cost and his father claimed that Valtr was the result of adultery with a half-Jewish woman. The Gestapo in Hodonín did not believe what Komárek’s father claimed and sent him to the Gestapo in Prague where he was severally beaten. Valtr was marked as non-Aryan and Komárek’s folder was restamped to the status “reinvestigate.” In Uherský Brod Germans examined his descent and called up a lawyer from Hodonín, who intervened on the child’s behalf, arguing that Valtr is so called *quadron*, whose father is non-Aryan, and mother is only half-Jewish. The lawyer further claimed that *quadrons*, according to Nuremberg Laws, could serve in the Wehrmacht and there was no reason to deport Valtr. After long hesitation of the German official, Komárek was sent back and saved from deportation at the last moment.²⁶⁶

The total number of Jews concentrated in the high school in Uherský Brod reached 2,838 persons. Without any water or food, relying merely on their own supplies, young and old were squeezed into classrooms, sleeping on the hard floors. Weberová recalls they made straw mattresses to sleep on something at least a bit softer. Also, for many it

²⁶⁵ Deutsch, “Oral History Interview with Fred Deutsch.”

²⁶⁶ Česká televize, “13. komnata Valtra Komárka.”

was the first time they experienced beating and the physical terror of the Nazis. Moreover, the elderly who did not obey SS orders were treated harshly.²⁶⁷ Karel Langer recalls that Germans put an old woman in a little room “and I remember how very cruel they were to her. We were looking through the little key hole, you know, little boys. As I said, I did not understand that, then, how cruel they were.”²⁶⁸ Also, while in the high school, Jews were obliged to surrender any jewelry to the Germans. As Langer recalls, “my mother took her wedding ring and flushed it down the toilet rather than give it to the Germans.”²⁶⁹ The high school in Uherský Brod was also a place where Jews became only numbers. The first group of 1,000 Jews was led in the harsh winter towards the train station and loaded on a passenger train marked “Cn.”²⁷⁰ This transport, comprised of Jews from Kyjov, Uherský Ostroh, Zlín, Napajedla, Holešov, Veselí nad Moravou, Vracov, Vizovice, Malenovice, Jarošov, Zlechov and Kunovice, left town on January 23, 1943.²⁷¹ Věra Weberová was assigned to this transport with her entire family. Another transport of 1,000 persons marked “Co”²⁷² left the school four days later, on January 27, 1943, with Jews from Strážnice, Hodonín, Podivín, Brumov, and with a few inhabitants from Uherský Brod.²⁷³ Exactly four days later, on January 31 1943, the last transport marked “Cp”²⁷⁴ with 838 Jews from Brod and surroundings left the town. People from this transport spent only one night in Theresienstadt and on the morning on February 1, 1942, headed east in a transport marked “Cu.”²⁷⁵ According to survivor Willy Bock, that transport was not the usual cattle car other Jews used to ride in, but a passenger train again.²⁷⁶ Hanáková estimates, that the transport arrived in Auschwitz-Birkenau in the

²⁶⁷ Weberová, interview by author, Kyjov, November 16, 2013.

²⁶⁸ Karel Langer, “Oral History Interview with Karel Langer” (video interview, United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, June 20, 1991), accessed January 21, 2014, <http://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn515915>.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

²⁷⁰ “Transport Cn,” Holocaust.cz, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www.holocaust.cz/de/transport/TRANSPORT.ITI.201>.

²⁷¹ Tomeček, Gazdík, and Zpurná, *Uherský Brod: Očima dobových fotografů*, 381.

²⁷² “Transport Co,” Holocaust.cz, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www.holocaust.cz/en/transport/TRANSPORT.ITI.202>.

²⁷³ Tomeček, Gazdík, and Zpurná, *Uherský Brod: Očima dobových fotografů*, 381.

²⁷⁴ “Transport Cp,” Holocaust.cz, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www.holocaust.cz/en/transport/TRANSPORT.ITI.203>.

²⁷⁵ Tomeček, Gazdík, and Zpurná, *Uherský Brod: Očima dobových fotografů*, 381. See also “Transport Cu,” Holocaust.cz, accessed October 22, 2013, <http://www.holocaust.cz/cz/transport/TRANSPORT.ITI.102>.

²⁷⁶ From interview with Willy Bock, *Survivors of the Shoah, Visual History Foundation* dated August 19, 1996, in Hanáková, “Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století,” 79.

early morning of February 2.²⁷⁷ There, Mengele's now infamous selection process took place. The elderly, disabled, or children under age sixteen, in short those unsuitable for work, perished in the gas chambers the same day. Within a week and exactly in four day intervals, the Nazi machinery managed to wipe out entire Jewish communities from Moravian Slovácko (see appendix P IX). The region's Czech gentiles had either participated in this deportation or apathetically enabled the Germans to take their neighbors away.

While in the death camps, those Jews from Brod who were selected for work strived to help each other and survive a system bent on their destruction. Arnošt Schön, Erich Schön-Kulka,²⁷⁸ Oto Kraus²⁷⁹ and Adolf Rosenfeld, already experienced with the functioning of Auschwitz-Birkenau, saved lives of friends from Brod by smuggling to them food or clothing.²⁸⁰ Meanwhile, Jews from two transports previously dispatched from Brod, waited for their departure the east. Among them was Věra Weberová (see appendix P X), who was put on the list along with her family on October 23, 1944. Her mother managed to save Věra right before the doors of the cattle car locked and the train departed from Theresienstadt. As Weberová claims, it was not for free. Germans, obsessed with numbers, put another person on the list instead of her to load the train fully.²⁸¹ Some among 33,000 inmates of Theresienstadt died,²⁸² while others did not endure the horrible travel in cattle cars heading for the unknown, and still others were worked to death. Those unsuitable for labor were gassed, and cremated. Within a few years, 1,500,000 Jews died in Auschwitz-Birkenau.²⁸³ As in many other camps, the Nazis made good use of Jewish bodies before incineration or took everything from the Jewish luggage. Also, they pulled out the gold teeth.²⁸⁴ Helga Ederer claims that Germans took out her braces in Theresienstadt as some parts were made of gold.²⁸⁵ Trains emptied of

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 80.

²⁷⁸ Erich Kulka and his son Otto, escaped the death marches in Germany and managed to get out of the train in Ostrava. He and his son survived the rest of the war by hiding in Liptál and Zlín. See Drahomír Brzobohatý, "Erich Kulka: Zánik rodinného tábora," Brzobohaty.eu, accessed February 2, 2014, brzobohaty.eu/Erich_Kulka.rtf. Erich Kulka along with Ota Kraus published their memories on Auschwitz in a book called *The Death Factory*.

²⁷⁹ Oto Kraus was arrested in Prague for publishing *V boj* magazine.

²⁸⁰ Kalousová, "Životní příběh Arnošta Schöna z Uherského Brodu."

²⁸¹ Weberová, interview by author, Kyjov, November 16, 2013.

²⁸² Bondy, *Trapped*, 137.

²⁸³ Gilbert, *The Holocaust*, 853.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 247-248.

²⁸⁵ "Deportation from Prague to Theresienstadt in July 1942. Testimony of Helga Ederer." Yad Vashem, accessed November 29, 2013, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7rerZ6wauI>.

Jews, returned back from killing centers loaded with treasures.²⁸⁶ Apparently, German material desires haunted Jews even after their deaths. In the first half of 1943, the situation changed as the Germans lost on the East front. With the Russians pushing west towards the camps, the extermination process gained momentum. Between September 28 and October 28, 1944, 18,402 Jews were transported from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz.²⁸⁷ As Russians constantly pushed the front west, the Nazis hastily covered up or destroyed killing centers and made Jews walk so called “death marches” to Germany.²⁸⁸ At that time, the Allies attacked from the West. As the USHMM suggests:

The SS camp guards reacted in different ways to total defeat. Some took off their uniforms and tried to disappear among the millions of German army POWs. Others, remaining faithful to Nazi ideology, viewed the Allied victory as the handiwork of the Jews and thus attempted to fulfill their mission by killing as many Jews as possible in the final moments of the war.²⁸⁹

From the three transports dispatched from Uherský Brod, the majority of Jews did not survive until liberation. From the transport “Cn,” 80 Jews out of 1,002 survived, whereas from the transport “Co”, out of 1,000 Jews only 64 survived. From the last one, the transport “Cp”, out of 838 Jews, 53 survived. Further, many of those who survived the German atrocities died soon afterwards because of infections, malnutrition or over-eating. Indeed, the latter was a quite frequent death as bodies of prisoners, exposed to constant hunger, were not used to bigger amount of food.²⁹⁰ All in all, 6,152 persons died in Theresienstadt, and among the 60,382 Jews sent from Theresienstadt to the East a mere 3,097 persons survived.²⁹¹ During the Shoah, over 80,000 Jews from the Protectorate died. As Pěkný predicts, the Czech Jewish community will never recover from such a loss.²⁹²

2.3.3 Meanwhile in Uherský Brod

While Jews died by the thousands in concentration camps, German and Czech gentiles enjoyed personal enrichment from the Jewish property in Uherský Brod. Shortly after all Jews were sent away, Germans confiscated the most valuable items and sold the

²⁸⁶ Guided tour of Auschwitz, May 2006.

²⁸⁷ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 656.

²⁸⁸ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, *Nazi Ideology and The Holocaust*, 152-153.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 153.

²⁹⁰ Langer, “Oral History Interview with Karel Langer.”

²⁹¹ Kárný, “The Genocide of the Czech Jews.”

²⁹² Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 656.

rest to Czech gentiles. All Jewish books originating in Spain, France, the Netherlands and Israel were taken and shipped to a paper mill in Germany. Also, the town mayor confiscated the most valuable books, such as centuries-old Old Testaments. Although one of the locals smuggled them away and stored them in a museum,²⁹³ up to this day nobody knows where the books are located. When Germans sensed the possibility of loss, increased their property confiscations. Czech gentiles also utilized the situation. On April 7, 1945, Germans ordered their families and German newcomers to leave the town immediately as the Soviet-Romanian army was close to Uherský Brod. In a rush, Germans sold Jewish furniture and valuables. In turn, Czech peasants provided them with food. Furthermore, in one day, Germans withdrew over 2.5 million Czech crowns from the local bank and fled to Germany. Apparently, much of this was Jewish property.²⁹⁴ Whether Czech gentiles suffered during the war or not, nothing can justify their cold and calculating behavior when taking Jewish property. World War II indeed fully distinguished people's characters and revealed true Anti-Semites driven by visions of personal enrichment, jealousy or narrow-mindedness. Such behavior was usually covered up or justified by actions of the Germans, which provided Czechs with a perfect excuse. Some Czechs still nowadays have Jewish belongings in their homes. Furthermore, Wide-spread collaboration and snitching on Jews was another phenomenon among Brod's gentiles, which cost the lives of many of their Jewish neighbors. Whether Czech gentiles were interested in personal gain or were sympathizing with the Germans, it makes them participants in the extermination of Jews. Whether out off a sense of guilt or indifference, Czechs then attempted to erase remnants of Uherský Brod's Jewish past.

²⁹³ Růžička, *Z doby okupace města Uh. Brodu*, 102-103, 107.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 113.

3 BETRAYED FOR THE SECOND TIME: JEWISH SURVIVORS UNDER THE RULE OF COMMUNISM AND THE FINAL DESTRUCTION OF LOCAL JEWRY

Most Czechoslovakians celebrated the end of the war. The dark period of Nazi rule was over. While Czechs took retributions on the Nazis and ethnic Germans among them, often blindly, at the same time they praised their liberators, whether they were the Allies, Russians or partisans. In contrast, Jewish survivors either from concentration camps or from hiding, suffering physically and mentally, gathered their remaining strength to return to their hometowns and start over. Most elderly Jews were gone. Entire Jewish families were annihilated. Many Jews had lost faith in God. The youngest survivors had matured prematurely after what they experienced. Most of the Jewish survivors were penniless. Nevertheless, their return to their communities was frequently unwelcomed. Anti-Semitism persisted among Czech gentiles, and many of them wished Jews would never return. Many acted as if the Shoah, which in all claimed some six million Jewish victims, never happened.

Attempts of Jewish survivors to reestablish their communities were overwhelmingly majority unsuccessful for various reasons. First, in many cases there were too few survivors for the reestablishment. Second, the attitude of gentiles and the presence of the Communist regime almost completely suppressed any religion, especially Judaism. In reality, the post-war euphoria and development was utilized by some Czech gentiles. Those, who previously sympathized with the Nazi regime, merely “changed” their political views and became Communists,²⁹⁵ as the influence of Soviets was obvious after the war and the future perspective was thus promising for such individuals. Also, the Soviets themselves utilized the post-war period to confiscate what was not taken by the Germans. The Red Army took all the Jewish gold and money from Czech banks shortly after liberation, and the approach of the Communist regime towards Jews gradually changed to Anti-Semitic.²⁹⁶ The Communists had thirty-five more years than the Nazis to destroy everything Jewish in Czechoslovakia. Similar to during World War II, Czech gentiles again became instruments of destruction, erasing Jewish culture and any memory of that culture.

²⁹⁵ Weberová, interview by author, Kyjov, November 16, 2013.

²⁹⁶ “Arizace,” Holocaust.cz.

3.1 Rebirth of the Jewish Community in Uherský Brod and the emigration to Israel

3.1.1 The attitudes of Czech gentiles after return of the Shoah survivors

“So, you survived?! We were told all the Jews were gassed.”²⁹⁷

Into such an unwelcoming environment entered one of the Shoah survivors, who weighed no more than 40 kilograms after the liberation, while standing on a Persian carpet he had given to the neighbors before he and his family left Brod for Theresienstadt. From the entire family, only he and his younger brother survived. That carpet was one of a few remnants of his past. Nevertheless, it was never returned. Furthermore, Kalousová claims that Adolf Rosenfeld, who helped to save many Jewish lives in Auschwitz, experienced a similar phenomenon as a returnee: “When he did return to Uherský Brod, a town in south-eastern Moravia, he received no help from the town authorities, no money nothing and some Czechs lived in his parents’ house: ‘They didn’t give us a single glass of water.’”²⁹⁸ As Pěkný claims, occupied flats and unreturned belongings left for safekeeping with Czech neighbors were as common as a lack of hospitality and compassion for Jews. In contrast, Pěkný further points out, that many Czechs did not count on the return of Jews. As a result, Czech gentiles tended to treat Jews with hostility.²⁹⁹ Deutsch and his family returned from hiding and found themselves in very peculiar situation: “Well, the neighbors where my mother hid so many of our possessions claimed that nothing of it survived, that the Russians stole everything from them, which generally the population claimed whenever Jewish property was given to them for safe keeping ... So, it was an excuse and many Christians enriched themselves with Jewish property.” He further adds that some gentiles felt sorry for the fate of Jews. Nevertheless, there were also Czech gentiles, who “openly said we are sorry that Hitler did not kill all of you.”³⁰⁰ Furthermore, Věra Weberová returned from Theresienstadt to Moravian Kyjov with her mother. From a large Jewish community in Kyjov she was the only child survivor.

²⁹⁷ Mannheimer, interview by Adam Drda, Rozhlas.cz.; Eva Kalousová, “Return Home? Experience of Czech Jews after Their Survival of the Death Camps,” (paper presented at the conference The Legacy of the Holocaust: the World Before, the World After, Cracow, May 24-26, 2007).

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 576.

³⁰⁰ Deutsch, “Oral History Interview with Fred Deutsch.”

Similar to many other returnees, their home was occupied, belongings confiscated and those valuables saved at their gentile neighbors were “taken by Romanians.” More, Kyjov’s town mayor wanted to deport Věra and her mother along with Germans from the town after the war.³⁰¹ As one source confirms, “There were also instances of German-speaking Jews being interned in camps for Germans or even being expelled to Germany with the German minority.”³⁰² However, Weberová and her mother were fully assimilated Czech Jews, speaking the Czech language. Also, returnees had to face other difficulties. For instance, Aryanized property was difficult if not impossible to retribute. Jews, despite the cruelties they experienced during the war, were still perceived by Czech gentiles as an instrument of Germanization. When applying for restitution, a census from 1930 in which many Jews claimed German nationality, was considered. As a result, Jews encountered anti-Semitism when dealing with Czechoslovak clerks. By the end of 1947, only 3,000 out of 16,000 applications for restitution were approved. Furthermore, so-called *Terezínská podstata*, the valuables found in Theresienstadt after liberation, did not return to Jewish hands. Rather, it was taken as war booty by Czechoslovakia, and a large part was also dispatched to Russia.³⁰³ Not only did anti-Semitism prevail among Czechs, but also greed determined and nurtured anti-Semitic attitudes.

3.1.2 The Postwar political development and questionable future of Czechoslovak Jews

Postwar political developments helped determine the fate of Czechoslovak Jewry. Compared to the pre-war Masaryk’s government, President Beneš, a returnee from exile, took a different stand on the question of minorities. The democratic pre-war recognition of minorities was about to be abolished. Consequently, Beneš supported Zionism and Jewish emigration to Palestine. Those Jews who would stay were obliged to fully assimilate with Czechoslovaks. Otherwise, they would become strangers in the new state, which was ethnically pure.³⁰⁴ Sympathy with Zionism and Jewish emigrants was obvious during the rule of Beneš and Masaryk’s son Jan.³⁰⁵ According to one Jewish survivor, Jan

³⁰¹ Weberová, interview by author, Kyjov, November 16, 2013.

³⁰² Petr Brod, Kateřina Čapková, and Michal Frankl, “Czechoslovakia,” YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe, accessed January 5, 2014, <http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Czechoslovakia>.

³⁰³ Hanáková, “Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století,” 93-95.

³⁰⁴ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 348-349.

³⁰⁵ Jan Masaryk was Czechoslovakian Foreign Affairs Minister at that time.

Masaryk was instrumental in the creation of at least a more favorable mood of sympathy and kindness among otherwise hostile Czech gentiles.³⁰⁶ Furthermore, after the Soviet Union annexed the Subcarpathian part of the country in 1945, 8,500 out of 15,000 Subcarpathian Ruthenians Jewish survivors immigrated to Czechoslovakia. Besides, Jan Masaryk supported the emigration of Polish Jews, who were victims of postwar pogroms. However, reluctant to damage good relationships with Arabs, Great Britain continued in its “White Paper Policy” of limiting immigration to Palestine. As a result, Jews once again had to cope with illegal emigration to the Holy Land. The large scale emigration from the diaspora to Israel was called *Bricha*.³⁰⁷ Czechoslovakia became a transit country for Jews from the East, who went from French or Italian ports to Palestine.³⁰⁸ According to Hanáková approximately 140,000 Jews, supported by the JOINT organization, immigrated to Palestine through Czechoslovakia.³⁰⁹ Interestingly, one of the traffickers during *Bricha* was Brod’s Pavel Winterstein (Elhanan Gafni), who escaped to Palestine in 1939.³¹⁰ What is more, good relationships with Israel were confirmed by the Czechoslovakian support of the establishment of the state of Israel in fall 1947.³¹¹ Consequently, Israel was officially created in May 1948.³¹² Czechoslovakia also supported Israel military-wise, by selling it planes, tanks and guns.³¹³ Additionally, Israeli Jews were trained as pilots at Czech military bases.³¹⁴ It seemed that Czechoslovakia and Israel established a prospective relationship for the future.

However, the situation gradually changed after the communist coup in February 1948.³¹⁵ Why did Czechoslovakia support Israel after the war despite the fact that, as William Korey claims, “Anti-Jewish discrimination had become an integral part of Soviet

³⁰⁶ Ibid., 576-577.

³⁰⁷ *Bricha* (literally an “escape”) was the organized illegal immigration movement of Jews from Eastern Europe across the occupied zones into Israel. Perhaps the largest organized clandestine population in history. See <http://www.ushmm.org/exhibition/displaced-persons/emigrat2.htm>.

³⁰⁸ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 350-351.

³⁰⁹ Hanáková, “Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století,” 96.

³¹⁰ Ibid., 96-97.

³¹¹ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 351.

³¹² Alena Heitlinger, *In the Shadows of the Holocaust & Communism: Czech and Slovak Jews Since 1945*. (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2006), 19.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ Gideon Szuran, a Jew from Brod, tragically died during such trainings in Olomouc in November 1948. See Eva Hanáková, “Příběh dvou náhrobků: Z historie židovské emigrace z Československa ve 20. století,” (paper presented at the annual meeting Židé a Morava, Kroměříž, November 9, 2005).

³¹⁵ Heitlinger, *In the Shadows of the Holocaust & Communism*, 19.

state policy ever since the late thirties”?³¹⁶ Brod Shoah survivor Karel Langer, who fought in the Israeli army along with his brother, suggests that the communists supported Israel since they believed, that “Israel was going to become a communist country.”³¹⁷ Historian Pěkný offers similar yet more sophisticated explanation. The Soviets considered a temporary alliance with Zionists to be favorable due to the fact that Jews in Palestine were in a conflict with the British. However, when Israel changed its course and gradually headed towards democracy, Soviets returned to their anti-Semitic policies. The outcome was that the new regime in Czechoslovakia stopped supporting Israel militarily and the anti-Semitic propaganda began.³¹⁸ Czechoslovak Jews found themselves once again in an unfavorable situation.

3.1.3 To stay, or not to stay: That is the question

Shoah survivors who returned to Brod were serious about the reestablishment of the Jewish Community. Indeed, the minutes from meetings of the Jewish community continued from where they ended on October 29, 1939. On September 29 1946, the community members with a new head, Arnošt Schön, reunited to renew the life of the Jewish community in Uherský Brod. On January 5, 1947, the meeting was dedicated to restitution, money collection for *Les mrtvých z ČSR* in Palestine, and plans for building the memorial plaque and a new synagogue. Later, the meeting was devoted to plans for a new synagogue, which supposed to be designed by an architect from Brno. Also, the community prepared for celebrations of the Passover, which proved that the Shoah survivors continued in Jewish traditions.³¹⁹ Nevertheless, the synagogue was never built, restitution processes went very slow and attitude of locals was hostile. Therefore, whether to stay or not was the question many returnees to Brod asked themselves. The birth of Israel where Jews would have equal rights and would not have to face anti-Semitism gave them hope for a new beginning. As Pěkný claims, the main decisive factors for emigration were as follows: to start a new life in a new place to help forget the war trauma, a strong belief in Zionism, the outcome of the Communist coup in 1948, the

³¹⁶ William Korey, “The Origins and Development of Soviet Anti-Semitism: An Analysis,” *Slavic Review* 31 (March, 1972): 135, accessed December 18, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2494148>.

³¹⁷ Langer, “Oral History Interview with Karel Langer.”

³¹⁸ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 352-353.

³¹⁹ Minutes from a Meeting of the Jewish Community in Uherský Brod, September 7, 1938, September 29, 1946, January 5 1947, March 9, 1948, Muzeum Jana Amose Komenského, Uherský Brod.

overall status of Jews in Czechoslovak society, and difficulties with restitution.³²⁰ Jews betrayed by previous regimes, whether it was disillusionment after the Munich Betrayal or the Nazi regime, were not able to withstand anti-Semitism under the new regime as well as the prevalent anti-Semitic mood in Brod. Some Jews found solace in marriage and the establishment of new families. One couple from Brod decided to emigrate since the anti-Semitism in the town was awkward and very personal. Having a baby, they did not wish to bring up the child in such a hostile environment.³²¹ Similar, the head of the community, Arnošt Schön, decided to emigrate with his wife and children despite the fact that he had reestablished his business in Brod. On May 13, 1949, the Schöns emigrated along with other people from Uherský Brod, but prior to their departure the communistic authorities requested a list of things they would take with them and additionally controlled boxes and luggage in the street.³²² For many it was a *déjà vu*. Furthermore, Willy Bock, who lost his entire family during the Shoah, decided to emigrate as no bond kept him in Czechoslovakia. Nonetheless, the communist authorities refused his application for emigration, so he left the country illegally in 1949. Also, Max and Edgar Mannheimer, who were closely connected with Brod, emigrated after the communists seized the country. Max and his new German wife from Nový Jičín settled in Munich despite Max's aversion to Germany.³²³ Such a significant outflow of Jews was a widespread phenomenon in Czechoslovakia. Many Jews made sacrifices, as the property they left behind was the only thing they had. In countries they immigrated to, they often faced financial difficulties, language barriers as well as cultural or even religious differences such as the difference between Orthodox or liberal Judaism. According to Pěkný, between 1945 and 1950, 25,000 Jews emigrated from Czechoslovakia to countries such as Israel, England, the United States, Canada, or Venezuela.³²⁴ Israel itself registered 2,558 Czechoslovak immigrants in 1948 and 15,689 in 1949.³²⁵ The latter number demonstrates that anti-Jewish attitude of communists gave the Jewish survivors compelling reasons to flee the country. As Deutsch confirms, "We Jews who survived

³²⁰ Ibid., 349.

³²¹ Hanáková, "Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století," 108.

³²² Kalousová, "Životní příběh Arnošta Schöna z Uherského Brodu."

³²³ Hanáková, "Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století," 107-108, 118.

³²⁴ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 349. Pěkný mentions that 35,000 was the overall number of Jewish emigrants from Czechoslovakia. This number includes Subcarpathian Rus' Jews who stayed in Czechoslovakia shortly and decided to leave the country before communists.

³²⁵ Brod, Čapková, and Frankl, "Czechoslovakia."

always thought about the Soviet and Russian pogroms under the Czars and we were afraid ... that there will be another Holocaust.”³²⁶ Out of approximately thirty Shoah survivors who returned to Uherský Brod, the majority moved abroad. Therefore, a promising rebirth of the Jewish community was aborted.

3.2 Suppression of Judaism under the Communist Regime and the second wave of emigration

3.2.1 Impact of Communist Anti-Semitic propaganda on Czechoslovak Jews

15,000-18,000 Jews who stayed in Czechoslovakia,³²⁷ either believing in communism, too old to move abroad, or too poor to cover the travel costs for emigration, experienced difficult times during the forty year communist regime. Even though some Jews wished to emigrate, they were not allowed to. One such example was the father of Fred Deutsch who as a doctor, was not allowed to emigrate. During the early 1950s, anti-Jewish propaganda gained great momentum. In Russia, many incentives for an anti-Zionist campaign appeared. For instance, one Russian scholar, notes Korey “recapitulated the international conspiracy thesis, linking world Zionism, Jewish capitalism, Israel, American imperialism, and West German revanchism in a gigantic plot to overthrow Communist rule.”³²⁸ Within a few years, many similar anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish propaganda texts appeared in Russia and quickly spread across the Soviet Union. For instance, the book *Ostorozahno: Sionizm! (Beware: Zionism)* sold 75,000 copies.³²⁹ In Czechoslovakia, the anti-Zionist conspiracies resulted in the infamous Slánský trial. Rudolf Slánský as well as his companions from the Czechoslovak Communist Party, of whom eleven were of Jewish origin, became scapegoats of false accusations.³³⁰ As Heitlinger suggests:

The whole case against Slánský and his co-defendants was built on the basis of wild accusations about Zionist conspiracies, and about the predisposition of Jews to treason and disloyalty to socialism as well as to the Czechoslovak state and nation.

³²⁶ Deutsch, “Oral History Interview with Fred Deutsch.”

³²⁷ Heitlinger, *In the Shadows of the Holocaust & Communism*, 19.

³²⁸ Korey, “The Origins and Development of Soviet Anti-Semitism,” 130.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*, 134.

³³⁰ Heitlinger, *In the Shadows of the Holocaust & Communism*, 21.

All of the accused were found guilty of high treason, espionage, sabotage, and other trumped-up charges, and all but three were executed on December 2, 1952.³³¹

Heitlinger further points out, that “for the most of their rule, Czechoslovak communist party-state officials used their monopoly of power and doctrine either to present Jews in an unfavorable light, or to erase them out of history.”³³² Communist authority was not used only in the political sphere, but also against ordinary Shoah survivors, who became easy victims. Věra Weberová and her mother faced the terror of communists immediately after their return to Kyjov (see chapter 3.1). Not only was the town council extremely hostile, they also made them move out of their own house. Věra’s mother fought to stay in the house and in 1950, the national committee demanded they pay rent. Furthermore, when applying for a widow’s pension and orphan’s pension, they were refused due to the “public nuisance” that might be caused. Since only twenty Shoah survivors returned to Kyjov, the communist officials nationalized the abandoned houses. The most prominent ones they seized for themselves or for their acquaintances.³³³ The wave of the nationalization process scarcely avoided any Jewish-owned businesses as everything fell under state ownership.

In Uherský Brod the leftover members of the community were forced to sell the empty Jewish houses in the *Židovna* quarter as the community desperately needed finances. As Růžena Hanáčková suggests, the prices for which the houses were sold were rather ridiculous.³³⁴ The Jewish community in Brod was gradually decaying. The last significant event at which the remaining community reunited was at the unveiling of the memorial plaque of the Shoah victims on February 5, 1950.³³⁵ Rabbi Feder, who became the only rabbi of Czechoslovakia in 1960,³³⁶ was present at the ceremony. Since then, the community meetings took place less frequently as the communist regime gradually suppressed anything Jewish in Czechoslovakia. For instance, among many restrictions issued by the government, the regime prohibited ritual kosher slaughter on July 20, 1954, which created a problem especially in Czechoslovak Orthodox communities. Despite all

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Ibid., 22.

³³³ Weberová, interview by author, Kyjov, November 16, 2013.

³³⁴ Hanáčková, interviewed by author, Uherský Brod, October 17, 2013. Hanáčková’s father, Josef Brammer, dealt with the sales as well as with the function of the community during the Communist Regime.

³³⁵ Minutes from a Meeting of the Jewish Community in Uherský Brod, February 10, 1950, Muzeum Jana Amose Komenského, Uherský Brod.

³³⁶ Brod, Čapková, and Frankl, “Czechoslovakia.”

of the limitations, the community in Brod strived to, even though among a small number of participants, keep symbolically the most important Jewish holidays and festive days. Although destitute, the community provided Jiří Diamant, one of the youngest Shoah survivor from Brod, with financial support during his studies.³³⁷ Since the number of Jews rapidly decreased in many Jewish communities in Czechoslovakia, the government reorganized administration of Jewish communities. The meeting minutes of the Jewish community in Brod on February 13, 1964 succinctly documents the process of reorganization. At first, Brod succumbed to the *Židovská náboženská obec* (Jewish Religious Community) in Kyjov and later functioned as synagogical congregation administrated by the Jewish Community in Hodonín.³³⁸ By 1962, only three Bohemian (Prague, Pilsen and Ústí nad Labem) and two Moravian (Ostrava and Brno) communities had a status of *ŽNO*. Smaller congregations, which numbered approximated thirty or forty, were administrated by the aforementioned few cities with the *ŽNO* status.³³⁹ Uherský Brod became subservient to Brno. As Pěkný suggests, the Council of Jewish Communities was powerless against decisions of the communists, who oversaw administration of Czechoslovak Jewish communities. As a result, many communities completely ceased to exist.

3.2.2 Trumped-up trials, injustice, and complete disillusionment with the Communist Regime

Many Jews and Czech gentiles who helped them during World War II became scapegoats of the totalitarian regime and communist ideology. More, the punishment of World War II collaborators by the Czechoslovak government was in many cases more than ridiculous. Indeed, the collaborating town mayor, Hawranek was sentenced to death in 1947 and all his most likely stolen Jewish property fell into the hands of state. However, he was granted an amnesty in 1955 and the sentence was shortened to only twenty-five years. In 1956, he was released from jail and one of the Shoah survivors from Brod encountered him in Prague later on. As Hanáková suggests, Jews from Uherský

³³⁷ IMAG0651

³³⁸ Minutes from a Meeting of the Jewish Community in Uherský Brod, February 13, 1964, Muzeum Jana Amose Komenského, Uherský Brod.

³³⁹ Petr Sedlák, "Obnovování a organizace židovských náboženských obcí v českých zemích po druhé světové válce," Federace židovských obcí v ČR, accessed March 8, 2014, <http://www.fzo.cz/o-nas/historie/>.

Brod thus did not receive satisfaction for the war crimes he committed.³⁴⁰ Věra Weberová suggests that her gentile neighbor in Kyjov, who was collaborator and a member of the *Vlajka* movement, represented a serious danger for many Jews in the town during the war. After the war, however, he was not punished by the government. Instead, he became a high-ranking *StB* agent,³⁴¹ “faithful” to his job of reporting against “enemies” of the regime. Many Jews also experienced severe difficulties in their studies. As Heitlinger confirms, “some of the respondents ... found that their Jewish descent could create problems with acceptance to high school or universities.” Věra Weberová, influenced by her experience from Thereseinstadt, wanted to pursue a medical degree. However, the regime did not allow her to do so. Instead, she studied to be nurse.³⁴² The communist regime was also ruthless to Fred Deutsch’s mother, who committed suicide in 1953. She wanted to reward the traffickers who smuggled the Deutches across the border into Slovakia. The two joined an organization called the American Czechoslovakia Friendship Club, but they were found out and about to be arrested. Deutsch’s mother arranged for them an escape to Austria. As Deutsch explains, “somebody revealed that plan to communist police and they arrested my mother. And they tortured her ... On one occasion while at the police station, she jumped from a window and committed suicide.” Deutsch, already fighting for the Israeli army, stayed in touch with his father and grandfather, who stayed in Czechoslovakia, only via mail. Deutsch explains the difficulties in communication: “that correspondence was censored. You never knew what to write whether that letter which you are writing will not be detrimental to them.” Also, Jewish trafficker Klíma suffered under the communist regime. He returned from hiding in Slovakia to Strání but in 1948 his distillery was nationalized. His pub was nationalized one year later. The *StB* began to be interested in Klíma after one civil agent from Uherský Brod joined in a discussion with Klíma about politics. Klíma only said a joke about President Gottwald, but it was a compelling reason to report him. Klíma was finally arrested on July 31, 1951.³⁴³ After the trial, Klíma served his sentence in several jails and

³⁴⁰ Hanáková, “Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století,” 104.

³⁴¹ Weberová, interview by author, Kyjov, November 16, 2013. *StB* is an abbreviation for Státní (tajná) bezpečnost (State Security), the aim of which was to protect the Czechoslovak state against inner and outer enemies. See Daniel Růžička, “Státní bezpečnost (StB),” Totalita.cz, accessed March 15, 2014, <http://www.totalita.cz/stb/stb.php>.

³⁴² *Ibid.*, Věra Weberová helped and looked after many elderly and ill Shoah survivors during the Communist era.

³⁴³ Bílek, “Pokus Vítězslava Klímy ze Strání o protikomunistický odboj,” 157-158, 167.

uranium mines nearby Příbram in Bohemia. Klíma, as well as the majority of political prisoners, was given amnesty in May 1960.³⁴⁴

Many Jews suffered from the state-approved anti-Semitic policies, and in most cases they were completely disillusioned with the communist regime. Whether it was the *Slánský trial*, arrests of their co-religionists and friends who helped them in difficult times, or the neighbors who were ready to betray them, some Jews realized that the regime was not very different from the previous one. Czechoslovakia gradually underwent the process of de-Stalinization, which, as Heitlinger notes, “included the opening of the Cold War borders for travel, allowed the local Jewish religious communities to expand significantly the scope of their activities beyond the religious sphere, and initiate several educational, social and commemorative projects.”³⁴⁵ The more liberal approach of the communists towards Jews lasted until 1967 when, as a result of the Six-Day War, Czechoslovakia interrupted diplomatic its relationship with Israel. In contrast, the Prague Spring in 1968 brought certain hopes that the regime might be more open. Censorship was abolished, revealing taboos such as the Slánský trial. However, all hopes were thwarted in August 1968 when the socialist armies invaded Czechoslovakia to stop a too-relaxed atmosphere in the state.³⁴⁶ As a result, 6,000, one-third of Czechoslovak Jews, decided to permanently flee Czechoslovakia. Among them, Jiří Diamant, whose studies were supported by the Jewish Community in Uherský Brod, emigrated along with his family to the Netherlands. Diamant did not want to repeat the mistake of his father who was reluctant to send him and his brother to London prior to the entry of the Nazis into Czechoslovakia.³⁴⁷ Such an outflow of Jews weakened the functioning of many Jewish communities. More, the communist regime tightened after August 1968, and suppressed Judaism even more.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 172.

³⁴⁵ Heitlinger, *In the Shadows of the Holocaust & Communism*, 27.

³⁴⁶ Pěkný, *Historie Židů v Čechách a na Moravě*, 349.

³⁴⁷ Hanáková, “Emigrace Židů z Uherského Brodu ve dvacátém století,” 125. Jiří Diamant became a world-renowned psychologist. See also Jiří Diamant, *Psychologické problem emigrace*, (Olomouc: Maticе cyrilometodějská, 1995).

3.3 The Normalization period

3.3.1 Rebirth of anti-Zionism and the final destruction of the Jewish community in Uherský Brod

The Normalization period had the worst possible impact on the existence of the Jewish Community in Uherský Brod. Heitlinger notes that Normalization period resulted in the return of Czechoslovak Communists to the policy from the 1950s: “this racist policy was again hidden under the mask and political slogans of 'anti-Zionism'.”³⁴⁸ In the 1970s, the communist regime utilized the fragility of the communities and, as Heitlinger points out, “erased all visible traces of the multiethnic character of prewar Czechoslovakia.” Although Jews played not an insignificant role in the Czechoslovak armed forces during the war, they were “passed over in silence in the official communist postwar discourse.”³⁴⁹ Similarly, the communist regime made sure that the Theresienstadt memorial did not strongly memorialize Jews. As Jan Munk suggests, “widespread Communist propaganda coupled with the suppression of information about the history of Jews and anti-Semitism in the Czech lands, as well as about the resistance movement, has caused immense and at times even insurmountable problems for the Memorial.”³⁵⁰ Also, the destroyed Jewish sanctuaries. Indeed, it demolished eighty-five Czech synagogues. This number even exceeded the number of synagogues destroyed during the war.³⁵¹ In Kyjov, the synagogue was razed to the ground and a Communist community center was erected, whereas the Jewish cemetery and the memorial plaque were “decorated” with trash dump.³⁵² In Uherský Brod, the charred ruins of the synagogue were destroyed as well as the almost entire *Židovna* quarter. The Jewish houses, often generations old, were torn down and replaced by blocks of flats. With the material destruction, also the spirit of Jewish culture in Uherský Brod disappeared. Not many people of Jewish origin were left in the town, and only a few successors of Jewishness, representing the second generation of the Shoah survivors, serve as reminders of the once strong Jewish presence in Uherský Brod up to this day.

³⁴⁸ Heitlinger, *In the Shadows of the Holocaust & Communism*, 33.

³⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 48-49.

³⁵⁰ Jan Munk, “Activities of Terezín Memorial,” *The Public Historian* 30 (February 2008): 74, accessed November 27, 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/tph.2008.30.1.73>.

³⁵¹ Heitlinger, *In the Shadows of the Holocaust & Communism*, 48.

³⁵² Weberová, interview by author, Kyjov, November 16, 2013.

3.4 Collective memory and reasons for hiding the Jewish past

Memory is about both remembering and forgetting, and privileging certain memories often implies neglecting or actively suppressing others.³⁵³

This is how Alena Heitlinger explains the function of collective memory. In collective memory, as Heitlinger puts it, not only individual memories, but also a community's shared memories, play significant roles in determining whether certain historical events would be forgotten or remembered. As Heitlinger further points out, "shared memories are inherently selective, unstable and fragile, and the processes of retaining and passing them on to the next generation require social intervention through a variety of social mechanisms" including "various forms of institutionalized repetition." Nowadays, only a few things remind an occasional visitor to Uherský Brod of the Jewish presence in the town. Needless to say that one has to explore the town properly to learn whether there were any Jews or not. The Jewish cemetery and the attached temple are both nearly inaccessible to the public. The memorial plaque erected at the train station is easy to overlook and a small sign at the entrance of the high school from which Jews were deported insufficiently expresses the Jewish tragedy that followed. Importantly, the majority of people born after the Velvet Revolution, raised and educated in a school system that was supposed to be without ideological influence of totalitarian regimes, do not know how significant the Jewish community in Brod was. Their history teachers mentioned that Jews from Brod were deported and sent to death during the war. However, only a few were aware that *Židovna* used to be a Jewish quarter before its complete destruction. Although the name *Židovna* has been frequently used among Brod's gentile inhabitants and the name explicitly suggests a Jewish connection, few were familiar with the fact that hundreds of Jews lived there in the past.³⁵⁴ Naturally, a question might pop up: What is wrong that the majority of young people do not know more details about the Jewish presence in Uherský Brod? And how does it happen in the twenty-first century? Who and what is to be blamed for such a vague awareness of young people about the Shoah and former presence of Jews in their hometown?

³⁵³ Heitlinger, *In the Shadows of the Holocaust & Communism*, 47.

³⁵⁴ Based on personal interviews performed by the author with the inhabitants of Uherský Brod born after the Velvet Revolution. The interviewees chose to remain anonymous.

3.4.1 Decisive aspects of erasing Jewish presence in Uherský Brod from the historical memory

To elaborate on Heitlinger's definition of collective memory in practice, both totalitarian regimes are to be blamed for the overall destruction of the rich cultural and religious heritage of Czechoslovak Jews. First, the Nazis annihilated almost the entire population of Jews living in Czechoslovakia. After a great outflow of Jews after 1948 or 1968, only a small percentage stayed in Czechoslovakia. Second, their tragedy failed to be remembered by the communist regime, which suppressed memories about the Shoah³⁵⁵ and Jewish religion as such. In its ideology, Jews, along with the Western world, were enemies. As a result, Jews were almost expelled from the public life in Czechoslovakia. More, their sense of Jewishness was influenced by the Shoah and state socialism. As Heitlinger claims, "as a rule, there was little if any reference to Jewish cultural and religious traditions and, as we note, in many cases there was also total silence about Shoah." Heitlinger further points out that "the degrees of concealment varied, of course, ranging from complete denial of Jewish heritage to partial or full identification. Some parents practiced total passing, to the extent of not telling their children that they were Jewish."³⁵⁶ Jiří Navrátil, a renowned Czech rally driver, is an example of the latter approach. His mother worked at the office of Valtr Komárek, who himself had Jewish descent, but she never told Jiří about his Jewish heritage. "It was long after the death of my mother. I was 32 when a coincidence made me think of my Jewish heritage. On one occasion, I met with the head of the Jewish community in Mariánské Lázně who noticed my appearance and said: 'You belong among us!' Afterwards, I asked our family lawyer and neighbor of my mother who confirmed that my mother was a Jewess."³⁵⁷ But what led many Czechoslovak Jews to distance themselves from their roots? According to Heitlinger, it was "the unconcealed stigma attached to Jewishness in Czech and Slovak culture" and "the communist regime." As Heitlinger further adds, such a stigma led to "(a) a negative sense of otherness; (b) an often painful search for understanding of Jewishness while the communist authorities and many of their parents preferred that they do not identify with their Jewish background; and (c) an absence of systematic Jewish

³⁵⁵ As Heitlinger points out, "Czech Jews were not allowed to hold their ceremonies on the date of Hashoah, the date marked each spring as Holocaust Remembrance Day by Jews in Israel and elsewhere in the Diaspora." See Heitlinger, *In the Shadows of the Holocaust & Communism*, 61.

³⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 81-82.

³⁵⁷ Jiří Navrátil, interview by author, Zlín, March 20, 2013.

(religious) education.”³⁵⁸ Indeed, these aspects were cornerstones of gradual disappearance of Jewishness in Czechoslovakia.

However, it was not only the outcome of totalitarian regimes that shaped the current historical memory in Uherský Brod and the Slovácko Region more precisely, but also, and foremost, people who decided whether to pass on or suppress certain memories. It was also gentile neighbors who had a great impact on the fate of Jews during the most demanding times. For many Czech gentiles, Jews represented an alien element in Christian society, bearers of Germanization, bloodsuckers, and stiff competition for local businessmen. The hostile attitude towards Jews was also nurtured by jealousy and prevailing prejudices. When the Nazi and Communist regimes seized the country, those gentiles who wished Jews would disappear, had a chance to participate in the total destruction of Jewishness. In the Slovácko Region, a traditionally Catholic part of the country, Czech gentiles hated Jews for religious reasons. Fred Deutsch recalls that he was beaten up by boys in the streets of Uherský Brod and called “Christ killer.” As Deutsch wonders, the boys opinions must have been infected by their parents. He further adds: “That is one part of it which I never could have reconciled in my mind. How am I, if it is true that the Jews sold out Christ and crucified him, what part did I play in it, or my parents. Why am I being punished for something 1,945 years later? When I came to my parents with these questions, there were no answers.”³⁵⁹ Furthermore, Valtr Komárek, not aware of his Jewish origin until the World War II, used to bully one Jewish boy in Hodonín along with his gentile friends. Komárek claims that he himself was a typical example of a person with deeply embedded anti-Semitism so typical for southern Moravia.³⁶⁰ Apart from religious reasons, also human ignorance, the prospect of improved social status after the elimination of Jewish influence, or personal enrichment from Jewish property became important aspects nurturing hatred towards Jews. A part of the destruction of the cultural heritage of Jews in Uherský Brod, residents decided to actively suppress the historical memory of the Shoah and the former Jewish presence in the town.

³⁵⁸ Heitlinger, *In the Shadows of the Holocaust & Communism*, 207.

³⁵⁹ Deutsch, “Oral History Interview with Fred Deutsch.”

³⁶⁰ Česká televize, “13. komnata Valtra Komárka.” Komárek was born out of marriage to Jewish parents in Slovakia. On the way to Brno, his mother was forced to give birth in Hodonín. Komárek never saw his Jewish parents again.

3.4.2 Insufficient Commemoration of the Jewish suffering during the Shoah and the Communist Regime in the Slovácko Region

Both totalitarian regimes and Czech gentiles had fifty years to oppress Jews in Czechoslovakia. The Velvet Revolution and sudden peaceful shift to democracy did not necessarily mean that Jewish heritage, suffering during the Shoah and the communist era, would be automatically acknowledged and commemorated. Indeed, the change of regimes still seems to be too sudden for the Czech Republic. The difficulties with restitution that Věra Weberová and Růžena Hanáčková experienced in the early 90s confirm that the state is not prepared to change the attitude towards Jews.³⁶¹ During his interview for the USHMM, six years after the fall of the Iron Curtain, Fred Deutsch underwent struggle with the Czech Republic, which was reluctant to confess that his mother committed suicide because of tortures by the Czechoslovak police. Also, it was not long before the Revolution that second or third generation descendants of Shoah survivors learned about their Jewishness the hard way, being called by the Czech gentiles “stinking Jew, Jewish swine, dirty Jewess or Jew, and a clever little Jew (in pejorative way).”³⁶² Věra Weberová also mentions that although Jewish heirs from abroad had rights to claim an inheritance for a home in Kyjov taken by the communists, they were not successful. Furthermore, items with Jewish themes such as a Jewish hanukiah, most likely “inherited” by Czech gentiles during the war, are nowadays for sale in Kyjov. In Uherský Brod the memorial plaque is locked in the temple, inaccessible to the broader public (see appendix XI). In Kyjov, twenty years after the Velvet Revolution, Věra Weberová finally convinced the local authorities to solve the issues with the trash dump on the Jewish cemetery. All the aforementioned examples show that not much has changed since the communist era in terms the commemoration of Jewish suffering. Although Uherský Brod commemorated the seventieth anniversary of the transports dispatched to Theresienstadt on January 27 2013,³⁶³ one such event definitely will not suffice to increase the awareness of younger generations about the Shoah. What is completely missing, either in school curricula or during such commemorations, is the

³⁶¹ Weberová, interview by author, Kyjov, November 16, 2013; Hanáčková, interviewed by author, Uherský Brod, October 17, 2013. Věra Weberová in the end did not obtain compensation for the confiscation, even after presentation of all the evidence.

³⁶² This is how some descendants of the Shoah survivors responded in Heitlinger’s study. See Heitlinger, *In the Shadows of the Holocaust & Communism*, 91.

³⁶³ Elen Fremlová, “Vzpomínka na Holocaust,” uherskybrod.cz, accessed October 18, 2013, <http://www.uhb.cz/zpravy/Vzpominka-na-holocaust-1?expandMenu=16>.

impact of the communist regime on Czech Jewry. As Heilinger suggests, “institutionalized repetition” includes “annual celebrations of important religious rituals or specific dates and events in a national history, various literary texts and other art forms, and the construction of memorial sites such as museums, statues, and monuments.”³⁶⁴ In this regard, Czech authorities still have much to do. The only way to redress the current state of affair is to actively attempt to alter the collective memory that purposely sanitized history.

³⁶⁴ Ibid., 47.

CONCLUSION

The hostile and anti-Semitic attitudes of the majority of the gentile inhabitants of Uherský Brod had been longstanding, but fully blossomed during the German occupation of Moravia, leading to the betrayal of the Jewish inhabitants of the town. As the influence of the Jewish community in the town increased, the Czech gentiles were seized by feelings of anger, jealousy, and hatred towards their Jewish neighbors. Occasional violence, both verbal and physical transformed into a collaborative deadly assault at the outbreak of the Second World War, revealing the true face and shadowy side of human morality, or the lack thereof. Either through espionage, reports to the Nazi regime, or outright hostility towards Jews, the local Czech gentiles became, as the Nazis desired, instruments of destruction against the local Jewry. Despite the fact that the regime changed, the character of the local gentiles remained the same. In reality, such individuals continued wreaking havoc on what remained of the Jewish community under the umbrella of conspiratorial anti-Zionism and anti-Semitism approved by the communist government. As a result, four decades of communism finally terminated the centuries-old heritage and undeniable contribution of the Jewish community to Uherský Brod. Also, during that time, the local gentiles concealed their passive and active participation in the destruction the local Jewry, leaving behind an almost blank page in the history of Uherský Brod. As a consequence, people are reminded of the existence of Jews in the town in only very vague way. Any culpability of the local gentiles in the Shoah is dismissed, as is their roles in the final destruction of the community during the communist era.

Věra Weberová, a Holocaust survivor from the Slovácko Region, now gives school lectures and guided tours of the death camps to raise awareness among younger generations about the dangers of fanaticism and totalitarian regimes. However, her hard work and resolve will not amount to much unless the local teachers, historians, and primarily the authorities join forces to find courage to present local history in a realistic and unbiased way. The inhabitants of Uherský Brod, mainly the younger generations, should be constantly reminded of the uncomfortable Jewish history of their hometown, so that they might learn from it and avoid the same mistakes made by their elders.

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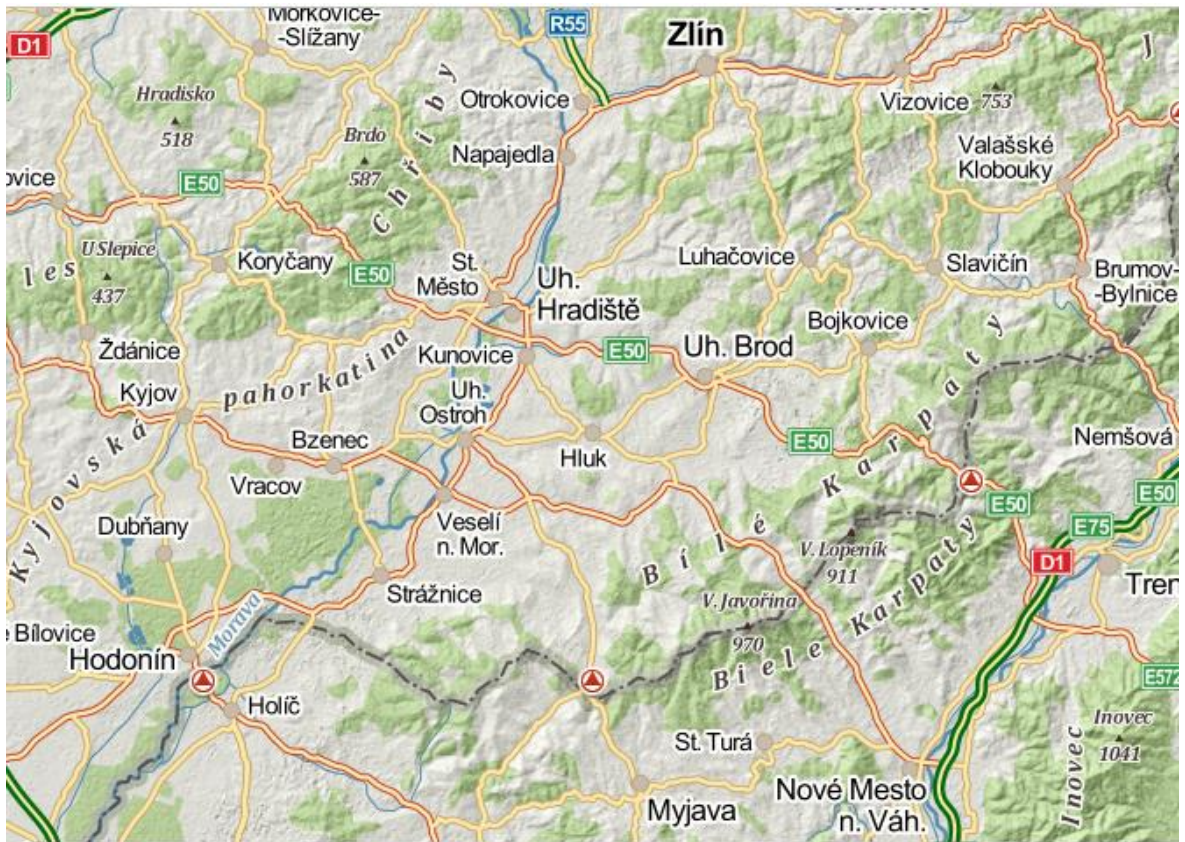
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APPENDICES

- P I The Slovácko Region of southern Moravia.
- P II Exterior and interior of the synagogue in Uherský Brod.
- P III Poor part of the Jewish quarter in Uherský Brod.
- P IV Children from the Makkabi Club in Uherský Brod
- P V Minutes of the very last meeting of the Jewish community in Uherský Brod, dated October 29, 1939.
- P VI The Schweiger Foundation.
- P VII Anti-Semitic signs in Uherský Brod, and restrictions imposed on Jews.
- P VIII The synagogue in Uherský Brod after the fire of July 18, 1941.
- P IX The local high school, from which 2,838 Jews were deported to Theresienstadt concentration camp.
- P X Věra's placement to the transport from Theresienstadt, dated October 22, 1944.
- P XI Memorial plaque in the Jewish temple, and the Jewish cemetery contrasting with the block of flats built during communism.

APPENDIX P I: THE SLOVÁCKO REGION OF SOUTHERN MORAVIA



Map available at www.mapy.cz

**APPENDIX P II: EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR OF THE SYNAGOGUE
IN UHERSKÝ BROD**



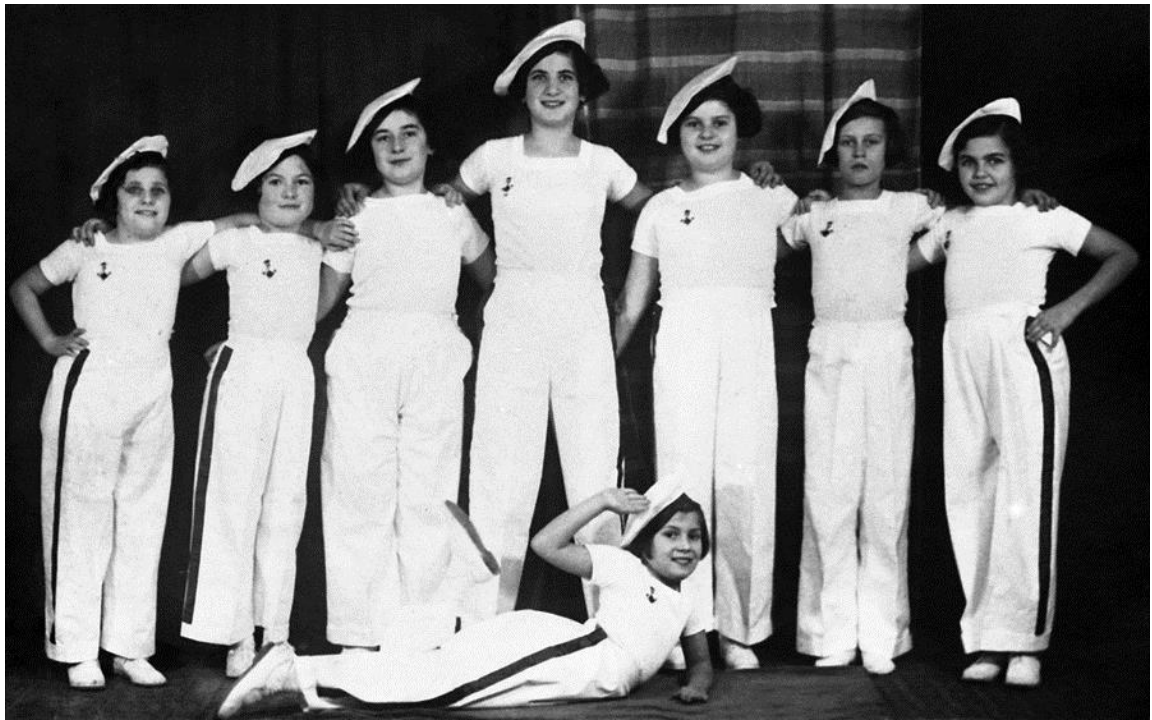
Courtesy of the Jan Amos Komenský Museum, Uherský Brod.

**APPENDIX P III: POOR PART OF THE JEWISH QUARTER IN
UHERSKÝ BROD**



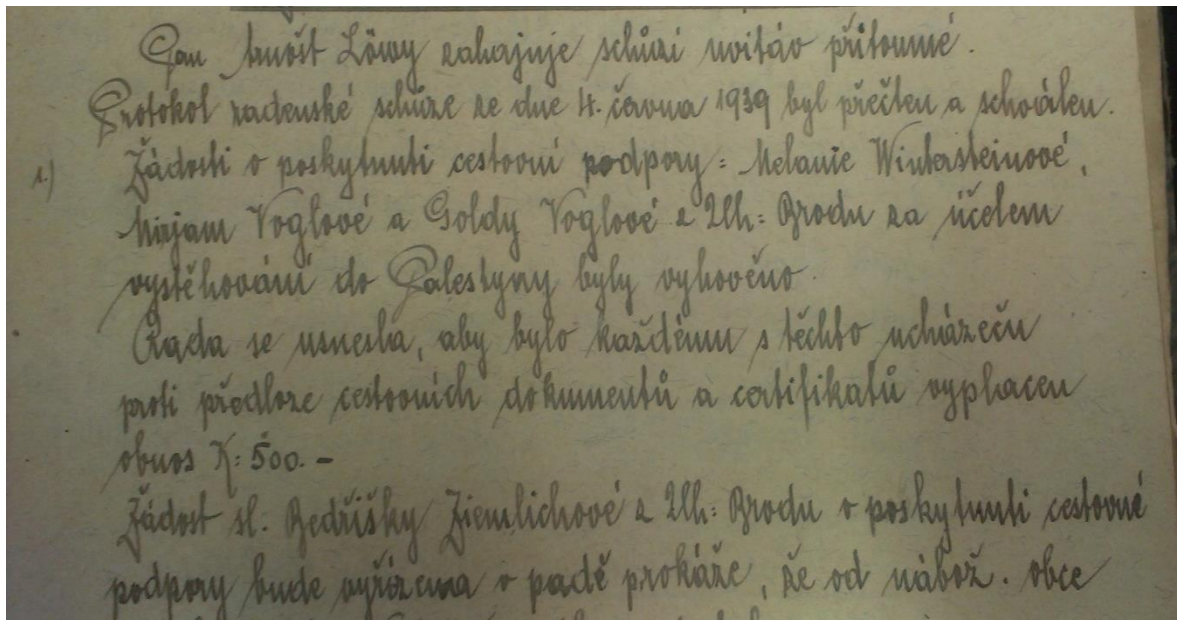
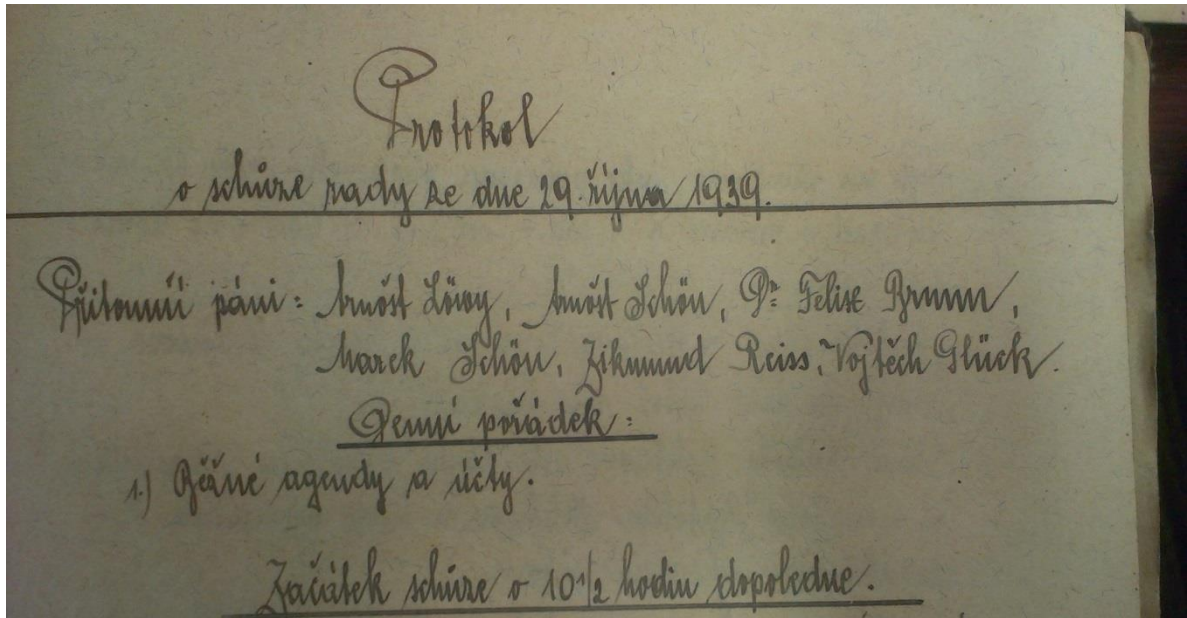
Courtesy of the Jan Amos Komenský Museum, Uherský Brod.

**APPENDIX P IV: CHILDREN FROM THE MAKKABI CLUB IN
UHERSKÝ BROD**



Courtesy of the Jan Amos Komenský Museum, Uherský Brod.

**APPENDIX P V: MINUTES OF THE VERY LAST MEETING OF THE
JEWISH COMMUNITY IN UHERSKÝ BROD, DATED OCTOBER 29,
1939.**



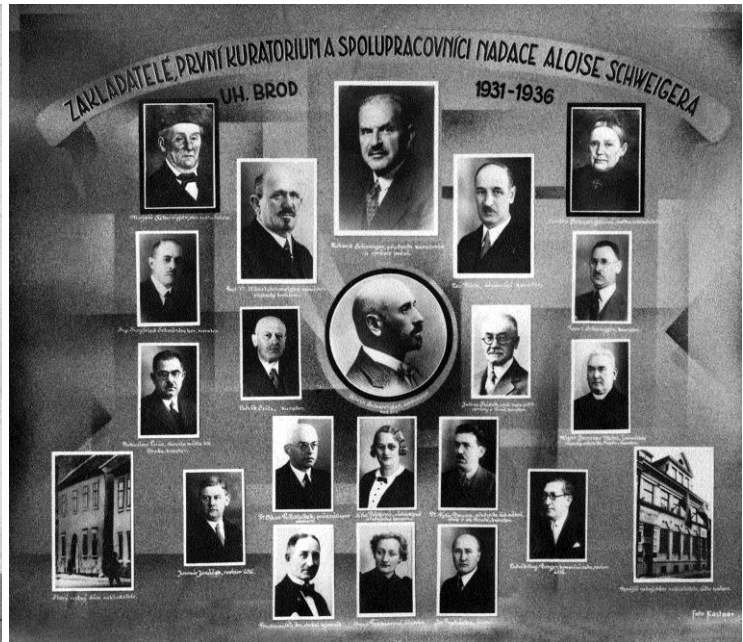
The members of the community discussed the financial support of Melanie Winterstein, and Mia and Golda Vogls for their emigration to Palestine.

Courtesy of the Jan Amos Komenský Museum, Uherský Brod.

APPENDIX P VI: THE SCHWEIGER FOUNDATION



Alois Schweiger



Members of the Schweiger Foundation

Abschrift!

An die Ung. Brod, den 29. Oktober 1939.

Zentralstelle für jüdische Auswanderung Prag

Prag - Střešovice.-

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In der Anlage erlauben wir uns den Bericht über Alois-Schweiger-Stiftung vorzulegen. Wie aus diesem Bericht zu ersehen ist, ist die Erfüllung der Stiftung durch die in der Stiftungsurkunde gelegten Bedingungen in zahlreicher Hinsicht gesichert worden.

Aus dem hinterlassenen Vermögen verbleibt ein Betrag von K 18,000.000.- von dem jedoch bloss der Betrag von K 12,000.000.- die eigentliche Stiftung bildet. Vom diesem ~~Rest~~ 12,000.000.- soll der Ertrag von K 6,000.000.- für bedürftige Verwandte verwendet werden, während der Ertrag des Restes von 6,000.000.- K an bedürftige Landsleute des Stifters, das ist Ung. Broder fallen soll.

Die Art der Auszahlung der Stiftung und der Umfang, der in Betracht kommenden Personen, ist aus dem erliegenden Bericht ersichtlich.

Von dem Ertrage der Verwandten-Stiftung per 6,000.000.- werden auch die in der Fremde wohnenden Verwandten, die auch zum Teil fremde Staatsbürger sind bedacht.

Von den Zinsen der restlichen K 6,000.000.- werden 80% laufend verwendet.

Wenn man mit einem Ertrag von ca 3 1/2% rechnet, bleiben zur jährlichen Verwendung nach Abzug der Spesen und mit Rücksicht auf die Kurseinbussen nur ca K 100.000.- übrig. Von diesen K 100.000.- stehen der jüdischen Zentralstelle in Ung. Brod 50% das ist ca K 50.000.- zur Verfügung, der polnischen

Courtesy of the Jan Amos Komenský Museum, Uherský Brod.

APPENDIX P VII: ANTI-SEMITIC SIGNS IN UHERSKÝ BROD, AND RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED ON JEWS



Courtesy of the Jan Amos Komenský Museum, Uherský Brod.

**APPENDIX P VIII: THE SYNAGOGUE IN UHERSKÝ BROD AFTER
THE FIRE OF JULY 18, 1941**



Precious religious subjects that disappeared after the fire.

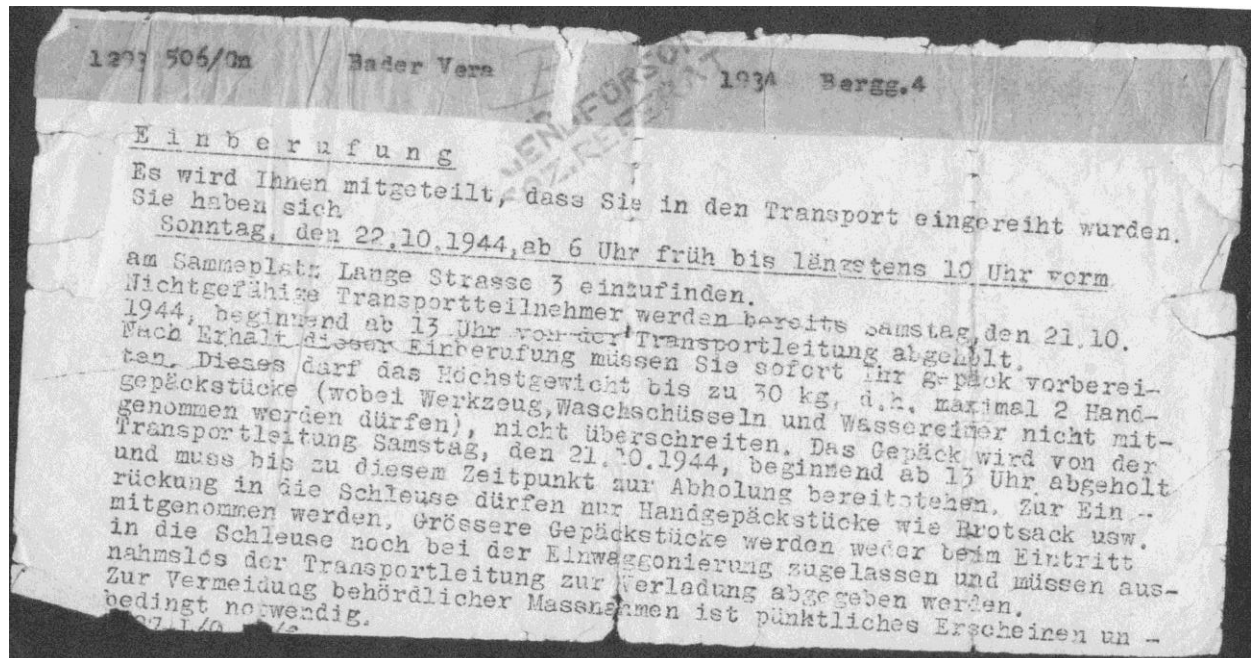
Courtesy of the Jan Amos Komenský Museum, Uherský Brod.

**APPENDIX P IX: LOCAL HIGH SCHOOL, FROM WHICH 2,838
JEWS WERE DEPORTED TO THERESIENSTADT
CONCENTRATION CAMP**



Courtesy of the Jan Amos Komenský Museum, Uherský Brod.

**APPENDIX P X: VĚRA'S PLACEMENT TO THE TRANSPORT
FROM THERESIENSTADT, DATED OCTOBER 22, 1944**



From personal archive of Věra Weberová, Kyjov.

**APPENDIX P XI: MEMORIAL PLAQUE IN THE JEWISH TEMPLE,
AND THE JEWISH CEMETERY CONTRASTING WITH THE
BLOCK OF FLATS BUILT DURING COMMUNISM**



Pictures taken by the author on October 17, 2013, Uherský Brod.