

Given Names of Czech and Moravian Jews in the Post-War Period*

Žaneta DVOŘÁKOVÁ

The aim of this study is to analyse given (first) names of children born in the post-war period in Jewish communities in Bohemia and Moravia. In order to understand the motivations for choosing these names, it is necessary to introduce both the political and social context, as it largely influenced and determined naming. That is why I make divisions in this work at turning points in historical moments, such as the “Victorious February” in 1948, the invasion in 1968 and the “Velvet Revolution” in 1989.

1. Material

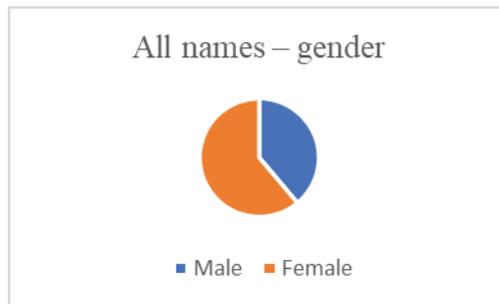
1.1 Monthly article in *Roš Chodeš*

There are currently 10 active Jewish religious communities in the Czech Republic (in Prague, Liberec, Děčín, Ústí nad Labem, Teplice, Karlovy Vary, Pilsen, Brno, Olomouc and Ostrava) associated with the “Federation of Jewish Communities in the Czech Republic” (FJC), which is the umbrella body of Jewish religious communities, associations and organizations in the Czech Republic. The FJC publishes the bulletin *Roš Chodeš* which has become a source for my excerption of anthroponyms. There is a monthly section “News from the Communities” with birthday greetings to members of individual Jewish communities and reports on their deaths. Name lists are supplemented by dates of birth.¹

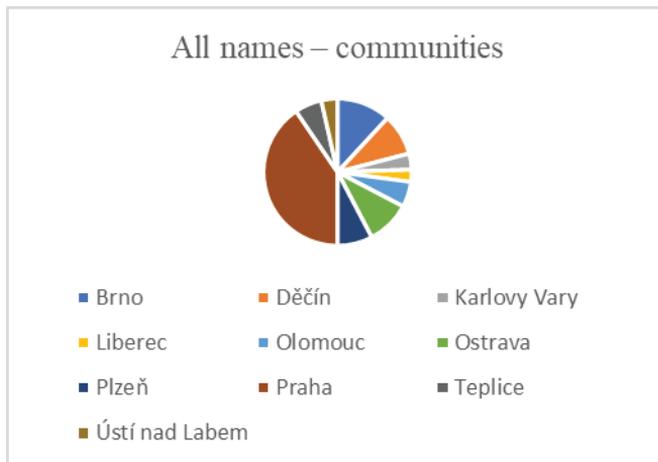
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¹ The study by J. Bartůšek (1972–1973) was also based on the same source, formerly called *Věstník židovských náboženských obcí v Československu* (i.e. the *Bulletin of Jewish Religious Communities in Czechoslovakia*). However, he provided only a list of names without in-depth analysis and without distinguishing between the names of Czech, Slovak, and foreign Jews. R. Bondyová (2006: 167 – 168) mentions these records in her monograph as a possible material starting point, but she does not deal with them in more detail and ends her research with the conclusion that “After 1989 a new chapter of Jewish names in the Czech lands begins and it belongs to other generations.”

When collecting material, I relied on the 2006 – 2020 editions, which are available online: <https://www.fzo.cz/ros-chodes/archiv-ros-chodes/>. I extracted 1,747 names of persons from these articles – 1,067 female names and 680 male names (see Graph 1). Their distribution among individual Jewish communities is shown in Graph 2.



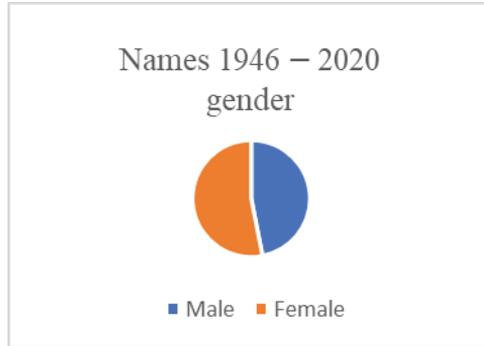
Graph 1 All names – gender



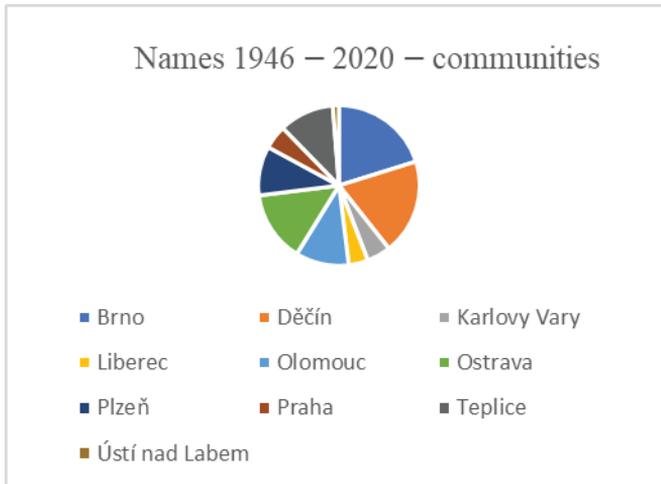
Graph 2 All names – communities

However, most of these names belonged to older people who were born before (or rarely during) World War II, so I had to exclude them for research of post-war Jewish anthroponymy. This was mostly the case of records from Prague, because only members over 75 years old are listed from the Prague community in the bulletin. Records of younger members can only be found in the case of their deaths. 47 members of the community in Ústí nad Labem lacked dates of birth, so I had to exclude them from the analysis as well. In my corpus, 646 names of Jews

born between 1946 and 2020 remained, of which 342 were women and 302 men (see Graph 3). Their territorial distribution is shown in Graph 4.



Graph 3 Names 1946 – 2020 – gender



Graph 4 Names 1946 – 2020 – communities

1.2 Questionnaire survey

The above-mentioned corpus offers only “civil names” (so-called *kinnui* or “profane name”)² used in public. There is a single exception where we also learn a “religious name” (so-called *shem ha-kodesh* or “sacred name”): the late *Alexander Lebovič* was called *Ašer ben Benjamin* in the synagogue. Therefore, I developed a questionnaire survey focused on the use of these “religious names” and at the same time on the motivations for choosing civil and religious names. I got 26 answers.

² For the term *kinnui* see Jacobs 1906: 155 or Beider 2001: 1.

Although this is not a high number, the answers provide us with interesting data. Women were more willing to participate in the on-line survey and they completed 22 questionnaires (see Graph 5). Most respondents were members of the community in Prague (21), Brno (2) and Děčín (1), 2 respondents did not provide this information (see Graph 6). The age structure of the respondents was as follows: 4 respondents were born in the 1960s, 12 in the 1970s, 8 in the 1980s and 2 in the early 1990s.

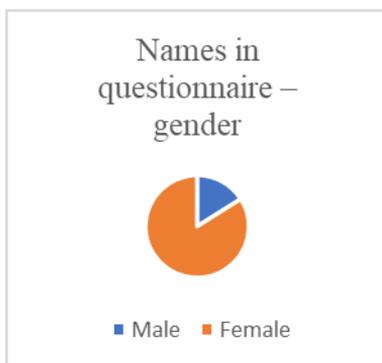


Figure 5 Names in questionnaire – gender

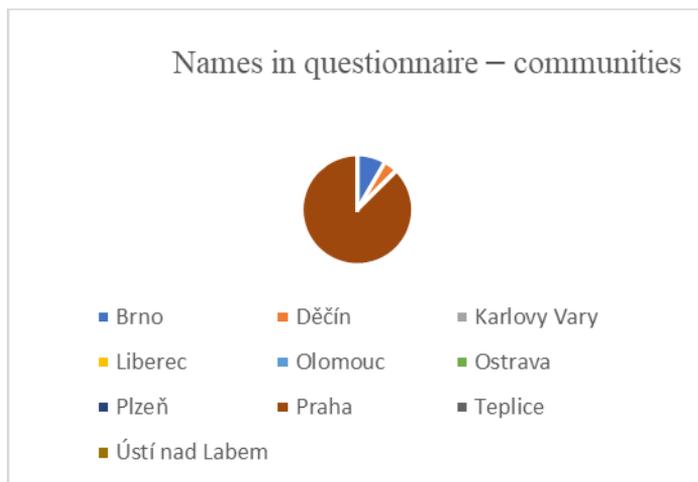


Figure 6 Names in questionnaire – communities

2. Before World War II

At the time of the proclamation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (1939), an estimated 120,000 Jews lived in our territory. Many of them emigrated.

However, at least 80,000 Jews were murdered (Kárný 1991: 110). Their names are written in the *Terezín Memorial Book* or on the walls of the Pinkas Synagogue in Prague. They were analysed by R. Bondyová (2003: 15), who stated: “Most of the first names that Jews in Bohemia and Moravia chose for their descendants in the last years of the monarchy and during the Czechoslovak Republic corresponded to their character: neutral names that antagonized neither the Czechs nor the Germans [...] and which did not make their bearers unnecessarily conspicuous. Josef, Karel, Rudolf, Otto, Emil, Franz (František) and Georg (Jiří) were the most popular male names. The women were often named Anna, Julie, Rosa (Růžena), Olga, Irma, Truda, Berta, Greta and also – quite strangely for Jews – Marie, probably because it was the most widespread name of the Christian community, but perhaps also because only one letter differed from the Hebrew Miriam.”

3. Post-war period 1945 – 1947

Approximately 38,000 Jews returned to Czechoslovakia after the war (Franková, Sadek, Šedinová 1992: 54). A third of them were so-called “optants” – a special status of optant was granted to those who came from the Carpathian Ruthenia, which was a part of Czechoslovakia before the war but after the war it became a territory belonging to the Soviet Union. These Jews mostly settled on the Czech borders, depopulated after the expulsion of the Germans. Thanks to these new immigrants, there was a relatively large number of Jewish children born in north Bohemian towns (Sedlák: on-line).

For the most part, they tried not to differ from their surroundings, not even in their proper names. Thousands of requests for name changes are stored in the National Archive in Prague from this period. Jews mainly got rid of surnames that were German or typically Jewish. However, the renaming was not exclusive to Jews, as many Czechs with German surnames also preferred to be renamed at that time (for details, see Matúšová 2015: 45 – 57; Matúšová 2017; cf. Bukovská & Mlynář 2019). Jews changed not only their surnames, but also their German first names, examples are given by R. Bondyová (2006: 160): “Hildegard in Libuše, Regina in Katuša, Herta in Helena”.

In my corpus, there are 69 people born in the first two years after the war. Most of their names are common in the majority of society. For girls, the names *Eva* (5x), *Marie* (3x), *Hana* (2x), *Helena* (2x), *Jana* (2x) and *Věra* (2x) appear most often. For boys, *Jan* (5x), *Jiří* (4x), *Pavel* (3x), *Miroslav* (2x) and *Tomáš* (2x). What is unique are given names that were fashionable especially in the 1930s such as *René*, *Alfréd* or *Egon*. It can be assumed that some children born after the war were named after one of their murdered relatives in accordance with the Ashkenazi tradition (see Beider 2001: 14; Bondyová 2006: 24). The trend described by R. Bondyová continued in the post-war period in the selection of rather neutral given names. And it was certainly exacerbated by the trauma of the war, fears of the future and trying not to be different, because the time was still uncertain, returnees were not always welcomed with open arms, they had trouble regaining their property, pogroms took place in neighbouring

countries and the Germans were massively expelled. The choice of typical Czech or Slavic names such as *Jaromír*, *Ladislav*, *Milena*, *Libuše* and *Šárka* or *Eduard* after president Eduard Beneš could thus also be a kind of patriotic manifesto of belonging to the Czechs. The Russian given names *Ivan*, *Sonja* and *Tatána*, which we find in the corpus, could also be motivated ideologically and we could look at them as an expression of gratitude for liberation (cf. Knappová 1989: 77).

4. Communist period 1948 – 1959

I split the data in 1948, at the time of political change in Czechoslovakia after the coup by the Communist Party, and the so-called “Victorious February”. This provoked a wave of Jewish emigration. Heitlingerová (2007: 30) states that more than half of all Czechoslovak Holocaust survivors, i.e. 22,000 – 24,000 people, emigrated to Palestine/Israel by 1950 and another 3,000 – 5,000 to other countries. Thus, only 15,000 – 18,000 Czech and Slovak Jews remained in the country, less than a tenth of the pre-war numbers. The fears of the Jews were justified. “Since December 1948, anti-Jewish repression, staged trials and purges were taking place in the Soviet bloc.” (Houfová 2011: 62) In Czechoslovakia, Slánský’s process was the most famous trial taking place in 1950 – 1952.³ For Jews who remained here, this led to the hiding of their roots, to the silence about the events of the war, and to attempting to avoid the Jewish identification of their children (cf. Novotná 2013: 52 – 53).

How did it turn out in the area of proper names? There are 204 people born in the 1950s in my corpus. When I compared their names with the most common names of children born in Prague in 1958, which were presented by M. Knappová (1989: 178 – 179), I could see almost the same set (Table 1). However, while before the war we can understand the choice of names common in the majority of society as a natural part of the assimilation process, in the post-war period such a choice seems to be motivated more by the desire to hide.

Names of children born in Prague in 1958 (Knappová 1989: 178 – 179)	
Male	Female
<i>Jiří</i>	<i>Jana</i>
<i>Pavel</i>	<i>Hana</i>
<i>Jan</i>	<i>Eva</i>
<i>Petr</i>	<i>Alena</i>
<i>Miroslav</i>	<i>Dana</i>

Names of Jewish children born between 1948–1959 in our corpus	
Male	Female
<i>Petr</i> (9) / <i>Peter</i> (1)	<i>Eva</i> (14)
<i>Jiří</i> (8)	<i>Hana</i> (8)
<i>Pavel</i> (7)	<i>Helena</i> (5)
<i>Michael</i> (3) / <i>Michal</i> (4)	<i>Dagmar</i> (4)
<i>Josef</i> (5)	<i>Věra</i> (4)

³ “Rudolf Slánský, former general secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, was convicted along with eleven other defendants (mostly Jews) for alleged cosmopolitanism and Zionism, and his Jewish origin was emphasized several times in a pejorative context. Given that the whole process was broadcast on state radio, it was a truly massive anti-Semitic campaign, the first of its kind in the post-war era.” (Novotná 2013: 42)

<i>Jaroslav</i>	<i>Jitka</i>	<i>Karel</i> (5)	<i>Zuzana</i> (4)
<i>Zdeněk</i>	<i>Helena</i>	<i>Tomáš</i> (5)	<i>Marie</i> (3)
<i>Josef</i>	<i>Věra</i>	<i>Jan</i> (4)	<i>Růžena</i> (3)
<i>Milan</i>	<i>Jaroslava</i>	<i>Ladislav</i> (4)	<i>Alena</i> (2)
<i>Václav</i>	<i>Marie</i>	<i>Rudolf</i> (4)	<i>Anna</i> (2)
<i>František</i>	<i>Zdeňka</i>	<i>František</i> (3)	<i>Drahomíra</i> (2)
<i>Karel</i>	<i>Irena</i>	<i>Milan</i> (3)	<i>Jana</i> (2)
<i>Vladimír</i>	<i>Zuzana</i>	<i>Miroslav</i> (3)	<i>Jiřina</i> (2)
<i>Martin</i>	<i>Dagmar</i>	<i>Vladimír</i> (3)	<i>Judita</i> (2)
<i>Stanislav</i>	<i>Jiřina</i>	<i>Arnošt</i> (2)	<i>Ludmila</i> (2)
		<i>Jaroslav</i> (2)	<i>Milena</i> (2)
		<i>Zdeněk</i> (2)	<i>Nad'a</i> (2)

Table 1 Names in 1950s

The choice of names such as *Eva* or *Hana* was certainly influenced by the fact that they are of Hebrew origin, but in Czech society they were so widespread that they were not perceived symptomatically and were not associated with the Jewish ethnic group – unlike names such as *Tamara* or *Lea* which also occurred in my corpus, but rather as exceptions. Even some other names in the list of the most frequent names were popular among Czech Jews in the pre-war period. Some Russian given names appear in the 1950s as well (e.g., *Oleg*, *Boris*, *Nad'a*, *Iraida*).

5. Release in the years 1960 – 1968

In the 1960s, there was a general social liberation in Czechoslovakia, which, among other things, enabled contact with foreign Jewish organizations. Between 1965 and 1968, around 2,000 to 3,000 Jews were allowed to emigrate to Israel (Houřová 2011: 65). A number of books and films with Jewish themes could be published. However, it continued that “religion, when practiced in families, was a matter for parents, who often tried to hide it from their children. The second generation thus found its way to Judaism only in adulthood, for some it did not happen at all. Identification with Jewish origin was simply not conditioned by identification with Judaism.” (Novotná 2013: 55; cf. Soukupová & Pojar 2010) This atmosphere is also confirmed by data from my sociolinguistic research. One of my questions was: “What was your parents’ relationship with religion? For example, did you go to the synagogue as a child, celebrate holidays, eat kosher as much as possible, etc.?” Most respondents born in the 1960s and 1970s wrote that their parents had no connection to religion, they only went to the synagogue for the celebration of the main holidays (if at all), or they celebrated the holidays only at home, and *kashrut* was not strictly observed (but mostly no pork was eaten). Judaism was more of a family and cultural affair, and it was concealed. Despite such an attitude towards religion, 3 respondents

out of 4 born in the 1960s state that in addition to a “civil name” (that their parents simply liked), they also received a “religious name” – in one case because of its meaning (*Natan* “he /God/ gave”). For another respondent after her great-aunt and great-grandmother. The third respondent stated that the name *Bruriah*, after the great figure of Jewish history, was chosen by her non-Jewish father. At the same time, these “religious names” were not recorded on the birth certificates (the law at the time allowed only one name (see Knappová 2020: 42)) and they are not used outside the Jewish community. The fourth respondent chose his name *Samuel* himself as an adult and commonly uses it in everyday life (but he lives in Israel today).

As for civil names, in the articles published in the bulletin *Roš Chodeš* we find 73 people born in the years 1960 – 1968.⁴ No name is predominant here, they appear in a maximum of 3 occurrences – female *Zuzana*, male *Michal/Michael*, *Pavel*, *Tomáš* and *Vladimír*. I observed an overall greater variety and names that did not appear in the previous decade, such as female *Blanka*, *Iveta*, *Lucie* and *Monika*, male *Leoš*, *Marcel* and *Radek*, which at that time were gaining popularity among the majority of society as well (see kdejsme.cz).⁵

6. Period of “normalization” 1969 – 1988

However, the reforms of the so-called Prague Spring, which were an attempt to speed up the process of democratization, quickly ended in August 1968 with the invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops. “Political liberation in 1967 and 1968 was called a Zionist conspiracy. The Kremlin considered Zionists to be anyone who had Jewish ancestors or had contact with people who had them. State security began to compile lists of persons of Jewish descent for ‘operational use’ in the fight against Zionism, which were more thorough than under the Nazis: their origins were examined until the fifth generation.” (Hvížd’ala 2007: 8) After the invasion, almost a third of the 18,000 Czechoslovak Jews emigrated, but of those six thousand, only a few hundred to Israel (Brod 1995: 14). Since 1969, a central executor of state administration in church affairs, the so-called Secretary for Ecclesiastical Affairs of the Ministry of Culture, was established, which controlled the finances and activities of churches, decided on the composition of their bodies, etc. Surveillance, bullying and blackmailing of Czech Jews is well documented. In the years 1970 – 1984, there was no rabbi in Bohemia or Moravia. The Communists assumed that without a rabbi, the Jewish tradition would disappear (see Hvížd’ala 2007: 8).

⁴ Among the jubilees is the name of the former Brno and later Prague rabbi *Moše Chajm* Koller, who, however, accepted these Hebrew names after conversion in adulthood (Nová 2016: 27), so it does not belong to the corpus of names from the 1960s. I also exclude from it the obvious names of foreigners who settled here only after the fall of communism, whether they came from the countries of the former Soviet Union (e.g. *Oleksandr* Shytyi, *Dmitry* Kirillov, *Vasyl* Tyrpak) or from Israel (*Yoav* Kidar, *Oded Zeev* Pelzmann, *Boaz* Harel).

⁵ M. Knappová (1970: 257) also stated at this time that the choice of name according to religion is in decline, “e.g., in the case of the Jewish religion, *Ervin*, *Oto*, *Ester*, etc.” Although, the selected examples relate more to the pre-war period.

My questionnaire survey was answered by 12 respondents born in the 1970s. One third of them (4) state that they have no “religious name”, 2 use the Hebrew form of their “civil name” as a “religious name” (*Jakub – Yaakov, Zuzana – Shoshana*), the remaining 6 chose their “religious name” themselves in adulthood, often after consultation with a rabbi, 1 of them after conversion (but she has Jewish roots). Among those born in the 1980s, the situation is similar: 3 out of 8 participants in our research do not have a “religious name”, 1 respondent states that she received it, but “I do not use it and now do not even remember it”, 1 respondent uses the Hebrew version of her civil name (*Zlata – Golda* – after Israeli president Golda Meier), 2 respondents were given a special “religious name” (*Sára* – after great-grandmother). None of the respondents has his/her “religious name” written on their birth certificates and no one uses it outside the synagogue.

In the bulletin *Roš Chodeš* we find records of 137 people born in the 1970s and 76 born in the 1980s. After excluding foreigners (e.g., *Uri Schmueli, Sergei Oukhov, Roy Kombelis*, etc.) I again get an almost identical list of the most common given names, which I can see in the majority of society (see Table 2). In the years 1969 – 1979, the male names *Petr* (10), *Jan* (7), *David* (6), *Tomáš* (6), *Pavel* (4) and *Martin* (3) and female names *Kateřina* (4)/*Katka* (1), *Eva* (4), *Jana* (4), *Dita* (3) and *Lenka* (3) predominated among Czech Jews.

1968	Male	<i>Petr, Martin, Jiří, Pavel, Tomáš, Jan, Michal, Jaroslav, Karel, Roman, Miroslav, Robert, Milan, Josef, Zdeněk</i>
	Female	<i>Jana, Martina, Renáta, Monika, Jitka, Lenka, Kateřina, Hana, Michaela, Alena, Lucie, Eva, Iveta, Zuzana, Markéta</i>
1978	Male	<i>Jan, Petr, Martin, Jiří, Tomáš, Michal, Pavel, David, Ondřej, Jakub, Lukáš, Josef, Václav, Jaroslav, Miroslav</i>
	Female	<i>Kateřina, Jana, Petra, Lucie, Lenka, Martina, Markéta, Zuzana, Veronika, Eva, Hana, Tereza, Jitka, Monika, Michaela</i>

Table 2 The most frequent names of all children born in Prague in 1968 and 1978 (Knappová 1989: 178 – 179)

In the years 1980 – 1989, the female given names *Tereza* (5), *Eva* (4), *Petra* (4), *Hana* (3) and *Kateřina* (3) and male names *Daniel*, *David* and *Martin* were the most common in my corpus.

7. After the Velvet Revolution 1989 – 2000

The “Velvet Revolution” in November 1989 meant a radical political and social change, brought the return of democracy and the possibility of free religion and its manifestations. Many people have only now learnt about their Jewish roots. This is also related to the phenomenon of the choice of a “religious name” in adulthood, described above. However, most of my respondents keep it as a spiritual name, which they use only within the community, but do not have it written in official documents, only in exceptional circumstances does the “religious name” completely

overshadow the official civil name.⁶ The main inspirations for the choice of these “religious names” were as follows: a) the Hebrew version of the “civil name” or at least some relation to the “civil name” (*Efrat* – an anagram of the civil name *František*); b) the meaning of the name (*Nili* – an acronym which stands for the Hebrew phrase “Netzah Yisrael Lo Yeshaker”, which translates as “the Eternal One of Israel will not lie”); c) the name after a deceased ancestor or in some relation to the name of the ancestor (*Gafna* – begins with G like the great-grandmother’s name *Gertrude*); d) the name after a biblical figure or a great person of Jewish history (*Chana Jocheved*).

Children born to Jewish families in the 1990s (41 are found in the bulletin) are given popular names such as *Barbora*, *Kateřina* or *Dominika*⁷ as well as traditional Hebrew names like *Benjamin*, *David* and *Samuel*, *Ester*, *Miriam* and *Sára/Sarah*. This is aided by the overall social climate, as even among the majority of society it has been possible to observe an increased interest in Judaism. In the area of proper names, “since the end of the 20th century we have witnessed a growing interest in biblical female names such as *Ester*, *Rebeka*, *Ráchel*, *Rút/Ruth*, *Miriam*, *Sarah*, which has also become a European fad. They are popular among devotees or admirers of Judaism, who further introduce names such as *Joshua*, *Sharon*, *Noemi*, *Abigail*, which are not yet common in our country. If some citizens of the Czech Republic convert to Judaism, they change their names to typically Jewish or New Hebrew forms (e.g. *Avraham*).” (Knappová 2017). Let me add that converts⁸ do not necessarily have to change their original name, as Knappová states, but more often the addition of a second “religious” Hebrew name (which is supposed to demonstrate belonging to the new faith) is then used in public, although it is not always officially written in the birth register. It usually comes in second place (e.g. *Karol Efraim*, *Jaroslav Achab*, *Štěpán Menaše*), less often it appears in the first place (e.g. *Šlomo Radomír*, *Ráchel Michaela*).

8. Current state 2000 – 2020

At the last census in 2011, 1,129 people declared that they belong to the Federation of Jewish Communities, and another 345 filled in “Judaism” as a religion (Český statistický úřad: on-line; cf. Munk 2014). However, the Federation states that about 3,000 members are registered in 10 Jewish communities in the Czech Republic, about 2,000 others in other Jewish associations, and estimates that 15 – 20,000 Jews live in the Czech Republic today, but most of them are not registered. The

⁶ One respondent born in 1987 states that his “religious name” has completely replaced his “civil name” that he no longer uses, he chose this “religious name” (*Zeev*) himself in adulthood.

⁷ Cf. frequency of names in the Czech Republic at that time: among living women born between 1991 and 2000, the most common given names were *Kateřina*, *Tereza*, *Lucie*, *Veronika*, *Michaela*, *Kristýna*, *Nikola*, *Barbora*, *Jana* and *Petra*. Among men, the most common names were *Jan*, *Tomáš*, *Martin*, *Jakub*, *Lukáš*, *Petr*, *David*, *Michal*, *Jiří* and *Ondřej* (Hájková 2004: 9).

⁸ Between 2006 and 2014, 51 people converted to Judaism in Prague (Nová 2016: 64).

Jewish religious community in Prague has the highest number of members – 1,516 (of which 692 were men and 824 women) in 2019, the average age for men is 51 years, for women 55 years (Výroční zpráva: on-line). The smallest community is the one in Ústí nad Labem, which had only 41 members in 2013 (Dvořáková 2015: 36).

The names of children born in the new millennium (39 names in the *Roš Chodeš* bulletin) are mostly Hebrew – *Eva* (2) and *Ester* (2), *David* (3) and *Samuel* (2) were the most common. Combinations of two names also appear (e.g., *Atara Rebeka*; *Elijah Shai*). Some names are unusual in the Czech Republic so in some cases it was necessary to provide an expert opinion in order to be able to write the name in the birth registers (see Štěpán 2018 for details). However, this does not mean that the names common in the majority of society and originating in other languages have completely disappeared. In the corpus we still find names such as *Anežka*, *Klára*, *Kristýna*, *Petr* or *Maxmilián*, but the inclination towards Hebrew names is clear (and is confirmed by my respondents as well), including the revival of some old, long-disused names such as *Adina* or *Maya*. Some names can also be found in spelling variants (e.g., *Elijáš* – *Elijah*).

Jews who came to the Czech Republic from abroad and settled here also become members of local Jewish religious communities. I have excluded them from my corpus of names, yet they influence the onymic system in our country by bringing names common in their country of origin, and some of them enter into marriage here. Foreign trips, visits to Israel, and cooperation with Jewish organizations around the world are quite common today. Of course, this also means that for many parents is an important factor in choosing “civil names” whether the name can work internationally. And naturally also the aesthetic evaluation of the names (“I liked it.”) or an agreement with the partner⁹ are other main factors.

The answers to my questionnaire also show that most of the children of my respondents received their “religious name” in addition to the “civil” one, which is probably related to the fact that these respondents described their relationship to religion as active, conservative, orthodox, Judaism is an important part of their identity, etc. However, the parents’ approach differs in whether they have the “religious name” registered officially as the second given name (8 respondents) or not (9), or whether the “civil name” also functions as the “religious” name (3). Parents tend to use traditional biblical names as “religious names”. The tradition of naming descendants after deceased ancestors (e.g., *Yehuda Leib* – “Leib after a grandfather”) also continues significantly. The etymological interpretation of the names and their “meaning” also plays an important role (e.g., *Cofia* “God is watching over me” – “because the daughter was born a year and a half after the husband survived a dangerous accident”). It was surprising to me that the belief in the magical and apotropaic power of the name (cf. Kaganoff 1996: 104–105) persists: “My son’s name was changed at my request in the days when he moved between life and death. His Hebrew name was changed by the addition of *Chajim* ‘life’. It is only from the

⁹ I can add that my respondents also stated that their partners are also of Jewish origin/religion in 17 cases out of 24, although they themselves were mostly born from mixed marriages.

moment when he fought to the death and Chajim won that his name is exactly the same as his grandfather's.”

9. Conclusion

Immediately after World War II, the surviving Jews collectively changed their German or typically Jewish names. The assimilation tendency from the pre-war period certainly continued. Those who stayed after several waves of Jewish emigration tried not to be conspicuous. This was reflected in the choice of names for their children – common and popular names among the majority of society. Many Jews did not begin to discover their roots until after the revolution of 1989. Democracy brings not only religious freedom but changes in Jewish anthroponymy as well. The revival of interest in Judaism is associated with the adoption of “religious names” in adulthood. Since the 1990s, we have seen a return to traditional Hebrew names and the popularity of two given names.

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Given Names of Czech and Moravian Jews in the Post-War Period

Žaneta Dvořáková

Abstract: The study is based on onymic material from birthday and death notices of members of Czech Jewish communities published regularly in the bulletin *Roš Chodeš* (646 names), and on a sociological survey organised on-line (26 respondents). The choice of civil names for Jewish children born in the post-war period was influenced by the political and social climate in communist Czechoslovakia. Names popular with the Czech majority were preferred because Czech Jews had a tendency to hide their identity. After the revolution of 1989 and the fall of communism, the situation changed. Since then, we can see the return of traditional Hebrew names given to (not only) Jewish children. Looking for Jewish roots and interest in Judaism, brings the choice of “religious” names in adulthood that could be used only for synagogue, or publicly as second given names.

Keywords: onomastic, given names, Jewish, Czechoslovakia, post-war

Žaneta Dvořáková, Ph.D.

Department of onomastics

Czech Academy of Sciences

Praha, Czech Republic

e-mail: z.dvorakova@ujc.cas.cz