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Jewish Surname Changes (Sampling of Prague Birth Registries 1867–1918)

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Abstract: The study focuses on changes of surnames among Czech and Moravian Jews. The changes are tracked until the start of the German occupation in 1939. The source material is comprised of Jewish birth registers from 1867 to 1918 from Prague, as this was the most populous Jewish community of the region. These records are part of fund No. 167 stored in the Czech National Archive. More than 17,000 Jewish children were born in Prague during this period and only 350 of them changed their surnames. Surnames were mostly changed by young men under the age of 30. A large wave of renaming occurred mainly at the beginning of the 1920s shortly after the formation of Czechoslovakia (1918). Renaming was part of the assimilation process but was not connected to conversion to Christianity. The main goal was the effort to remove names perceived as ethnically stereotypical, which could stigmatize their bearers (e.g., *Kohn*, *Löwy*, *Abeles*, *Taussig*, *Goldstein*, etc.). Characteristic of the new surnames was the effort to preserve the same initial letter from the original surname. The phenomenon is compared with the situation in neighboring countries (Germany, Hungary, and Poland).

Keywords: onomastics; surnames; Jews; Bohemia and Moravia

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1. Introduction

In my study, I will focus on surname changes among Jews born in the period following 1867, when Jews in the then Austro–Hungarian Empire were legally given equal rights with the rest of the population, to 1918, when the Austro–Hungarian Empire collapsed and independent Czechoslovakia was created. I will follow the changes of their surnames until the beginning of the German occupation and the establishment of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in 1939. The source for my research will be registers of Jews born in Prague in the years 1867–1918, as the largest Jewish community in the Lands of Bohemian Crown lived here.[1]

During my research, I will be interested in which surnames were most often changed, what the relationship was between the original name and the new one (e.g., phonetic similarity—*Kohn* > *Korn*) and whether the new surnames were Czech (*Löwy* > *Levý*) or German (*Löwy* > *Löhner*). I will also look for answers to the question of when the largest number of these family name changes took place and what the structure of the applicants was (age, gender). I will also note how frequent this phenomenon was in comparison with neighboring countries, e.g., Germany (Bering 1992), Hungary (Farkas 2009, 2012a), or Poland (Woźniak 2016).

I will focus only on the changes of surnames which the bearers decided and requested for various reasons. The change was thus a manifestation of their free will. Therefore, I will not take into account surname changes that occurred as a result of various other legal acts:

1. For women, adoption of the husband's surname upon marriage (according to § 92 of the General Civil Code of 1 June 1811);
2. Legitimization of illegitimate children who were originally registered with their mother's surname later receiving the surname of the father who claimed paternity

(according to § 164 of the General Civil Code of 1 June 1811),[2] or who were legitimized by the later marriage of their parents (according to § 161 of the General Civil Code of 1 June 1811)[3];

3. Change of surname as a result of adoption (according to § 182 of the General Civil Code of 1 June 1811)[4].

The decision to change the family name meant a conscious breaking of the line leading to one's parents and other ancestors. This can make genealogical research very problematic because it can make it difficult to find other family ties (e.g., siblings continue to have different surnames).[5]

2. Results

2.1. Legislation

Patent on Jewish names No. 698 was issued by emperor Joseph II. on 23 July 1787. It ordered not only the obligation to accept hereditary surnames, but also German first names. These hereditary surnames should then remain unchanged. If someone arbitrarily changed the name once adopted, they risked a fine of 50 guilders, or even expulsion from the Empire (§ 7 of this patent). Official changes of surnames were only permitted by Decree of the Court Office No. 16255 of 5 June 1826, but only in the case of conversion to Christianity or promotion to nobility, in other cases the emperor himself decided on them and permission to change had the character of imperial grace (Žáček 1936, p. 329). In 1866, the authority to permit a name change was transferred to the regional political authorities, based on the Order of the Imperial–Royal Ministry of State No. 1452 of 18 March 1866 (Pražák 1906, p. 44), In our case, then, the decision on changes of personal names was made by the Governorship (Statthalterei) in Prague.[6]

The mentioned conditions established by the Decree of the Court Office from 1826 were also valid during the period of the Czechoslovak Republic and were definitively abolished only in 1950.

The situation was more complicated if someone wanted to change their first name. As stated by J. Pražák (1906, p. 44): "We do not have an explicit prescription, from which practice sometimes infers that anyone can change this name at will, while others consider any change of first name to be absolutely impossible; the third intermediate point of view points to the fact that it is appropriate to use in that case what is stipulated in the case of the change of surname, so that such a change is not impossible, but it can only happen with the permission of the provincial government". In practice, some Jews used a first name other than the one under which they were registered in the birth register, without officially requesting such a change. However, these officially unauthorized and unregistered name changes today greatly complicate the identification of individual persons in archival sources (see Matušíková 2015, p. 281).

From the point of view of the legal reasons described above, I could divide the examined surname changes as follows:

- Conversion to Christianity: Conversion to Christianity is explicitly mentioned in the name change notes only in seven cases. Therefore, name changes were probably not primarily connected with leaving the Jewish religion.[7] In five cases, the recorded changes concerned only the surname, e.g., *Karl Muneles* (* 1873) became *Munory* in 1902 (Birth Register 1872, 1873, inv. No. 2505, scan 42, entry 206). In two cases, first names were also affected, e.g., *Adolf Töpletz* (* 1884) completely changed his first name and surname and became *Josef František Urbánek* in 1903 (Birth Register 1884, inv. No. 2527, scan 5, entry 27).
- Elevation to nobility: Jews who acquired a noble title and surname during the Austro–Hungarian period also form a marginal group of those who changed their family name. It is significant, however, that after the formation of Czechoslovakia they were forced to change their surnames again, as noble titles were abolished by Act No. 61/1918 of 10 December 1918. They chose different strategies, e.g., *Emanuel Grab* (* 1868)

received the noble surname *Grab von Hermannswörth* in 1915, which he changed to *Grab-Hermannswörth* in 1922 (Birth Register 1863–1871, inv. No. 2503, scan 144, entry 187). *Eduard Porges* had used the name *Porges knight von Portheim* since 1890, as we read in the birth records of his children, and in 1920, the family changed it to *Portheim* (Birth Register 1863–1871, inv. no. 2503, scan 148, entry 24; Birth Register 1863–1871, inv. No. 2503, scan 211, entry 35).

- Others: For the majority of surname changes, no reason was given in the registers, so I assume that in these cases it was not a matter of conversion or promotion to nobility. Unfortunately, we do not have the original requests, nor the decisions, from which it would be possible to find out more detailed information about the individual changes and their causes, we only see their results in the registers.

2.2. Age

In the corpus, changes of surnames of children and adults must be distinguished. The change of surname was applied to the husband and wife and automatically to all their (minor) children. E.g., the change of surname from *Löwy* to *Lindt* in 1915 concerned five children registered in the Prague Jewish registers; the oldest, Ella, was 19 years old (Birth Register 1896, inv. No. 2552, scan 15, entry 154) and the youngest, Maria, was 8 (Birth Register 1907, inv. No. 2574, scan 5, entry 30). But, as we can see in the example of the *Amschelberg* family (and many others), in order to preserve the same family name, three adult siblings changed their surname to *Andres* in 1921. Changing the surname could thus be both an individual decision and a family strategy.

Figure 1 shows that most surname changes took place among men between the ages of 22 and 29, with a peak at the age of 25, i.e., the period when they finished their education, were looking for employment on the labor market and were starting to build a career and have their own family.[8]

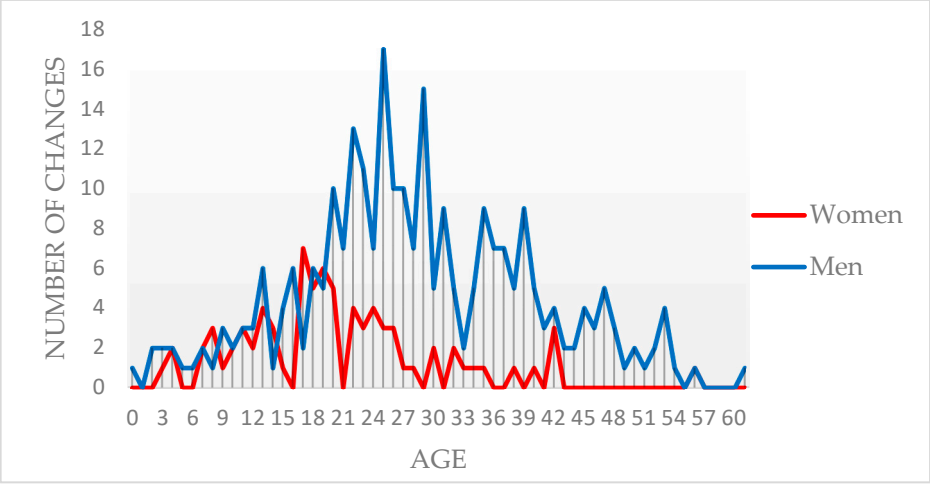

Figure 1. Age at surname change.

The oldest person who changed his surname before World War II was 61 years old. It was *David Kohn* (* 1876), who changed his name to *Kalina* in 1937 (Birth Register 1876, inv. No. 2511, scan 11, entry 108) together with his sons *Karl* (* 1905) and *Hans* (* 1908) (Birth Register 1905, inv. No. 2569, scan 11, entry 84; Birth Register 1908, inv. No. 2575, scan 6, entry 44). The youngest to be renamed was one-month-old *Ludwig* (* 1907), whose family changed their surname *Itzeles* to *Itzner* (Birth Register 1907, inv. No. 2573, scan 9, entry 50).

As T. Farkas (2012a, p. 5) states, in Hungary, it was mainly Jews living in cities, with higher education, who came from a Hungarian language environment and who mostly subscribed to Reform Judaism, who chose a different name. Name changes were therefore not only associated with assimilation, but also with secularization. Even in the Lands of Bohemian Crown, surname changes at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th

century are mostly encountered in the middle and upper social strata. Many Jews, however, retained their first and last names even after entering high offices (Matušíková 2015, p. 281).

2.3. Number of Changes

In my corpus, I collected 344 changes of surnames only, 5 changes of first names only, and 6 changes of both surname and first name. There are significantly fewer surname changes made by women (79), and they mainly occurred within the framework of surname changes of the whole family. It was probably due to the social status of women at the time and the fact that it was mandatory for women to take their husband's surname after marriage. Men changed their surnames in 271 cases (in 6 cases together with first name). See Figure 2.

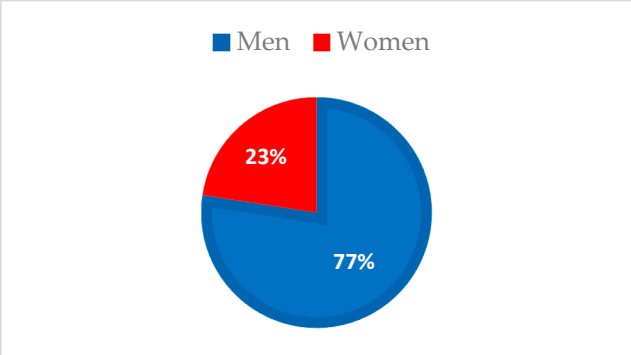

Figure 2. Surname changes by gender.

There are very rare cases when one person changed his name several times in his life, e.g., *Egon Max Kohn* (* 1899) first changed his surname to *Komba* (28 February 1926) and three months later (8 May 1926) to *Kolm* (Birth Register 1899, inv. No. 2557, scan 7, entry 54).

In Prague, 8353 Jewish girls and 8,802 Jewish boys were born in the monitored period 1867–1918, i.e., a total of 17,155 children across 51 years. By 1939, only 350 of them had changed their surname, accounting for 2% of the total. I can therefore state that surname changes among Czech Jews (according to this Prague survey) never reached the same amounts as, for example, among Hungarian Jews, where, according to estimates, every 8th–12th Jew changed his name (Farkas 2009, p. 379; 2012a, p. 8).[9]

2.4. Reaction to Changes

With the birth of nationalism, names became ethnic symbols, referring to the origins of their bearers, and names considered Jewish could therefore stigmatize their bearers.[10] At the turn of the 19th century, criticism of Jews changing their names abounded in Czech press. Reports about these changes were accompanied by antisemitic comments, with journalists assuming that Jews did so because they were ashamed of their names[11] or that they did so only to hide their origins and improve their social status (for details see Dvořáková Forthcoming). Hungarian Jews were the main target of Czech newspapers claiming, for example—ironically—that "the more Hungarian a name from this [i.e., financial and business] class sounds, the safer is the assumption of Jewish origin" (Moravská orlice 1907, p. 1).

On the other hand, Czech Jews striving for assimilation, united in the Association of Czech Academicians Jews, evaluated the changes in Hungary unequivocally positively, as can be seen, for example, from G. N. Mayerhoffer's (Mayerhoffer 1895–1896, p. 103) article in Kalendář česko-židovský, published by the association: "Patriotism cannot be proven by words, it is proven by actions. Under the current conditions, Hungarian Jews testify to their love for their country by supporting all national purposes. They oppose all non-Hungarian nationalities—they have become Hungarians completely. [. . .] The fever of Magyarization

threw itself upon all foreign names; even those Jews did not miss, and there is not a day that a Hungarian Jew does not cast off the last mark that distinguishes him from his new nation—his German name—and exchange it for a Hungarian one".[12]

As stated by R. Bondyová (2006, p. 10): "The history of Jewish names in Bohemia and Moravia, as well as of their bearers, moves between two opposing poles: between the effort to cling to the past and the effort to break free from it, between the effort to maintain uniqueness of the Jewish existence and the effort to assimilate, between the desire to preserve the heritage of the fathers forever and the desire to get rid of it as soon as possible. Jewish names, like their bearers, are in constant flux".

2.5. Changes of Surnames over Time

Among Jewish children born in the years 1867–1918, I noted the first change of surname in 1884. It was the thirteen-year-old *Viktor Löwy* (* 1871), whose family changed their surname to *Löhner* (Birth Register 1863–1871, inv. No. 2503, scan 225, entry 151). The last pre-war changes are among the most tragic, as I see in them the last desperate attempt to escape Nazi persecution. Later, changes should no longer have been possible, as the Reich Law on the Change of Surnames and First Names (Gesetz über die Änderung von Familiennamen und Vornamen) came into force on 1 February 1940. Nevertheless, J. Matúšová (2015, p. 44) states that several cases of changes of typical Jewish surnames from the period of the World War II are documented in the records of the Prague municipality, and she expresses the assumption that these changes had to be very expensive (e.g., *Israel* > *Hohlfeld*, *Kohn* > *Kohoutek*/*Kolm*/*Kovář*/*Kroll*, *Kokštein* > *Kobal*, *Löwy* > *Lexa*, *Rosenbaum* > *Ulbric*, *Siebeschein* > *Knops*). In the Prague birth registers, however, the last recorded pre-war changes date from September 1938 and then continue from 1945.

As stated by J. Vobecká (2007, p. 90): "Between the years 1890 and 1900, there was a large shift of the Jewish population from German to Czech. While in 1890 about 74% of Prague's Jews (12,588 persons, data for Prague I–VII) claimed to speak German, in 1900 it was only 45% (8230 persons). The largest share of this decline was the poorer strata of Jewry". Later during the Czechoslovak republic, a high percentage of the Jewish population was bilingual (Čapková 2005, p. 48). The gradual leaning towards the Czech language was also evident in the changes of surnames. While during the Austro–Hungarian period the change of Jewish surnames to German or German-sounding ones prevailed (e.g., *Baum* > *Braun*, *Epstein* > *Elmhornst*, *Stösseles* > *Stettner*, etc.), after the formation of Czechoslovakia in 1918, the number of Czech surnames increased (e.g., *Katz* > *Kalina*, *Klauders* > *Kopecký*, *Meisterles* > *Matějka*, etc.), as well as requests for Czech form of surnames previously written in German spelling (e.g., *Pollaczek* > *Poláček*, *Wotitzky* > *Votický*, etc.).

Figure 3 shows the number of changes in individual years. However, the presented data must be interpreted with caution. I count each surname change separately, i.e., each renamed individual separately; e.g., in 1911, we can see in the graph a supposed increase in the number of changes, but this is only due to the fact that several larger families were renamed, e.g., *Metzeles* > *Mertens* (six people). Similarly, a year later the family *Nefeles* > *Nef* (four persons) changed their surname; in 1915 the family *Löwy* > *Lindt* (five persons) and *Bondy* > *Bondrop* (four persons), etc., affected the total number.

The increase in the number of changes in connection with the increase in anti-Semitism at the very turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, which I expected, and which occurred, for example, in Prussia, was not confirmed in my corpora (cf. Bering 1992).[13]

The real increase in the number of changes occurred after the formation of independent Czechoslovakia (1918), especially in its first years, with a peak in 1920, when 40 people changed their surnames. This can be attributed to a certain contemporary enthusiasm for the young republic, an attempt to express Czech patriotism by choosing a Czech surname, but perhaps the simplification of the administrative processing of applications in the new state could also have played a role.

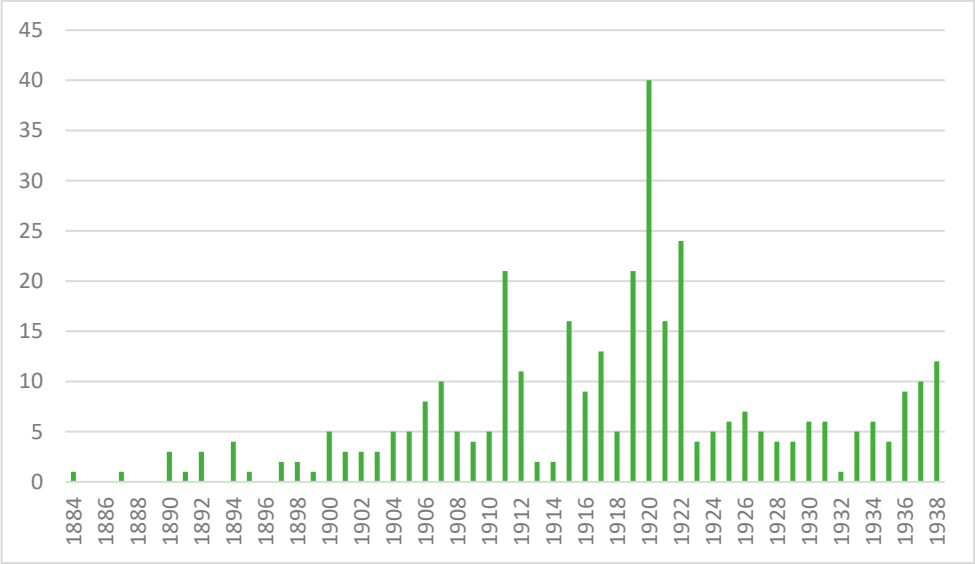

Figure 3. Surname changes in individual years.

2.6. Surnames Old and New

Table 1 shows the surnames that were most frequently changed.

Table 1. The most frequently changed surnames.

Original Surname	Number of Changes	New Surname
Kohn	62	*Bán, Hahn, Horvath, Kalina, Kant, Karbach, Karlík, Keller, Kemp, Kesler, Kienzl, Klemens, Klement, Klemm, Kliment, Kluge, Kodet, Kohler, Kolar, Kolbeck, Kolberg, Kolbrych, Komba, Konrad, Korda, Korff, Korn, Kornegger, Körner, Korte, Kostina, Kovář, Kristian, Kühns, Marinek*
Löwy	26	*Lanner, Lauda, Lendvort* (?), *Lenhart, Lenk, Lesný, Levý, Lindt, Lingg, Löhner, Lohsing, Lorenz, Loskot*
Karpeles	19	*Käbler, Karst, Karel, Karlen, Kavan, Kestner, Kinzel, Klimeš, Köhler, Kostner, Krüger*
Abeles	15	*Albert, Albrecht, Anders, Angert, Arens, Arnold, Auer, Havelna*
Pereles	15	*Palócz, Pelear, Perger, Perner, Perten, Petera, Pretori, Teudt*
Jeiteles	12	*Jäger, Jessler, Jeithner, Jettmar, Jetel, Junk, Imhofer, Föger*
Nefeles	9	*Nef, Neruda, Nessler*
Pollak	9	*Pohnert, Polák, Pollmer*
Metzeles	8	*Meindl, Mertens, Metzl*
Taussig	6	*Tausil, Tasold, Torn*

It is not surprising that the first two places are occupied by the surnames *Kohn* and *Löwy* (i.e., forms of Hebrew *Cohen* and *Levi*), which are tied primarily to the Jewish community. The same happened in Germany (Bering 1992, p. 154) and in Hungary (Farkas 2012a, p. 2). A potential reason for the high number of changes of these names could not be only their "Jewishness" but also their frequency among the Jewish population. As A. Volfová (1994, pp. 48–49) calculated in her diploma thesis, the 20 most common surnames among Jews in

Prague between 1900 and 1945 were *Kohn*, *Pick*, *Pollak*, *Kraus*, *Fischer*, *Taussig*, *Stein*, *Steiner*, *Neumann*, *Heller*, *Popper*, *Freund*, *Klein*, *Fuchs*, *Löwy*, *Adler*, *Lederer*, *Bondy*, *Katz*, and *Fischl*.

Patronymic and matronymic surnames with the ending *-es* were also clearly felt to have a strong ethnic character because they were derived from Hebrew and Yiddish personal names that did not occur among the non-Jewish population (cf. Bondyová 2006, p. 44). In addition to the most frequently changed surnames in the Table 1, I can also list others formed in this way from my corpus, e.g., *Itzeles*, *Jampehles*, *Kindeles*, *Paschales*, *Schneles*, *Teveles*, etc. Many of them were documented in Prague as early as in the 17th century (see Beider 1995, pp. 18–29).

In Czech society, surnames formed from toponyms were considered by many to be typically Jewish, as indeed they were common among Jews here (cf. Beneš 1978, p. 17). In the corpus, we can see changes of surnames based on the names of cities (e.g., *Eger*, *Jerusalem*, *Wiener*) and names of countries and regions (e.g., *Österreicher* 'Austrian', *Pollak* 'Pole', *Schlesinger* 'Silesian').[14]

Another type of surname that was frequently changed was German compound surnames, such as *Goldstein*, *Kräuterblüth*, *Lichtenstern*, *Lilienfeld*, *Rosenberg*, *Weissenstein*, etc.[15]

Perhaps with the exception of the surname *Kuh* (from the German Kuh 'cow'), which was changed to *Kuhn*, I did not find any changes in the Prague registers due to the semantic content and the possible derogatory nature of the name (cf. Woźniak 2016, p. 128). However, surnames that referred to various Jewish realities were removed, e.g., *Koscherak* (> *Kosek*), *Sabath* (> *Sand*), etc.

As can be seen from Table 1, most new surnames have the same first letter as the original surname in order to preserve the monogram. This happens both with new Czech surnames (e.g., *Bondy* > *Borský*, *Katz* > *Kýval*, *Klarfeld* > *Kalina*) and German ones (e.g., *Bondy* > *Burghardt*, *Goldstein* > *Göllner*, *Rind* > *Rieder*). The same tendency was noted by K. Forgács (1990, p. 325) on the material of Hungarian Jewish changes; in her survey, this occurred in 66.92% of cases. Sometimes, Jews also tried to preserve a larger part of the original surname, especially the first syllable (e.g., *Muneles* > *Munory*, *Taubeles* > *Taubner*). Some new surnames were created directly by shortening the original ones (e.g., *Bindeles* > *Bind*, *Mameles* > *Mamel*, *Suchařipa* > *Suchý*) or by changing them (e.g., *Hock* > *Hauck*, *Pick* > *Pik*). I also observe the striving for phonetic similarity (e.g., *Arnstein* > *Arnošt*, *Damenstein* > *Daneš*).

There were numerous spelling changes in my corpora. There was a "bohemisation" of German surnames (e.g., *Geszlieder* > *Gešlídr*), but mainly surnames of Czech origin, which were written in the German spelling in the past, were newly written correctly in Czech (e.g., *Biehal* > *Běhal*, *Hatschek* > *Háček*, *Natscheradetz* > *Načeradec*).

A partial Czech translation based on the meaning of the German surname *Bergstein* as *Horský* ("of a mountain") was completely unique.

The last group consists of changes where the old and new surnames are nothing alike and seemingly unrelated. Personal reasons must be sought behind the choice of such surnames, e.g., family ties, aesthetic sense, etc. This includes both newly Czech surnames (e.g., *Freund* > *Slavník*, *Töpletz* > *Urbánek*, *Winternitz* > *Pokorný*) and German (e.g., *Goldstein* > *Ditmar*, *Patzan* > *Werther*, *Weissenstein* > *Frankl*).

3. Materials and Methods

Fund No. 167, entitled Registers of Jewish Religious Communities in Czech Regions, is stored in the Czech National Archive. Jewish registers from the years 1784–1949 were digitized in 2011 and were first available on the website www.badatelna.eu; now, they are available via the archive application VadeMeCum (https://vademecum.nacr.cz, accessed on 1 May 2023).

Records were compulsorily kept in German during the Austro–Hungarian period. Later, records and notes were written mainly in Czech. The structure of entries in the registers was fixed by preprinted columns. The last column was set aside for miscellaneous notes. It contains records of deaths (including declarations of deaths after World War

II), legitimization of illegitimate children, corrections of errors in records, information on leaving the Jewish faith and, finally, notices of name changes. These notes had an established form, they always contained the date of the change, a reference to the decision number given by the competent authority in this matter, followed by the date of entry, name of the registrar, and a stamp. The notes were written by hand, and it must be said that, in some cases, very illegible handwriting.

Figure 4 shows the number of births of girls and boys registered in the Jewish registers in Prague in the monitored period 1867–1918. In total, there were 8353 girls and 8802 boys.

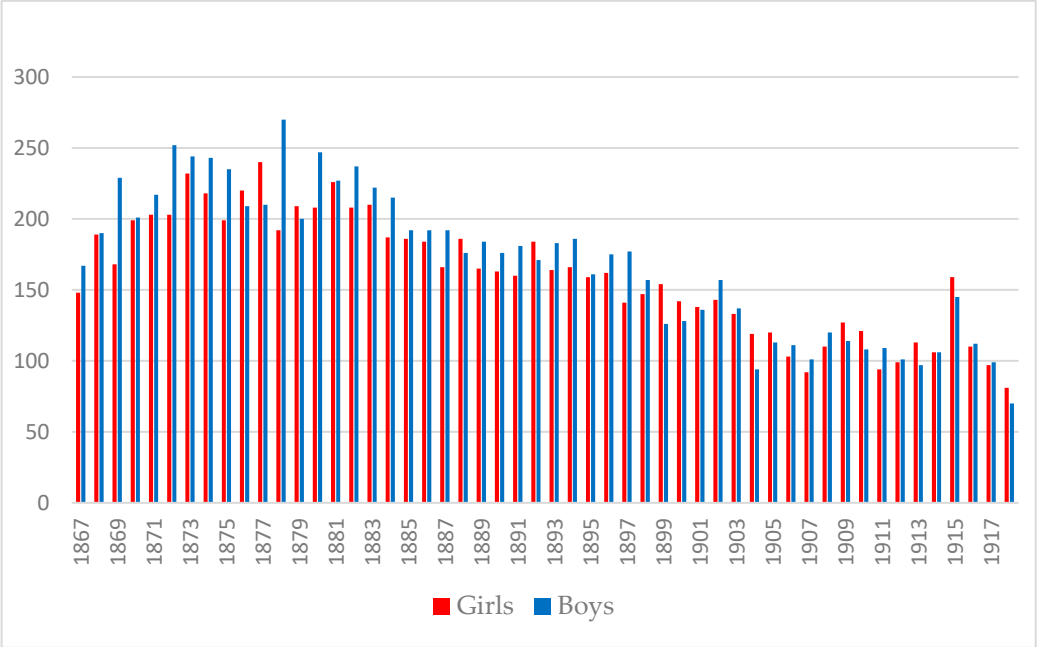

Figure 4. Numbers of Jewish girls and boys born in Prague (1867–1918).

4. Conclusions

More than 17,000 children born during the period of Austro–Hungarian Empire, i.e., between 1867 and 1918, are recorded in the Prague Jewish registers. According to the notes in these registers, only 350 of them changed their surname before the proclamation of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in 1939. Surname changes were not as widespread a phenomenon here as they were in Hungary, but they nevertheless became the target of criticism in the Czech press.

Surnames were mostly changed by young men under the age of 30. A large wave of renaming occurred mainly at the beginning of the 1920s shortly after the formation of Czechoslovakia (1918). Just before the outbreak of the World War II, changing of one's surname was probably an attempt to avoid Nazi racial persecution (e.g., *Josef Pick* > *Pik* on 14 September 1938).

In general, renaming was part of the assimilation process, but was not connected to conversion to Christianity. The main goal was the effort to remove names perceived as ethnically stereotypical, which could stigmatize their bearers. These were mainly surnames typically linked to the Jewish community (e.g., *Kohn*, *Löwy*), surnames formed by the characteristic ending *-es* (e.g., *Abeles*, *Karpeles*), and surnames with a high frequency of occurrence among Czech Jews. Compound German surnames (e.g., *Goldreich*, *Rozenzweig*) and names derived from toponyms (e.g., *Taussig* derived from the name of the city called Tausk in Yiddish, Domažlice in Czech) or names of countries and regions (e.g., *Polák* from Poland) were also removed. The newly chosen surnames were mainly German during the Austro–Hungarian period, and increasingly Czech after the formation of Czechoslovakia. At the same time, the changes also included the spelling of surnames (e.g., *Raubitschek* > *Roubíček*).

Characteristic of the new surnames was the effort to preserve the same initial letter from the original surname.

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Data Availability Statement: All birth records are available in the Czech National Archive in fund No. 167 called "Registers of Jewish Religious Communities in Czech Regions" ("Matriky židovských náboženských obcí v českých krajích"), on-line: https://vademecum.nacr.cz, accessed on 1 May 2023.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Notes

1 In the second half of the 19th century, there was a large migration of Jews from the countryside to larger industrial cities. While in 1869 there were 15,000 Jews living in wider Prague (i.e., 16.9% of the total Jewish population in Bohemia), in 1900 there were already 27,000 (i.e., 29%) and in 1921 almost 32,000 (i.e., 39.8%). Data from 1921 also show that 60% of Prague's Jews were born outside the capital (Kieval 2011, p. 26). "While approximately 30,000 people of the Jewish faith lived in Prague at the beginning of the First Republic [i.e., 1918–1938], there were 200,000 in Vienna, 215,000 in Berlin and 350,000 in Warsaw. Although Prague thus became the natural center of Jewish life in the Czech lands, its Jewish community was numerically insignificant compared to other capital cities". (Čapková 2005, p. 24).

2 E.g., *Joachim Grünfeld* claimed to be the father of *Karolina Porgesová* (* 1870), and the girl was therefore renamed *Grünfeldová* in 1873 (Birth Register 1858–1869, inv. No. 2501, scan 197, entry 83).

3 E.g., in 1901, *Jindřich Kantor* (* 1884) was legitimized by his parents' marriage, and his name was therefore changed to *Bondy* after his father (Birth Register 1884, inv. No. 2527, scan 8, entry 72).

4 E.g., *Alfred Tänzerles* (*1867) and *Isidor Tänzerles* (* 1870) were adopted by *Josef Welisch*, and therefore they were renamed *Welisch* in 1897 (Birth Register 1863–1871, inv. No. 2503, scan 107, entry 125). On the other hand, *Carl Donat* (* 1869) adopted by *Ludwig Moskovits* was given the double surname *Donat-Moskovits* in 1912 (Birth Register 1863–1871, inv. No. 2503, scan 174, entry 201).

5 E.g., *Jakob Sabath* and *Rosa neé Löblová* had two sons. *Walter* (* 1896) kept the surname *Sabath* (Birth Register 1896, inv. No. 2551, scan 14, entry 124), while his brother *Alfred* (* 1894) changed his surname on *Sandt* in 1920 (Birth Register N 1894, inv. No. 2547, scan 18, entry 185).

6 By comparison, Jews in Prussia had to adopt names under the assimilation edict in 1812. According to the 1816 ban, they were not allowed to change them. From 1822 the name change had the status of royal grace (Bering 1992, p. 80). After 1867, when the minister of the interior gained oversight of the name change agenda, various obstacles were placed by the authorities to Jews requesting a name change. At that time the debate about names also shifted from the opposition of Jewish vs. Christian names to national Jewish vs. German names. As an extreme case, D. Bering cites the *Moses* brothers, who took 28 years and had to submit 10 applications before their surname changed to *Moser* (Bering 1992, p. 183). Cf. also legal regulations in Hungary described by T. Farkas (2012b) and an overview of interwar legislation on name change in Poland by E. Woźniak (2016).

7 Compare also the situation in post-war New York, which was analysed by K. Fermaglich. She also came to the conclusion that "although some Jews may have chosen to change their names as a signal of alienation or as part of a substantial separation from the Jewish community, evidence suggests that the number of name changers seeking to abandon the Jewish community altogether were actually quite small. For the large majority of Jews who sought new names, name changing did not entail flight from the Jewish community at all. It was instead an open secret within the community, a way of hiding in plain sight" (Fermaglich 2018, p. 86).

8 It is interesting that the situation in Poland in the 1920s was completely different, according to the survey conducted by E. Woźniak (2016, pp. 131–32). According to her findings, the majority of renamed Jews were those in their forties and fifties (57%). These men were mainly merchants and businessmen, officials, doctors, artists, teachers, and students.

9 Even in the Prague registries, there are rare changes of surnames to Hungarian ones (e.g., *Gerstl* > *Geszti*, *Kohn* > *Horváth*, *Perelis* > *Palócz*, *Schlesinger* > *Szabo*). Apparently, these were Jews who settled in Hungary. I also find rare changes to Polish (*Perlsee* > *Sowinski*) and Slovenian (*Schwarz* > *Sovič*) surnames.

10 For names as ethnic symbols see T. Farkas (2012a, p. 2), for the term ethnic epithets see I. L. Allen (1983).

11 See, e.g., the report about brothers *Löwy* from Prague asking for a new surname *Lechner* published in newspaper Katolické listy (1901, p. 4).

12 Compare similar opinion in Poland described by J. B. Walkowiak (2016, p. 226): "Józef Kirschrot (1842–1906), a Polish lawyer, journalist and social activist of Jewish descent, who was an ardent advocate of the assimilation of Jews in Poland, suggested in

1882 in Kurier Warszawski that Polish Jews should attach Polish surnames to their German-sounding surnames in order to blend into the society more effectively. He set the example and in 1882 assumed the name Kirszrot-Prawnicki".

[13] As D. Bering states, the real number of requests to change one's name in Prussia never reached the level described by the anti-Semitic press at the time, which called for the preservation of German names; on the contrary, it was relatively low in comparison to the total number of requests and to the size of the Jewish population in Prussia. Cf., e.g., the table of requests from the years 1900–1913 presented by D. Bering (1992, p. 124).

[14] However, I also find rare changes that go against this tendency (e.g., *Osterreicher* > *Praga*, *Popper* > *Pražák*, *Rozenzweig* > *Rovenský*, *Ziegler* > *Milotický*). All of these new surnames are motivated by the names of Czech cities (Praha, Rovensko, Milotice), so their bearers could have been motivated by some relation to these places.

[15] In this respect, one exchange of a Jewish surname for another seems paradoxical: *Regina Kleinhändlerová* (* 1916) changed her name to *Rosenfeldová* in 1935 (Birth Register 1916, inv. No. 2592, scan 9, entry 41).

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