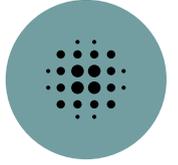


ONE BIOGRAPHY, MULTIPLE PLACES: THE LIFE AND WORK OF SHMUEL HUGO BERGMANN BETWEEN PRAGUE AND JERUSALEM (1883–1975)



PANEL 2

Bergmann and Czech Lands



BLANKA SOUKUPOVÁ

The Jewish National Movement in the Czech Lands, the National Jewish Council, and Hugo Bergmann

The First Czechoslovak Republic, which arose from the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, is historically considered the most liberal state in terms of its treatment of the Jewish population. The republic also became a democratic state with numerous and highly structured Jewish activities. Of course, in the exceptionally complicated multi-ethnic landscape of Central Europe, where the Jews found themselves amid the Czechoslovak/German and Slovak/Hungarian conflicts, the Jewish national movement (Zionism) also thrived along with its most important institution: the National Jewish Council. Among the most notable figures of the national Jewish (Zionist) movement was university librarian Hugo Bergmann, who even represented Czechoslovak Jews at the peace conference in Versailles. The aim of the study is to analyze the relationship of Czechoslovak Zionists to the newly founded republic, to their Judaism, and to the idea of a Jewish state against a backdrop of the turbulent post-war years. Special attention is devoted to Hugo Bergmann, who helped shape Jewish national identity both before and after the First World War. Bergmann's contribution to Czech and Czechoslovak Zionism is compared with the contributions of other major figures of the Zionist movement (Singer, Brod, Weltsch, etc.). With this comparison in mind, the text then attempts to determine and clarify the particularities of the Czechoslovak Zionist movement (an emphasis on the diversity and equality of all nations, an obsessively correct relationship to Czechoslovak language policy, exceptional loyalty to Czechoslovak state interests culminating in the 1930s, the construction of Czechoslovak Zionist history, the overlapping of Jewish national and feminist movements, and the problematic relationship to orthodox Judaism. In an atmosphere of certain distrust of the State of Israel and the diaspora, the understanding of Europe by the Czechoslovak Zionist movement provides an interesting perspective.

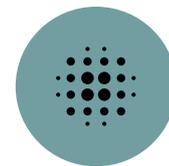


ZBYNĚK TARANT

From Lanškroun to the World Stage - Life and Work of Leo Hermann

The small town of Landskron (Lanškroun) at the borders between Bohemia and Moravia became the birthplace of Leo Hermann - an important Zionist activist, chairman of the Bar Kochba student club, member of the Czechoslovak delegation to Versailles, a close associate of Hugo Hermann, member of the Brit Shalom, co-founder and lifelong chairman of Keren HaYesod, producer of the first Zionist sound film and active rescuer of Czechoslovak Jews after Munich agreement.

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Bergmann and Czech Lands

Despite the importance of this personality, who belonged to the German-Jewish circle around Max Brod and Hugo Bergmann, different portions of his life story are known in different parts of the world. The Czechs remember Hermann's cooperation with the Czechoslovak government in exile, while the Israelis know him most for his work in Keren HaYesod. Intended as an invitation to the audience to share their insight, experience, and research tips at the beginning of a new research project, my presentation aims to provide an overview of Hermann's life and work, hopefully merging the Czech and Israeli narratives about Hermann's life into one. Special attention will be given to Hermann's rescue efforts and the Czechoslovak version of the Ha'avara agreement.