

7. RESUMÉ

The thesis is focused on the life of Jewish community in Prague, on the background of post-Holocaust and post-communist Europe.

In the first part, the reader is introduced into the historical and sociological views on Jewish identity, with an emphasis on Central Europe and Prague in particular.

The main part of the thesis is divided in separate chapters, each dedicated to one of the contemporary Jewish congregations in Prague. A special attention is given to the Jewish Community of Prague (Kehila Prag, or ŽOP). The other congregations analyzed in the thesis are Chabad Prague (part of Hasidic movement Chabad Lubavitch), Bejt Simcha and Jewish Liberal Union (both liberal/progressive), Bejt Praha and Masorti Prague (both conservative).

Since the current situation of the communities has been poorly covered in relevant literature, our main sources of knowledge have been the internet pages of individual congregations, legal documents (statutes, articles of association), and periodicals issued by some of the communities.

The question “Who is a Jew” is central in searching for the Jewish identities. The answers vary across the congregations (according to their nature – orthodox, conservative, liberal), with ŽOP being the most problematic. The orthodox Kehila Prag has founded its membership policies on Halacha rules, meaning that persons with Jewish father (but not mother) must convert to Judaism if they want to be members of ŽOP. This strict rule has in fact led to the foundation of liberal Bejt Simcha by the former members of ŽOP. Chabad Prague is a special case because it is not based on membership at all. Their activities are open to general public.

The thesis has shown that 1) Prague Jewish community as a whole is pluralist in opinions and all main movements of Judaism are represented; 2) a Jewish identity that would embrace all Prague congregations cannot be defined since the understanding and manifestations of Jewish identity depends on each individual member of the community. Moreover, some individuals of Jewish origin are members of more than one congregation (one of them typically being ŽOP), and others are not members of any formal structure.