

THE JOURNAL *JUDAICA BOHEMIAE*, THE „PRAGUE  
SPRING“ AND THE RENEWAL OF JEWISH HISTORICAL  
RESEARCH IN POST WWII CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Commemorating the Historian Jan Heřman (1933-1986)

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The article examines the origins of the multilingual journal of Jewish history *Judaica Bohemiae*, on the eve of the so-called *Prague Spring* of the mid-1960s. The background for this examination is the life work of its founder, the young Czech-Jewish historian Jan Heřman, at the Jewish museum in Prague and his tragic death. Founding and editing the *Judaica Bohemiae* was inseparably intertwined with the well-researched short-lived, fascinating historical episode of the *Prague Spring* and the outburst of the long suppressed freedom of intellectual and cultural creativity in the Czech society in the mid 1960s. Less known, and hitherto almost unresearched, is the parallel short-lived renaissance of Jewish intellectual and cultural creativity and the re-awakening of Jewish self-perception and communal life. One of the aftermaths of the suppression of the *Prague Spring* was that the Jewish Museum of Prague, which during the Nazi-period was designated a museum of the “extinguished Jewish race,” was intended to serve the official campaign of Communist ideology to promote atheism.