



[Also used cemetery at [Stenovice](#)] cemetery [photo](#) [February 2009]

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A city in western Bohemia and capital of the [Plzeň Region](#) and the fourth most populous city in the Czech Republic about 90 km west of Prague at the confluence of four rivers (Radbuza, Mže, Úhlava, and Úslava) which form the Berounka River. Plzeň is also the seat of the Municipality with Extended Competence and Municipality with Commissioned Local Authority. The city is known worldwide for Pilsener beer. town

[images](#)

[February 2009]

Alternate names: **Plzeň** [Cz], **Pilsen** [Ger], **Pilzno** [Pol]. [49°45' N, 13°22' E](#) , 54 miles WSW of Praha (Prague), in W Bohemia. Fourth-largest city in the Czech Republic.

Jewish presence in the 1300s, was one of the earliest Jewish communities in Bohemia. By 1900, the Jewish community in Plzen was one of the five largest in Bohemia.

3,517 was the 1910 Jewish population.

After the German occupation in March 1939, persecution of Jews began culminating in 1942 when over 2,000 persons were deported to Nazi extermination camps. After the war, the community reconstituted with about 300 survivors. [February 2009]

[Source](#)

[February 2009]

By some reports, the large Moorish style [synagogue](#) was built in 1893 from a design by Jacob Gartner, who also designed the Olomouc synagogue. Another attributes it to a Viennese architect named Fleisher, who originally made a design with granite buttresses and twin 65-meter towers for which the cornerstone was laid on 2 December 1888.

City councillors rejected the plan with "tower envy" (would compete with nearby Cathedral of St. Bartholomew). Emmanuel Klotz's a new design in 1890 retaining the original ground plan and cornerstone, but lowering the towers by 20m and creating the distinctive Romantic and neo-Renaissance styles covered with Oriental decorations and a giant Mogen David. The design was approved; and master builder Rudolf Štech completed work in 1893 for 162,138 guilders when the Jewish community in Plzeň numbered about 2,000. The mixture of styles; from the onion domes of a Russian orthodox church, to the Islamic style ceiling, to the distinctly Indian looking

Aron kodesh is this the second largest

synagogue in Europe.

Nazi gave up their plan to destroy the synagogue requiring the destruction of an entire city block.

The Jewish community that retook possession at the end of WWII of the synagogue that had been decimated by the

Holocaust

held the last regular service in 1973 when the synagogue was closed and allowed to fall into disrepair under communist rule.

Repairs to the exterior of this buildings implemented in 1996-97 with support from the state, the city of Pilsen and an ad hoc foundation established by the local Jewish community at a cost of 63 million Kč

culminated in a gala concert by Cntor Malovany on 11 February 1998. The reconstruction of the interior, paintwork, appurtenances and large organ, however, still require considerable funds not yet available. The Pilsen Synagogue houses a concert hall

from such legends as Joseph Malowany, Peter Dvorský, or Karel Gott, the walls display temporary photographic exhibitions of various worthy-causes,

and a permanent exhibition on the history of Jewish communities in the region of western Bohemia.

. The synagogue is still used for worship, but only in what was formerly the winter prayer room.

The present number of Pilsner Jews is a little over seventy. [February 2009]

Alternate name: **Pilsen** in Yiddish and German. About 90 km from Praha and 10 km from Plzen center, the cemetery is located on Rag road (Prazska-misspelled?) about 6-10 km from town. Present town population is over 100,000 with fewer than 10 Jews. One is non-practicing Jew: Dr. & Mrs. Hugo Tetzeli who brought Elizabeth Margosches (see below) to the site. They are in contact with families of several buried there. The cemetery appears to have regular hours. The city existed since the 13th century. Major industrial center (Skoda Works) was involved in Nazi war effort; a camp was somewhere in the vicinity. Noteworthy Jews buried here include Dr. Josef Schanzler-Vorsteher der Kulturgemeinde 1896-1918 (head of the community from 8 Oct 1853 to 20 July 1930) and Leopold Wintemitz aus Wien died 2 Aug 1920 at age 71 with last burial with a stone was in 1994. There was a fresh grave found on the visit 7 June 1996. Plzen synagogue is being restored by funds from outside the country. Probably a Conservative community, cemetery 10km away, used this suburban hillside near the crest, separate but near other cemeteries. Across the street from the municipal cemetery with various buildings, some of the graves in the municipal cemetery show birthdate with a Star-of-David, but death with a cross. Examples of names include Vand, Chmelik, and Luft. The cemetery has no sign or marker. Reached by turning directly off a public road, access is open to all via a continuous masonry wall and locking gate. The cemetery is about 500 sq. feet [?], with 500 to 5,000 gravestones. The marker closest to the gate reads " E. LXXII 1207-1223" but more graves exist. Numbering appears to go on down the aisle, with the new grave towards the left of the gate. Less than 25% of the surviving stones are toppled or broken. Vegetation overgrowth in the cemetery is a constant problem, disturbing graves. Water drainage is not a problem.

The oldest known gravestone appears to be around 1900 with stones of the 19th and 20th century. The marble and granite finely smoothed and inscribed stones, flat stones with carved relief decoration, double tombstones, sculptured monuments-an angel monument, or multi-stone monuments have Hebrew, German, and Czech inscriptions. Some are raised markers, iron decorations or lettering and/or iron railings around graves. There is a special memorial to Holocaust victims where annually, 6 candles burn for the 6 Million. (The largest transport to Oswiecim was in March so the annual ceremony occurs then.) The monument is inscribed with Jeremiah Chapter 2, Verse 13. Adjacent properties are commercial or industrial and agricultural and another cemetery across the street. Private visitors and local residents visit. Apparently, some fixing of the wall and gate has occurred. The writer was told that it has received better maintenance since around 1993. There is a pre-burial house. Vegetation is a very serious threat with some trees growing in graves. Weather erosion is also serious with some older gravestones having washed-out inscriptions. Security, pollution, vandalism and incompatible nearby existing development are slight or moderate threats.

Elizabeth Margosches, 2509 Crest St., Alexandria, VA 22302; phone (703) 931-8135 completed survey on Sept. 8, 1996, based on her notes taken during a June 17, 1996 visit by Elizabeth Margosches and Don Melman (same address). No formal interview took place but Dr. Tetzeli (above), who brought her to the site, was helpful.

PLZEN I: US Commission No. CZCE000376

Alternate name: Pilsen in German. Plzen is located in western Bohemia, Plzen-mesto at [49°45' N, 13°22' E](#)

, 54 miles WSW of Praha (Prague). The old cemetery is located at 1700 m NNW of main square in Lidicka Street. Present town population is over 100,000 with 10-100 Jews.

- Town: Urad metskeho obvodu Plzen 1, alej Svobody 60, 323 18 Plzen.
- Regional: Okresni urad Plzen-mesto, Referat Kultury, Skroupova 18, 301 36 Plzen; and Zidovska Nabozenska Obec, Smetanovy sady 5, 301 36 Plzen; tel. 019/357-49; and Pamatkovy ustav, Dominikanska 4/6, 301 00 Plzen; tel. 019/357-62 or 358-71.
- Interested: Zapadooceske Muzeum, Frantiskanska 13, 301 37 Plzen; tel. 019/374-32 or 343-61; and Statni Zidovske Muzeum, Jachymova 3, 110 01 Praha 1; tel. 02/231-06-34 or 231-07-85.

Earliest known Jewish community was 15th century. 1930 Jewish population was 2,773. All Jews were expelled about 1533 when their medieval community with synagogue and cemetery ceased to exist. 3 families permitted in 1837 in first half of 19th century. Rapid increase of Jewish population was after 1848 (259 people in 1854, congregation established in 1859, 1207 people in 1870) correlated with expansion of local industry and commerce. Congregation was reestablished after WW2, but reduced by both aliyah and emigration. Emil Lederer (1882-1939), Professor of Economics and Sociology in Austria, Germany, Japan and New York; Oskar Baum (1883-1941), blind writer and musician from Kafka's circle; Bedrich Reicin (1911-1952), son of chazen, communist leader in army and police, hanged in Slansky trial; and Zuzana Ruzickova (b.1928), leading contemporary harpsichordist lived here. The unlandmarked Jewish cemetery originated in 1856. Register of burials are available in Plzen Jewish congregation office with last known Conservative Jewish burial in 1905. The isolated flat urban site with a Czech sign or plaque, reached by turning directly off a public road, is open to all via no wall, fence, or gate. The approximate size of cemetery before WWII was 0.2435 hectares and is now 0.2435 ha (all disbanded cemetery) or 0.001 ha s (memorial lapidarium).

None of the 1-20 or 100-500 stones is in original location. The cemetery has no special sections. Stones date from beginning of second half of 19th-20th century. The granite and sandstone flat shaped stones and finely smoothed and inscribed stones have Hebrew, German and Czech inscriptions. The cemetery contains special memorial monuments to disbanded cemetery but no known mass graves or structures. The municipality owns property used for recreation (park, playground, and athletic field) park. Adjacent properties are recreational. Occasionally, private visitors stop. Vandalism occurred prior to World War II, during World War II and occasionally 1981-91 with liquidation of cemetery in 1984-86 by local/municipal authorities in 1986. Now, authorities occasionally clean or clear. Moderate threat: weather erosion and vandalism.

Dr. Peter Braun, Komenskeho 43, 323 13 Plzen; tel. 019/52-1558; and Jiri Fiedler, z"l, Brdickova 1916, 155 00 Praha tel. 02/55-33-40 and Rudolf Loewy, Jesenicka 33, 323 13 Plzen; tel. 019/52-0684 completed survey on 1 September 1992. Documentation: archives of Jewish Congregation in Plzen; *Die Juden and Judengemeinden Bohemens* 1934 1934; Jarbuch fur die israelische Cultusgemeinden Bohemens (1894-95); articles of Jaroslav Schiebl in monthly *Plzensko*, 1930; photo-archives of Statni Zidovske Muzeum Praha. Other documentation exists but was too general. No site visits or interviews occurred.

PLZEN II: US Commission No. CZCE000377

The new cemetery is located at 4 km E of main square in Rokycanska Trida Street. Key holder: Mrs. J. Voborova, Rokycanska trida 110, 312 00 Plzen. Caretaker: Tomal Filek, Nad Dalmatinkou 12, 312 08 Plzen tel. 019/65-885.

The Jewish cemetery originated in 1898. Buried in the unlandmarked still-active Conservative cemetery is Rabbi Porges. Register of burials is deposited in Plzen Jewish congregation office. The flat suburban site, separate but near cemeteries, has no sign or marker. Reached by turning directly off a public road, access is open to all during hours of operation. A continuous masonry wall and locking gate surround. The approximate size of cemetery before WWII was 1.6 ha s and is now 1.4 ha.

500-5000 stones, all in original location, date from 1898-20th century. The marble, granite, limestone, sandstone and slate finely smoothed and inscribed stones, flat stones with carved relief decoration, sculpted monuments or multi-stone monuments have Hebrew, German and

Czech inscriptions. Some tombstones have bronze decorations or lettering, other metallic elements, portraits on stones and/or metal fences around graves. The cemetery has special section for children, refugees, and WW1 soldiers as well as special memorial monuments to Holocaust victims and Jewish soldiers, marked mass graves, but no structures. The municipality owns Jewish cemetery property. Adjacent properties are commercial or industrial and agricultural. The boundaries are smaller now than 1939. Frequently, organized Jewish tours or pilgrimage groups, private visitors and local residents stop. Vandalism occurred during World War II, occasionally 1981-91 when ceremonial hall was pulled down. Jewish groups within the country did restoration in 1986, '87, '88, '89, and '90. Plzen Jewish congregation pays the regular caretaker. Moderate threat: uncontrolled access and weather erosion. Slight threat: vegetation and vandalism.

See surveyors in section above (1 September 1992.) Documentation: archives of Jew. Congregation in Plzen; *Die Juden and Judengemeinden Bohemens* 1934 1934; Jarbuch fur die israelische Cultusgemeinden Bohemens (1894-95); articles of Jaroslav Schiebl in monthly Plzensko, 1930; photo-archives of Statni Zidovske Muzeum Praha. The site was not visited.