



Final Report of the Jewish Culture Center ŠTETL for 2025

Activities of the Center

The year 2025 marked the fourth year of systematic, year-round activities of the Jewish Culture Center ŠTETL.

This project is organized by the ŠTETL association and the Jewish Community of Brno.

Over the course of the year, the Center's activities continued to develop both in terms of content and organization, confirming the stable position of the Jewish Culture Center ŠTETL as an important cultural and educational institution engaged in Jewish history, memory, and contemporary culture.

The year-round program included dozens of events in various formats – theatre performances, exhibitions, lectures, discussions, guided walks, film screenings, workshops, commemorative events, as well as extensive educational programs for schools and teachers. Programs took place in Brno, other cities across the Czech Republic, and abroad.



ŠTETL FEST Festival 2025

The largest project of the year was the fourth edition of the international Jewish culture festival ŠTETL FEST, which took place from August 27 to 31, 2025. During the five days, more than 130 program events were held, attracting over 11,000 visitors from the Czech Republic and abroad.

Ticket sales for paid programs exceeded 95%, confirming stable and growing audience interest.

The festival offered a wide range of formats: 35 discussions and lectures, 39 guided walks and tours, 5 theatre performances, 14 concerts by Czech and international artists, 8 workshops, and 6 exhibitions. With its scale and attendance, ŠTETL FEST once again confirmed its reputation as the largest and most significant festival of Jewish culture in the Czech Republic, and likely also within the broader European context.



Nationwide Competition “The Heart is a Fire”

An important year-long project was the nationwide literary and visual arts competition *The Heart is a Fire*, held from January 27 to October 31, 2025. The project was intended for pupils and students of primary schools, secondary schools, and elementary art schools from across the Czech Republic, focusing on themes of the Holocaust, war, courage, hope, and human dignity.

The competition was created and implemented in cooperation with the Gymnázium Přírodní škola, which has long been dedicated to innovative educational approaches, project-based learning, and especially to the topic of children’s artistic expression in the Terezín ghetto.

The competition worked with the format of student magazines inspired by Terezín-era creations, developed under the guidance of teachers and in collaboration with experts. The award ceremony and accompanying program took place as part of the ŠTETL FEST festival. An

exhibition of the competition entries was installed at the Institute of Memory of the Nation in Brno and was visited by approximately 1,200 people; the overall attendance of the project reached around 1,500 visitors.



As part of the festival program, a special meeting of competition participants and involved teachers was also held, creating a space for sharing experiences, mutual reflection on their work, and establishing further contacts and collaborations between schools. This format proved to be highly beneficial and strengthened the community and networking dimension of the entire project.

The project received very positive feedback from teachers, students, and the professional public, and the resulting body of student work has the potential for further use in educational programs.

The competition followed on from the previous project *Black Peter from Terezín*, implemented in 2024 in the same format of a nationwide competition for children and youth. Based on the exceptionally positive responses from participating students and teachers, as well as from the professional public and general audiences, we plan to continue this format in 2026.



Exhibitions

The year 2025 was exceptionally strong for the Jewish Culture Center ŠTETL in the field of exhibition projects, which were conceived as long-term professional and educational initiatives.

One of the most significant projects of the year was the exhibition *Rabbi Feder Superhero*, launched as part of the ŠTETL FEST festival. The project is dedicated to Rabbi Richard Feder (1875–1970), a prominent spiritual authority in postwar Czechoslovakia, and was created on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of his birth.

The exhibition uniquely combines historical research with artistic interpretation. The visual concept was created by Petra Goldflamová Štětinová, while the script was developed in collaboration with Arnošt Goldflam. The project works with archival documents, personal testimonies, and comic-style storytelling, deliberately avoiding the traditional biographical model.

An accompanying publication forms part of the project, combining the comic section with a scholarly essay based on extensive archival research. The publication was printed in 500 copies and serves as an independent educational and popularization material.

In 2025, the project had two exhibition formats:

- *Rabbi Feder Superhero: drawings by Petra Goldflamová Štětinová and Oto Antonín Goldflam* (Arnold Villa, until October 5, 2025),
- *Rabbi Feder Superhero – long-term exhibition* (Arnold Villa, until August 30, 2026).

The exhibition was systematically accompanied by guided tours and programs for schools as well as the general public, becoming one of the pillars of the center's year-round activities.

As part of the ŠTETL FEST festival, we also launched additional exhibitions that continued within the year-round program:

- *The Heart is a Fire* – Institute of Memory of the Nation Brno (until October 31, 2025)
- *Hagibor, A Place of Hope* – Institute of Memory of the Nation Brno (until October 31, 2025)
- *Nansen's Children* – Löw-Beer Villa (until October 31, 2025)
- *Testimonies of Terezín Walls* – shelter under Kraví hora (until December 17, 2025)



Divadelní projekty

V roce 2025 byly pro veřejnost i školy uváděny inscenace Příběh knihy, Noir Haas a Touha tvořit, touha žít. Představení probíhala v Brně, dalších městech České republiky i v zahraničí.

Příběh knihy a Noir Haas – reprízy a zájezdy

V roce 2025 se uskutečnila řada zájezdů s inscenacemi Noir Haas a Příběh knihy, a to jak v České republice, tak v zahraničí:

6. 2. – Příběh knihy, Londýn

7. 2. – Příběh knihy (pro školy s lektorským úvodem), Londýn

11. 5. – Příběh knihy, Brněnec, ve spolupráci s Muzeem přeživších v Brněnci

20. 6. – Noir Haas na festivalu Jüdische Woche in Leipzig, ve spolupráci se Schaubühne Lindenfels

22. 10. – Příběh knihy a beseda s Angelou Strach, Praha

23. 10. – Příběh knihy (pro školy s lektorským úvodem) a beseda s Angelou Strach, Praha

8. 11. – Noir Haas, Dny židovské kultury Olomouc



The Desire to Create, the Desire to Live

The production *The Desire to Create, the Desire to Live* premiered as part of the ŠTETL FEST festival and was subsequently included in the year-round repertoire of the Jewish Culture Center ŠTETL.

This theatre and music project brings to life the works of Gideon Klein, Hans Krása, Viktor Ullmann, and other Terezín authors, conveying through music and text a testimony to the desire to create and to live even under conditions of extreme oppression.

The production combines authentic quotations, acting performance, and live music, and is presented both to the general public and in an educational version for schools, including an introductory lecture.

The strong interest from both audiences and schools in the Center’s theatre projects—reflected in the number of repeat performances and touring shows—demonstrates their importance as a significant educational tool with international reach.



Education, Schools, and Seminars

Between January 1 and December 31, 2025, approximately 1,560 students participated in the Center's educational programs. A total of 94 educational activities were carried out, including theatre performances for schools, guided exhibition tours, and educational programs related to the competition *The Heart is a Fire*.

The educational activities also included seminars for teachers and Tourist Information Center (TIC) staff within the series *Jews, History, and Culture*. In 2025, five seminars were held with a total attendance of approximately 90 participants.

Publishing Activities

The year 2025 was also significant for the Jewish Culture Center ŠTETL in terms of publishing activities. The published works expand the Center's long-term dramaturgical lines and serve as lasting outputs of its research, educational, and curatorial work. Individual titles are intended for both professional and general audiences and are used within educational programs as well as for independent distribution.

Thirteen Dreams of Freedom

At the beginning of 2025, the Jewish Culture Center ŠTETL, in cooperation with the Host publishing house, released its first book publication, *Thirteen Dreams of Freedom*. The author, historian Michal Konečný, presents lesser-known aspects of the history of the Jewish community in Brno through thirteen remarkable individuals whose lives shaped the city's cultural, religious, and political history.

The book is available through regular distribution and was also selected in 2025 for a radio adaptation by Czech Radio.

Otto Eisler – Reissue of a Monograph

In cooperation with the Obecní dům Brno association, a reissued monograph *Otto Eisler* was published in 2025, mapping the complete works of one of the most important architects of modern Brno. The reissue formed part of a broader commemoration of Eisler's legacy within the ŠTETL FEST festival and the Center's year-round program.

The publication includes unique documentation of 36 completed buildings, a complete catalogue of works, and scholarly texts in both Czech and English. The book is intended for professionals, architecture students, and a wider audience interested in modern architecture and urbanism.

In the Footsteps of Otto Eisler

Following the reissue of the monograph, a printed guide *In the Footsteps of Otto Eisler* was published in November 2025 during a full-day event dedicated to Eisler's legacy. The publication complemented a program that included guided tours, a site-specific exhibition, and a commemorative act of laying Stolpersteine for Otto and Mořic Eisler in front of their former home.

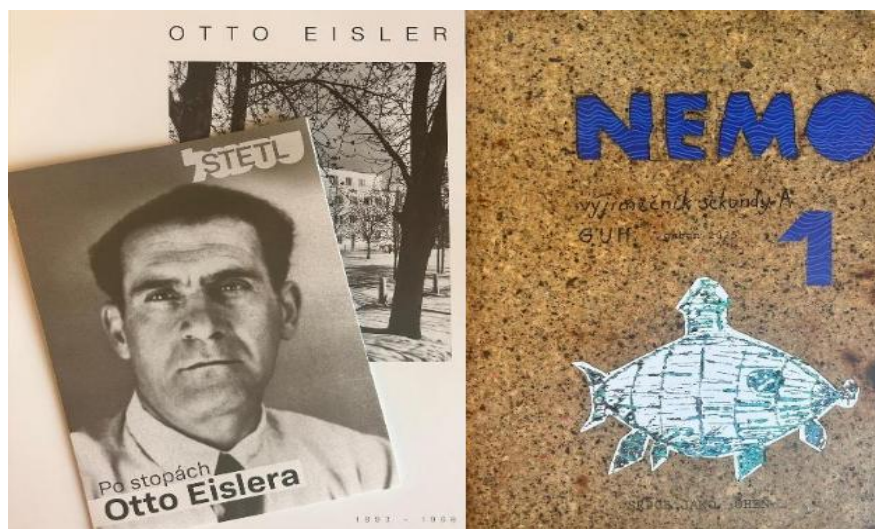
Rabbi Feder Superhero – Accompanying Publication

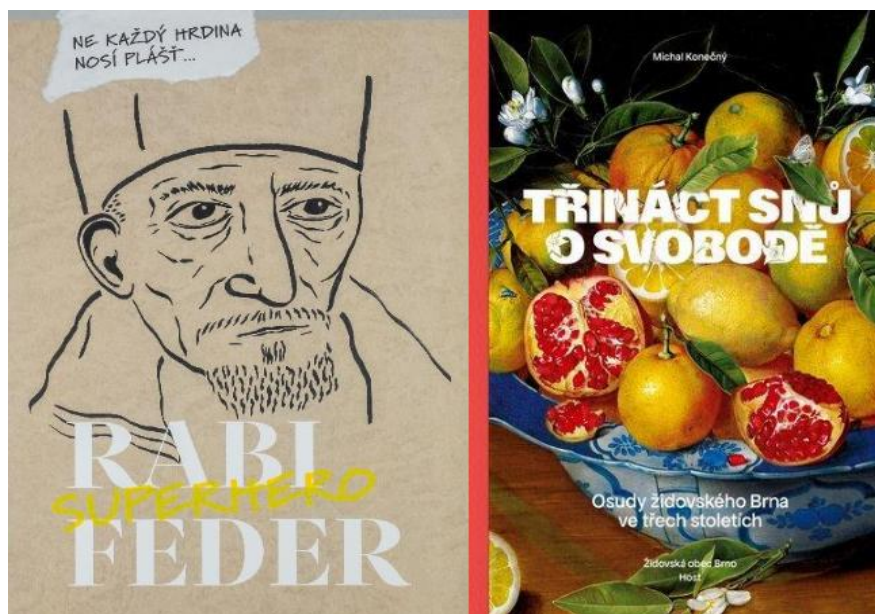
The accompanying publication to the exhibition *Rabbi Feder Superhero* expands the exhibition concept with a scholarly and interpretative framework. It combines the comic section with an academic essay based on extensive archival research and serves both as an independent educational resource and as a tool for further scholarly engagement with the legacy of Rabbi Richard Feder.

Nemo Magazine

As part of the publishing activities of the Jewish Culture Center ŠTETL in 2025, a printed edition of *Nemo* magazine was also released. The magazine was created as a result of the nationwide competition *The Heart is a Fire*. Its authors are students from the Gymnázium Uherské Hradiště, whose work won first place in the competition as an example of high-quality student production capable of sensitively and clearly reflecting historical themes.

The magazine was distributed free of charge to visitors of the ŠTETL FEST festival.





Center Partners

In 2025, the Jewish Culture Center ŠTETL collaborated with a range of institutions at the regional, national, and international levels, including the Institute of Memory of the Nation Brno, Husa na provázku Theatre, the Bubny Center for Memory and Dialogue, the Brno City Museum, the Brno Region Museum, the Jewish Museum in Prague, the National Heritage Institute, as well as international partners.

Stones of the Disappeared in Brno: Kameny zmizelých

The *Stones of the Disappeared* project is one of the long-term memory initiatives systematically developed by the Jewish Culture Center ŠTETL.

In 2024, a specialized project website—www.kamenyzmizelychbrno.cz—was created as part of this collaboration. It includes a map of all the stones, information about the individuals commemorated, and opportunities for public involvement through the installation of new stones or the adoption and cleaning of existing ones. In 2025, the Jewish Culture Center ŠTETL continued to expand and update the website. Over the course of the year, the site was translated into English and enriched with more detailed information about the installed stones.

At present, there are more than 300 *Stones of the Disappeared* located throughout Brno, and their number continues to grow. In 2025, 45 new stones were installed across the city.

The organization of accompanying commemorative and educational events is regularly carried out in cooperation with the Institute of Memory of the Nation Brno and the Brno City

Museum. The database section of the website was developed in expert collaboration with the Encyclopedia of the City of Brno. The project is financially supported by the South Moravian Region.



Human Resources and Financial Background

The growing scope of activities has confirmed the need for further professionalization in building the institution, including establishing a stable core staff. At present, the activities of the Jewish Culture Center ŠTETL and the production of the ŠTETL FEST festival are ensured by four core employees working part-time, as well as by external collaborators and experts.

Funding has been secured through public subsidies, grants, foundation contributions, sponsorship donations, ticket revenue, and the Jewish Community of Brno's own financial resources.

Evaluation of the Center's Activities

The year 2025 confirmed the stability, professional quality, and social significance of the Jewish Culture Center ŠTETL project. Thanks to its systematic dramaturgy, long-term projects, and strong educational component, the Center has established itself as a stable and respected cultural institution in the city of Brno.

The Center has recorded increasing interest from both the general public and schools. In 2025, its programs were attended by an estimated 15,000–17,000 participants across festival, exhibition, theatre, and educational activities. Demand is growing particularly in school programs, seminars, and guided formats, confirming the Center's importance as an educational partner for schools in Brno and throughout the Czech Republic.

This growing interest is also reflected online. Project websites maintain steady traffic, while social media profiles continue to expand their reach—approximately 5,000 users follow the Facebook profile, and more than 1,400 follow the Instagram account.

Overall, 2025 can be evaluated as a period of consolidation and continued growth, creating a solid foundation for further development.

