

The last Jews in Hämeenlinna, 1889–1918

A community fades away



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ABSTRACT • Around a hundred years ago there was a tiny Jewish community in Hämeenlinna, a small provincial capital in Finland. The dissolution of the Hämeenlinna Jewish community has become shrouded in mystery. Some amateur historians have even suggested that the last members of the Jewish community were shot by Russian soldiers in 1914. What happened to the last Jews of Hämeenlinna, and what were the reasons behind the historical process that led to the dissolution of the community? This article examines the turns of fate that prompted the leading Jewish families, the Rosenbergs and the Krapifffskys, to leave the town. The involvement of the local governor, the hardline antisemite Rafael Späre, turned out to be instrumental in the case of the Krapifffsky family, who were the last remaining members of the community.

HÄMEENLINNA, IN SWEDISH TAVASTEHEUS, is an inconspicuous, slumbering provincial capital in southern Finland. Around a hundred years ago there was a tiny Jewish community in Hämeenlinna, but today the only trace of Jewish life there is a small and neglected Jewish cemetery surrounded by a larger Christian one. What happened to the Jews of Hämeenlinna? Lack of historical research has left the field open to speculation and rumour. Some amateur historians have even suggested that the last members of the Jewish community were shot by Russian soldiers in 1914 (Alhainen 2001; Karttunen 2004). In this article I will try to establish the fate of the community.

I will probe the following two research questions: 1. What happened to the last Jews of Hämeenlinna? 2. What caused the historical process that led to the dissolution of the community? I will probe these questions

by investigating archival material from the Hämeenlinna municipality and police, as well as archival material concerning Jews on national level. The Hämeenlinna police department kept record of all residents, and information regarding religious affiliation was also noted. All foreigners, including Jews as Russian imperial subjects, were also listed in the passport records of the police department. In addition, the Hämeenlinna municipal records include miscellaneous files concerning Jews collected specifically under the heading ‘Records concerning Jews’ (Hämeenlinnan maistraatin arkisto, Juutalaisia koskevat asiakirjat). The filing system and rigorous nature of the archival material concerning Jews make it clear that the municipal authorities had a very special interest in monitoring Jews. The same is true regarding policies on the national level. The Ministry of the Interior (Sw. Civilexpeditionen, Fi.



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Sivilitoimituskunta) was keen on monitoring Jews and demanded detailed reports from the local authorities. The archives of the Ministry of the Interior are thus relevant too when it comes to the Hämeenlinna Jewish community. Additional information is provided by the historical database of Finnish newspapers. The rights and fate of Jews living in Finland was debated intensively in the press with conservative and nationalist commentators demanding the deportation of Jews from Finland, and liberal commentators calling for the naturalisation of Jews as Finnish citizens with equal rights and freedom of religion. The Hämeenlinna Jews were also part of this debate.

There is practically no previous research on the subject. The Hämeenlinna Jewish community is sporadically mentioned in accounts of Jewish history in Finland, but there are very few details available. Taimi Torvinen states in

her comprehensive history of Jewish life in Finland that there was a small Jewish community in Hämeenlinna during the latter half of the nineteenth century and that the community was formed by local Jewish soldiers (Torvinen 1989: 31). There are no archival records from the early years of the community. The Hämeenlinna Jewish cemetery bears witness to the size of the community: there are altogether forty-two graves, but only a minority of them have headstones that have survived. On six headstones there are inscriptions in Hebrew, while two headstones are unhewn and blank. The rest of the graves are only marked with dilapidated wooden planks in the ground, partitioning them from their surroundings. The number of graves indicates that there were more Jews in Hämeenlinna than the municipal and state records reveal. One headstone indicates a burial in 1856. This was even before Jews were allowed to

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The gate of the Hämeenlinna Jewish cemetery.



Grave of Ze'ev Zamek, Hämeenlinna Jewish cemetery.

settle in Finland; this is a very early Jewish burial in the Finnish context. The Helsinki Jewish burial aid society *Chevra Kadisha* was founded in 1864 (Kantor *et al.* 2006: 155). The arrangements for proper Jewish burial are among the primary services that a newly established Jewish community has sought to provide throughout history. Indicative of this is the fact that the Helsinki community employed its first rabbi three years *after* the founding of the burial aid society.

Another grave in Hämeenlinna bears witness of the death of a youngster whose name does not appear in the records. Ze'ev Zamek died in Hämeenlinna in 1894, but his name was for some reason not entered in the municipal records. From the beginning of the twentieth century the records are clear and rigorous, but for the nineteenth century many questions remain open. Many of the graves are obviously from the poorly

documented early years of the Hämeenlinna Jewish community.

I will start by describing the early years of the Hämeenlinna Jewish community and the families constituting the core of the community. From there I will go on to analyse the forces that contributed to the dissolution of the community. The analysis offers comparative glimpses of similar processes in other parts of Finland at the same time. The findings of the study are summarised in the final conclusions.

From humble beginnings to consolidation

The earliest trace of Jewish life in Hämeenlinna is represented by Moses Kaplan, a Jewish blacksmith who converted to Christianity. He was baptised on 12 June 1836, but even as a Christian Moses Kaplan had to wait until 1840 to be granted rights as a



Grave of Yocheved bat Dov, departed 9 Iyyar 5616 (14 May 1856), Hämeenlinna Jewish cemetery.

burgher in Hämeenlinna (Swanström 2014: 25; Swanström 2007: 24–6). Jews were finally allowed to settle legally in Finland when discharged Jewish soldiers were permitted to stay in the country at the end of the 1850s. In his seminal work on Finnish Jewish history Santeri Jacobsson describes the imperial edict of 29 March 1858 as the Magna Carta of Finnish Jews (Jacobsson 1951: 108, 427–9). Discharged Jewish soldiers from the sizeable garrison in Hämeenlinna formed the core of the community. These soldiers had served in the Russian army for as long as twenty-five years. They had endured extreme hardships, appalling sanitary conditions and disease, and above all resisted pressure to convert to Orthodox Christianity (cf. Petrovsky-Shtern 2009: 96–7, 102–7). Those soldiers who had been drafted as children and served in Cantonist schools were called Cantonists, but among Finnish Jews the word Cantonist started to be applied to all former Jewish soldiers who had served in the Russian army (Muir 2004: 20).

Jews are first mentioned in the Hämeenlinna municipal records at the end of the 1880s. In a letter dated 22 March 1889 the Finnish senate informed the local governor that a group of ten Jews had been granted temporary right of residence in Hämeenlinna. The group consisted of ten adult males and an unspecified number of wives and children. The men were discharged non-commissioned officers, military musicians and ordinary soldiers. The group also included Abraham Janzon, the rabbi of Hämeenlinna.¹ Apparently the small community valued Jewish religious education, but rabbis and teachers did not stay long. After the turn of the century there is a mention of a Hebrew teacher named Ben-Tsien Trok, who

was active in Hämeenlinna (Muir 2004: 90). The rabbis of the Hämeenlinna Jewish community have fallen into oblivion, since there has been no community to preserve their memory, and no records have survived. In Helsinki, rabbis followed the Minhag Polin, the eastern Ashkenazi liturgical rite (Muir and Tuori 2019: 8). This was the tradition of the Cantonist soldiers, and it is likely that the Hämeenlinna community employed rabbis who adhered to the same tradition.

The Hämeenlinna Jews were required to renew their permits of residence every month. They were permitted to sell self-made crafts, bread and bakery products as well as berries, fruit, tobacco and matches. The list of permitted goods also included clothes of second-rate quality, hats and shoes. The letter went on to stipulate that the Jews were not allowed to visit markets or engage in peddling in the countryside. The only places they were allowed to move to were Helsinki and Vyborg. If the Jews broke any of these prohibitions, or if they were caught begging or engaging in any form of licentious activity, they could be deported. The threat of deportation loomed large over any Jew whose behaviour was found to be objectionable. Deportation was possible even without a criminal offence – an arbitrary disapproval of ‘Jewish behaviour’ was enough.² Thus, the Jews of Hämeenlinna faced a life with many restrictions. They were under constant scrutiny and at the mercies of suspicious neighbours and antisemitic authorities.

One of the Jews granted permission to reside in Hämeenlinna was David Rosenberg. In November 1889 he fled the town together with his co-religionists Robert Klimscheffski and Berka Lippman. Rosenberg had been discharged from the Russian army in 1881,

1 KA, Hämeenlinnan maistraatin arkisto, Juutalaisia koskevat asiakirjat Hd:10.

2 KA, Hämeenlinnan maistraatin arkisto, Juutalaisia koskevat asiakirjat Hd:10.

and he had run a butcher's shop as well as a sausage factory in Hämeenlinna. The factory gave employment to two Jews, as well as one Russian and one Finn. Slumping meat prices had resulted in financial difficulties for Rosenberg, and his factory was declared bankrupt. Rosenberg's escape gained a lot of attention in the press, and newspaper reports screamed about the 'Rosenberg Affair'. A telling headline in *Östra Nyland* claimed that Rosenberg had escaped with half a million marks.³ There were rumours about Rosenberg's potential return, but those who flocked to the railway station anticipating the return were disappointed when he did not show up. There were reported sightings of Rosenberg in western Russia as well as in Hamburg, where he was said to have changed 112,000 marks into US dollars (*Wiborgsbladet* 14.11.1889). The exact reason for Rosenberg's escape remains shrouded in mystery. Bankruptcy as such would not have been a sufficient reason. Rosenberg might have wanted to hide financial assets from his debtors, but it is not possible to draw any firm conclusions. Newspaper articles as such do not constitute adequate source material for determining the exact facts in a complex financial case, but they can indicate the general outlines of a public drama, where the protagonist was clearly culpable to some extent as he had fled the town, leaving behind a large but failed business.

The government publication *Finlands Allmänna Tidning* listed Rosenberg as wanted on 1 November 1889. He was joined in his flight by his wife Fredrika (Frida) and their children. Some members of the Rosenberg extended family stayed behind in Hämeenlinna. David's brother Zacharias died in 1889. He was mourned by his wife

3 Original in Swedish: 'Förlupen med en half miljon', *Östra Nyland* 14.11.1889.

Lena and their four daughters. David's other brother Levi and his wife Rosa did not leave any major traces in public records, and their further whereabouts are uncertain.⁴ The Rosenberg Affair weakened the tiny Jewish community of Hämeenlinna, but the remaining Jews were determined to cling on to their homes and businesses in the town.

After the turbulence caused by the Rosenberg Affair, the Hämeenlinna Jewish community was centred around the Krapiffsky household. Jakob (Jankel) Krapiffsky, the head of the family, was born in the Tver governorate on 23 October 1834, and he came to Hämeenlinna in 1867. His wife Mina (Wilhelmina) was born in 1856 and came to Hämeenlinna in 1860. The Krapiffskys had ten children. Salomon (Emil) (b. 1872) moved to Russia in 1897 and from there to Berlin in 1912. Aron (b. 1874) tried his luck in America but suffered an accident and returned home blind; he died in Hämeenlinna on 24 December 1917 (Meliza's Genealogy n.d.). Alexandra (b. 1877) got married and moved to Helsinki. Sara (b. 1881), Josef (b. 1883), and Moses (b. 1891) moved to America, whereas Herman (b. 1890) and Simeon (b. 1894) moved to Helsinki. Abram Girsch (Gabriel) (b. 1886) and Leo (b. 1900) lived with their parents in Hämeenlinna.⁵ Besides the Krapiffskys the community included a tailor named Isak Pasternak and his wife Sonja. Isak converted to Christianity in 1913.

The size of the Hämeenlinna Jewish community can be compared to statistics on the national level: in 1912 there were 1229 Jews living in Finland. Roughly sixty per cent of the Finnish Jews were living in Helsinki,

4 KA, Hämeenlinnan maistraatin arkisto, Juutalaisia koskevat asiakirjat Hd:10.

5 KA, Hämeenlinnan maistraatin arkisto, Juutalaisia koskevat asiakirjat Hd:10.

while Turku and Vyborg both had a share of roughly twenty per cent (Ahonen 2017: 49). Thus Jews living in Hämeenlinna were a truly marginal group existing on the fringes of Finnish Jewry.

Governor Spåre starts the deportations

The dwindling community was under increasing pressure from the provincial governor. Governor Rafael Spåre had been in office since November 1911. He was a cavalry officer and his professional experience included quelling revolutionary unrest in Livonia in 1905–6. The new governor represented a broader shift of mentality in the Russian administration in Finland: fairly liberal constitutional officials were being replaced by new ones with a service track in the Russian military administration and a mindset compatible with military dictatorship (Spåre 2006a; Jussila 1979: 211, 302). Governor Spåre was promoted to the rank of major general in 1913. He was a hardline antisemite and apparently determined to get rid of all Jews in his province. Deportations of the Hämeenlinna Jews started in January 1913. The newspaper *Dagens Tidning* reported on 16 January 1913 that Abram Girsch (Gabriel) Krapifsky had been ordered to leave the country within twenty-four hours. The deportation order was delivered by the local chief of police on Saturday, the Jewish Shabbat, which seemed to underscore the antisemitic intentions of the authorities. A deportation order was also handed to Rabbi Bruskin, who worked as a private teacher for the Krapifsky family (*Iltalehti* 25.1.1913). For Abram Girsch Krapifsky, this was the final notice, since Krapifsky had received a previous deportation order a month earlier, giving him thirty days to leave the country.

The liberal Swedish press sided with the Jews, demanding an end to the deportations.

Nya Pressen wrote that the pointless and inhumane deportations of Jews were a recurring outrage to society.⁶ Abram Girsch Krapifsky succeeded in persuading the Uusimaa (Sw. Nyland) provincial governor to grant him permission to reside in the country (*Aamulehti* 8.2.1913). The drama unfolded in several acts: in April 1913 Abram Girsch asked for permission to visit his sick father during the Jewish Passover holiday in Hämeenlinna, but the provincial secretary turned down the petition (*Dagens Tidning* 22.5.1913). Newspaper reports concerning the deportations of Jews can be regarded as fairly reliable, since the basic facts of such governmental decisions were straightforward and available for public scrutiny. Details were clearly added through interviews with the deportees and the authorities. These details might have contributed to the tone of the articles, which in many cases favoured the deportees.

Governor Spåre continued his antisemitic deportation drive in the autumn of 1913. This time the target was the Jewish merchant Isak Pasternak. Pasternak had already been given an order of deportation in January 1913. Pasternak tried to deflect the order by converting to Christianity, but the conversion did not seem to give him protection from the governor's wrath. Pasternak then appealed to the senate (*Åbo Underrättelser* 14.10.1913). Pasternak told the press that he had been advised by the governor-general's office to get an appointment with Governor Spåre in order to have the deportation order cancelled. Spåre did not receive Pasternak, and instead

6 Original in Swedish: 'Vårt samhälle upp-
röres tid after annan af lika meningslösa
som mänsklighetskänslan sårande jude-
utvisningar. Det senaste fallet är guvernö-
rens plötsliga order till kontoristen A.G.
Krapifsky i Tavastehus att inom 24 timmar
lämna landet', *Nya Pressen* 17.1.1913.

he ordered the police to apprehend him and put him on the train back to Helsinki (*Åbo Underrättelser* 11.11.1913). Governor Spåre seemed to be close to attaining his goal: the number of Jews residing in his province was reported to be sixteen.

Deportations of Jews occurred at various locations in Finland. In Jakobstad the newly appointed chief of police started to harass Jews, which according to press reports was bound to have negative consequences for local businesses. Mr Lande, a Jewish tobacco merchant from Warsaw, was deported from Jakobstad. He was in town for commercial dealings with the local Strengberg tobacco factory, and the only reason for the deportation was the fact that Mr Lande was a Jew (*Västra Nyland* 25.7.1914). Mr Lande's presence in Jakobstad was technically possible since he was not planning to settle down there. He was apparently on a short business trip, but this did not spare him from deportation.

The governor of the Kuopio province, Arthur Spåre, reported that there were no Jews living in his province.⁷ Arthur Spåre was Rafael Spåre's brother, so there were two governors named Spåre serving at the same time. Arthur Spåre wrote to the police departments in his province that certain Jews who had been expelled by the senate were forbidden to stay in the country and that the police authorities were not allowed to give the Jews permission to stay even for shorter periods while waiting for the processing of their appeals. One of three Jews named in the letter was Abram Girsch (Gabriel) Krapifsky.⁸

First World War: intensified persecution

The outbreak of the First World War exacerbated the harsh measures of Governor Rafael Spåre. Previous research has maintained that the antisemitic measures of governors and local police authorities stemmed from the outbreak of the First World War: the authorities suspected that Jews were not loyal subjects; rather, they were seen as potential spies, saboteurs or profiteers (Torvinen 1989: 96–7). The governor-general suspected that Russian Jewish soldiers returning from German captivity had been recruited as spies.⁹ Therefore Jews had to be monitored closely. Nevertheless it is noteworthy that Rafael Spåre had started his campaign of deportations well before the outbreak of the war. The war seemingly gave the campaign added urgency, but the basic motivation was probably rooted in a deeper tradition of antisemitism and pogroms in the Russian empire.

The deportations can also be seen in the context of the Beilis Affair. Menachem Mendel Beilis was a Jew accused of the brutal killing of a twelve-year-old boy in Kiev. Antisemites depicted the case as ritual murder. Even though Beilis was acquitted in court, the blood-libel case was a major catalyst for antisemitism in the Russian empire. The case unfolded from the arrest of Beilis in 1911 to his acquittal in October 1913 (Weinberg 2014). There is no evidence that links the Beilis Affair directly with Governor Spåre's policies regarding Jews in his province, but the affair nevertheless offers a striking illustration of rampant antisemitism

7 KA, Siviilitoimituskunnan arkisto He:1, Kuopion läänin kuvernööri, Lääninkanslian kirje 23.9.1915 Keisarillisen Senaatin Siviilitoimituskunnalle.

8 KA, Tohmajärven nimismiespiiri I Haa:6 Juutalaisia koskevat asiakirjat (1914–1916),

Kuvernööri A. Spåren kirje Tohmajärven piirin nimismiehelle 29.9.1914. Regarding Arthur Spåre, see Spåre 2006b.

9 KA, Tohmajärven nimismiespiiri I Haa:6 Juutalaisia koskevat asiakirjat (1914–1916), Kuvernööri A. Spåren kirje Tohmajärven nimismiehelle 27.8.1915.

spreading throughout Russian society during those years. Spåre's policies can be seen against this wider societal background. A wider context is also offered by the attempts of Russian military administrators to create in Galicia a 'Russian borderland "free of Jews"' (Petrovsky-Shtern 2009: 248). Russian troops occupied Eastern Galicia after the battle of Lemberg (Lviv) in 1914. The Russian command suspected local Jews of being Austrian spies, and the goal of the Russian military administration was to drive Jews out of the conquered territory. Spåre might also have shared the vision of creating a borderland free of Jews as Finland was Russia's strategic north-western borderland right next to the imperial capital. On an even more general level, one can say that economic insecurity, the seeking of a national identity (both Finnish and Russian) and political strife were factors which contributed to the rise of antisemitism (cf. Ahonen 2017: 327). Governor Spåre's decision to deport Jews can be seen as a small part of this larger picture, but his exact personal reasoning behind the decision cannot be traced.

Governor Rafael Spåre continued his anti-semitic agenda. In February 1915 he ordered the thirty or so Jewish patients of Hyvinkää Sanatorium, mainly women and children, to immediately leave the country. Russian Jews comprised a sizeable portion of the patients at the sanatorium. There were seventy rooms with a total of ninety beds at the sanatorium (Bergström 1996: 20; *Helsingin Sanomat* 2.3.1915, 14.3.1915). Many of the patients were suffering from fever or mental conditions, and J. W. Sandelin, the chief physician of the sanatorium, appealed to the governor on behalf of the patients. Lower-ranking police authorities finally ordered the deportation of all patients except for two, who were deemed too ill to travel. Some Jews managed to stay in Hyvinkää, which was situated on

the border of the Häme and Uusimaa provinces. The sanatorium was in the jurisdiction of Spåre (*Helsingin Sanomat* 2.3.1915). News about the deportations reached Russia, where newspapers reported that all Jews were being deported from Finland. These rumours were denied in the Finnish press. According to Finnish law, a provincial governor was authorised to deport Jews residing in his province without giving any formal reason. The most notorious masterminds behind the deportations were the governors of the Häme and Kuopio provinces, both named Spåre. According to newspaper reports, the Spåre brothers were known for their anti-Jewish attitudes. The newspaper reports linked the characterisation of the Spåre brothers with the deportation of Jews from the Hyvinkää Sanatorium as well as previous deportations.¹⁰ Deporting all Jews from Finland would have required a decision of the Finnish senate. The senate had also intervened in the case of Isak Pasternak, whom Rafael Spåre had tried to deport. Other provincial governors might not have been imbued with the antisemitic zeal of the Spåres, but the legal situation concerning the rights of Jews in Finland was extremely precarious.

In September 1915 Rafael Spåre sent the Finnish senate a list of Jews residing in his province. There were sixteen Jews on the list: six members of the Krapifsky household as well as Isak Pasternak were the only Jews listed as residents of Hämeenlinna. In Tampere there was one Jewish family, the Naparstocks, with seven members, and Hausjärvi had one Jewish resident, Miss

10 *Helsingin Sanomat* 14.3.1915; original in Finnish: 'Hämeen ja Kuopion läänien kuvernöörit, molemmat Spåre-nimisiä, ovat Suomessa tunnettuja ankarina juutalaisten vastustajina', *Riihimäen Sanomat* 20.3.1915; *Uusi Aura* 16.3.1915

Paulina Bloch.¹¹ All Jews living in Finland were monitored closely by the Ministry of the Interior, which collected detailed information about them. This information included Jews visiting spas and sanatoriums, as demonstrated by the governor of Mikkeli province, who provided information about eight Jews visiting the Takaharju tuberculosis sanatorium at Kerimäki.¹²

Arthur Spåre was also keen to bar the entry of a clergyman named Arthur Pihra to his province. The Reverend Arthur Pihra was renowned for baptising Jews for financial compensation. His business gained fame in the entire Russian empire, and Russian Jews openly talked about *Finnish baptisms*. Pihra was reported to have baptized 755 Russian Jews in the years 1911–13 (Swanström 2007: 52–3). This is an astonishing figure compared to an estimated total of 3,100 Jewish converts to various Protestant denominations in Russia during the entire nineteenth century (Stanislawski 1987: 190). Pihra's converts had travelled from St Petersburg to seek his services in Finland. Arthur Spåre was apparently afraid that Jews might find a way to circumvent the deportation orders by getting baptised by Pihra. Therefore Pihra was to be monitored closely and sent away from the province.¹³

In contrast to his brother's success, Rafael Spåre did not succeed in deporting all Jews

living in his province. The Krapiffskys maintained a tenacious hold on their right to reside in Hämeenlinna. Between 1910 and 1916 the Krapiffskys renewed their permits of residence annually, except for the year 1914, when the Krapiffskys' name did not appear in the address listing of the Hämeenlinna police department. Besides the Krapiffskys there was only one other Jew, Mordhel Doneleff Schustoff, who lived in Hämeenlinna during that period. Schustoff was a private teacher and he managed to get a permit of residence in December 1911, and he extended his stay in May 1912.¹⁴ The records of the Hämeenlinna police department for the years 1915 and 1916 list the Krapiffskys as living in Panimokatu (Brewery Street) 36. The house was owned by an insurance official who lived in another town. Besides the Krapiffskys there were five other families sharing the rental building. They were drivers, tanners and factory workers. Jakob Krapiffsky was listed as a merchant. The household included also the Jewish shop assistant Josef Gurevitsch and three non-Jewish maids. In 1916 the family had one fewer maid, and Aron had moved to the poorhouse.¹⁵

Apparently the Krapiffskys finally got tired of the endless harassment and moved away from Hämeenlinna. They did it, however, on their own terms, not on orders from Governor Spåre. In 1917 there was

11 KA, Siviilitoimituskunnan arkisto He:1, Hämeen läänin kuvernööri, Lääninkanslian kirje 29.9.1915 Keisarillisen Senaatin Siviilitoimituskunnalle, Luettelo Hämeen läänissä asuvista juutalaisista 29.9.1915.

12 KA, Siviilitoimituskunnan arkisto He:1, Mikkelin läänin kuvernööri, Lääninkanslian kirje 20.9.1915 Keisarillisen Senaatin Siviilitoimituskunnalle.

13 KA, Tohmajärven nimismiespiiri I Haa:6 Juutalaisia koskevat asiakirjat (1914–1916), Kuopion lääninkanslian kirje Tohmajärven piiriin nimismiehelle 21.8.1915.

14 KA, Hämeen lääninkanslian arkisto, Ulkomaalaisia koskeva passi- ja oleskelulupaluettelo (1893–1920) Bba:6. Regarding Schustoff, see also KA, Hämeenlinnan poliisilaitoksen arkisto, Matkustajaluettelot, Luettelo ololipuista 1906–1919, 13.12.1912.

15 KA, Hämeenlinnan poliisilaitoksen arkisto, Henkilöluettelo 1914, I Ba:30 pp. 1216. 61–2; KA, Hämeenlinnan poliisilaitoksen arkisto, Henkilöluettelo 1915, I Ba:33; KA, Hämeenlinnan poliisilaitoksen arkisto, Henkilöluettelo 1916, I Ba:36.

only one Jew left in Hämeenlinna: Aron Krapifffsky was left behind by his family, and he died in the Hämeenlinna poorhouse on 24 December 1917. Finland had proclaimed independence a few weeks before. The rest of the Krapifffsky family continued their lives in Helsinki. The Krapifffskys had managed to stay in Finland despite the repeated attempts to expel them. Abraham Hirsch Krapifffsky became a Finnish citizen in 1920 (*Uusi Suomi* 23.10.1920). He could now use his proper Jewish name in its Western European form, and there was no need to use the Russian spelling Abram Girsch, nor the assimilated name Gabriel. Jankel died in Helsinki on 24 January 1924 at the venerable age of 97. His obituary appeared on the front page of *Hufvudstadsbladet* the next day.

The fate of the Hämeenlinna Jewish community hinged on its relatively small size. A community of just a few families was initially shaken by the Rosenberg Affair. After that, Governor Spåre was able to drive away the remaining Jews by implementing bureaucratic harassment and expulsions. Laura Ekholm writes about the plight of Jews in Finland during the late imperial Russian period and states that Jews with invalid passports or problems with their bills of residence had the following options: 'conversion to Christianity, emigration to the West, or hide and bribe the local authorities in Helsinki, Turku, or Viipuri' (Ekholm 2013: 53–4). According to Ekholm, all these alternatives were employed. Although expulsion took a toll on the larger Jewish communities in Helsinki, Turku and Viipuri, these communities were large enough to offer resistance. They could also find support from pro-Jewish philanthropic circles.

Conclusions

The end of the Jewish community of Hämeenlinna seems to have been the result of a bureaucratic war of attrition. Governor Rafael Spåre was the chief strategist of this bureaucratic drama, but the Krapifffskys offered him staunch resistance. The Hämeenlinna municipal and police records show clearly that the Krapifffskys were the last Jews of Hämeenlinna. There are no indications of missing Jews who could potentially have been executed.

Governor Rafael Spåre was known as a rabid antisemite, and this seems to be the only logical explanation for his zeal to expel the Jews of Hämeenlinna. During WWI Spåre could connect his actions to the anti-semitic paranoia of the Russian bureaucracy and the governor-general, but Spåre's anti-semitic actions predated the war. Governor Spåre was not bound by any legal or bureaucratic imperative to exercise antisemitic policies. Both the army and governmental apparatus offered some degree of flexibility. Yohanan Petrovsky-Shtern (2009: 254) writes about this complexity: 'The Russian army was a complex entity; not everyone in its hierarchy bowed to the aggressive, state-orchestrated antisemitism.' The same applied to the Russian bureaucracy. Governor Spåre chose to play the role offered by the anti-semitic bureaucratic machinery. His task was relatively easy. The Hämeenlinna Jewish community could offer only feeble resistance, since the community had already been weakened by the Rosenberg Affair. In this case, the seeds of destruction seemed to come from within the community. The final blow, however, dealt by Rafael Spåre, who effectively cleared his provincial capital of Jews.

What could then explain the persistent rumours of executions that supposedly ended Jewish life in Hämeenlinna? The dissolution of the community was a sudden event,

because the community had already shrunk to just one family. When the Krapiffskys left, some people with rather loose ties to the family could have been left without a clue as to why the Krapiffskys moved away, or disappeared, as it seemed. They might have been watching the plight of their Jewish acquaintances from a benevolent and concerned perspective. Left without a clue as to what happened, these people started to speculate, and after the bloodshed of the Finnish civil war in 1918, sinister urban legends about executions started to mushroom. This article has demonstrated that the last Jews of Hämeenlinna were not executed, but rather forced to move away in an antisemitic campaign orchestrated by the governor. ■

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