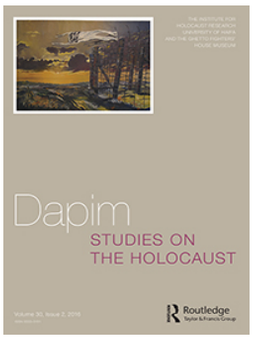

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'It Is Not My Fault That You Are Jewish!': Jews, Czechs, and the Memory of the Holocaust in Film, 1949–2009

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This article examines the ways in which Czech filmmakers have shaped the memory of the Holocaust in the Bohemian lands. It does so through an analysis of four films: *Distant Journey* (1949), *Romeo, Juliet, and Darkness* (1959), *The Death of Beautiful Deer* (1986), and *Protector* (2009). The narratives of all of these films center on a mixed couple or an intermarried family, a site where the fate of Jews and non-Jews intersected during the Holocaust. These films thus constitute productive sites for the investigation of the representation of Jews and non-Jews' relations during the war. I argue that in the immediate postwar period, filmmakers asked probing and difficult questions about Czech complicity and defiance under German occupation. Before long, however, the mixed couple became a staging ground for narratives that privileged Czech victimization and used references to the Holocaust primarily to allude to German genocidal intent against Czechs. As such, the Jewish experience was marginalized as a historical event in favor of the 'real' Czech history of the war. Analyzing the films as manifestations of historical memory, I show that these narratives serve not only to silence Czech complicity in the social death of Jews during the war, but also to legitimize the violent un-mixing of German- and Czech-speakers after World War II. This narrative of parallel victimization of Jews and Czechs was first developed in the immediate aftermath of the war, and despite the monumental political changes experienced by the country, it has become entrenched in Czech historical memory until today.

Keywords: Holocaust memory; film; Czechoslovakia/Czech Republic; intermarriage; mixed couples

Introduction

At her sister's wedding in Prague in October 1941, Anna Hyndráková, then 13 years old, wore her first pair of silk stockings and leather gloves. After the ceremony, she left to meet up with some friends:

> I went to meet my girlfriends still wearing those gloves, pulled on tightly to avoid any wrinkles. A couple of guys were hanging out on the edge of the sidewalk and when I went by them, one of them spat at me and hit my glove. And why not, I was wearing the star after all. Such incidents and denigrations were why we children were not afraid of the transports; we welcomed the change.[1]

[1]Anna Hyndráková, née Kovanicová, in *Svět bez lidských dimenzí – čtyři ženy vzpomínají* (Prague: Státní židovské muzeum v Praze, 1991), p. 130.

Testimonies such as this one reflect the ways in which random strangers, neighbors, shopkeepers, friends, and acquaintances participated in the persecution of Jews during the German occupation of Prague. Ordinary people – who humiliated Jews just because they could, avoided Jewish friends and neighbors, denounced and threatened others who continued to socialize with Jews; and who profited from Jews' attempts to save some of their belongings from the German authorities – contributed to the degradation and isolation of Jews in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Since the end of the war, the ways in which ordinary Czechs participated in the persecution of local Jews has been erased from the dominant historical memory.

This essay examines the ways in which Czech filmmakers have shaped the memory of the Holocaust in the Bohemian Lands. It does so through an analysis of four films: *Distant Journey* (1949), *Romeo, Juliet, and Darkness* (1959), *The Death of Beautiful Deer* (1986), and *Protector* (2009). All of these films' narratives center on a mixed couple or an intermarried family, a site where the fate of Jews and non-Jews intersected during the Holocaust, thus making it productive for investigating representations of relations between Jews and non-Jews during the war. In the immediate postwar period, filmmakers asked probing and difficult questions about Czech complicity and defiance under German occupation. But before long, the mixed couple became a staging ground for narratives that privileged Czech victimization and used references to the Holocaust primarily to allude to German genocidal intent against Czechs. As such, the experience of Jews was marginalized as a historical event in favor of the 'real' Czech history of the war. While this narrative of parallel victimization of Jews and Czechs was first developed in the immediate aftermath of the war, it has become entrenched in Czech representations of the Holocaust until today. In fact, as manifestations of historical memory, films about mixed couples reflect a marked continuity in the treatment of the Holocaust and World War II in Communist and post-Communist society.

For at least two decades, historians of the Holocaust have been preoccupied with questions of how and why ordinary people participated in the persecution and murder of Europe's Jews. Focusing on the testimonies of Jews about their everyday lives in Nazi Germany, historian Marion A. Kaplan argues that social death preceded Nazi Germany's physical extermination of Jews. This was a process that included the denigration, dispossession, and isolation of Jews, placing them outside 'the legitimate social or moral community.'[2] It involved state policy as well as approval of, indifference to, or participation in the stigmatization and isolation of Jews by ordinary non-Jewish Germans.

In German-occupied territories, such as the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, the Germans' conquest and the racial hierarchies they imposed added other forceful dynamics to the persecution of Jews. In Bohemia and Moravia, regions in which Czech and German-speakers intermixed and Jews were deeply integrated into both of these overlapping societies, some Czechs embraced a more extreme, racialized, and openly antisemitic form of Czech nationalism. They did so in the wake of the Munich Agreement in the fall of 1938 and were further radicalized by the German occupation of the entire region in March 1939.[3] At the same time, the new authorities' privileging of ethnic Germans and certain Czechs allowed members of these groups to bolster their racial status vis-à-vis the Germans by way of antisemitism. Thus, some Germans and

[2]Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 9.

[3]After October 1938, Czechoslovakia lost territory to neighboring Germany (Sudeten region), Poland (Teschen region), and Hungary (southern Slovakia). Slovak leaders established an independent Slovakia just before the Germans occupied the rest of Bohemia and Moravia on March 15, 1939. This territory now became the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia.

Czechs played their part in enforcing the multitude of prohibitions and humiliations directed at Jews in the months before and during the German occupation. They were motivated by antisemitism and nationalism, by a desire to solidify their tenuous racial status, or by greed and social ambition.[4] Thus, in order to understand how the Holocaust happened and its development and scope, one must understand why and how ordinary people became invested in or indifferent to the persecution of their Jewish neighbors.

Historians describe the Jewish experience in the Protectorate up until late 1941, when the authorities began physically removing Jews from their home communities, as living in 'a ghetto without walls.'[5] Some scholars have understood this primarily as the intricate web of anti-Jewish legislation created by German and Czech authorities to denigrate, dispossess, and isolate Jews.[6] Others have begun to investigate the role played by ordinary Czechs in this process of social death.[7] Until recently in Czech historiography, ethnic Germans inhabited the role as enforcers of anti-Jewish legislation, while Czechs, if their behavior was addressed at all, appeared as fearful or defiant of the authorities.[8] But if the ghetto did not have walls, then the authorities had to rely on ordinary non-Jews to police its boundaries, enforce the myriad rules, and isolate the Jews living among them. Evidence from diaries and survivor testimonies as well as studies of the roles of Czech bureaucrats and police in enforcing and expanding anti-Jewish legislation, often in response to denunciations, suggests that some Czechs also played an active role in the persecution of Jews.

In the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, there were, however, Jews who were more difficult to separate and isolate from non-Jewish society. These were the thousands of Jews married to non-Jews as well as people of mixed ancestry, the so-called *Mischlinge*. When other Jews were deported, they initially remained behind in communities across the Protectorate. As in Nazi Germany, these intermarried families and their children – a particular affront to Nazi racial ideology – were treated differently than other Jews out of consideration for public morale.[9] Yet many of these families and individuals experienced social death in ways similar to 'full Jews.' Many marriages fell apart, and the couples divorced. Other couples divorced formally, but sought to

[4]For the way in which Nazi racial theory and colonization practices contributed to antisemitism among Eastern Europe's ethnic Germans, see Doris Bergen, "Tenuousness and Tenacity: The Volksdeutsche of Eastern Europe, World War II, and the Holocaust," in Krista O'Donnell, Renate Bridenthal, and Nancy Reagin, (eds.), *The Heimat Abroad: The Boundaries of Germanness* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), here p. 273. Chad Bryant shows that while German authorities directed most Jewish property into the hands of ethnic Germans, Czechs also benefited directly as well as indirectly from less competition from Jewish businesses and professionals; Chad Bryant, *Prague in Black: Nazi Rule and Czech Nationalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 82–84. A similar dynamic, a mix of uncertainty and opportunism, also motivated Poles and other Eastern Europeans to attack Jews, see Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001).

[5]Miroslav Kárný, *"Konečné řešení": Genocida českých židů v německé protektorátní politice* (Prague: Academia, 1991), p. 50.

[6]Ibid.; Helena Petrův, *Zákonné bezpráví: Židé v Protektorátu Čechy a Morava* (Prague: Auditorium, 2011).

[7]Benjamin Frommer, "Verfolgung durch die Presse. Wie Prager Bürokraten und die tschechische Polizei halfen, die Juden des Protektorats zu isolieren," pp. 137–150 in Andrea Löw, Doris L. Bergen, and Anna Hájková, (eds.), *Alltag in Holocaust: Jüdisches Leben in Grossdeutschen Reich, 1941–1945* (Munich: Oldenbourg Verlag, 2013).

[8]Kárný argues that ordinary Czechs understood that what was happening to Jews was a mere foreshadowing of what the Germans had in store for them. According to him, Czechs' assistance to the persecuted Jews weakened the Nazis and the Czech Protectorate government's anti-Jewish policies; Kárný, *"Konečné řešení,"* p. 52; for examples of solidarity, p. 54, 73.

[9]Nathan Stoltzfus, *Resistance of the Heart: Intermarriage and the Rosenstrasse Protest in Nazi Germany* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1996), p. xxii.

maintain their families intact. Some stayed together and preserved the bonds to their non-Jewish kin and social circles. These 'last Jews,' exempted from deportation until the final months of the war, depended on their non-Jewish spouses and members of the communities in which they lived for their survival.[10] Divorce or denunciation for violations of anti-Jewish laws often led to deportation and hence a death sentence for intermarried Jews and people of mixed ancestry.[11] For much of the German occupation, the experience and fate of intermarried Jews and people of mixed ancestry was determined by the ways in which non-Jews responded to German persecution of their Jewish neighbors.

When the war ended, Czech political leaders at home and abroad deliberately encouraged an atmosphere of radical Czech nationalism and anti-Germanism. A desire for retribution engulfed the Bohemian Lands. Some Czechs' hatred toward and violence against ethnic Germans was fueled, on the one hand, by years of pent-up hostility against the brutal occupiers.[12] On the other hand, the shame of submission – of 'keeping a pragmatically low profile' – and the need to distance Czechs from accusations of collaboration with the Nazis also fed the violent attacks.[13] Many Czechs applauded the brutal acts of retribution against their German neighbors, with only some watching in horror.[14] Over the next two years, almost three million Czechoslovak citizens, who were or were considered to be ethnic Germans, were stripped of their citizenship and property and deported to Allied-occupied Germany.[15] This was part of a process of ethnic cleansing that was sanctioned by the Allies, popular among many Czechs and supported by their political leaders. Yet in its brutality, vengefulness, and arbitrariness, it was also an event that was deeply unsettling to some Czechs. The purgers' treatment of ethnic German men, women, and children – their public branding, incarceration, and forced labor; the mistreatment and violence meted out against these civilians; the theft of their property; and finally their deportation – bore a disturbing resemblance to the methods employed by the Nazis against the Protectorate's

[10]For evidence of divorce and "last Jews," see Benjamin Frommer, "The Last Jews: Intermarried Families in the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia," unpublished paper, German Studies Association, October 2013. Frommer is one of the few scholars working on intermarriage in the diverse and mixed population in the Bohemian Lands; see Benjamin Frommer, "Expulsion of Integration: Unmixing Interethnic Marriage in Postwar Czechoslovakia," *East European Politics and Societies* 14:2 (2000), pp. 381–410. Indeed, while scholars working on German-Jewish history have published widely on intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews before and after the Nazis came to power, for the Bohemian Lands, an area in Europe with some of the highest intermarriage rates, little has been done until now beyond short articles or limited studies, such as Šárka Kužílková, "Osudy česko-židovských míšenců a smíšených manželství v protektorátu Čechy a Morava," unpublished undergraduate thesis, Univerzita Karlová, Prague, 2008. For Germany, see, among others, Kerstin Meiring, *Die Christlich-Jüdische Mischehe in Deutschland, 1840–1933* (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz Verlag, 1998), Beate Meyer, *"Jüdische Mischlinge." Rassenpolitik und Verfolgungserfahrung, 1933–1945* (Hamburg: Dölling und Galitz Verlag, 1999), and Stoltzfus, *Resistance of the Heart*; for Beate Meyer's analysis of the 2003 film *Rosenstrasse*, see Beate Meyer, "Geschichte im Film: Judenverfolgung, Mischehen under Protest in der Rosenstrasse 1943," *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft* 52:1 (2004), pp. 23–36.

[11]For examples of such deportations, see Evan Burr Bukey, *Jews and Intermarriage in Nazi Austria* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 153–173.

[12]Bryant, *Prague in Black*, p. 249.

[13]Bryant, *Prague in Black*, pp. 220–223; on keeping a low profile, see Joseph Rothschild as quoted in Benjamin Frommer, *National Cleansing: Retribution against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 24.

[14]Protests against retribution were the exception, not the rule; Bryant, *Prague in Black*, p. 250.

[15]For the ways in which this affected German-speaking Jewish survivors, see Kateřina Čapková, "Germans or Jews? German-speaking Jews in Poland and Czechoslovakia after World War II," *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów/Jewish History Quarterly* 2 (2013), pp. 348–362.

Jews. It was but one testament to the profound ways in which the German occupation, one of the longest in Europe yet also one of the milder ones, impacted Czech society.[16]

Early on, writers and filmmakers understood that the fate of the Protectorate's Jews was a topic that could serve as a stage for investigating the personal and moral implications of the occupation. The range of tolerated inquiries into the recent past was, however, quickly circumscribed by the desire of postwar authorities to use the memory of the war to legitimize their policies of ethnic cleansing and later the new Communist regime. Before long, the emerging official historical narrative about the occupation emphasized German genocidal intent against Czechs as well as Czech resistance in the face of German terror. Attention was paid to the fate of Jews mostly as 'foreboding of what would have happened to Czechs,' and thus, the Holocaust was presented merely as a step on the way to Germans' 'final solution to the Czech question.'[17] The regime had little use for Jewish suffering in part because the Jews' experience raised uncomfortable and inconvenient questions about Czech collaboration with the Nazis, questions that challenged the one-sided heroic image of the Czechs as defiant victims of Nazism.[18]

The memory of the Holocaust and World War II was intertwined with film as a medium from the outset. Camera crews descended on the uncovered death pits and liberated concentration camps. The new authorities used these images to make audiences understand why the war had been fought and to legitimize postwar policies of retribution. Similarly, filmmakers began writing and shooting feature films about the war almost immediately.[19] Over time, cinema, and later television, has become one of the most significant media for shaping audiences' historical memory.[20] While monuments, exhibits, and public rituals are important manifestation of historical memory – and play an important part in the construction of that memory – film reaches much wider audiences and does so in ways that engage the viewer on multiple sensory levels all at once.[21] Historical films are therefore significant cultural artifacts that reflect as well as construct historical memory.[22]

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[16]On Czechs using Nazi methods, see Bryant, *Prague in Black*, p. 242, 268; on the impact of the occupation, p. 252.

[17]Michal Frankl, "The Sheep of Lidice: The Holocaust and the Construction of Czech National History," in John-Paul Himka and Joanna B. Michlic, (eds.), *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), pp. 172–173.

[18]This collective amnesia after the war was not unique to Czechoslovakia or Communist regimes, but rather was widespread in European societies; see the studies in Himka and Michlic, (eds.), *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe* as well as Tony Judt's overview in *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005), pp. 802–834, here p. 808.

[19]Toby Haggith and Joanna Newman, (eds.), *Holocaust and the Moving Image: Representations in Film and Television since 1933* (New York: Wildflower Press, 2005).

[20]For history and film, see the essays in Marcia Landy, (ed.), *The Historical Film: History and Memory in Media* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), especially Robert Rosenstone's essay "The Historical Film: Looking at the Past in a Postliterate Age," pp. 50–66. For film and the Holocaust, important works include Annette Insdorf, *Indelible Shadows: Film and the Holocaust* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), Alan Mintz, *Popular Culture and the Shaping of Holocaust Memory in America* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), and Lawrence Baron, *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present: The Changing Focus of Contemporary Holocaust Cinema* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2005).

[21]There is a vast literature on historical memory, see Pierre Nora, (ed.), *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, 3 vols. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996–1998); John R. Gillis, (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method," *The American Historical Review* 102:5 (December 1997); Małgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth, (eds.), *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).

[22]Any investigation of historical memory through film and other artifacts needs to acknowledge the myriad of artistic, political, financial, and social considerations that shape any production; the existence of

While scholars have examined the place of the Holocaust in Czech historiography as well as in Czech and Slovak historical culture, less attention has been paid to representations of the Holocaust in films produced in Czechoslovakia and later the Czech Republic.[23] Indeed, as manifestations of Holocaust memory, films about 'mixed couples' – intermarried families and intimate relationships between Jews and non-Jews – are particularly rich sources because they deal with an intersection of otherwise segregated worlds. As a result, mixed couples have served as favored themes for screenwriters and producers in many countries since the end of the war.[24] The story of one kind of forbidden love, film scholar Lawrence Baron argues, allows filmmakers to explore people's ability to withstand social and legal pressure to dissolve their relationships. The stark, and in some ways familiar, options faced by mixed couples – stories told away from the dehumanizing and extreme conditions in the ghettos and camps and in situations in which a deadly outcome is not a given – have allowed filmmakers and audiences to explore questions of agency, betrayal, courage, and self-sacrifice.

Historical background

In postwar and Communist Czechoslovakia, the memory of the Holocaust produced on screen has been, with a few notable exceptions, shaped by the experience of Jews in Bohemia and Moravia.[25] Since this area of the country was under direct control by Nazi Germany, it made for a more useable past than the independent, collaborationist, and populist fascist regime in Slovakia. The privileging of the experience in the wartime Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia has in turn led filmmakers to focus on stories of interethnic intimacy as a vehicle for remembering the wartime experience. In the Bohemian Lands, perhaps more than elsewhere in Europe, the experiences of intermarried couples and people of so-called mixed ancestry were an important part of the regions' history before, during, and after the war. These were individuals and families that challenged the imagined distinctions between Jews and non-Jews, Czechs and Germans.

As in most of Europe, World War II had a devastating impact on Jewish society in Czechoslovakia. Before the fall of 1938, there were about 118,000 Jews in the Bohemian Lands, comprising less than 1% of the overall population.[26] In May 1945, less than 14,000 remained alive in labor and concentration camps, in the Theresienstadt/Terezín ghetto, in hiding, or living with false papers.[27] In the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, anti-Jewish legislation modeled on Germany and Austria came into effect immediately. Within a few months, the Protectorate's Jews faced a series of new laws that intended to isolate them and encourage their emi-

marginalized, competing forms of memory; and the multiplicity of responses the film might have generated among audiences; see Tomas Sniegon, *Vanished History: The Holocaust in Czech and Slovak Historical Culture* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014), p. 8.

[23]The most comprehensive study of representations of the Holocaust in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic is Peter Hallama's *Nationale Helden und jüdische Opfer: Tschechische Repräsentationen des Holocaust* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015).

[24]Baron, *Projecting the Holocaust into the Present,* pp. 103–104.

[25]The most important exception is Oscar-winning film *Obchod na korze/The Shop on Main Street* directed by Ján Kadár and Elmar Klos (Czechoslovakia, 1965).

[26]There were about 365,000 Jews in Czechoslovakia as a whole, making up 4% of the total population; Kateřina Čapková, Michal Frankl, and Petr Brod, "Czechoslovakia," *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, Dec. 13, 2010, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/czechoslovakia.

[27]In the Protectorate, German place names took precedence over their Czech version. In this essay, I will for simplicity's sake use the town's Czech name, Terezín.

gration. Jews were fired from their jobs, their businesses and properties were confiscated, and they were barred from schools, universities, and public places, such as parks, pools, and trams, and expelled or unwelcomed from professional and voluntary associations and other social spaces.[28] Between 1938 and 1941, less than 26,000 Jews managed to leave the Protectorate through official channels; thousands more fled illegally. The majority that remained lived increasingly impoverished and circumscribed lives.[29]

In November 1941, after several thousands of Jews were deported to the ghettos in Łódź, Minsk, and elsewhere in the German-occupied East, the German authorities established a ghetto in Terezín, about 40 miles from Prague. The majority of the Jews in Bohemia and Moravia were imprisoned there over the course of 1942. Beginning in January 1942, transports took Jews from Terezín to ghettos, labor camps, and killing centers in German-occupied Poland and Soviet territory. From October 1942, Jews from Terezín were sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau.[30] In all, more than 82,000 Jews were deported from the Protectorate.[31]

In Bohemia and Moravia, German efforts to isolate Jews from non-Jews were complicated by the presence of a substantial number of intermarried families and people of mixed ancestry. During the 1920s and 1930s, well over a third, and in some years closer to half, of all Jews who married, married non-Jews.[32] There were therefore thousands of intermarried families and people of 'mixed origin' living across Bohemia and Moravia. When the authorities applied anti-Jewish policies against intermarried Jews and their children, they affected a large number of non-Jewish Germans and Czechs, complicating matters of property confiscation, employment discrimination, and social isolation.[33]

In the first few years of German occupation, some intermarried families and people of mixed ancestry were exempt from certain anti-Jewish regulations, depending on their nationality, their perceived attachment to the formal Jewish community, and the commitment of local authorities to enforcement of regulations.[34] Most importantly, once deportations began in the fall of 1941, people in mixed marriages and their children were not initially included. Thus, intermarried couples and their children assumed a position of relative privilege vis-à-vis Jewish families or 'full' Jews, but nevertheless were increasingly condemned to a life of segregation and denigration. In the spring of 1942, with mass deportation of Jews underway, the authorities applied, full force, anti-Jewish measures regarding employment, exclusion from public spaces, and prohibitions against extramarital sex and new marriages between Jews and non-Jews.[35] By the summer of 1943, the Jewish population that remained legally in the Protectorate (outside of the Terezín

[28]This process and the interplay between the Protectorate's German and Czech authorities is the subject of Kárný's *"Konečně řešení."*
[29]Kárný, *"Konečně řešení,"* p. 50.
[30]Karel Lagus and Josef Polák, *Město za mřížemi* (Prague: Baset, 2006; first published in 1964 by Svaz protifašistichých bojovníků v Našem vojsku), pp. 228–252.
[31]United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "The Holocaust in Bohemia and Moravia," Holocaust Encyclopedia, http://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10007323.
[32]Bruno Blau, "Statistika židovské Prahy," *Židovský kalendář 1938/1939*: pp. 134–159, here pp. 137–138; František Friedmann, "Židé v Čechách," pp. 729–735, in Hugo Gold, (ed.), *Die Juden und Judengemeinden Böhmens in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart* (Brünn: Jüdischer Buch-und Kunst Verlag, 1934), p. 733.
[33]Indeed, the German authorities initially sought to "transfer" German definitions and legislation to the Protectorate, but this was complicated by the differentiation between the Czech and German populations. The authorities' desire to elevate local Germans led them to distinguish not only between Jews and non-Jews, but also between Jews married to Czechs and those married to Germans, privileging the latter group over other intermarried couples. Frommer, "The Last Jews," p. 7.
[34]For the evolution of these regulations, see Helena Petrův, *Zákonné bezpráví: Židé v Protektorátu Čechy a Morava* (Prague: Auditorium, 2011), pp. 173–179.
[35]Petrův, *Zákonné bezpráví,* pp. 173–179.

ghetto) consisted of intermarried adults, their young children (under age 14), and people of mixed ancestry. In January 1945, the Germans began deporting these remaining Jews to labor camps and ghettos.

From the beginning of German rule, intermarried couples faced enormous social and official pressure to divorce. Czech and German non-Jewish women were especially disadvantaged if they remained married to their Jewish husbands. As the historian Benjamin Frommer has noted, divorce was an immediate dilemma faced by these couples, and many non-Jews used the changing circumstances 'to get rid of a Jewish spouse.'[36] The legislation directed at intermarried families deliberately pitted spouses against each other and parents against their children. Divorce returned a non-Jewish spouse to 'normal' status, lifting the burden, so to speak, of being tied to a Jew. It also temporarily protected adolescent children of mixed ancestry from deportation, and some managed to avoid anti-Jewish legislation altogether. For the Jewish spouse, however, divorce removed any protection that the marriage had afforded. This person was now subject to the full range of anti-Jewish legislation. The consequences for the Jewish spouse were dire.

The question of whether or not to divorce was particularly acute for intermarried families with children. Some couples divorced so that 'there wouldn't be trouble,' only to see the Jewish parent deported and murdered.[37] Others remained together, thereby endangering their adolescent children, who could be deported without their parents and siblings.[38] Thus, while intermarried families inhabited a privileged position relative to other Jews, their plight was nevertheless devastating. Often, intermarried individuals were the only survivors of their entire extended Jewish family. In the fall of 1944 and early 1945, 'Aryan' husbands of Jewish women and people of mixed origin were deported to labor camps in the Protectorate and elsewhere, while Jewish spouses were transported to Terezín. By May 1945, about 2650 Jews who had avoided deportation thanks to their marriages and other circumstances remained in the Protectorate.[39] The destruction of Jewish life was almost total.

In postwar Czechoslovakia, the Jewish minority was a mere shadow of its former self. In the Bohemian Lands, 85% of the Jewish population had been murdered (about 14,000 survived the

[36]Frommer, "The Last Jews," p. 13. Looking back, the legal scholar Josef Frydrych remembered "*a wave of divorce disputes* between spouses where one was Aryan which under the influences of racial statutes *flooded our courts* during the occupation" (my emphasis), quoted in Frommer, "Expulsion or Integration," p. 399.

[37]The quote is from the testimony of J.R., who was five at the time of the divorce of her Jewish father and non-Jewish mother. Although mother and daughter moved to a provincial town while the father remained in Prague, the divorce was for all intents and purposes pro forma, as the family continued to visit each other as much as possible. Still, the divorce was disastrous for the family. Having rescinded the protection afforded by his non-Jewish wife, J.R.'s father was deported to Terezín in August 1942. He was sent to Auschwitz-Birkenau in September 1943 where he was murdered. Unable to predict the consequences of a rational desire to want to protect their children from persecution, the divorce deprived J.R.'s father of life-saving protection. J. R. Testimony #987 (recorded July 1, 2002) in the collection of Holocaust survivor testimonies in the Jewish Museum in Prague (Sbírka vzpomínek pamětníků holocaustu, Židovské museum v Praze).

[38]One of the best-known examples from the Protectorate is perhaps that of the Ginz family. Ota and Marie Ginz did not divorce. He was Jewish; she was not. They had two children, and while they were not slated for deportation initially, Ota and his two children were subject to a whole host of anti-Jewish legislation, including forced labor. Throughout the spring and summer of 1942, the Ginzs watched as their family and friends headed to Terezín. In late September 1942, Petr, having turned fourteen a few months earlier, received his transport notification. While keeping the family intact afforded Ota Ginz protection from deportation, his adolescent children were deported at different times and alone. Petr Ginz was murdered in Auschwitz-Birkenau in the fall of 1944. His parents and sister survived the war. For the Ginzs' account, see Chava Pressburger, *Deník mého bratra: Zápisky Petra Ginze z let 1941–1942* (Prague: Trigon, 2004).

[39]Kárný, *"Konečné rešení,"* p. 21.

Holocaust). In Slovakia, more than two-thirds of the community was dead, leaving about 30,000 survivors. In prewar Czechoslovakia's eastern-most province, Subcarpathian Ruthenia, which had been occupied by Hungary during the war, 15,000 Jews survived the Holocaust; the rate of death there was similar to the one in Bohemia and Moravia: almost 85%. In all, the Germans and their helpers murdered 272,000 Jews from Czechoslovakia. In 1948, an estimated 44,000 Jews remained in Czechoslovakia, about 14,000 in the Bohemian Lands and the remainder in Slovakia.[40] By 1950, about 18,000 Jews remained in the country as a whole. As in neighboring Germany, a significant part of postwar Jewish society consisted of people who were married to non-Jews or the children of intermarried couples.[41]

Postwar Czechoslovakia was awash with hyper-nationalism and ethnic violence, but also with a revolutionary atmosphere that focused on building a better, more just society.[42] On the one hand, political leaders and public opinion demanded that Jews' inclusion in postwar Czechoslovak society be conditional, dependent on their will to assimilate, to act and speak Czech, and to abandon any particularism.[43] On the other, as Anna Hájková argues, the promise of a new society allowed some survivors 'to start afresh' and to find ways 'to fit in' through politics, by changing their name and language and identifying as Czech rather than as Jewish victims of Nazi oppression.[44] In short, people's Jewishness had to become inconspicuous. Discussing the Jews' differences – their historical experience, culture, and, significantly, memory of the war – became a taboo. Wartime and postwar antisemitism, social and cultural integration, and the assimilationist pressures of the Communist state made the private sphere, family, and memory, the locus for Jewishness in Czechoslovakia. The only acceptable Jew was a de-Judaized one, a person whose difference in origin was marked by his or her Jewish name or features, but who was in every other way Czech. This absence of difference, embodied by the intermarried, presumably assimilated, Jewish character, would become a significant part of Czech cinematic representations of the Holocaust.

Confrontation and indifference, 1945–1958

After the war, the new Czechoslovak authorities put the experience of war and genocide to immediate political use. As the historian Michal Frankl shows, it was, however, not the murder of Jews that took center stage. Rather, in this emerging master narrative, the German plans for a final solution to the 'Czech question' came to dominate. Communist and non-Communist Czech scholars and politicians framed the occupation and its aftermath as the culmination of a century-old struggle between Germans and Czechs.[45] According to this narrative, Nazi Germany's Germanization policies were merely a more radical incarnation of earlier Austro-German

[40]"Czechoslovakia," *The YIVO Encyclopedia of the Jews in Eastern Europe*.
[41]Frommer, "The Last Jews," p. 19; they were joined by thousands of Jews from Subcarpathian Ruthenia who moved to the western borderlands, when Czechoslovakia's easternmost province was annexed by the Soviet Union. Alena Heitlinger, *In the Shadows of the Holocaust and Communism: Czech and Slovak Jews since 1945* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2006); p. 68.
[42]This atmosphere is powerfully recounted in Heda Margolius-Kovaly's memoir *Under A Cruel Star: A Life in Prague, 1941–1968* (New York: Holmes & Meier Publishers, Inc., 1997).
[43]Jan Láníček, "Coming Home? Jewish Survivors in Postwar Czechoslovakia," in Sharif Gemie, Norry Laporte, and Scott Soo, (eds.), *Coming Home? Conflict and Return Migration in the Aftermath of Europe's Twentieth-Century Civil Wars*, volume 1 (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), pp. 201–220.
[44]Anna Hájková, "To Terezín and Back Again: Czech Jews and their Bonds of Belonging from Deportations to the Postwar," *Dapim: Studies on the Holocaust* 28:1 (2014), pp. 38–55, here pp. 51–52.
[45]Frankl, "The Sheep of Lidice," pp. 171–173.

efforts to eradicate the Czech nation. It was only Germany's loss of the war that had prevented a catastrophe. The expulsion of the country's Germans was not only meant to punish these citizens for their alleged treason, but also to remove Germans and the threat of Germanization once and for all from lands considered Czech. The memory of the war as the culmination of a long German-Czech national struggle, one ultimately won by the Czechs, has been, and continues to be, the most persistent and widely accepted narrative about the war in the Czech Republic.[46]

Central to the development of this interpretive framework was the so-called *heydrichiáda*, the terror campaign unleashed in the Protectorate in the wake of the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich. Heydrich had arrived as the new head of the Protectorate in late September 1941 and immediately ordered a wave of arrests and executions. However, because of the Protectorate's economic significance for the war effort, Heydrich soon adopted a policy of carrot and stick, rewarding compliance while discouraging sabotage by acting swiftly to crush all forms of resistance. Heydrich's arrival also coincided with a radicalization in German anti-Jewish polices. Beginning in October 1941, thousands of Jews were sent from the Protectorate to ghettos in German-occupied Poland, the Baltic states, and Soviet territory. In December 1941, the Czechoslovak government-in-exile in London dispatched agents to Prague to kill Heydrich. The attack took place on 27 May 1942. Roundups and executions of hundreds of Czechs followed.[47] The reprisals included the destruction of two Czech villages, Lidice and Ležáky. The Germans murdered the men and boys in the villages as well as some women. Most women and girls were sent to concentration camps. As the hunt for the assassins unfolded, rumors circulated that one in every 10 Czechs would be killed if the assassins were not handed over to the authorities.[48] The agents killed themselves along with other members of the resistance when the Germans discovered their hideout in Prague.

After the war, Communist and non-Communist leaders alike celebrated the heroism of resistance fighters and partisans, focusing on the Slovak National Uprising in 1944 and on the assassination of Heydrich and the subsequent terror and mass executions. In the Bohemian Lands, the events of the summer of 1942 came to embody the entire Czech wartime experience. Ironically, it was the relative calm in the Protectorate that moved Edvard Beneš, the leader of the Czechoslovak government-in-exile in London, to order the assassination of Heydrich, a decision that met opposition by domestic resistance circles precisely because they anticipated massive German reprisals. The quiet, grudging submission of Czech society, which was made possible by high wages, social benefits, and the threat of arrest, that preceded and followed the *heydrichiáda* was marginalized in favor of the memory of heroic sacrifice and resistance in the face of German terror.[49]

Since the end of the war, this focus on the *heydrichiáda* and the interpretation of the occupation as a national struggle between Czechs and Germans has marginalized the wartime experience of Jews and Roma.[50] The murder of Roma was, and continues to be, a taboo subject, Michal Frankl argues. In contrast, in school textbooks and exhibits, German persecution of Jews was incorporated into the dominant narrative, but only as an element in a broader German campaign against Czechs. For example, even though the mass deportations of Jews got under way in the fall of 1941, the transports were often depicted as parallel to, and hence part of, the terror campaign

[46]Ibid., pp. 182–184; Hallama, *Nationale Helden*, pp. 310–317.
[47]According to Chad Bryant, 3,188 Czechs were arrested and 1,357 sentenced to death in response to the assassination not including more than 200 villagers executed in Lidice and Ležáky; see Bryant, *Prague in Black*, p. 172. Historians estimate that the total number of non-Jewish Czechs killed during the war by the Nazis is between 36,000 and 55,000. Frommer, *National Cleansing*, p. 25.
[48]Bryant, *Prague in Black*, pp. 169–171.
[49]Bryant, *Prague in Black*, p. 179, pp. 185–186.
[50]Frankl, "The Sheep of Lidice," p. 172.

unleashed after the 1942 attack on Heydrich. By doing so, the authors erased the distinctiveness of the wartime experience of Jews and suggested that the Germans targeted Czechs and Jews with equivalent exterminationist policies.

Another way in which the fate of Jews was simultaneously silenced and co-opted in order to exaggerate German persecution of Czechs is through the use of the mantra '360,000 Czechoslovak victims' of World War II. Even though three-quarters of these victims were Jews who died as a result of racial policies, the only distinction Communist historians made among the victims, Frankl notes, was the identification of 25,000 of the victims as Communists.[51] More recently, in the public debate about *Schindler's List* in the mid-1990s, '360,000' continued to serve to delineate non-Jewish Czech suffering at the hands of the Germans by erasing the identities of the victims.[52] Furthermore, from 1945 onward, the Small Fortress at Terezín became the location for official commemorations for the victims of fascism.[53] By choosing the fortress as the site for the memorial, the authorities insisted on the political nature of German persecution. Unlike the town of Terezín, the fortress served as a Gestapo prison during the war. In many cases, prisoners held there had been arrested on political grounds. The town itself, where the ghetto had been, was repopulated by its prewar inhabitants and by Czechoslovak army units as soon as the survivors left the ghetto in the summer of 1945, thus quickly erasing the memory of the ghetto and its more than 30,000 Jewish dead.

In postwar Czechoslovakia, the Communist regime's attitude toward Jews and the Jewish experience of persecution was marked by indifference and neglect, if not outright hostility. Yet the authorities were unpredictable. In 1949, for example, they allowed the publication of the Jewish writer Jiří Weil's autobiographical novel *Life with a Star*.[54] That same year, they banned Alfréd Radok's film *Distant Journey*, a story about an intermarried Czech-Jewish couple and the first feature film about the Holocaust made in Czechoslovakia. Indeed, it is astonishing that Radok was able to complete and release his film in 1949. Considering the surge in postwar antisemitism and overall hostility toward minorities, an atmosphere that would have dissuaded most from making a film about Jewish suffering and the responses of ordinary Czechs to the fate of their Jewish neighbors, *Distant Journey* is uniquely focused precisely on this topic.[55]

The film was a personal one, both for the original screenwriter Erik Kolár, who was intermarried, and Radok, who authored the final version of the script and directed the film.[56] Radok came from an intermarried family, and his Jewish father and other family members died in Terezín.

[51]Ibid., p. 173. Benjamin Frommer shows that this number is made-up; see *National Cleansing*, p. 26, fn. 85. In all, approximately 80,000 from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, 42,000 from the Sudetenland, 80,000 from Subcarpathian Ruthenia, and 70,000 from Slovakia; for this indiscriminate use of numbers, see Sniegon, *Vanished History,* p. 203.

[52]Tomas Sniegon, "Schindler's List Comes to Schindler's Homeland: Oskar Schindler as a Problem of Czech Historical Culture," in Klas-Göran Karlsson and Ulf Zander, (eds.), *The Holocaust on Post-War Battlefields: Genocide as Historical Culture* (Malmö: Sekel, 2006), pp. 161–190.

[53]See Peter Hallama's discussion of the evolution of Terezín as a site of memory, *Nationale Helden*, pp. 63–142.

[54]Jiří Weil, *Život s hvězdou* (Prague: ELK, 1949).

[55]*Daleká cesta (Distant Journey),* directed by Alfréd Radok (Czechoslovakia, 1948). The previous year, Kurt Maezig's *Ehe im Schatten/Marriage in the Shadows* (1947) was produced in the Soviet-occupied zone of Germany and released in all the Berlin sectors. While the story was based on the fate of a well-known mixed couple in Nazi Germany, the director also drew on his own experiences. I am grateful to Stuart Liebman for this reference.

[56]For a fascinating study of this film drawing on a wide variety of sources, see Jan Láníček and Stuart Liebman's forthcoming article, "A Closer Look at *Distant Journey*," (forthcoming in *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*) on Kolár and Radok's original scripts and the editing they underwent, pp. 5–13; for Kolár and Radok's personal experiences, p. 5.

Distant Journey was released in Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1949, but was banned by the Communist authorities within a few months.[57] Unlike the other Czech films on mixed couples that would follow, *Distant Journey* approached the Holocaust as the main event of the war, undistracted by the later conventions about Czech suffering and the *heydrichiáda*.

The film's story opens sometime in the late fall of 1938 during the post-Munich Second Czechoslovak Republic, when Hana Kaufmannová, a medical doctor, is fired by the hospital administration due to her 'racial origins.' Once the Germans invade, conditions for Jews rapidly deteriorate. Despite this, Hana and her non-Jewish lover and fellow doctor Antonín Bureš marry, a decision that costs him his position at the hospital and sends him to the factory floor. As deportations begin, fear engulfs Hana's family. In a particularly memorable scene, one of the family's Jewish neighbors commits suicide rather than obeying the order to join a transport. Before long, Hana's parents and younger siblings are sent to Terezín. Hana remains behind, protected from deportation by her 'Aryan' husband. Assisted by a sympathetic Czech gendarme, Antonín smuggles himself into the ghetto. There, amidst the appalling conditions, he learns that Hana's parents and siblings have been sent to the 'East.' When Antonín returns home, he receives the news that his father and brother, who had been arrested for resistance activities, have died in Mauthausen. Before long, Antonín is sent to a work camp for 'Aryan' husbands. Hana is deported to Terezín. The film ends as Hana and Antonín, the sole survivors of their respective families, visit Terezín after liberation. In this last scene, the camera focuses on a gravestone or monument with a Star of David before shifting to a panoramic view of the masses of white crosses that adorn the memorial site in front of the small fortress. As the couple makes their way between the crosses, a narrator recites the names of the death and concentration camps.

There are several striking aspects of Alfréd Radok's film. More than any movie that would follow, Radok painted a portrait of Czech Jewish culture as both distinctly Jewish and distinctly Czech. According to the film, what appeared to distinguish Czechs and Jews most from each other was not their religion, although members of the older generation were conscious of those differences, but class and family history.[58] Antonín, the main non-Jewish Czech character, comes from a working-class background. His widowed father is a shoemaker. Hana and the film's other Jewish characters are from middle- and upper-middle-class environments. In *Distant Journey*, Jews are deeply rooted and recognizably Czech. In fact, they are so Czech that the audience has to be reminded of their Jewishness through the display of menorahs and a family album. When Hana's father seeks to secure visas for the family, Hana announces that she won't be leaving because 'I belong here, this is my language, my upbringing, my people, everything!' Her father responds, 'And you think that I don't?' Soon enough, distinctions are imposed on the family from the outside, by other Czechs and Germans alike.

Another unusual part of *Distant Journey* is its focus on Czech antisemitism. From the outset, Jews are excluded from society on Czech initiative. In fact, Hana's story opens with her dismissal by an openly antisemitic hospital administrator, a reference to the 'self-Aryanization' that some institutions undertook after the Munich crisis and thus well in advance of the German occupation. Another major theme is the juxtaposition between German anti-Jewish regulations, represented by a stream of announcements across the screen and the everyday Czech antisemitism embodied by the ubiquitous graffiti 'Jews out!' (*Židí ven!*) on office doors and city streets. As the hateful

[57]Láníček and Liebman, "A Closer Look," p. 22; for wide distribution abroad, p. 25; *Distant Journey* was screened again from 1954 to 1956, and with the thaw in the late 1950s and 1960s it was more widely distributed. It was very influential for filmmakers of that era, pp. 28–29.

[58]Veronika Ambros notes Radok's careful creation of types of people rather than ethnic stereotypes; see Veronika Ambros, "Daleká cesta. Svědecká výpověď Alfréda Radoka," in Eva Stehlíková, (ed.), *Alfréd Radok mezi filmem a divadlem* (Prague: AMU, 2007), pp. 53–75, here p. 66.

words of neighbors, the latter comes across as insidious, intimate (Czech) threats that contributed to – and at times preempted – the official (German) persecution. Yet the depiction of Czech antisemitism is complex. On the one hand, there is the vicious antisemitism of the collaborators and beneficiaries of the Jews' misfortune. On the other, there is the traditional dislike of Jews, embodied by Antonín's working-class father, who refuses to attend his son's wedding to a Jewish woman. Still, when Antonín's Jewish family needs help, his father overcomes his prejudices, recognizing the injustice that has befallen Jews. For Radok, the Bureš family enabled him to conform to the Communist dictates that invested the working class with true moral character and heroism.

In *Distant Journey*, the narrative's focus on the intermarried family allowed Radok to examine people's character in the face of persecution and to explore the ways in which the wartime experience of Jews and non-Jews were intertwined. While the pressures on the couple mount, we wait for Antonín to falter morally and abandon Hana to her fate. But he doesn't. He remains faithful despite the persecution he experiences as the 'Aryan' husband of a Jewish woman. And others, such as Antonín's working-class colleague from the factory who has promised to hide Hana, stay true to their word and humanity as well.

At the same time, Radok also ponders the differences between Jews and non-Jews during the occupation. Some non-Jews lost family, while others took advantage of new material and social opportunities. Many were indifferent to the fate of Jews. Without introducing overtly negative Czech characters, Radok nevertheless makes this point by juxtaposing street scenes in the overcrowded, chaotic, terrifying, and maddening Terezín ghetto with the tranquility and ordinariness of Prague's sunny streets where life went on as usual.

One particularly striking aspect of this film is that fear, debilitating and pervasive, is experienced only by Jews and not by Czechs. Radok shows that Czechs are imprisoned for their resistance to the occupation, but Czech society is not paralyzed or morally warped by German terror. As time went on, filmmakers engaging the Holocaust would do so bound by the master narrative of a terrorized Czech society. However, *Distant Journey* conformed to postwar dictates in ways that seem out of place given the thrust of the film as a whole. In the film's concluding scene, the loss suffered by Jews and non-Jews is represented not only as having occurred in the same places, but also as equally catastrophic. The Germans have murdered *both* Hana and Antonin's families. As the two gaze over the sea of crosses, the differences between the Nazi regime's Jewish and Czech victims are effectively erased. In this concluding take, Radok seems to anticipate the erasure of the distinct experience of Czech Jews in favor of the official universalizing narrative of 'Czechoslovak victims.'[59]

Indeed, while in the first few years after the war, a number of books appeared that chronicled the experiences of the Protectorate's Jews, with the consolidation of the Communist regime, a marked indifference to the suffering of Jews set in in the public realm.[60] Significantly, the 1952 show trial of the prominent Communist leader Rudolf Slánský and his alleged accomplices

[59]Láníček and Liebman suggest that there was official intervention in creating the concluding scene's universalizing theme. As they note, Radok had to build the Christian cemetery for the film and the ending's conflation of Jewish and Christian suffering stands in stark contrast to the film's focus on a particular Jewish experience, "A Closer Look," pp. 16–17.

[60]Works included Richard Feder's memoir, *Židovská tragédie* (Kolín: Lusk, 1947) and Ota Kraus and Erich Schön, *Továrna na smrt* (Prague: Čin, 1946). For a more detailed discussion of these early testimonies and studies, see Michal Frankl, "Die 'Endlösung der Judenfrage' und die Narrative der tschechischen Geschicte, 1945–1989," in Christiane Brenner, Erik Franzen, Peter Haslinger, and Robert Luft, (eds.), *Geschichtsschreibung zu den böhmischen Ländern im 20. Jahrhundert. Wissenschaftstraditionen, Institutionen, Diskurse* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2006), pp. 257–260.

(11 of the 14 defendants, including Slánský himself, were of 'Jewish origin') was accompanied by state-sponsored and popular antisemitism. This further discouraged any mention of the victimization of Jews at the hands of the Nazis. While the authorities made constant use of the memory of World War II, celebrating heroic resistance and the Red Army's liberation of Czechs and Slovaks from German tyranny, the memory of the persecution of the country's Jews was relegated to the private sphere.

Probing questions, comforting conclusions, 1959–1968

By the late 1950s, as the political and cultural thaw of destalinization began to have an impact in Czechoslovakia, the authorities became more receptive to commemorative projects that focused on the Holocaust. Under the banner of the Communist slogan 'struggle for peace and against fascism,' the director of the state's Jewish Museum, Hana Volavková and her staff, including writer Jiří Weil, then an employee of the museum, managed to launch several exhibits and publications that commemorated not only the universal 'victims of fascism,' but specifically Jewish victims.[61] In 1959, Volavková and Weil edited a book of children's drawings and poems from Terezín entitled *Children's Drawings on the Station to Death: Terezín 1942–1944* (the English-language edition was entitled *I Never Saw Another Butterfly*).[62] A few years earlier, the construction of a memorial to Jewish victims of the war had begun in the Pinkas Synagogue in Prague. Artists hand-painted every victim's name and date of birth and deportation, a total of 77,297 entries, on the walls of the synagogue. In 1964, Josef Polák and Karel Lagus published a carefully researched monograph on the Holocaust in the Protectorate, and some of their work also appeared in an English-language book on Terezín soon thereafter.[63]

The authorities' desire to distance themselves from the repressive Stalinist regime allowed for a new openness to different narratives about the recent past. While at first there was some vacillation on the part of the authorities, in this atmosphere of new possibilities, writers, artists, editors, and filmmakers created works that broached new topics and challenged old narratives.[64] The subsequent decade saw a remarkable outpouring of films, novels, and short stories about the Holocaust, including Jan Otčenášek's best-selling *Romeo, Juliet, and Darkness*, Josef Škvorecký's *The Menorah*, and the works of the prolific Arnošt Lustig. Lustig published a novel or a short story collection almost every year during this decade.[65]

[61]Magda Veselská, *Archa paměti Cesta pražského židovského muzea pohnutým 20. Stoletím* (Prague: Academia, 2013).

[62]The Czech edition was Hana Volavková, (ed.)*, Dětské kresby na zastávce k smrti. Terezín, 1942–1944* (Prague; Státní židovské muzeum v Praze, 1959). For Weil's work at the Jewish Museum, see Hana Hříbková, "Jiří Weil: a Scientist and Initiator of Exhibitions of Children's Drawings From Terezín," working paper, Centrum pro studium holokaustu a židovské literatury (Prague: FFUK, n.d.).

[63]Karel Lagus and Josef Polák, *Město za mřižemi* (Prague: Naše vojsko, 1964) and František Ehrmann, Otta Heitlinger, and Rudolf Iltis, (eds.), *Terezín* (Prague: The Council of Jewish Religious Communities in Prague, 1965); for a full list, see Frankl, "Die 'Endlösung der Judenfrage,'" p. 261.

[64]Not all of the new works released were welcomed by the authorities, some having "slipped by" the censors, and they were soon prohibited, most famously, Josef Škvorecký's *Zbabělci* (Prague: Československý spisovatel, 1958); see the interview with Josef Škvorecký by John Glusman, "The Art of Fiction," *The Paris Review* 112 (Winter, 1989), pp. 10–11; for the censors, see Milan Bárta, "Cenzura československého filmu a televize v letech 1953–1968," *Securitas imperii* 10 (2003), pp. 5–57.

[65]Jan Otčenášek, *Romeo, Julie, a Tma* (Prague: Československý spisovatel, 1958) and Josef Škvorecký, *Sedmiramenný svícen* (Prague: Naše vojsko, 1964). This work was later published in English under the title *When Eve Was Naked*, which obscures the book's Jewish content. Arnošt Lustig's publications began with the short story collection, *Noc a naděje,* in 1957. Several of his works were adapted for the screen including the short story "Tma nemá stín" from the collection *Démanty noci* (1958) (film 1964, directed

Several of these works were almost immediately adapted for the screen. Having seemingly been granted permission to explore sensitive, even taboo, topics, filmmakers produced a number of high-quality and innovative films about the Holocaust. In fact, that decade witnessed a still-unmatched productivity in terms of films about the wartime experience of Jews in the Protectorate and Slovakia. Some were made by, or based on the experiences of, survivors, others by non-Jewish Czechs and Slovaks. The films include *Romeo, Juliet, and Darkness* (1959), *Transport from Paradise* (1962), *... And the Fifth Horseman is Fear* (1964), *Diamonds of the Night* (1964), *The Shop on Main Street* (1965), *Dita Saxova* (1967), and *The Cremator* (1968).[66]

These films situated the persecution of Jews in familiar spaces of World War II, such as Terezín, although now with a focus on the ghetto, not the prison, on fascist Slovakia, and wartime Prague. Some focused less on the historicity of the story and more on the psychology of persecution. Yet all of the filmmakers approached the Holocaust through narratives about individuals under dictatorship. Thus, rather than being films about the persecution of Jews, the Holocaust became a stage on which writers and directors could explore questions of individuals' moral character, complicity, and resistance in a society governed by fear. As Thomas Sniegon argues, the filmmakers of the 1960s Czech New Wave 'straddled the line between forbidden and permitted.'[67] While using well-established tropes from the official narrative about World War II, such as fascist terror against the Czechs and Slovaks, working-class resistance, and bourgeois complicity, the filmmakers entered new territory by focusing on the experience of Jews and, most daringly, on the responses of non-Jewish Czechs to the regime's persecution of their Jewish neighbors.

The first of these films, the 1959 *Romeo, Juliet, and Darkness* is the tale of the doomed love between the non-Jewish Czech high school student Pavel and the Jewish Hana.[68] The story takes place almost entirely in the working-class apartment building in which Pavel lives. When Hana shows up looking for the Wurms family, the building's only Jewish family, whom the viewer has just seen leave for the deportation train, Pavel helps the frightened and isolated Hana out of harm's way by hiding her in the building's attic. Before long the two are in love. Yet Pavel quickly becomes aware of how dangerous his romance is. Hana, having failed to show up for her transport, is now an 'unregistered person.' Schoolmates are arrested for helping such people, and Pavel's mother, who is growing increasingly concerned about Pavel's suspect behavior and odd hours, pleads with him not to put his family at risk.

Shortly after Pavel hides Hana, the attack on Heydrich occurs, and with the repression that follows, Czech society is under siege and, much like Hana in the attic, terrorized by German brutality. Soon, the building's only collaborator, the promiscuous, opportunistic, and openly antisemitic Czech girlfriend of a German soldier, who is living in the Wurms' apartment and has appropriated the family's belongings, reveals Pavel's secret to his mother. As Pavel is out

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by Jan Němec), *Dita Saxová* (1962, film adaptation 1967, directed by Antonín Moskalyk), *Transport z ráje* (1962, film same year, directed by Zbyněk Brynych), and *Modlitba pro Kateřinu Horovitzovou* (1964, film adaptation released in 1965, directed by Antonín Moskalyk). For a full list of Lustig's work, see http://www.slovnikceskeliteratury.cz/showContent.jsp?docId=507.

[66]Petr Koura, "Obraz holokaustu v českém hraném filmu," in Jiří Holý, (ed.), *Holokaust – Šoa – zagłada v české, slovenské a polské literature* (Prague: [PUBLISHER], 2007), pp. 229–233.

[67]Sniegon, *Vanished History*, p. 63.

[68]In Jan Otčenášek's novel Hana is Esther. The name change was made, according to one observer, so "that it would be a more apt, less biblical, and more historically accurate," but was likely also a reference to Alfréd Radok's Hana given how influential *Distant Journey* was for filmmakers in the 1960s; for biblical perspective, see František Goldscheider, "Romeo, Julie, a tma: Nejúspěšnější dílo novodobé české prózy ožije na plátně," *Kino* 15:2 (1960), pp. 24–25, and for influence, see Láníček and Liebman, "A Closer Look," pp. 28–29.

arranging for a new hiding place for Hana, Pavel's mother, desperate to remove the threat to her son, pleads with Hana to leave. Tension builds as German troops arrive to subdue Heydrich's assassins holed up a few blocks away. The women of the building panic. By the time Pavel returns home, his mother and the female collaborator have flushed Hana out. Hana, fully aware of the danger she poses to Pavel, is determined to leave. While he tries desperately to stop her, Hana runs into the street and is shot by the German patrol outside the building. Pavel remains inside, the door bolted shut by his fellow Czechs.

Working within the constraints of Communist narratives, yet at a moment of political and cultural thaw, the film's director, Jiří Weiss, in collaboration with the author of the novel, Jan Otčenášek, used the mixed couple to examine the power of fear and the limits of solidarity in the face of state-sponsored terror. Pavel and Hana's courtship plays out against the backdrop of mass arrests and executions, a seemingly endless series of reprisals against Czechs. In doing so, the filmmakers affirmed the dominant narrative of Czech victimization during World War II. Nevertheless, the film broached hitherto forbidden topics, including its depiction of Czechs as participating in the isolation of Jews, as indifferent to Jews' suffering, and as the ones who, gripped by their own fears, ultimately betrayed the Jews among them.

But it is not the fate of Jews that demands attention. Rather, what is under investigation is the challenge to the Czech national character posed by German terror unleashed against Jewish *as well as* non-Jewish Czechs. To that end, the film's non-Jewish women embody the failure of Czech character.[69] Pavel's mother compromises her moral principles out of fear. She warns Pavel not to speak to the Jewish Wurms family in public lest someone should see him. When she refuses to alter stolen Jewish clothes for their new owner, a veiled accusation of sympathizing with Jews is all it takes for her to reconsider. When Pavel reproaches her, she responds, 'We must survive at all costs!' Her moral failure culminates in her expulsion of Hana from the attic. Like most Czechs under the occupation, the mother is not hateful, but weak and fearful.

In contrast, the collaborationist neighbor is greedy and utterly immoral, her mantra being, 'Live for the moment; we don't know what tomorrow will bring.' Her promiscuity, fraternization with the German enemy, and vulgar speech and behavior suggests that collaborators were not part of polite society. Rather, they were barely tolerated outcasts on the margins of the Czech community.

Finally, there is Pavel's girlfriend, a 'typical' Czech girl, blonde and easygoing – unlike the dark and depressed Hana – who is completely oblivious to the momentous drama unfolding. The film's Czech male characters are almost all uniformly positive. They do not give in to the pressures of German terror. Pavel's grandfather, for example, offers subtle support for his grandson's secretive exploits. While Pavel's resolve is tested by fear, the viewer never doubts that he will remain true; the real danger emanates from the women within and the German terror outside.

Weiss' daring focus on the complicity of Czechs was somewhat neutralized by the historical moment in which the film's narrative plays out and the resulting impression that Jews and Czechs were persecuted to the same degree, that they were similarly victimized. By setting the film in late May and early June 1942, Weiss avoided confronting not only the process of social death experienced by Jews in the first three years of German occupation, but also the Czech response to the onset of deportations in the fall of 1941. Incidentally, this was an investigation of Czechs' behavior from which Otčenášek's novel did not shy away. By making the *heydrichiáda*, the symbol of terror against Czechs, the historical backdrop to the drama playing out in Pavel's building, Weiss

[69]This is another interesting departure from the book, where the collaborator Rejsek is a Czech turned German, and thus not a "real" Czech; see Jan Otčenášek, *Romeo, Julie a tma* (Prague: Československý spisovatel 1963), pp. 141–152 (Chapter 9).

proposes that fear explains the failure of Czechs to help, or even sympathize with, their Jewish neighbors. Terror serves as the excuse for the inability of Czechs to help Jews, about whom we learn only that they are in danger and are themselves dangerous to Czechs. By avoiding the particularity of the Jews' experience of persecution, the film suggests that Jews and Czechs are parallel victims, divided by fear, but victimized by a common enemy. Thus, although the film asks difficult questions about Czech complicity, in the end, it falls back on the official master narrative of German terror and exterminationist intentions vis-à-vis the Czech nation that had been firmly established by the late 1950s. The Holocaust as an event is therefore ignored.

While the device of the mixed couple could have allowed for a meaningful investigation of the experience of Jews and Czechs, in *Romeo, Juliet, and Darkness*, the plot of the non-Jewish boy saving the Jewish girl serves to further marginalize the Jewish wartime experience.[70] Unlike Radok's Hana – and Otčenášek's original heroine Esther – Weiss' Hana doesn't have a story of her own.[71] All we learn is that she has a Jewish father. In fact, little seems to distinguish her from non-Jewish women than her dark features, timidity, and her yellow star. She is a de-Judaized Jew, without family and history. Her Jewishness is manifest in her victimization. In fact, in a promotional review ahead of its release, the author, seeking to play up the universalist message of the film, did not mention Hana's Jewishness aside from referring to her as a victim, 'as the girl with a yellow star with the inscription "Jude."'[72] She, and by extension the fate of Jews, serve merely as a vehicle for Pavel's coming of age and moral struggle, a battle he ultimately wins even as Hana, ignoring his pleas to stay, surrenders herself to her death at the hands of the Germans. The focus on the struggle of the male Czech hero and the passivity of the female Jewish victim evokes important postwar tropes about Czechs as heroic fighters and Jews as passive, almost willing, victims.[73]

Weiss and Otčenášek's work was the first of several films exploring the Holocaust released in the 1960s. *Romeo, Juliet, and Darkness* explored important new territory in dealing with the memory of the war, such as its prodding questions about Czechs' fear, self-interest, and complicity in the persecution of Jews. However, this daring inquiry was somewhat neutralized by the film's ultimate affirmation of the existing narratives about Czechs' simultaneous victimization and heroism. The films that followed in the increasingly liberal and experimental atmosphere of the 1960s, such as *The Shop on Main Street*, situated the Holocaust as a historical event at the center of the war experience, yet retained the focus on the allegorical element. The Soviet-led invasion in August 1968 put an abrupt end to the liberalized political and cultural climate that had allowed people to examine hitherto marginalized historical topics as well as ponder their significance for Czech and Slovak identities. It would be almost 20 years before another film about the Holocaust was released in Czechoslovakia.

[70]For this as a trope in Holocaust films, see Judith E. Doneson, "The Jew as a Female Figure in Holocaust Film," *Shoah* 1:1 (Spring, 1978), pp. 11–13, 18. I am grateful to Jacob Labendz for this reference.

[71]For family background and social death examples, see Otčenášek, *Romeo, Julie a tma,* pp. 32–33, 98–99, 109, 125–134.

[72]The article was accompanied by a full-page still from the film of Hana and her star, František Goldscheider, "Romeo, Julie, a tma: Nejúspěšnější dílo novodobé české prózy ožije na plátně," *Kino* 15:2 (1960), pp. 24–25.

[73]The notion that Jews' suffering should be commemorated was not necessarily widely shared. At the opening of an exhibit in Auschwitz-Birkenau in the 1950s, the Union of Czech Anti-Fascist Fighters declined to list the names of Czechoslovak Jewish victims. They refused to honor them to the same extent as members of the resistance, referring to the camp's Jewish victims as "groups that passively and without any resistance went into the gas chambers," as quoted in Sniegnon, *Vanished History*, p. 62.

'Normalization': nostalgia and the Holocaust, 1969–1989

After 1969, during the period of so-called normalization, the official silence on the Holocaust was to some extent re-imposed. As in other parts of the Communist bloc, the Czechoslovak regime toyed with antisemitism, framing the Prague Spring as the result of the interference of 'Zionist forces.'[74] But the silence was not complete. Historian Miroslav Kárný published a number of articles about the Holocaust in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia based on thorough archival research.[75] Yet, at the same time, historical knowledge about the Holocaust remained absent from school curricula and commemorative events.[76] It was not until the mid-1980s that filmmakers broached the topic of the Holocaust again, this time as a historical family drama.

Unlike the 1960s, when the Holocaust acted as a metaphor for life under totalitarian rule, by the 1980s Czechoslovak filmmakers were producing historical films and television series that focused on everyday life. They now approached memory and politics through family-centered stories.[77] Interestingly, at the time, this was a trend that breached the Iron Curtain, as western filmmakers also dealt with complex historical topics, such as American slavery, World War II, and the Holocaust through a private, family lens in television series, most notably *Roots* (1977), *Holocaust* (1978) and *The Winds of War* (1983).[78] In Czechoslovakia, this new perspective – of the historical family drama – although less overtly ideological than in the past, nevertheless furthered the well-established, state-endorsed narrative about the wartime victimization and heroism of ordinary Czechs.

The 1986 feature film *The Death of Beautiful Deer* was based on the childhood memoirs of the well-known journalist Ota Pavel (Popper) published in the early 1970s.[79] Born in Prague in 1930, Pavel grew up in an intermarried family and spent much of his childhood in Buštěhrad, his father's hometown close to Prague. During the war, his father and two older brothers were interned in Terezín and several labor camps while the younger Ota remained behind with his non-Jewish mother, Hermína Popperová. Unlike the earlier films about the Holocaust examined here, Pavel's story begins well before the German occupation and focuses on the travails of Ota's father, Leo Popper. Popper is a traveling salesman, an avid fisherman, and a womanizer. He is quick to squander any financial success he has selling fridges and vacuum cleansers on ill-fated business adventures.

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[74]The Communist bloc broke-off diplomatic relations with Israel in the wake of the 1967 war, already reawakening the specter of the Zionist enemy. According to Tomas Sniegon, the idea was quickly abandoned, *Vanished History*, p. 70.

[75]For a discussion of Kárný's work and the role of émigré circles and samizdat publications in the 1970s and 80s, see Hallama, *Nationale Helden*, pp. 265–306.

[76]Sniegon, *Vanished History*, p. 70.

[77]Paulina Bren has examined the significance of television, and especially television series, during normalization. By 1972, 80% of households owned a television set, making this an extraordinarily important medium. Although they dealt with different historical topics, historical television series in Czechoslovakia in the 1970s and 1980s advanced and legitimized state ideology by incorporating politics into the story line of family-centered soap operas. Paulina Bren, *The Greengrocer and his TV: The Culture of Communism after the 1968 Prague Spring* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010), p. 8, 147.

[78]Daniel Magilow and Lisa Silverman attribute the emergence and impact of family-focused narratives to the importance of television as a medium, "designed to be watched by families, so it focused on families." For the Holocaust on TV, see Daniel H. Magilow and Lisa Silverman, *Holocaust Representations in History: An Introduction* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 97. Considering the importance of television by the 1980s, this is relevant for Czechoslovakia.

[79]*Smrt krásných srnců,* directed by Karel Kachyňa (Czechoslovakia, 1986). The film was released in English under the title *Forbidden Dreams*. Ota Pavel's autobiographical short story collections were published as *Smrt krásných srnců* (Prague: Československý spisovatel, 1971) and *Jak jsem potkal ryby* (Prague: Mladá fronta, 1974).

The German occupation transforms the family's life. Leo Popper loses his job as a salesman as the company's management worries that Popper's 'Jewish origin' will interfere with the company's success. The director does not act out of ill will; he simply does not want to be inconvenienced. While Leo Popper is humiliated, degraded, and increasingly destitute, he refuses to give in. When the German army confiscates his carp pond, he steals back his own fish. When his two oldest sons are called up for deportation, he defies every regulation and sets out to get extra food for his sons that they can take with them. Popper arrives at his old fishing grounds just as the news about the attempt on Heydrich's life reaches the hamlet. Now, old friends are fearful and unwilling to help the increasingly desperate Popper. In the end, Popper decides to hunt a deer – an animal that he had always insisted was too beautiful to kill – trusting that its meat will give his children the strength needed to survive the camps. A family friend, Karel Prošek, and other Czech heroes ultimately salvage Popper's doomed expedition, and Leo reaches his family safely with the precious meat.

While the family's wartime experience is the emotional climax of the film, the narrative begins in the 1930s, focusing almost exclusively on the exploits of the Popper patriarch. As in Ota Pavel's memoirs, aside from the family name, there is little indication that Leo Popper and his family are in any way different from other Czechs. In fact, the only indication of difference is the Jewish star that Leo Popper and his older children begin wearing during the occupation. While the Jewishness of the characters is acknowledged, they and their social world appear no different from other Czech families. The film's director, like Ota Pavel, downplayed even taboo Jewish differences in order to enable audiences to identify with the Popper family. As a result, an important locus for Jewishness for many acculturated Jews, namely their Jewish kin, is therefore absent from the film, even though the Poppers lived with or near Ota's Jewish grandmother in Buštěhrad during the war.[80] Without addressing the characters' Jewishness, the film's focus on the indifference and ignorance of non-Jewish Czechs vis-à-vis the fate of their Jewish colleagues and neighbors appear merely as a question of individual flawed character. The filmmaker thereby skirts uncomfortable questions about Czech antisemitism and wartime attitudes toward Jews and reproduces the image of Czechs as responding to German oppression with defiance and occasional heroism.

Indeed, despite the fact that the story centers on an intermarried family, the narrative is entirely driven by the dictates of the Czech memory of the war. Popper sets out to procure the meat for his sons just as the attack on Heydrich takes place. His desperate struggle first to catch fish and then to kill a deer for his oldest sons plays out against the backdrop of the terror unleashed by the *heydrichiáda*. It is marked by the tropes of fearful neighbors, reprisals, and the murders at Lidice. In this way, the Jewish experience of persecution is conflated with the familiar narrative of Czech victimization. The way in which Pavel's story is tailored to fit this narrative becomes clear when one considers that the Poppers' oldest sons, Hugo and Jiří, were not deported until early March 1943, almost a year later.[81] In fact, while much of the film follows Pavel's short stories closely, including significant parts of the dialogue and the downplaying of the family's Jewishness as a marker of difference, the backdrop of the *heydrichiáda* was added for the film.[82] Thus, despite the fact that the main protagonists come from an intermarried family, their situation is

[80]Leo Popper's mother, Malvína Popperová (born 1876), was deported on 26 February 1942, first to Terezín and then to Izbica. She did not survive. See the database at www.holocaust.cz.

[81]Hugo and Jiří, 17 and 16 years old, respectively, spent two weeks at the assembly point in Prague before leaving for Terezín on March 6, 1943; see interview with Jiří Pavel (Popper), a survivor of the Buna/Monowitz concentration camp (Auschwitz III), http://www.wollheim-memorial.de/en/ji_pavel.

[82]For the literary basis for the meat expedition, see Ota Pavel, *Smrt krásných srnců* (Prague: Sláfka, 2004), pp. 42–59.

made to fit the prescribed Czech narrative of the war, a chronology that suggests the parallel victimization of Jews and Czechs in the Protectorate.

Nevertheless, thanks to the filmmaker's reliance on Ota Pavel's autobiographical stories, the film does illuminate one of the central aspects of the experience of intermarried families, namely the way in which anti-Jewish policies intentionally pitted Jewish parents against their children. Indeed, the marriage that protected Leo Popper, a 'full Jew,' placed his adolescent sons at risk. Furthermore, in contrast to the female Jewish victims in Radok and Weiss' films, director Karel Kachyňa's Leo does not resign in the face of persecution. Rather, as in the original short stories, he fights back against his degradation and against the Germans oppressors' attempt to rob him of his dignity as a man and father. Thus, because of the gendered narrative and the tone of Pavel's original memoirs, Kachyňa bestowed agency and self-respect on the persecuted Jews, in stark contrast to the trope of the passive (feminine) Jewish victims implied by the official narrative of widespread resistance by non-Jewish Czechs.

When they first appeared, Ota Pavel's autobiographical short story collections were met with wide acclaim. It was probably the author's popularity as a sports reporter that enticed the authorities to allow the publication of his two short story collections, *The Death of Beautiful Deer* and *How I Came to Know Fish*. After all, he was writing during the first years of normalization, a period of renewed antisemitism and silencing of Jewish themes.[83] It nevertheless took several years before Pavel's stories found their way to the screen, unlike the films of the 1960s, the almost-immediate cinematic adaptations of successful books.[84] Even if the first part of the film seems like an ordinary, popular Czech comedy, the film as a whole is dominated by the dark wartime years and the corresponding sentiments of degradation and loss. But the film, like Pavel's stories, also mourns the loss of a beautiful childhood and loving parents and is thus a deeply nostalgic tale. In fact, this was the focus of the promotional reviews and interviews with the director. It was the film's universal message that mattered to reviewers, who praised it for its depiction of 'individuals' moral character and relations between people.'[85] Indeed, the Jewish experience appears unique, with Jews being marked and deported, while Czechs are not. Yet because it privileges Czech historical memory of the war, the film does little to examine Jews' experience of persecution as a distinct event with different power dynamics, and, significantly, in which Czechs assume more ambiguous roles than that of defiant victimization.

The entrenchment of memory: post-Communist continuity, 1989–present

Since the end of Communism, there has been a surge in interest in Jewish culture, and especially in the Holocaust, in the Czech Republic. But the Holocaust is an event that, much like the broader historical experience of Jews in the Bohemian Lands, remains outside of the Czech historical narrative. Unlike other post-communist societies, most notably Poland, in the Czech Republic there

[83]Petr Koura, "Obraz holokaustu v českém hraném filmu," in Holy, (ed.), *Holokaust – šoa – zagłada v české, slovenské, a polské literature*, pp. 227–236, here pp. 233–234. For a comparative Polish perspective, see Marek Haltoff, *Polish Film and the Holocaust: Politics and Memory* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), pp. 115–138.

[84]The first adaptation was *Zlatí úhoři/Golden Eels* (Czechoslovakia, 1979), which was also directed by Karel Kachyňa. It made no reference to the family's Jewishness aside from showing Pavel's older brothers leaving for a transport wearing stars partially obscured by the straps of their backpacks. I am grateful to Jan Láníček for this example and other suggestions.

[85]Zdena Škapová, "Smrt krásných srnců," *Kino* 11:42 (1987), p. 15; see also the interview in the same issue with the director Karel Kachyňa by Pavel Jiras, "Smrt krásných srnců," *Kino* 11:42 (1987), pp. 6–7.

has not been a serious scholarly or public discourse about the Holocaust or about the role of non-Jewish Czechs in the persecution of their Jewish neighbors. Scholars and artists have challenged the Czech victim narrative of the war by uncovering the history of vicious ethnic cleansing as well as cooperation of Czechs with the German Protectorate authorities.[86] Yet this more complicated and self-critical view of Czech history has done little to change the broader historical narratives about the war.

Since 1989, several different films have addressed aspects of the Holocaust. Some films about the Protectorate include Jewish protagonists as minor characters in the plot, such as *Divided We Fall* (2000). Others focus on stories of rescue, such as the films about the missions to save Jewish children (the so-called *Kindertransporte) All My Loved Ones* (1999) and *Nicky's Family* (2011).[87] The most significant contribution has been the award-winning documentary film *Forgotten Transports*.[88] Centered on interviews with survivors, Lukáš Přibyl's six-hour film explores the fate of Jews from the Protectorate who were sent to ghettos and labor camps in Poland and German-occupied Soviet territory.[89]

In 2009, Marek Najbrt's *Protector* approached the German occupation through the lens of an intermarried couple.[90] The film was made with record-breaking financial state support, won some of the most prestigious Czech film awards, including the Czech film critics' award, and went on to collect numerous honors abroad.[91] While critics hailed Najbrt's film for 'asking the right questions' about Czech collaboration during the occupation, it ultimately reaffirmed the dominant master narrative that conflates Jewish and Czech suffering.[92] In fact, two decades after the end of official dictates about the treatment of World War II on screen, *Protector* depicts the Holocaust as a mere aside to the Czech drama of resistance and collaboration in the Protectorate.

The film's narrative centers on the marriage of an ambitious young couple, the Vrbatas. In 1938, Hana is an up-and-coming actress about to release her first major film while Emil, her husband, works in a much less glamorous capacity at the Czechoslovak Radio. With the German occupation, Hana's career is derailed due to her 'Jewish origin.' Meanwhile, the new German leadership taps Emil as a potential loyal collaborator, not least because he is compromised by his Jewish wife. Before long, Emil is a major radio star, a success generated by the sidelining of a defiant, brave colleague and by Emil's loyal service to the new German authorities.

[86]There is growing literature on this subject; some of the most important works include Bryant, *Prague in Black* and Frommer, *National Cleansing*; one of the earliest scholars was Tomáš Stánek, *Odsun Němců z Československa, 1945–1947* (Prague: Academia, 1991). German and Czech relations have also been examined in an interesting 2010 German-Czech film, *Habermann/Habermannův mlýn*, by the Czech director Juraj Herz. Herz was also behind the 1968 film *The Cremator*.

[87]*Musíme se pomáhat,* directed by Jan Hřebejk (Czech Republic, 2000); *Všichni moji blízcí*, directed by Matej Mináč (Czech Republic, 1999); *Nickyho rodina*, directed by Matej Mináč (Czech Republic, 2011).

[88]*Zapomenuté transporty*, directed by Lukáš Přibyl (Czech Republic, 2007–2010).

[89]The work consists of four 90-minute episodes that were shown on Czech television in 2010 and again in 2012, http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/tv-program/hledani/?filtr[SIDP]=10249234949.

[90]The script was co-written by Marek Najbrt, Benjamin Tuček, and Robert Geisler; it was directed by Najbrt, *Protektor* (Czech Republic, 2009).

[91]Some of these awards and honors are listed on the film's entry in the Czech and Slovak Film Database, http://www.csfd.cz/film/223876-protektor/prehled/. For a list of some of the press about the film, see http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/specialy/protektor/protektor-napsali-o-nas.php. The film received 16 million CZK for a total budget of 50 million; see Mirka Spáčilová, "Protektor: velké ambice, důvtipná stylisace, ale ohrané téma," *Dnes*, September 22, 2009.

[92]The author of the article praised the film for focusing on "collaboration" and "the Jewish question" and for doing so in a way that emphasized the universal significance of this story of love and betrayal; see Vit Schmarc,"Najbrtův Protektor konečně klade správné otázky," September 24, 2009, http://www.rozhlas.cz/radiowave/kultura/_zprava/637005.

At first, Emil is not an enthusiastic collaborator; protecting his Jewish wife is his main justification. As time goes by, though, husband and wife live increasingly separate lives. While Emil is drunk on his own success and indulges in the alcohol and women that accompany a life in the service of the Reich, Hana is isolated at home. The monotony of her life is only interrupted by her occasional escape into morphine-enhanced nostalgia for her old life in the company of a younger Czech admirer. Then, just as Emil is about to commit the ultimate betrayal by divorcing Hana and thereby removing the protection their marriage affords her, the attempt on Heydrich's life and the subsequent manhunt present him with an opportunity for redemption.

As Hana mistakenly comes to believe that Emil was part of the conspiracy to kill the *Reichsprotektor* and thus that his collaboration was only a cover, Emil revels in his newfound role as a hero. When Hana discovers his deception, she loses all hope and joins other Jews assembling for deportation. While Emil refuses any further collaboration with the Germans, finally taking a stand, his redemption does not save Hana. She disappears (willingly) into the faceless, anonymous columns of doomed Jews walking to Prague's Bubny train station to await their deportation.

From the outset, *Protektor* advances a notion of Czechs as the main victims. Throughout the film, German violence is directed only at Czechs who refuse to collaborate or who defy them. The lives of Jews appear merely circumscribed. At one point, viewers do get a sense of Jews' desperate situation, when Hana's old colleague, a Jewish actor, shows up to ask her for help to avoid deportation. Yet the most memorable part of this scene is her colleague's accusation that Hana, thanks to the protection of her 'Aryan' husband, lives a life of luxury and security while her fellow Jews have lost everything, including all hope. When Emil refuses to help Hana's colleague and chases him out of their apartment, Hana accuses him of murder. However, this forceful statement is undermined by the director's use of the *heydrichiáda* as the historical backdrop for the film's decisive dramatic and moral moments. It leaves viewers with the sense that German terror against Jews and Czechs was simultaneous and equivalent. Indeed, this was reflected in audiences' perception that *Protektor* was a film about the Protectorate and that Emil was the story's main victim.[93]

The film repeats well-known tropes to emphasize the Germans' genocidal intent against the Czechs, such as when one protagonist asks, 'Do you really think they will kill one in every ten Czechs?' The simultaneousness and hence sameness of Jewish and Czech suffering is also implied in other ways. For example, the director makes the visual glances at columns of Jews walking to their presumed doom coincide with the dramatic events of late May and early June 1942. Although Jews were being deported that summer, the ghettoization of the Protectorate's Jews had begun almost a year earlier, in the fall of 1941. In this way, Najbrt uses the Holocaust merely as a symbol of German terror directed against Jews and Czechs and not as a distinctive wartime experience in the Protectorate.

Indeed, while the intermarried couple offers an opportunity for Najbrt to complicate the history of the occupation, the narrative's focus on the male Czech protagonist further marginalizes the experience of Jews. As little more than a litmus test for her husband's and, by extension, all non-Jewish Czechs' moral character, Hana is a woman with no Jewish parents or siblings, no community, and with nothing else to mourn than her brief brush with fame. Hana seems like a spoiled child, stubbornly mourning her crushed dreams of fame and failing to recognize her privilege vis-à-vis other Jews. The fact that a fellow Jew explicitly voices this critique helps assuage the viewer of any discomfort about Hana's vacuousness. In another memorable scene, in which

[93]See comments on the online discussion: http://www.fdb.cz/film/protektor/komentare/44087 and http://www.ceskatelevize.cz/specialy/protektor/protektor-diskuze.php?q=.

Hana discovers Emil's infidelity, she laments her naiveté for thinking that their marriage could withstand outside pressures. He dismisses her reproach, noting, 'It is not my fault that you are Jewish.'

Even the film's attempt at addressing Czech antisemitism ends up trivializing it. When Hana seeks to escape her isolation, she and Emil go for a stroll in the Jewish cemetery, one of the few public green spaces in which Jews were allowed. When Hana suggests that they go to a café open to Jews, Emil, who is clearly uncomfortable and embarrassed among Jews, declines. Hana confronts him, 'Maybe the gentleman doesn't like the smell in a Jewish coffee house?' Yet little is made of this painful moment that very pointedly reveals the intimacy of the degradation to which Hana is subjected. Indeed, one could argue that it is precisely here that Emil fails the most profoundly. His distancing from Hana, his indifference to her suffering, may, in fact, have much more to do with his – and Czech society's – latent antisemitism. Nevertheless, the film insists on the estrangement as mutual, as caused by German terror, and Emil as fundamentally powerless to change Hana's fate. When she 'chooses' to die, Emil is beaten to a pulp as he tries to save her from deportation.

Most significantly perhaps, Najbrt's choice to make the *heydrichiáda* the defining moment in this tale undermines his ability to ask tough questions about the moral erosion caused by years of occupation. The main collaborator, Emil, is no ordinary Czech. He is an intermarried man who is compromised by his Jewish wife. Indeed, the film suggests that Emil had to collaborate to save his career *and* to protect Hana. In reality, remaining married was what non-Jewish husbands needed to do to save their Jewish spouses at least until the last year of the war. Thus, not only is the experience of intermarried Jews sidelined by the film's chronological dogma, but collaboration is also projected onto insecure, cowardly men like Emil and his promiscuous, female equivalent Věra, who marries the Sudeten German radio director. The film's real heroes are the courageous young resistance fighters and Hana's defiant would-be lover. Thus, rather than asking new questions, in the hands of Najbrt and his team, the depiction of the wartime experience of intermarried couples becomes a stage for playing out a familiar narrative about German terror and Czech defiance. Indeed, some viewer comments and published reviews suggested that the film's 'Jewish themes' were merely included in order to appeal to 'overseas' audiences and thereby presumably increase the film's chances at the Academy Awards.[94] Najbrt may have set out to make a film about the Holocaust, but in the end *Protektor* merely used its Jewish characters to reinforce a familiar, long-standing narrative about the victimization of Czechs at the hands of Germans.[95]

Conclusion

There is a remarkable continuity between the narratives developed in the immediate postwar years, a period marked by ethnic cleansing, hyper-nationalism, and antisemitism, and the ones perpetuated today. The Communist regime that sustained this memory of the war – myths that legitimized the expulsion of the country's ethnic Germans and washed away the shadow of complicity and collaboration, the shame of self-preservation, and silent defiance – that regime has gone. Twenty-five years of democracy has done little to change or adjust the postwar narrative. The public's historical imagination continues to be nurtured by films that frame the war as the

[94]See comment by "hvezdyn" dated October 1, 2009 on http://www.fdb.cz/film/protektor/komentare/44087 and Mirka Spáčilová, "Protektor: velké ambice, důvtipná stylisace, ale ohrané téma," *Dnes,* September 22, 2009.

[95]For Najbrt's intensions, see "Blíží se Protektor, film o válce z rozhlasového prostředí," *Dnes,* August 19, 2009.

culmination of a historical national struggle between Czechs and Germans. While the recent 70th anniversary of the *heydrichiáda* spurred massive state-sponsored commemorative events, the preceding year's 70th anniversary of the beginning of the deportations of Jews from the Protectorate was organized and sponsored by the Jewish Museum in Prague and the Terezín memorial. In fact, Czech historical memory about World War II as reflected in film continues to center on the narrative of Czech victimhood and German terror.

However significant, film is only one of multiple interrelated sites of memory. Indeed, even as the Czech master narrative, whether Communist or nationalist, has remained remarkably stable, alternative voices have persisted in producing forms of counter memory. As Peter Hallama has recently shown, while the official discourse invoked the Holocaust only to enhance the memory of Czech suffering at German hands, other memory communities, such as Jewish community leaders, survivors, amateur and professional historians, writers, and others, contested the master narrative. They did so through carefully crafted commemorative events, exhibits, autobiographical writings, and personal testimonies.[96] Although these voices were marginalized, they shaped a counter memory of the Holocaust, one that insisted on the Jewish experience as part of Czech history. Indeed, Hallama's findings point to Jewish survivors and activists developing memory practices that contested the broader political and social indifference to the Holocaust. One significant example is the annual commemoration of the 8 March 1944 destruction of the Terezín family camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau.[97] For the postwar Jewish community in Czechoslovakia, this event became the most important commemoration of the victims of the Holocaust. The memory of the liquidation of the family camp centered on a number of eyewitness testimonies that recalled the victims singing the Czech national anthem (*Kde domov můj*), the Zionist hymn (*Hatikvah*), or Communist songs as they were led to their deaths. In turn, over the years, these different accounts allowed organizers, observers, and participants to imbue the memory of that night with different meaning. Thus, invoking a particular memory of 8 March has allowed people to emphasize the victims' Jewishness *and* Czechness as well as erase this duality in favor of a singular Czech identity of the dead. Significantly, Hallama's study of the evolving memory practices reflect that from the outset Jews sought to incorporate the Holocaust into their identities as Czechs and Jews and to contest the exclusion of their community from Czech historical memory.[98]

Furthermore, even though the Czech nationalist master narrative persists in shaping the memory of the Holocaust in the Czech Republic, the growing interest among a new generation of scholars in the experiences of ordinary people and histories of everyday life has the potential to disrupt well-worn, comforting myths of the war. After all, testimonies such as Anna Kovanicová-Hyndráková's, which opened this article, reveal Czechs not as heroes or victims, but victimizers reveling in a newfound empowerment. Focusing on the 'ghetto without walls,' the period before the deportation of Jews – one that lasted even longer for intermarried Jews and people of mixed ancestry – will allow historians to understand the ways in which ordinary non-Jewish Czechs and Germans participated in, benefited from, and became invested in the denigration, isolation, and removal of the Jews in their midst. The histories of the real 'mixed couples,' their families and children, a particularly large population in Bohemia and Moravia, can shed light on persecution as an experience that played out within a complex web of social, emotional, legal, and economic bonds. Indeed, as has become increasingly clear in other contexts, such as Nazi Germany and Poland, property – or rather, the transfer of property and social power – was key in shaping the relationships

[96]Hallama, *Nationale Helden*, pp. 8–9.
[97]Ibid., pp. 246–264.
[98]Ibid., pp. 10–11.

between Jews and non-Jews.[99] In Poland, Jews could use belongings and valuables for some time to secure hiding places and other assistance from non-Jewish Poles. In contrast, in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, assistance most often came in the form of safekeeping of Jews' belongings, not of Jews themselves. This complicated the return of Jewish survivors in practical and symbolic ways, as new owners or 'helpers' refused to return property and belongings.[100] This, in turn, fed postwar antisemitism and was legitimized by the concurrent state-sponsored and popular dispossession of Czechoslovakia's ethnic Germans.[101] The memory of the Holocaust and the postwar expulsions are intrinsically linked, and writing the Holocaust into the history of the Bohemian Lands, that is, its integration into Czech history and memory, is thus dependent on a broader deconstruction of the nationalist master narrative of Czech history.

In an essay on modern European memory, the late historian Tony Judt explores the meaning of the Holocaust for contemporary European society. Today, he argues, admission to the European community is predicated on recognizing that the Holocaust, and its historical and moral significance is the foundation for a new European identity. 'The new Europe,' he argues, 'is bounded together by the signs and symbols of its terrible past.'[102] Still, 'bringing the dark past to light' is a challenging and fraught process in many European countries. In the Czech Republic, the memory of the Holocaust has remained remarkably stable since World War II. More than 20 years after the collapse of Communism, Czech historians, filmmakers, and politicians cling to narratives about the war developed by the postwar regime.[103] This demonstrates the entrenchment of historical memory and the significance of these narratives for identities between generations, and between political regimes. It is a memory that insists on the parallel victimization of Jews and Czechs centered on the events of *heydrichiáda*. Film can be an effective tool for teaching people about history, compelling audiences to imagine their past in new ways. In order to do so, however, there must be a desire to know what really happened and a willingness to abandon reassuring myths about the past that obscure important, discomforting insights about war, genocide, and ethnic cleansing. To this day, in the Czech Republic, such a reckoning has not happened.

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[99]For a comparative study of the theft of Jewish property on a large scale, see Martin Dean, Constantin Goschler, and Philipp Ther, (eds.), *Robbery ad Restitution: The Conflict over Jewish Property in Europe* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2007). In *Fear* and *Golden Harvest*, Jan T. Gross discusses the social implications of the transfer of property and social status on an interpersonal and communal level. Jan T. Gross, *Fear: Antisemitism in Poland After Auschwitz* (New York: Random House, 2007) and Jan T. Gross and Irena G. Gross, *Golden Harvest: Events at the Periphery of the Holocaust* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

[100]Survivor testimonies often include scenes where "helpers" explain why they cannot return the belongings; see, for example, Heda Margolius Kovály, *Under a Cruel Star*, pp. 45–47.

[101]See, for example, the discussion in Čapková, "Germans or Jews? German-speaking Jews in Poland and Czechoslovakia after World War II."

[102]Judt, *Postwar*, pp. 802–803.

[103]Frankl, "The Sheep of Lidice," p. 178, 181, 171.