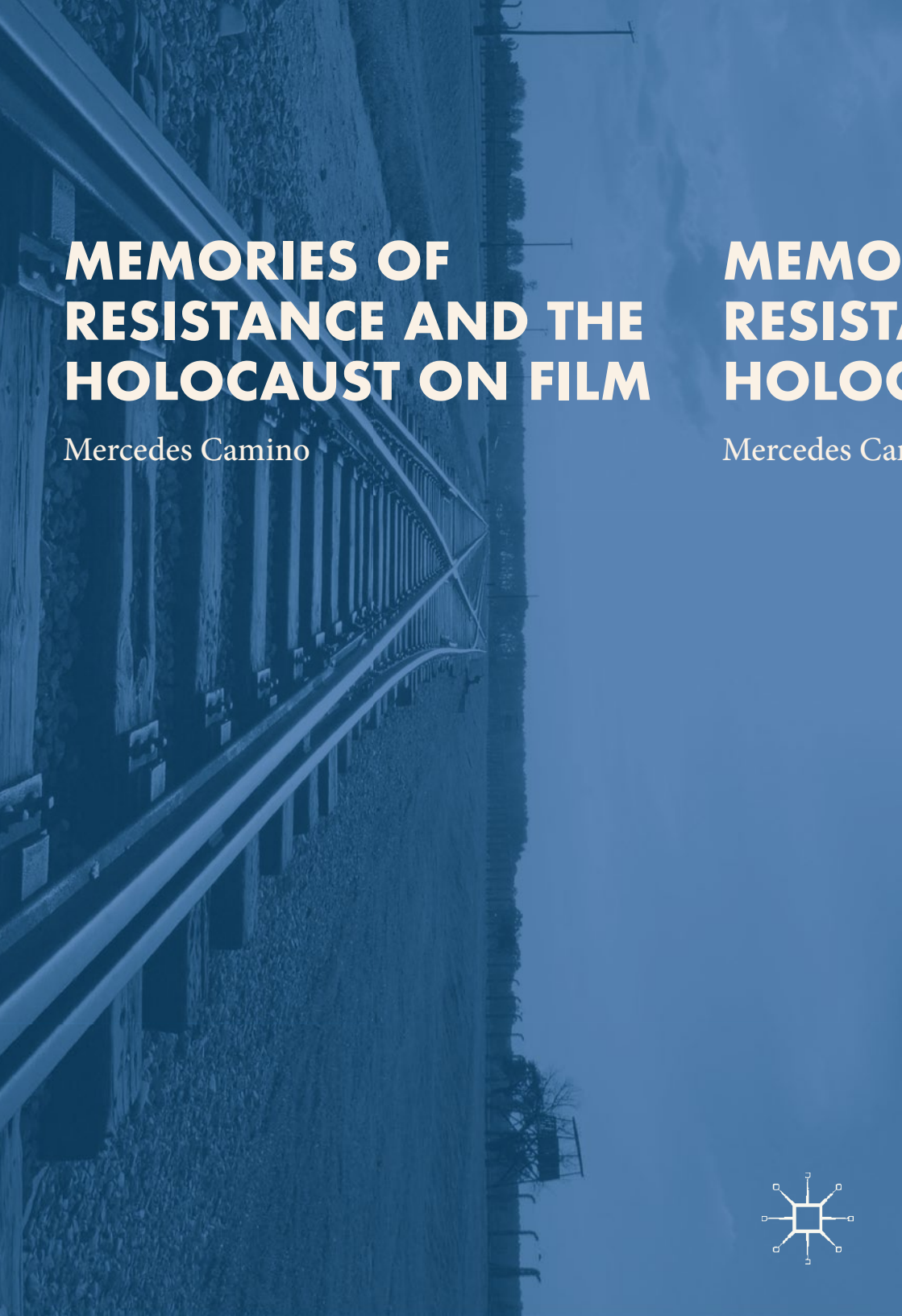

MEMORIES OF RESISTANCE AND THE HOLOCAUST ON FILM

Mercedes Camino

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Contents

List of Figures

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

'Earth conceal not my blood' (Job). Inscription in Sobibor's Memorial Site, Poland

The Hollywood Academy and the Cannes Film Festival do not normally converge in their understanding of cinema and very seldom coincide in their awards. Films that gain Oscars from the Academy tend to be entertaining, reward the protagonist's individual endeavour and adhere to the traditional three-act narrative, often with a happy ending. By contrast, one unstated prerequisite of films put forward for competition in Cannes is originality, in either theme or style, or both.[1] It thus came as a surprise to see Cannes and the Academy concur in their praise of László Nemes' *opera prima*, *Son of Saul* (*Saul fia*, 2015), which was awarded the Cannes' Grand Prix in 2015 and an Oscar for one of the Academy's most competitive categories, Film in a Foreign Language, in 2016. Even more remarkable was to hear Claude Lanzmann's unambiguous praise of the film, which was as notable as it was rare. Lanzmann believes that Nemes' articulation of fiction and reality conveys effectively that the Holocaust will always remain beyond the realm of representation.[2] This premise infused the production of his nine-and-a-half-hour documentary, *Shoah*, first released in 1985 and celebrated thereafter as a landmark in filmmaking and in Holocaust studies. Although belonging to different genres, *Son of Saul* and *Shoah* focus on the *Sonderkommando*, a category referred to by

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Lanzmann as 'spokesmen for the dead'.[3] The *Sonderkommandos'* paradoxical legacy offers a suitable point of departure for a book whose main subject is the cinematic representations of unlikely struggles in occupied Europe during World War II.

Son of Saul rehearses details of a desperate mutiny of Auschwitz *Sonderkommandos* that took place on 7 October 1944, also the focus of an earlier film, Tim Blake Nelson's *The Grey Zone* (2001). Remarkably, this attempt to escape was not the only rebellion in Auschwitz, though it was the last one, taking place shortly before the camp was dismantled. The uprising itself, however, is marginal to Nemes' film, which centres on a man's determination to have his 'son' buried and a rabbi delivering the ritual mourning prayers, *Kaddish*, on his behalf. Relying on knowledge of the topography of Holocaust cinematography, Nemes limits the field of vision to what is seen by its protagonist, *Sonderkommando* Saul Ausländer (Géza Röhrig), and the camera keeps large segments of the frame out of focus, zooming in and out from close-ups of Saul, making for an uncomfortable and unusual viewing experience. Alongside other *Sonderkommandos,* Saul guides unknowing victims to the gas chambers, sorts out and classifies their belongings, moves corpses, cleans the chambers of human debris and disposes of the ashes from the crematoria. The camera follows him closely, while the actions that we are familiar with take place not so much off scene as in its blurred margins. While this forecloses any form of voyeurism, audiences partake of the atmosphere through the sounds that the *Sonderkommandos* hear and the haptic perceptions suggested by the washed-out, neutral tones and textures of the environment, the clothing and the men's hands. Viewers listen to this cacophony of voices while reflecting on the obsession of the protagonist, Saul, offered as a somehow distant point of identification.

As a *Sonderkommando* working in October 1944, Saul would be showing the way to the chambers to Jews from his own country, Hungary. Excluded from selection up to that point were the estimated 825,000 Hungarian Jews, many of whom were deported as soon as Hungarian leader, Miklós Horthy, started negotiations to abandon the Axis in the spring of that year.[4] Once de-selected from the ranks of those to be immediately killed, *Sonderkommandos* worked in the camps until exhaustion or illness rendered them *Muselmänner*, unfit or unable to perform the work required of them. At that time, normally only months from their internment, *Sonderkommandos* followed the route traced by those who had arrived with them. *Sonderkommandos* were thus a liminal category, between the living and

the dead, starved, enslaved and routinely beaten up until they became despondent and lifeless *Muselmänner*, having given up on life, at which point they were murdered and replaced. A few *Sonderkommandos*, however, did survive, and their memoirs were determinant in the re-definition of Holocaust survivor from the 1970s onwards, as will be seen in Chap. 5 of this book, 'Holocaust Testimony: Survivors, Ghosts and Revenants (1947–2002)'.

Primo Levi presents the *Sonderkommandos* as the paradigmatic example of the moral conundrum, which he describes as the Holocaust's 'grey zone', and as embodiments of 'National Socialism's most demonic crime'. Soon after his release from Auschwitz, Levi dedicated a chapter of his first book, *Se questo è un uomo* (*If this is a Man*), to the shock and degradation that awaited all internees when they received their first blows from other prisoners.[5] The role assigned to *Sonderkommandos*, Levi argues, provides the best illustration of the Nazi 'paroxysm of perfidiousness and hatred' that designed a camp system in which 'it must be the Jews who put Jews into the ovens, it must be shown that the Jews, the sub-race, the sub-men, bow to any and all humiliation, even to destroying themselves'. In this way, the German lowered the status of their victims, making them forcibly into perpetrators and robbing them of any trace of human dignity. This vision, in turn, created a circular logic in which the subhuman Jews became suitable for extermination. Levi's last book, *The Drowned and the Saved,* expands on this analysis of the successful attempt 'to shift onto others—specifically the victims—the burden of guilt, so that they were deprived of even the solace of innocence'.[6]

The likes of Elie Wiesel, Levi, or *Sonderkommandos* Philip Müller, Abraham Bomba or Rudolf Vrba, wrote or gave interviews about their experiences, foregrounding paradoxes inherent in Holocaust survival. Contemporaries, however, often classed *Sonderkommandos* as Jewish collaborators, as they did with the Jewish Councils or Jewish Police in ghettos, all of whom had a visible role in repression and in putting into effect the Final Solution to the Jewish Problem. The contradictions inherent in their survival started to become known with a renewed interest in books such as Wiesel's *Night* or Levi's *If This is a Man*, which did not meet immediate success on their release in the 1940s and 1950s. Finished before the end of 1946, Levi's manuscript was initially rejected and then had 2000 copies printed by Franco Antonicelli the same year. This first edition only sold 1500 copies, in spite of receiving a positive review by Italo Calvino in the publication of the Italian Communist Party, *L'Unità*.[7] It was reprinted in 1958 by the

Turin editor Giulio Einaudi, and has remained a bestseller ever since. An even more protracted process was followed by Wiesel's *Night*, which saw the light in 1958 as a reduced summary of an earlier 800-page manuscript, *Un di velt hot geshvign (And the World Remained Silent)*, written in Yiddish and published in Argentina in 1956. It was reprinted in Paris in 1960 and later on in the same year in New York, where it only sold around 1000 copies in three years. Wiesel, who remained a human rights campaigner throughout this life, would go on to publish more than fifty books, receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1986. *Night* remains his most widely read work and has been widely translated.

Unrecognized and unrecognizable, Holocaust survivors were beset by contradictions and found it difficult to adjust to life in the liberation's aftermath. Some, as Levi's friend, Lorenzo Perrone, on whose generosity Levi depended for his survival in Auschwitz, descended into alcoholism, which led to his early death in 1952. Levi himself is thought to have committed suicide in 1987, while other survivors resumed their lives in countries other than their own.[8] European Jews tried to put the past behind them but many returned to it to give testimony about their life experiences decades later. Lanzmann's documentary, *Shoah*, famously broke some silences by interviewing Szymon Srebrnik, Bomba, Vrba and Müller, cementing Raul Hilberg's classification of Shoah protagonists into three segregated categories: victims, perpetrators and bystanders.[9] Lanzmann classed *Sonderkommandos* unambiguously as victims whose moral choices were close to zero and Nazi commanders as perpetrators. Controversially, Lanzmann castigated Polish bystanders, who bore the brunt of his accusations of antisemitism both during the war and at the time of making his documentary. These debates about Polish antisemitism will be referred to elsewhere in this book, including the reception of Edward Zwick's film, *Defiance* (2008), in Poland, charted in Chap. 7, The Jewish Resister (1987–2015).

Nemes' focus on a *Sonderkommando* in the context of a frustrated attempt to escape Auschwitz is not completely innovative. An earlier twenty-first-century film, Nelson's *The Grey Zone*, which borrows its title from Levi, also deals with Hungarian Jewish members of the *Sonderkommando*. Nelson's film is based on the memoirs written by one of those assessed by Levi as belonging in 'the grey zone', the Hungarian doctor, Miklós Nyiszli (Allan Corduner), who assisted Joseph Mengele with his experiments.[10] As in the book, in Nelson's film, a girl (Kamelia Grigorova) miraculously survives the gas chamber, perhaps thanks to a pocket of air held between the remaining victims. Nyiszli manages to resuscitate her and

informs SS-Oberscharführer Erich Mushfeldt (Harvey Keitel), who first doubts but decides that she should not live. Mushfeldt's hesitation, as will be detailed in this book's Conclusion, provided Levi with one extreme illustration of his analysis of 'grey zones'. However, Levi concludes against placing Mushfeldt alongside the likes of Doctor Nyiszli or the *Sonderkommandos*, whose only choice was to do what they were doing or die. Doctor Nyiszli's dilemma, moreover, was compounded by the fact that he was able to rescue his wife and daughter by bribing guards. His 'collaboration' thus highlights the degrees of selfishness inherent in Holocaust survival, leading Levi to suggest that survivors were not 'the true witnesses', as he famously put it, 'We, the survivors, are not the true witnesses … we are those who by their prevarications or abilities or good luck did not touch bottom. Those who did so, those who saw the Gorgon, have not returned to tell about it'.[11]

The focus on *Sonderkommandos* in these films is fraught with some challenges that Nemes addresses in original ways. Saul's position is defined by negatives. He is neither a *Muselmann* nor an active resister, because he considers himself and all camp inmates to be 'already dead', as he tells the leader of the uprising, Abraham Warszawski (Levente Molnár).[12] In fact, Saul's obsession with burying the child undermines an uprising that had been painstakingly planned by the camp resistance, and it is seen in the film to waste a carefully co-ordinated effort to obtain explosives from the women there.[13] Although Saul manages to smuggle the package, he loses it through his obsession with finding a rabbi to say *Kaddish* to 'his' son, though Warszawski reminds him on one occasion that he has no son. After the mutiny, Saul escapes with the boy's corpse, which he carries into the river, but loses it in the current before he is helped to reach the shore. When the escapees sit to rest in the ruins of a barn, the camera focuses alternatively on them and on the surrounding landscape, for the first time offering an establishing shot through Saul's field of vision that is not blurred. In a shot-reverse-shot, Saul catches sight of a boy of a similar age to his 'son', and a brief smile illuminates his expression, leading to a treasured moment of dignity and self-respect that outlasts the gun shots that close the film on a black screen. Throughout these scenes, *Son of Saul* puts to the test definitions of humanity and of Jewish resistance in death camps.

Nemes' visualization of Saul's story is informed by the changes in cinematic representations of the Holocaust that have taken place from the last third of the twentieth century. Fluctuating perspectives on civilian resistance and collaboration influenced these shifts even during the Second

World War. Among the myriad films that treat the plight of civilians in occupied Europe, this book establishes a thematic division that corresponds to chronologies of the conflict's memorialization, highlighting the intersecting vectors of time and space described by Mijhail Bakhtin as *chronotopes*. Although these trends neither arise *ex nihilo* nor disappear without a trace, this investigation reveals cinematic representations of resistance and the Holocaust that are demarcated by the 'intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships', or chronotopes.[14] The result is a geopolitical alignment that embeds historical and social co-ordinates, while displaying artistic movements and taking into consideration technological developments. These parameters radiate from the geographical and political centres of the conflict, France, the USSR and Poland, extending primarily to the main allies in the conflict, the USA and the UK, as well as other occupied countries, especially, but not only, those that were eventually situated beyond the Iron Curtain. Germany, as the aggressor, did not experience occupation and is therefore largely be excluded from my investigation, although consideration is given to the alternative stages of memorialization that took place in East Germany. By contrast with West Germany (FRD), the Democratic Republic of Germany (GDR) constructed a peculiar memory of the war visible in films that address the Holocaust in unusual ways, as will be seen in Chap. 5, which focuses on Jewish testimony. West Germany, as the direct heir to the Nazi regime, underwent an initially denazification process that entailed minimizing the breadth and depth of Nazism and its appeal, as well as highlighting its own victims and the putative honour of its army, the Wehrmacht.

This book treats films as historical sources in order not to elucidate details about events but to showcase ideas and attitudes about them. These films complement and are complemented by other sources, especially letters, photographs, memoirs and court testimonies, in unique and important ways. Films dealing with WWII and the Holocaust are highly dependent on the role played by photography during the conflict. Photojournalists became increasingly important from the 1930s, and photographs of the era have become iconic in a phenomenon described by Marianne Hirsch as 'post-memory' and by Alyson Landsberg as 'prosthetic memory'.[15] As with photographs, films establish an intimate relationship with viewers, which is only in part individual, as it is bound by parameters demarcated by the filmmakers. Films and photographs use light, lines, focus, vanishing points and other techniques, many of which were initially borrowed from painting, to direct viewers to

certain elements in the frame, while minimizing or disguising others. Whereas films projected on a screen in a theatre limit the time and space for individual contemplation of the subject, photographs locate their subjects in an everlasting frame. Spectators in a theatre cannot exercise agency in how they view a film, other than averting their sight, and this is the case even when films challenge sequential patterns of temporality. These strictures, however, started to change substantially with the advent of VHS, DVD and, above all, with the viewing of films on smart televisions, personal computers and tablets. Since the late twentieth century, viewers can increasingly negotiate individual or collective ways to watch and study films and can exercise agency in timing their viewing in a way that likens them to the study of photography. As will be seen throughout this book, these technological developments have removed some of the ceremonial aspects of cinema, transforming the study of film as an historical source while widening their contribution to our knowledge of the past.

The practices of film screening inflect this book's approach and content, which are aligned with individual and social demarcations of memorialization. I depart from the uncontested assumption that films have been important catalysts in the articulation of conflict and working through trauma, even performing surrogate acts of mourning. The events narrated in films provide forceful entry points for our understanding of actions, especially of people's motivations and feelings about them. In this context, it is worth remembering that cinema's outreach peaked around the time of the Second World War and remained one of the most important avenues for communication in the countries studied in this book up to the 1960s, when it was superseded by television and, in turn, by video and computers.[16]

The production of films about different aspects of World War II has been high, and their wide diffusion allows us to consider the medium as perhaps the most important means to explain, debate or contest views about the war, as well as work through trauma, pay homage to the departed or seek social consensus. For different reasons to be explored in this book, their role remains unrivalled, as illustrated by the numbers of films released every year especially, but not only, in Europe and the USA. The large number of films about military or civilian aspects of the war has created a substantive knowledge base about the conflict and its legacy, and the fact that the conflict developed in some occupied countries into a civil war affects cinematic productions and their use. During the war itself, films were actively used for propaganda purposes, striving to mobilize people

and espousing ideas that would inspire them to work, fight and die for a cause. With the war nearing its end, films began to construct narratives that could facilitate social reconstruction.

The films looked at in this book focus on civilian resistance and the destruction of European Jewry, two events that are distinctive but inextricably intertwined. Although all chapters include more than one nation, the book's thematic division creates clusters around particular chronotopes, including the camp, the forest, the sewer, the ghetto, the train, the mountain and the bar or cafe. My analyses deal with productions from complex cinematic traditions, the most prominent of which are those of France and the USSR, though the study includes films from Yugoslavia, Great Britain, the USA and Poland, as well as some contributions from the GDR, Italy, Hungary and Czechoslovakia. The thematic division within time-space co-ordinates means that the treatment of some national or transnational cinematic traditions may be perfunctory, as well as the omission of some productions. Films dealing with strictly military aspects of the war are largely excluded from my investigation, though the line demarcating the genre is imprecise, and some are mentioned in relation with secret agents, POWs and escapees.

The selection of films in this book is informed by a preference for representative or salient productions that have influenced the genre or are better known. A criterion used is the consideration of a film as 'foundational', in the sense that they introduce or summarize aspects that become recurrent in one way or another in other films. Lastly, this book takes into consideration accessibility either online, in DVDs or archives, selecting accessible productions when more than one might serve similar purposes. While some films studied here will be familiar to readers, the analyses do not take for granted prior knowledge. Consequently, historical and cinematic contexts are spelled out, and events in the films will be outlined when necessary for their analysis.

The main concepts underlying this study, resistance, collaboration and Holocaust, are subject to substantial debate, and boundaries about their significance need to be established. For the purposes of this book, resistance is treated from the perspective of the occupiers, who cast a wide net and used collective responsibility to prevent all forms of opposition. In other words, the lines that separate passive from active resistance or defiance from non-compliance or disobedience are drawn in relation to particular contexts. For example, praying in a ghetto or giving a piece of bread to passing POWs can be classed as acts of disobedience in countries

on the Western Front, while they risked an individual's life, as well as that of their family or even an entire village in the East. Acts of sabotage, printing illegal press or murder of collaborators can be rightly considered resistance in places like Denmark or the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia while minor acts of solidarity would be just as dangerous in Poland or the USSR. While this in no way lowers the value of acts such as the rescue of Danish Jews, which will be outlined in Chap. 7, it raises the bar of deeds that could be classed as symbolic when they took place in Eastern Europe or the Balkans.

The stereotypical resister in a World War II film conjures up the image of a French young man wearing a beret and wiring rail tracks while a train approaches. Sabotage, that is, was established in the war's early aftermath as the more cinematic form of resistance, although it was by no means the most effective. This book takes an eclectic view of resistance that includes the rescue of Jews as one of the most important actions since it undermined the core ideological tenet of Nazi racial hegemony. Indeed, a focus on Nazi thought makes some actions more subversive and long lasting, even if not as explosive, in every sense of the term, as blowing up a train. Minor protests or acts of disobedience in the Reich itself, such as the White Rose, Rosenstrasse, or the belated July plot of 1944, are beyond the scope of an investigation of events taking place in the occupied areas of Europe. This exclusion also applies to any real or imagined protests in Austria, regardless of whether these were religious or nationalist. However, Italy, which abandoned the Axis in 1943, is treated in Chap. 2, The Civilian Resister (1942–69), as it provides the most significant example of the transformation of anti-fascists into active resisters and of civilians supporting their struggle. Those exceptions notwithstanding, the chapters in this book engage with multifarious forms of resistance, as well as the parameters that define them.

Jewish survivors, witnesses and resisters are also classed in this book in accordance to the criteria followed by the Nazis and their collaborators. In other words, I treat this conflict's unwilling protagonists in keeping with the designation of those who created it, the Nazi ideologues such as Alfred Rosenberg, through the reification of racial supremacy that had Aryans at the pinnacle of a civilization whose nadir were Jews, Slavs and Africans, probably in that order. This Nazi dogma formed the basis from which military and paramilitary forces developed before and during the war, providing a justification for the occupation of Europe and a self-serving rationale for the staggering destruction

that followed. From this perspective, any form of resistance that would present a challenge to that hierarchical order would be treated as criminal, with the division between passive or active resistance becoming academic.

Anti-Nazi resistance took place in the context of a pan-European conflict, which was triggered by Nazi Germany and eventually split countries along socio-political lines, evolving into fully fledged civil wars in places such as Yugoslavia or Greece and, to a lesser extent, Italy or France. European governments fell into line with Nazi demands in quick succession, introducing antisemitic measures of their own, even when excusing or disguising them as anti-communist or, in the idiom of the era, anti-Bolshevik. In sum, resistance in occupied Europe was defined by the Nazis as a seamless transition between barbarism, partisanship and Jewishness, terms that often became interchangeable and that will be treated as coterminous in this book. This study thus situates the Holocaust within a Nazi worldview that made communism, socialism and Jewishness often synonymous and where Slavic peoples, ranked just above Jews in the subhuman scale, were earmarked for decimation and slavery. While the genocide of European Jewry became the central Nazi pillar, and the only war that Germany won, their credo subjugated and murdered millions elsewhere especially, but not only, in Eastern Europe and the Balkans. In addition, millions of civilians were dispossessed of their homes and displaced from them if they happened to inhabit land earmarked as German *Lebensraum,* as in the Czechoslovakian Sudetenland, Poland or Ukraine.

In this environment, many Jews, both religious and secular, took part in myriad resistance activities that even reached concentration and death camps, as mentioned above in relation to *Son of Saul*. In Eastern and Western Europe, Zionist, non-Zionist or anti-Zionist Jews not only took part in the struggle to save their families or their communities, but were also present in all resistance movements, especially those to the left of the political spectrum. The Jewish contribution to anti-fascist movements was not simply a response to the Nazi ultra-nationalist focus on Jews as enemies of the German motherland. It also resulted from their active involvement in the social and political fabric of various countries, especially in the USSR, Poland and France. Various forms of Jewish resistance are shown in films in which Jews appear initially as innocent victims and, subsequently, as survivors, active partisans or even corrupt leaders of Jewish Councils (the Judenrat), as in Roman Polanski's *The Pianist* (2002). Regardless of these differences, a large proportion of films

casts Jews in main roles as 'non-Jewish Jews', to borrow Isaac Deutscher's formulation.[17] These are Jews whose dress and way of life appear visually like those of their neighbours, with decorative markers, such as a menorah, establishing their distinctiveness. The reasons for this casting will be analysed below, especially in Chap. 5.

The topics treated in each chapter follow identifiable trends and chronotopes that peaked at particular historical junctures. The chapters also take into account how the memorialization of the conflict has made those representations both possible and appealing to different audiences. In the case of Eastern European countries, political censorship up to the break-up of the USSR will be taken into consideration, although the film industry has never been devoid of constraints and self-censorship, often determined by the high costs involved in production and distribution. These restrictions mean that most films seek to appeal to a wide national or international audience and, in some case, access subsidies available to films of 'national interest' or cross-national subsidies from institutions such as the European Union. In other words, even when making historical claims or subverting them, many productions avoid consciously or unconsciously alienating large segments of the population to whom they are directed. This standpoint does not mean that films do not challenge the status quo, but that even those challenges are constrained by semi-established paradigms.

The gender dynamics of the films studied here accord not so much with their subject matter as with patterns prevalent in the film industry. Given the general absence of women in military films, the expectation would be for a more balanced approach in films dealing with civilian lives during the war and the Holocaust. However, in resister films, political activity is mostly the terrain of masculine engagement, and women appear largely in subordinate or decorative roles or as femme fatales. Likewise, the protagonism of women in Holocaust rescue films remains limited, even though they were historically active in sizeable proportions. Nor do women figure as main protagonists in many 'anti-fascist' films of the 1940s. As brides, wives or mothers, these women seldom contribute to the action, but witness and suffer it as secondary characters, along the lines of the working-class mother Pina (Anna Magnani) in Roberto Rossellini's *Rome Open City* (*Roma città aperta,* 1945). An unusual example of a female protagonist in an early film is Gillo Pontecorvo's *Kapò* (1960), which is also striking for its location in a camp for women criminals and political prisoners and which will be studied in this book's Conclusion.

Partisan films shot in the former Yugoslavia showcase women among their main characters, although their proportion and prominence remain secondary to the men. The same applies to Soviet films, with some notable exceptions in and handful of productions released during the war itself, as will be noted in Chap. 3, The Partisan (1943–74). Largely, however, the roles played by Soviet women diminished in subsequent films, with only a few remarkable female protagonists in films released in the aftermath of Nikita Khrushchev's 'Secret Speech' in 1956. This speech, in which he criticized Stalin's 'cult of personality', is considered the first landmark in the relaxation of censorship now known as 'The Thaw' in the late 1950s and 1960s, and its effect on cinema of the Soviet Union will be considered in more detail in Chap. 3.[18]

Curiously, in the one sub-genre in which women are visible, films that deal with female SOE agents operating in France, the accentuation of women's sexual appeal has increased over time. The stress on women also flies in the face of their historical referents, as women made up a small percentage of the total agents there or elsewhere in occupied Europe, around one quarter.[19] The first two films about SOE agents with female protagonists, Herbert Wilcox's *Odette* (1950) and Lewis Gilbert's *Carve Her Name with Pride* (1958), bucked the trend in the 1950s. It is, indeed, ironic, to note that women's abilities in terms of action and leadership do not increase with time, though few will be as passive as Claude Berri's protagonist in *Lucie Aubrac* (1997). Berri casts in the title role an immaculately dressed Carole Bouquet who parades her French style in front of swastika-clad buildings and literally takes a back seat in the liberation of her husband, a plot that she had actually hatched and led. The camera fetishizes Aubrac, zooming in on her lipstick while preparing her trip to meet with Klaus Barbie (Heino Ferch), backgrounding her bravery, determination and, especially, her leadership in her husband's rescue. Berri's film is also anachronistic in its idealization of resistance, which was dealt a mortal blow in the late 1960s with the release of Marcel Ophuls's *The Sorrow and the Pity* (*Le chagrin et la pitié,* 1969). Ophuls' documentary, released in the aftermath of the May 68 protests, opened the way to a handful of films about collaborators in the following decade. These films, to be studied in Chap. 4: The Collaborator (1969–74), addressed what had been a taboo subject until then.

As with resister films, productions that focus on collaborators have men invariably at their centre of gravity, with women fulfilling roles ranging from victims to accessories of the crimes. Likewise, films dealing with

Holocaust survivors and Jewish partisans show no preference for women, although, as aforementioned, they make a limited appearance as rescuers, as will be seen in Chap. 6: Righteous Gentiles (1987–2011). Even if the subject appears inappropriate, in some of these films women don light, revealing clothes or work as cabaret dancers, with the camera in the position of a masculine voyeur, accentuating their sexual allure. In sum, any expectation that films dealing with rescue of Jews might challenge the macho displays of war films cannot but be frustrated, a reflection of cinematic trends in general. One of the exceptions is the film based on the life and deeds of Polish rescuer Irena Sendler, John Kent Harrison's, *The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler* (2008), which was devised for television and offers a vindication of Polish courage that counters their image of unredeemed antisemites.

The thematic and chronological arrangements of this book's chapters exemplify the transition from anti-fascists and 'Good Russians' to Gentile Rescuers and 'Good Germans' and from Jewish unidimensional victims to Jewish resisters and partisans. While clearly determined by political developments and the shadow cast by the Cold War, the films cast as protagonist men, and the odd woman, whose similarities with potential audiences outweigh their differences. In other words, these films assume that, for viewers to empathize with 'others', as Stephen Spielberg proposes in *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial* (1982), characters must adopt a way of life and mode of thought not too distant from Western or American contemporaries. In some particular cases, films go so far as to minimize or delete dietary mores or other cultural parameters, including Jewish side-locks or kapotas, which might construct difference. Devotion to family life and marital loyalty are also aligned to a stereotypical representation of goodness, as happens with flawed characters to be redeemed such as Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson) in Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993). This process of assimilation is also apparent in the integration or Americanization of 'Russians' or left-wing anti-fascists in 1940s films, which will be outlined in Chap. 2, The Civilian Resister (1942–69).

Chapter 2's study of anti-fascist resisters departs from the 1940s productions that established their characterization up to the war's end and immediate aftermath. During these years, cinema screens witnessed the rise and fall of a cinematic hero whose historical referent was the anti-fascist militant of the previous decade, the 1930s. Films that cast these characters, invariably men, often endow them with a 'flaw', in accordance with the parameters established by Greek tragedy, although this flaw is not

tragic or hubristic and does not necessarily lead to their downfall. Their destinies, however, are linked to their willingness to take the moral high ground against the establishment during the years of Appeasement. Presciently, these men had foreseen the evils of fascism well before Appeasement had proved to be an inadequate tool against Hitler's expansionism. In doing so, these films offer a redemptive narrative that counters the political unwillingness to oppose Hitler's Germany in the 1930s. The pedigree of these cinematic heroes, in other words, is attested to by the manner in which they had forged their credentials.

Anti-fascists or 'discreet heroes' started to appear in films in 1942, initially devised by European filmmakers in an effort to counter the isolationist stance embraced by the USA. In their crudest form, these productions, which were made during the war, projected the multi-sided conflict of occupied Europe in Manichaean terms. This happens in, for example, Sam Wood's block-buster *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1942), Michael Curtiz' *Mission to Moscow* (1943), Gregory Ratoff and László Benedek's *Song of Russia* (1944) and the little-known *Man from Morocco* (1945), directed by exile Mutz Greenbaum (known as Max Greene). More sophisticated and long lasting are the two films at the centre of the first section of Chap. 2, Curtiz' *Casablanca* (1942) and Rossellini's landmark, *Rome, Open City* (henceforth, *Rome*).

The 1940s anti-fascist heroes had a natural heir in resisters that appeared in films in the 1950s and 1960s, which are looked at in the second section of Chap. 2, Monuments and Martyrs. This segment studies the consecration of 'resister films' soon after the war, which project the transformation of innocent civilians into active saboteurs during the conflict. These men, and the women who accompany them, are presented with a situation in which not to resist might be tantamount to collaborating, and it is the situation, and not their prior beliefs, that makes them active resisters. Thus, if cinematic anti-fascists of the 1940s had been formed and tested in the 1930s, in the next two decades, they are shown to be dynamic and determined in response to situations beyond their control, joining underground movements as a response to the occupation or because of the policies of the occupiers. Interestingly, the change in direction of the war in 1942–43, which affected the recruitment of resisters everywhere in Europe, does not figure as a cinematic cause, partly to avoid suggesting that resistance was opportunistic. These films, moreover, were conceived as a means to memorialize the conflict, showcasing people's ingenuity and solidarity in the face of German occupation. For reasons to be investigated in this chapter, this

tradition soon became established cinematically in France, a move that parallels the increasing importance given to Charles de Gaulle's famous appeal of 18 June 1940 on the BBC and his speech following the Liberation of Paris, on 25 August 1944. Although the early appeal did not have much of an effect, it would be consecrated as a foundational moment in France soon after the war, and has remained central to the conflict's legacy. The final parade, by contrast, was thoroughly staged to be recorded for posterity, as will be detailed in this chapter.

At around the same time that France elaborated its resister myth in post-war films, Poland's main auteur, Andrzej Wajda, constructed the paradigmatic image of Polish resisters, who were mostly, but not only, members of the Armja Krajowa (Home Army). Under the strict communist censorship of the time, Wajda elaborated his celebrated trilogy, *A Generation* (*Pokolenie*, 1954), *Canal* (*Kanal*, 1957) and *Ashes and Diamonds* (*Popiół i diament*, 1958), which deal with gradual stages of the war. Contemporary with these foundational films, two UK productions, which focus on female SOE agents in France, established of a sub-genre that borrows from spy and noir but was, like contemporary resister films in France or Poland, initially designed as homage, monument or *memento mori*. The protagonists of Herbert Wilcox's *Odette* (1950) and Lewis Gilbert's *Carve Her Name with Pride* (1958) represent the experiences of young agents Odette Sansom and Violette Szabo, who were both arrested and imprisoned, with Szabo executed at the end of the war. Curiously, this sub-genre has been refashioned at the beginning of the twenty-first century in films that merge French chic with some paraphernalia borrowed from the 1970s Nazisploitation porn. This can be seen in, for example, *Charlotte Gray*, directed by Gillian Anderson (2001), Jean-Paul Salomé's *Female Agents* (*Les femmes de l'ombre,* 2008), loosely based on the life of Lise de Baissac, and Paul Verhoeven's *Black Book* (*Zwartboek,* 2008), which will be studied in this book's Conclusion.

At the same time that the trend for anti-fascist and resister heroes started to die in France after May 68, some remarkable films in which men, and some women, take up arms against the occupier were released in the USSR and Yugoslavia. Chapter 3, The Partisan (1943–74), analyzes the origins of these productions during the war and their zenith in the 1960s and 1907s. The protagonists of these films were modelled on real partisans who played important roles in the Western Borderlands of the Soviet Union and in the Eastern Mediterranean, especially in Yugoslavia, where partisans managed to liberate large

segments of the country.[20] These Soviet and Yugoslav combatants were soon mystified in the war's aftermath, with Soviet partisans often shadowing the Red Army in popular memory. This memorialization was expressed in monuments, literature and, above all, cinematic productions that became part of the foundational narratives of both the Belarusian Soviet Republic, referred to as a Partisan Republic, and the former Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia, in which the cult of partisans found expression in an idiosyncratic cinematic genre focused on them, Partizanski Films.[21] Chapter 3 investigates these two sets of historical and cultural figures, while Jewish resisters in the USSR, who were integrated in the country's official history, are investigated in Chap. 7, The Jewish Resister (1987–2015).

Films dealing with resistance in the USSR and Yugoslavia provided and still provide a platform to project heroes or, on occasion, anti-heroes, offering a unique vantage point from which to assess the social reconstruction following the conflict. In Yugoslavia, partisan memories, and the films that mystified them, contributed to the relative inter-ethnic concord during the decades that Marshal Tito ruled (1945–80). The violent disintegration of the country in the 1990s attests to the fragility of the social compromise on which it was built. By contrast, the memorialization of the conflict in the Russian Federation and in Belarus provides a window into processes that were contested at the end of the Cold War. This revision happened in the Eastern Bloc as a whole, and have subsequently been revived there, as will be seen in this book's Conclusion.

The relevance of cinema to national or resistentialist myths demonstrates the significance of memorialization in stimulating, enhancing or contesting social ties.[22] The films studied in Chaps. 2 and 3 of this book offer paradigmatic examples of the power of cinema not only to misrepresent historical events, but also to contribute effectively to their 'invention', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's use of the term.[23] These films provided historical capital on which communal consensus was built in the war's aftermath and had the salutary effect of bringing to life the experiences of individuals, marshalling empathy towards historical actors or, in some cases, history's casualties. These productions have helped to shape the social frameworks of collective memory, as delineated by Maurice Halbwachs. For Halbawchs, although only individuals have the ability to remember, they do so through parameters that are socially demarcated: 'While the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is individuals as group

members who remember … Every collective memory … requires the support of a group delimited in space and time'.[24] Watched by millions of people in theatres and thereafter on television, VHS or PCs, these films have had a lasting impact on collective memory. Films about partisan fighters in Yugoslavia and the USSR provided foundational narratives upon which these countries constituted or, to borrow Benedict Anderson's expression, 'imagined' themselves.[25]

Cinematic representations of resistance are part of a popular history that highlights the roles of ordinary citizens, fostering a basis for coexistence in the war's aftermath. The shared past of these societies, and the films that embody that past, display contingent points of union during or after a war in which social and ethnic divisions were wilfully erased. These films are historical documents and, at the same time, 'sites of memory' that offer an outlet for emotions, to borrow Pierre Nora's formulation.[26] Resistentialist films, however, overtly or covertly ignored the fact that the Nazis found many individuals and groups willing to help them carry out their crimes. Chapter 4, The Collaborator (1969–74), focuses on some of the scant representations of those who assisted the Nazis, which found cinematic expression in 1970s France and, to a lesser extent, Italy. The protean historical figure of the collaborator started to appear in films released in the aftermath of May 68, which challenged the view of the past that had dominated the previous two decades. From the war's immediate aftermath, France's productions typically endorsed the Gaullist official line of celebrating the country as a 'nation of resisters'. However, the generation that came of age in the 1960s started to question the limitations of this view, bringing to the fore the prevalence of collaboration with the Nazis in the very country that had coined the concept. US historian Robert Paxton, dubbed 'an American in Vichy' by Henry Rousso, famously challenged the idea that Vichy was playing a double game of attempting to appease Nazi Germany while subtly undermining it. Paxton's book, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940–1944*, first published in 1972 and translated into French the following year, is now a landmark in the assessment of Vichy, but caused a good degree of controversy on its release.[27] Paxton's perspective was also stressed from a different angle by Jean-Pierre Azéma and Rousso, who famously defined the 'Vichy Syndrome'.[28] These French historians have qualified some of Paxton's claims, which Paxton himself revised in the 1997 re-edition of his work, though his substantive claim about widespread collaboration remains unchallenged.[29]

Films that foregrounded collaboration became the catalysts for debates and controversies, contributing to the revision of the resister mythology. Chapter 4 analyses three films that cast men as willing or casual collaborators, explaining the historical 'amnesia' about collaboration that followed the war. Motives for collaboration were as abundant as the collaborators themselves, with ideological and economic reasons often preceding or even leading other motives. More unusual, however, is the ambiguity presented in films such as Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Conformist* (*Il conformist,* 1970), Louis Malle's disturbing *Lacombe Lucien* (1974) and Joseph Losey's *Mr Klein* (*Monsieur Klein*, 1976). Bertolucci's *The Conformist* brings to the fore the participation of Italians in the repression of their own countrymen, presenting the conflict in terms of an Italo-Italian civil war, as proposed by Claudio Pavone.[30] Bertolucci's film is an expression of the post-1960s take on the 1930s construction of 'perpetrator societies' and clearly highlights Hannah Arendt's concept of the 'banality of evil', which is shared by the other two films studied in this chapter.[31] Arendt's concept was developed in relation to the trial of an architect of the Final Solution, Adolf Eichmann, in 1961. Eichmann was smuggled out of Argentina and taken to Israel, where he was famously tried behind a glass case. Eichmann's trial became a landmark in International Law and made headlines around the world, while showcasing the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, including Lithuanian partisan leader, Abba Kowner, and Warsaw Ghetto fighter, Zivia Lubetkin. The trial also re-defined and expanded the category Holocaust survivor to embrace European Jews with the possible exception of those living in unoccupied areas, such as the UK, and some nominally neutral nations, such as Sweden, Portugal, Switzerland and Spain.

The films produced at this historical juncture show changes in the apprehension of personal guilt, in contrast to the judicial guilt that most perpetrators avoided after the war. Also, and more importantly, Eichmann's trial demonstrated the ease with which mass murderers made sense of their deeds as following orders or being part of machinery, with a glacial disdain for human life. In other words, perpetrators were able to avoid the sense of guilt that became part of the lives of survivors and that Levi and others amply illustrated. The relationship between the murders and their presentation in a court of law became the defining moment of the twentieth-century's 'age of catastrophe', to borrow Eric Hobsbawm's formulation.[32] To some, this nonchalant attitude was an aberration of the Enlightenment's heralding of progress through increasing tolerance of different religious

beliefs. For others, on the contrary, this was the crucial event of modernity, which culminated the assumptions of the so-called age of reason. This point of view was first championed in Theodor W. Adorno and Max Horkheimer's *Dialectic of the Enlightenment* (1944) and expounded thereafter by Zygmunt Bauman in *Modernity and the Holocaust* (1989), as well as Giorgio Agamben's *Remants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (2002) and *State of Exception* (2005).[33]

Eichmann's trial also became a catalyst for literary and visual testimonies of Holocaust survivors, contributing to increasing engagements in witnessing and memorializing their plight. Chapter 5, Holocaust Testimony: Survivors, Ghosts and Revenants (1947–2002), focuses on the way in which cinema became 'testimonial', with films using actual memoirs of survivors and stimulating them.[34] Although referents to the murder of European Jews had appeared in films produced after the war in Eastern Europe, representations of Jewish witnessing came of age in the late 1970s. This shift followed the renewed interest in the topic spurred by the screening in the USA of Marvin J. Chomsky's television series *Holocaust* (1978), which traced the stories of a German and a Jewish family from the rise of Nazism through World War II. Chapter 5 situates the stories of Holocaust witnesses as fragments of a 'sentient history' that is only accessible through creative and visual sources. In other words, films about Holocaust witnessing not only occupy an important position in Holocaust memorialization, but are also a means to introduce the topic and to reach wider audiences. They also project an alternative way of approaching this past, enabling the transference of witnessing from the source to the destination. The creation of this vicarious observer is, however, not without contradictions and is opposed by those who, like Lanzmann, believe that the Holocaust can only be represented in its absence, as will be seen in Chap. 5.

Productions dealing with survivors provide glimpses of hope in what were dire and hopeless historical situations. Even if this hope is fabricated, its re-enactment establishes a link between the past and the present. Throughout these films, and the narratives that inspired them, the past is brought effectively into the present, preventing distance and oblivion, and precluding the sense of historical closure that 1945 demarcated. This hope can either facilitate or obstruct mourning, providing a salutary form of working through trauma but also deleting the fact that the 'real witnesses of the Holocaust', those who, in Levi's terms, 'saw the Gorgon', did not survive or were muted.

The earliest examples of Holocaust witnessing were produced in Poland, Czechoslovakia and Eastern Germany, all countries of the Eastern Bloc, and are looked at in the first segment of Chap. 5. Although most of the women in the earliest of these films, Wanda Jakubowska's *The Last Stage* (*Ostatni eta,* 1947), are Jews in Auschwitz, their Jewishness is backgrounded. This feature inheres in other Eastern European films of the time, including the Czechoslovakian production *The Shop on Main Street* (*Obchod na korze,* 1965), directed by Ján Kadár and Elmer Klos, as well as an Eastern German film made under the auspices of the production company, DEFA, Wolfang Luderer's *Living Goods* (*Lebende Ware,* 1966). From the twenty-first century onwards, the paradigmatic representation of Jewish witnessing is undoubtedly Polanski's *The Pianist* (2002), which rehearses the remarkable life of Władysław Szpilman. The film is based on Szpilman's biography, originally entitled *Death of a City* (*Śmierć mias*), which was written by Szpilman's friend, Jerzy Waldorff, and first published in Poland in 1946. On its release, the book did not meet with an enthusiastic response in communist Poland. This was partly due to its ambivalent representation of Poles and Germans, partly because of communist censorship. It was also a reflection of the wish of many to return to some sort of normality in the face of the devastating loss of life, physical destruction, displacement and poverty resulting from the war. Eventually, and following the increasing popularity of Holocaust narratives from the 1970s onwards, Szpilman's book was reprinted by his son, Andrzej Szpilman, initially in German, under the title *The Miraculous Survival* (*Das wunderbare Überleben,* 1998), and subsequently in English as *The Pianist.* Following the success of Polanski's film, the book has been translated into more than thirty languages.

In Szpilman's book, both Poles and Germans are shown to be capable of good and evil. Whereas some Poles sell Jews and take little notice of their plight, others, such as Dorota (played by Emily Fox in Polanski's film) and her husband (played by Valentine Pelka), risk their lives and livelihoods to help them. Likewise, Nazi Germans are not only the cruel and loud SS men who shoot and beat people up routinely and savagely, but also compassionate humans, as Wilm Hosenfeld (Thomas Kretschmann), who helps Szpilman survive. Good Poles become more prevalent in Polish films of the late twentieth century, following the end of communism and the subsequent vindication of the role of the Polish Home Army, Armia Krajowa (AK). Also, and perhaps more importantly, these films provide an alternative view to representations of Polish antisemitism, which, according

to Mieczysław B. Biskupski, have gone so far as to blame Poles for the Holocaust. For Biskupski, this trend was popularized by the US television series, *Holocaust,* as well as a famous film about Auschwitz without any Jews, Alan J. Pakula's *Sophie's Choice* (1982), based on a novel of the same title written by William Styron.[35] The success of Pakula's film has not been without controversy, because of its aforementioned representation of Polish antisemitism and the choice of a Christian woman as the main protagonist in Auschwitz, as well as its overt sexual references.[36] Poland would go on to contest representations of Polish antisemitism after the demise of communism, co-producing the paradigmatic survivor film, Polanski's *Pianist*, as well as an unusual representation of a Holocaust revenant, Agnieszka Holland's *Europa, Europa* (1990), which are studied in this chapter.

Largely, the films studied in Chaps. 5 and 6 are adaptations of real-life stories, often published before reaching the screen, and they mostly adhere to them or otherwise commemorate the witnesses' understanding of events. Although some of the productions, including Jakubowska's, are also Jewish 'resister' films, they are treated in this chapter for their redefinition and widening of the category of Holocaust survivor and witness. Surviving is, however, not the fate of the main character of Frank Beyer's *Jacob the Liar* (*Jakob der Lugner*, 1974), remade by Peter Kassovitz with Robin Williams in the title role in 1999. Based on a book with two alternative endings, *Jacob the Liar* is a film about witnessing and hope.

Surviving the Holocaust was often enabled or facilitated by gentile rescuers who dedicated time and energy to sustain or hide them, with many paying with their lives. These films become popular from the 1980s and 1990s and will be studied in Chap. 6. Perhaps not surprisingly, there are some women protagonists in these roles, though the men outnumber them. The definitive rescuer who has defined the genre, the protagonist of Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, however, outclasses all. As a category, rescuers such as Schindler operated mostly after the invasion of the Soviet Union, which unleashed the systematic murder of Jews. These murders were first undertaken by the infamous mobile units that followed the Wehrmacht, the *Einsatzgruppen*, in mass shootings and, afterwards, in gas vans.[37] These massacres were in turn followed by the launch of the *Endlosung* or Final Solution, in early 1942, and the creation of death camps, codenamed Operation Reinhard after the murder of the Reichsprotektor of the Protectorate of Bohemia and

Moravia, Reinhard Heydrich, in May of the same year. The 'solution to the Jewish problem', which targeted all Jews indiscriminately and is thought to have been formally agreed at the Wannsee Conference on 20 January 1942, eventually led to the construction of the gas chambers, designed to increase and speed up the massacre of all European Jews and to distance the murderers from the murdered.

Rescue films are a sub-genre of Holocaust films whose production was stimulated by Spielberg's timely release of his film. Firstly, the film contributes to assuaging guilt, and it does so through its deployment of the well-worn cinematic ploy of redemption. The redeemed character, Schindler, is, on the one hand, just 'like us', while, on the other hand, he is an unusual person in terms of individual courage and proportion of the overall population. Secondly, and in line with mainstream film-making, rescue films display a good degree of hope and optimism with which to counter a hopeless historical situation, stressing survival when survival was the exception to the rule. Indeed, historical rescuers did not abound even in Western European countries in which, unlike in Poland or the Soviet Union, 'hiding or abetting Jews' was not invariable followed by harsh retaliatory measures against the culprit, relatives and random civilians, using the legally-dubious concept of 'collective responsibility'.

A plethora of films brings to light acts of kindness of Righteous Gentiles, which are considered (and mostly were) truly heroic, as in the remarkable rescue of Danish Jews. Chapter 6 explores the boom of these films whose main protagonist is a rescuer who embodies national or civil resistance and focuses especially on Polish, French and German 'righteous'. By and large, these films are designed to highlight the bravery of civilians, often acting not because of prior commitments or political outlook, but simply on account of basic humane feelings. These films demarcate a period of the memorialization of the war by the need to identify (with) understated heroes or heroines who risked their lives and even those of their families to maintain their humanity. Productions about 'righteous gentiles' thus participate in the widening of the concept of resistance through their inclusion of men and women not traditionally classed as active resisters. These films embody the centrality of the Holocaust in European re-construction at the end of the Cold War, following the demise of the Soviet Union.

Individuals who took risks to save others, like Père Jean (Philippe Morier-Genoud) in Louis Malle's *Au Revoir les Enfants* (1987), were honoured by Israel before their deeds became widely memorialized in

films from the 1980s and 1990s. This is a time when the narrative of national and widespread resistentialism that had inspired post-war reconstruction had been broadly, if not universally, challenged. It is also when the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum opened to the public, and Holocaust survivors increasingly talked and wrote about their lives. Since then, and following the success of Spielberg's film, other rescuers have been given full cinematic treatment, including Polish righteous Irena Sendler (Anna Paquin) in John Kent Harrison's *The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler* (2009) and Leopold Socha (Robert Więckiewicz) in Agnieska Holland's *In Darkness* (*W ciemności,* 2011).

The increasing number of 'rescue' films was contemporaneous with the wish to bring to light the lives and deeds of Jews who took an active stance to counter the situation in which they had found themselves. The end of the Cold War brought to light the lives and deeds of Jews who had taken part in communist or socialist resistance, with an added focus on Zionists. Chapter 7, The Jewish Resister (1987–2015), deals with these men and women in films which started to appear in the 1980s. Jack Gold's television docudrama, *Escape from Sobibor* (1987), about the uprising in the camp, stands at the crossroads of changes arising from the weakening and dissolution of the USSR, and the presence of Red Army inmates in the film attests to this liminal moment. Jewish resistance has received greater coverage in the twenty-first century, although it still comes as a surprise to learn that most ghettos and camps witnessed rebellions and even mutinies. These historical events started to become popular history at the time that Gold's film was released, which coincided with Nechama Tec's publication on the Bielski partisans in Soviet Belarus, which Edward Zwick adapted in *Defiance* (2008).[38] Chapter 7 investigates these productions, as well as Jon Avnet's television film about the last months of the Warsaw Ghetto, *Uprising* (2001), in the context of their increased prominence in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Productions about Jewish resistance are largely based on historical events, even when they take some liberties with them. More fictional, however, are what Daniel H. Magilow labels 'Jewish Revenge Fantasies', the most prominent of which is Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* (2009).[39]

Also about Jewish revenge, but using resistance and the Holocaust as ingredients, is Verhoeven's *Black Book* (2008), to be studied in this book's Conclusion. Verhoeven's *Black Book* offers a summative potpourri that concurs with the deployment of or challenge to resistentialist chronotopes in some twenty-first-century productions from Norway and

Denmark. While two Norwegian productions, Erik Poppe's *The King's Choice* (*Kongens nei,* 2017) and Joachim Rønning and Espen Sandberg's *Max Manus: Man of War* (2008), revisit the post-war mythology of resistance as uncontested 'good', and of national unity, heroism and courage, Danish director Ole Christian Madsen contests this paradigm in *Flame and Citron* (*Flammen & Citronen,* 2008). These different approaches have provoked debates about nationalism in those countries and beyond, which demonstrate the ways in which contemporary Europe uses the history of World War II for political ends. These nationalist chronotopes are compared in this last chapter with Verhoeven's approach, and all are illuminated by Levi's insights into 'grey zones', using a film released five decades earlier, Pontecorvo's *Kapò* (1960). While the Scandinavian films attest to the widening scope of our understanding of resistance and collaboration, *Kapò* and *Black Book* demonstrate the complexities inherent in segregating the categories of victims, perpetrators and bystanders.

This book confronts Holocaust *aporia* and resistentialist mythology in analyses that take into account a twenty-first century's experience of film viewing, and the usefulness of films as historical tools. The ritual function that likened the cinematic experience to that of a church or a museum is all but gone, as is the mediation of television, with its square, shrunken screen. Close reading of scenes and frames, using techniques initially borrowed from literary studies, remains essential to historical appraisal of films and has been facilitated by the use of computers. These developments offer a unique vantage point that challenges temporality, offering a vicarious form of participant observation that has the potential of transforming spectators into witnesses. These changes have affected the work of historians who use film and of film historians, including those who take into consideration the contexts of production and reception. This transformation is especially relevant for a book that deals with murders without corpses and heroic or murderous deeds that had or were meant to have no observer. It was during the war itself that the first of these heroes, mostly fictional, started to take shape. Their evolution from idealized and idealist characters to historical actors and martyrs is traced in the first chapter of this book.

Notes

1. On the Festival of Cannes' website, the organizers list the requirements for the presentation of films. The first refers to its main objective in terms of 'quality', 'evolution' and 'development' as follows: 'Its aim is to reveal and focus attention on works of quality in order to contribute to the evolution

of motion picture arts and encourage the development of the film industry throughout the world' (http://www.festival-cannes.com/en/participer/rules?id=2).

2. See Jordan Cronk, '"Shoah" Filmmaker Claude Lanzmann Talks Spielberg, "Son of Saul"', *Hollywood Reporter*, 5 February 2016 (http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/shoah-filmmaker-claude-lanzmann-talks-869931).
3. Ed Vulliamy, 'Claude Lanzmann: the Man who Stood Witness for the World', *Observer*, 4 March 2102 (https://www.theguardian.com/film/2012/mar/04/claude-lanzmann-memoir-shoah-interview).
4. These figures take into account the 1941 borders, which included segments from Romania and Czechoslovakia that Hungary had 'lost' in the Trianon Treaty after WWI. Within the pre-war borders, the death toll was nearly ninety per cent. Both figures include around 63,000 who died as a result of massacres or malnutrition prior to the armistice.
5. Levi, Chapter 9: The Drowned and the Saved, in *If This is a Man* and *The Truce*, trans. by Stuart Woolf (London: Abacus, 2013), pp. 93–106.
6. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. by Raymond Rosenthal (New York: Vintage, 1989), pp. 37, 35, 53.
7. Italo Calvino, 'Un libro sui campi della morte. *Se questo è un uomo*'. *L'Unità*, 6 May 1948; reprinted in *Primo Levi: un'antologia della critica*, ed. by Ernesto Ferrero (Turin: Einaudi, 1997), pp. 306–7.
8. Levi's death, caused by a fall from a third-floor apartment, was ruled suicide, though the possibility of accidental death cannot be disregarded.
9. Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933–1945* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993). I explain in more detail Hilberg's approach in Chap. 6: Righteous Gentiles (1987–2011).
10. Nyiszli, *Auschwitz: A Doctor's Eyewitness Account* (London: Penguin, 2012).
11. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, pp. 63–64.
12. Jozef Warszawski, whose real name was Josef Dorebus, had arrived in Auschwitz from the French camp of Drancy. The men who managed to escape crossed the Vistula River, before hiding in an empty building in which they were tracked down by SS, who killed them and brought their bodies back to be displayed in the camp. See Müller, *Eyewitness Auschwitz* (Chicago: Ivan Dee, 1999), pp. 159–60 for this uprising and Chap. 5, The Inferno (esp. pp. 120–60) for the organization of the resistance, the challenges that they faced and the role of Soviet POWs.
13. Four women, led by Róża Robota, smuggled small portions of gunpowder daily to the camp resistance. The women were subsequently tortured and hanged on 6 January 1945.

14. See 'Forms of Time and of the Chronotope in the Novel: Notes toward a Historical Poetics', in *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin: University Texas Press, 1981), pp. 84–258 (p. 84).
15. Hirsch, *Family Frames: Photography, Narrative and Postmemory* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012) and *The Generation of Postmemory: Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012); Landsberg, *Prosthetic Memory: The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).
16. On the importance of cinema prior to World War II, see Jeffrey Richards, *The Age of the Dream Palace: Cinema and Society in 1930s Britain* (London: IB Tauris, 1987).
17. Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968).
18. The speech was delivered during the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union on 25 February 1956 behind closed doors. Although the essence of the speech was widely discussed thereafter, it was only published in full in 1989.
19. Michael R.D. Foot estimates around one 3200 women of a total of 13,000 agents. See *SOE: The Special Operations Executive 1940–1946* (Evesham: Greenwood, 1984), p. 62.
20. The Greek and Albanian partisans were equally important. However, in the case of Greece, the Second World War was soon followed by a bitter civil war. The conflict lasted until 1949, when the communist-led Democratic Army of Greece was defeated by the governmental forces supported by the UK. On this topic, see John L. Hondros, 'Greece and the German Occupation', *The Greek Civil War 1943–50*, ed. by David Close (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), pp. 32–57; and Mark Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece: The Experience of Occupation, 1941–44* (Baltimore: Yale University Press, 1993).
21. My study has benefited from Jurica Pavičić's knowledge of Partisan Films, and I wish to thank Pavičić for sending me a copy of 'Titoist Cathedrals: Rise and Fall of the Partisan Film' before its publication in *Titoism, Self-Determination, Nationalism, Cultural Memory*, Volume Two of *Tito's Yugoslavia, Stories Untold*, ed. by Gorana Ognjenović and Jasna Jozelić (London: Palgrave, 2016), pp. 37–65.
22. Rousso uses the neologism 'résistancialisme' to denote the mythology of resistance in *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944*, trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1994).
23. Hobsbawm and Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

24. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 22.
25. Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).
26. Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les *Lieux de Mémoire*', *Representations,* 26 (1989), 7–24.
27. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940–1944* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1972). Paxton revised some claims in subsequent editions of his work (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).
28. Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome* (see note 22); Azéma, *La collaboration: 1940–1944* (Paris: PUF, 1975).
29. See Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940–1944* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001).
30. Pavone, *A Civil War: A History of the Italian Resistance*, trans. by Peter Levy and David Broder (London: Verso, 2013). Pavone's book was first published in Italy in 1991 with a different subtitle *Una guerra civile. Saggio storico sulla moralità nella Resistenza,* which translates as 'Historical essay on morality in resistance'.
31. See *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (London: Penguin, 2006). Arendt's collection of articles were written during Eichmann's trial for *The New Yorker* and first published in 1963. The book has seen multiple re-editions and translations, including the first translation into Hebrew by Ariel Uriel in 2000.
32. Hobsbawm calls 'Age of Extremes' the years of the 'short twentieth-century', from 1914 until the end of the Cold War and dissolution of the USSR in 1991. His 'Age of Catastrophe' embraces the time from the beginning of the First World War to the end of the Second World War, 1914–45. See *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth-Century, 1914–1991* (London: Penguin, 1994).
33. Adorno and Horkheimer's book was republished in an enlarged version in 1947. See *The Dialectic of Enlightenment,* trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002); Baumann, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989); Agamben, *Remants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive,* trans. by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 2002) and *State of Exception,* trans. by Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).
34. I borrow the term revenant from Lanzmann. See Ed Vulliamy. 'Claude Lanzmann: the man who stood witness for the world'. (See note 3).
35. Styron, *Sophie's Choice* (New York: Random House, 1979).
36. In Pakula's film, the main protagonist, Sophie (Meryl Streep), is a Polish Christian woman whose father is an antisemite. Arrested and taken to

Auschwitz with her two children, Sophie is given the choice to which the title alludes between her two children, one of whom is to die and the other to survive.

37. Police Battalions were also involved in massacres directly, as investigated by Christopher Browning's now classic, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993). Direct involvement of the Waffen-SS and the Wehrmacht has been amply documented. See, for example, Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich at War* (London: Allen Lane, 2008), pp. 58–60 and passim. Omer Bartov has charted the transformation of the Wehrmacht into a victim of the war by German historians in the 1980s, arguing against 'the bizarre inversion of the Wehrmacht's roles proposed by all three exponents of the new revisionism, whereby overtly or by implication the Army is transformed from culprit to saviour, from an object of hatred and fear to one of empathy and pity, from victimizer to victim'. See Bartov, 'Soldiers, Nazis and War in the Third Reich', ed. by Christian Leitz, *The Third Reich: The Essential Readings* (London: Blackwell, 1999), pp. 129–150 (p. 148). Bartov pays special attention to the vindication of German soldiers in cinema in 'Celluloid Soldiers: Cinematic Images of the Wehrmacht', in *Russia: War, Peace and Diplomacy: Essays in Honour of John Erikson*, ed. by Ljubica Erikson and Mark Erickson (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2004), pp. 130–143.
38. Tec, *Defiance: The Bielski Partisans* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993).
39. Magilov, 'Jewish Revenge Fantasies in Contemporary Film', in *Jewish Cultural Aspirations,* ed. by Bruce Zuckerman, Ruth Weisberg and Lisa Ansell (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2013), pp. 89–109.

CHAPTER 2

The Civilian Resister (1942–69)

The Second World War witnessed the rise and fall of a new type of cinematic hero whose historical referent was the 'anti-fascist' militant of the previous decade. By the war's end, these 'Good Russians' had largely been complemented or replaced by civilians who become committed resisters during the conflict. This transition can be seen in films such as Roberto Rossellini's *Rome, Open City* (*Roma, città aperta*, 1945), which casts both sets of characters at the same time. As will be explored in this chapter, Rossellini's film exemplifies the difficulties of synthesizing Italy's unique role in the war, as aggressor, perpetrator, victim and resister. Elsewhere, the transition is closely linked to the substantial role played by the USSR in the war and its aftermath. Whereas the alliance with the USSR gave way to a temporary vindication of 1930s socialists and communists, this perspective largely disappeared with the onset of the Cold War. For reasons to be explored in Chap. 3, The Partisan (1943–74), this paradigm continued unexpectedly in the only communist country that broke up from the Eastern Bloc, Yugoslavia, while other nations of the so-called Warsaw Pact projected idiosyncratic views of their role in the conflict in spite of the strict Soviet censorship.

The invasion of the Soviet Union in Operation Barbarossa on 22 June 1941 and the bombing of Pearl Harbour on 7 December of the same year made Joseph Stalin, Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt unlikely allies for the following four years. This historical conundrum led to the release of films promoting the political underpinnings of 1930s Popular

M. Camino, *Memories of Resistance and the Holocaust on Film*,
https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-49969-1_2

Front coalitions. In the Anglo-American world, this short-lived trend can be appreciated in propaganda films such as Michael Curtiz's *Mission to Moscow* (1943), Gregory Ratoff and László Benedek's *Song of Russia* (1944) and the British production, *The Man from Morocco* (1945), directed by Mutz Greenbaum (as Max Green).[1] It is more subtly foregrounded in productions with melodramatic undertones, including Michael Curtiz's *Casablanca* (1942) and Rossellini's *Rome*, which, like *The Man from Morocco,* trace their anti-fascist and anti-isolationist credentials to the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) and the International Brigades who fought in it. This cinematic articulation of the recent past into the present was designed to affect local and international political agendas through the elaboration and deployment of foundational narratives that relied overtly or covertly on allegory and myth making.[2] Rather than making these films unreliable as historical sources, I will argue in the first section of this chapter that these films' inconsistencies provide important clues about the cinematic use of historical capital, as well as the strategies deployed to work through personal and social conflict.

The end of the war and the onset of the Cold War effectively ostracized 1930s anti-fascists in Western Europe and the USA, opening the way for the re-nationalization of resisters in cinematic productions. The second section of this chapter traces the challenges involved in honouring resistance heroes in the cinema of post-war Poland and France, which are juxtaposed with two films made in the UK about secret agents working in France. Under Soviet censorship, Poland's main auteur, Andrzej Wajda, elaborated a distinctive filmic image of Polish resistance in *A Generation* (*Pokolenie,* 1954), *Canal* (*Kanal,* 1957) and *Ashes and Diamonds (Popiół i diament*, 1958). This celebrated trilogy unpacks the gradual stages of the war, starting with the wasted lives of young men and women in *A Generation,* which is set in Warsaw in 1943, at the time of the Ghetto Uprising. The second film, *Kanal,* follows the steps of a group of desperate Home Army (AK) resisters towards the end of the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. The last film, *Ashes and Diamonds,* is largely beyond the scope of this study, as it is set at the end of the war, and foregrounds the score settling between the AK and the communist Armia Ludowa (AL). In this film, the country symbolically dies as both meet their deaths, the last one taking place on a heap of rubbish. Wajda's comprehensive outlook straddles the divide between military and civilian resisters, and his three films are landmarks in Poland's remembrance of World War II, standing for the silenced memorialization of the AK as monuments with no plinths in the Soviet era. A different sort of monument was constructed in France.

Although not subject to governmental censorship, films produced in France in the war's immediate aftermath failed to present the country's complex responses, witnessing the cinematic consecration of the Gaullist view of the country as a 'nation of resisters'. This notion, which would last two full decades, is divided by Henry Rousso into two segments: firstly, a time of 'Unfinished Mourning' ('le deuil inachevé'), which lasted until 1953, followed by the focus on the country's resisters, which Rousso labels 'Repressed Memory' ('le refoulement'), which ended in 1971.[3] French cinematic resisters were cast in myriad films, including Robert Bresson's *A Man Escaped*, also entitled *The Wind Bloweth Where It Listeth* (*Un condamné à mort s'est échappé* or *Le vent souffle où il veut*, 1956) and Jean-Pierre Melville's untimely *Army of Shadows* (*L'Armée de l'Ombre,* 1969). While these films conform to the trend of celebrating unambiguously indigenous resistance, they do not share the triumphalism that was fast becoming identified with the Gaullist or Anglo-American perspective of the conflict. Bresson and Melville also defy some mainstream aesthetics of filmmaking, and their protagonists are endowed with a realistic aura not only on account of the use of two extraordinary historical memoirs as sources but also because of their cinematic styles. Bresson's *A Man Escaped* offers an intimate and claustrophobic portrait of the mental and physical struggles of a prisoner, resistance fighter Lieutenant Fontaine (François Leterrier), as he plans and executes his escape plan. By contrast, Melville's remarkable representation casts resisters as un-glamorous, flawed heroes, who are involved in unseemly deeds. These two films effectively project the unadorned brutalization of those taking part in the fight, who would as easily murder German soldiers as their own colleagues if necessary.

France is also the field of action of two contemporary films that complement Polish and Gaullist monuments, Herbert Wilcox's *Odette* (1950) and Lewis Gilbert's *Carve Her Name with Pride* (1958). These productions focus on Odette Sansom (Anna Neagle) and Violette Szabo (Virginia McKenna), two agents of Great Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE), an organization set up by Winston Churchill to foment resistance behind enemy lines or, in his own words, 'set Europe ablaze'.[4] The two films, which concentrate on the work undertaken by these women, were produced a decade after the war's end, and are unusual on two counts. Firstly, they make up half of the total output of UK's contemporary war films with women as protagonists; secondly, their contribution to the cinematic tradition of representing women in World War II has been long lasting.[5]

The chapter concludes with an analysis of a Czech film, Jiří Menzel's *Closely Watched Trains* (*Ostre Sledované Vlaky* 1966), which puts forward an uncommon notion of heroism. Humour and irony pervade Menzel's quirky vision of the conflict, presented with a degree of sarcasm that is seldom effective, although it is also successful in a later French film, Jacques Audiard's *A Self-Made Hero* (*Un Héros Très Discret,* 1996). Audiard, who matches Menzel's light touch from a different perspective, challenges the 'invention' of France as a 'nation of resisters', summing up half a century of cinematic history. The success of Audiard's satire, which is partly due to Matthew Kassovitz's charming incarnation of the 'self-made hero', Albert Dehousse, brings to the fore the contradictions inherent in France's coming to terms with its dark years, *les annés noirs.* Belatedly, *A Self-Made Hero* sums up the contradictions between the historical record and the 'production' of a mystified past that are traced in this chapter.

2.1 Good Russians and Anti-fascists

The Second World War evolved in some areas of occupied Europe into a partly or fully-fledged civil war. The fact that it was both an international and intra-national conflict explains the difficulties of coming to terms with it, as well as the important role played by films in these processes. During the war itself, cinematic anti-fascists appear to have taken a stance that would not have endeared them to the establishment during the years of Appeasement. Presciently, these men, for they were largely men, had foreseen the evils of fascism well before Appeasement proved to be an inadequate tool against Hitler's expansionism. The films in which these characters appear thus offer a redemptive narrative that counters the political unwillingness to challenge Hitler's Germany in the 1930s. Cinematically, these notions are conveyed through the understated and underwhelming heroism of 'ordinary' men with whom the audience fully identifies. Their subdued bravery is more poignant because of their anonymity and the films' tempered sense of loss.

These cinematic anti-fascists show remarkable strength, courage and determination in the face of adversity, torture or even death and are able to sacrifice themselves for the common good, which is a trait inherent in productions made during the war. Coincidentally, some of these men had forged their credentials by challenging the political lurch towards the right of the previous decade. The 1930s had witnessed the interventionism of

fascist Italy and Nazi Germany with the invasion of Ethiopia in 1935, the Spanish Civil War from 1936 and the German annexation of Austria and the Czechoslovakian Sudetenland in 1938. This expansionism was met with Non-Intervention or Appeasement by the main powers of the time, France, Great Britain and the USA. These policies ended with the invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939, triggering the declaration of war by France and Great Britain two days later. The rapid German advance in the following spring announced the shift to total war, with France and, especially, Great Britain turning to the USA as a potential source for military help or, better, direct intervention in the conflict. Efforts to counter the isolationist position that the USA had embraced since World War I took many forms, and cinema led a relentless crusade for increasing support and involvement. As Todd Bennett's analysis of 'The Celluloid War' demonstrates, the fight against isolationism 'was configured by the state as well as by the studio'.[6] This campaign informed the production of films representing the daily struggle and 'moral fibre' of ordinary British civilians to American audiences, thereby minimizing or erasing class differences in the process. A good example of this type of film is William Wyler's *Mrs Miniver* (1942), which Churchill suggested to be 'worth four divisions for what it did to influence American opinion'.[7] Other cinematic productions contributed to that trend through their retroactive presentation of the fight of the communist-led International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War (1936–39) as fundamentally heroic and selfless.

Overtly or covertly propagandistic, 1940s films that cast International Brigades make them simply 'anti-fascist,' and this vision was prevalent while the Stalin-Roosevelt-Churchill alliance lasted. These films belatedly endorse the Popular Front coalitions of communists, socialists and other left-wing parties in 1930s Europe, which were successful in France and Spain, winning elections in February and May of 1936 respectively.[8] These alliances would play an important role in the internationalization of the Spanish Civil War through the recruitment of International Brigades, which comprised volunteers from more than fifty different countries. The central organization of the approximately 35,000 brigades was carried out by card-carrying communists, who also made up the majority of volunteers. The brigades were not, however, the only international supporters of the Second Spanish Republic (1931–39), which was also endorsed by fund-raising in grass-roots organizations, as well as a good number of artists and intellectuals. In addition, anti-Stalinist communists or other leftist individuals fought with Trotskyist or anarchist militia. The commitment of

these volunteers and supporters was infused by their political outlook and the wish to counter the substantive backing given to the nationalist rebels by Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy.

Although the Japanese invasion of Manchuria and the Italian invasion of Abyssinia are events leading to the Second World War, the Spanish Civil War provided the rallying point against Appeasement for left-wing Europeans.[9] The impact and long-lasting impression of the war can be seen in artworks, books and films that were released in the 1930s and early 1940s. Some of these works were produced during the conflict, and the most prominent of them was Pablo Picasso's *Guernika* (1937), a harrowing protest of the blitzkrieg of the Basque town by the German Condor Legion of the Luftwaffe. Intellectuals, writers, photographers and war correspondents also contributed to the popularity of the conflict. Among them, writers Albert Camus, Ernest Hemingway, George Orwell, Lillian Hellman, André Malraux, Martha Gellhorn and Ilya Ehrenburg, photographers Robert Capa, Gerda Taro and David 'Chim' Seymour and filmmakers, such as Joris Ivens, amply documented the fight from the point of view of the republicans.

From the 'anti-fascist' perspective of the 1940s, the Spanish Civil War was a dress rehearsal for the greater conflict and the International Brigades were honourable fighters for the right cause at the wrong time. The 1940s films that showcase these men thus championed a cause that had been largely repudiated during the Appeasement era and that would be subsequently disowned. A successful rendition of this point of view is Sam Wood's adaptation of Hemingway's novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1942), which became the top box-office hit in the USA on its release. With the onset of the Cold War, real or imagined communists, including veterans from the Abraham Lincoln Brigade in the USA, became outcasts of the infamous witch hunts led by Joseph McCarthy and the House of Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC).[10] The 'Red Scare' that was contemporary with the HUAC led to the blacklisting of Hollywood producers, directors and scriptwriters, making some of those involved in the aforementioned films immediately suspect.

Wood's adaptation of Hemingway's famous *For Whom the Bell Tolls* casts Gary Cooper as Robert Jordan, supposedly an International Brigade willing to sacrifice himself for the Republic's 'little people' (both literally and metaphorically). Although the film was very popular, it did little to illuminate the Spanish war or the fight of the Brigades. In fact, Wood's adventure film distances the events from the ideological struggle

taking place in Spain, which is presented as an alien and alienating environment, as Hemingway complained in his copious correspondence about the film.[11] The fact that Wood was a fervent anti-communist did not do much to repositioning the US as an anti-fascist ally at this time. Prior to the end of the war, in 1944, Wood became the first director to join the conservative Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals (MPA). The aim of this Alliance, which Wood chaired from 1947, was to find and denounce 'subversives', meaning communists or sympathizers, in Hollywood's film industry. In fact, Wood's testimony before the HUAC in 1947, where he complained about a putative widespread communist influence in the US film industry, contributed to the fears of the time, and is an action that has tainted his legacy to this day. Nevertheless, even if Wood's production undermined Hemingway's endorsement of 1930s anti-fascism, both the writer and the director converged in highlighting the heroism of the American protagonist.

With the shifting alliances that resulted from Hitler's invasion of the USSR and the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour, the early 1940s provided a suitable climate for building bridges that bypassed traditional divisions between the political left and right. As Richard Armstrong notes,

> Since the end of the First World War in 1918, American politicians had favoured an isolationist role in world affairs. Dubbed 'a day that shall live in infamy' by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, 7 December convinced many ordinary Americans that Germany and Japan threatened not just American interests but world peace, and that their territorial expansion had to be stopped.[12]

The alliance between Great Britain, the USA and the USSR, which many would have thought impossible a few years earlier, lasted while they shared the same enemy, and hostilities resumed with the onset on the Cold War. Until then, however, cinematic productions showcased sympathetic portrayals of 'Good Russians' and good communists. This interim would start to be phased out towards the end of the conflict, and Good Germans would replace Good Russians when West Germany and some of its allies became close partners in the fight against communism. Cinematic anti-fascists 'survived' in productions from the Eastern Bloc, noticeably in Partisan Films made in Yugoslavia, as will be seen in Chap. 3 of this book.

A good number of anti-fascist characters from 1940s films are shown to have supported republican loyalists in the Spanish Civil War, which developed as a result of the failure of the coup led by General Francisco Franco

in the country's major cities and industrial towns, as well as in rural Andalusia, where people rallied in support of the Republic. As this resistance developed into fully-fledged combat, the Republic tried to purchase armament and regroup the forces that had remained loyal. In the shadow of Appeasement, a meeting in London of Western countries, led by Great Britain, France and the USA, signed the Non-Intervention Treaty in September 1936, forbidding the sale of weapons to the Republic. This embargo was largely ignored by both sides, with Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany providing munitions, personnel and aircraft to the nationalist forces. Ostracized by the Non-Intervention Treaty, the Spanish Republic largely relied for its defence on older weapons or armament bought from the USSR, which were used by a largely untrained, voluntary militia. It would prove no match for the well-drilled Nationalist Army, where the majority of the army officials served. The International Brigades volunteered to counter what they perceived as international treason, with around one third of them losing their lives on Spanish soil.

Although at this time the Spanish left was largely grouped in anarchist, socialist and republican movements, communism grew considerably during the war, partly because the Soviet support of the Republic was channelled through the Spanish Communist Party (PCE). It thus boosted the party's membership and overall control at the expense of republicans and socialists. It also marginalized the two unions where most workers were affiliated: the socialist UGT (*Unión General de Trabajadores* or General Union of Workers) and the anarcho-syndicalist CNT (*Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores* or National Confederation of Workers). People from these unions, as well as anarchist and non-Stalinist groups, were eventually subjected to purges led by the NKVD and its acolytes.[13] The resulting conflict between the forces supporting the Republic further weakened its ability to withstand the right-wing rebellion.

The growth of the Spanish Communist Party during the late 1930s was not, however, anomalous. European communist parties augmented their support and membership throughout the continent following the rise of Hitler and the NSDPA, benefiting from their active opposition to concessions made by France and Great Britain to Nazi Germany in controversial appeasement efforts. This growth came to a sudden halt not with news of Stalinist terror but when Stalin and Hitler signed the non-aggression Pact normally referred to as the Soviet-Nazi or Molotov-Ribbentrop treaty (23 August 1939). Confused by an agreement with its long-lasting enemy, some communists renounced their membership, although many returned after

the invasion of the USSR. At this time, communists, who were seasoned in underground activities, took the lead in resisting the Nazis, adhering to the changing directives received from Moscow. With Stalin becoming an unlikely ally of Churchill and Roosevelt, left-wing resisters, including the odd communist group, such as Marshall Tito's Partisans in Yugoslavia, were not only tolerated, but also overtly supported economically and logistically.[14] In cultural and propagandistic terms, this fuelled the positive representation of 'anti-fascists' that were temporarily screened on cinemas.

For this limited time, the fight of the Spanish Republic and the volunteers from the International Brigades was retroactively seen as fundamentally selfless. This can be appreciated in, for example, Karel Langer (Anton Walbrook), the protagonist of the British production, *The Man from Morocco,* directed by émigré Mutz Greenbaum and also, perhaps more prominently, in Wood's Robert Jordan (Gary Cooper), the main protagonist of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, which became the top box-office hit in the USA on its release in 1942. Rick Blaine (Humphrey Bogart) from Curtiz's *Casablanca* and Giorgio Manfredi (Marcello Pagliero) from Rossellini's *Rome* are two cinematic men who share credentials with Greenbaum's 'man from Morocco' and Wood's Robert Jordan.

Rick and Manfredi illustrate the re-appropriation of 1930s anti-fascist resistance fighters in the 1940s, and the films in which they appear have not been simply products reflecting the time in which they were made but have contributed actively to shaping the collective memory (or memories) of the era. *Rome* has been seen to inaugurate the mythology of Italian citizens, including Catholics and communists, united against German invaders, and their 'anti-fascism' is intimately linked with the development of Italian neorealism, representing Italian resistance. As Lesley Caldwell observes, 'politically and ideologically, neorealism is linked with the liberation movements, with post-war reconstruction, with anti-fascism and with the establishment of democratic Italy'.[15] Rossellini's film became a foundational narrative of the 'new' Italy that emerged after the war, partly on account of its focus on the war's victims and disregard for Italy's role as invader and perpetrator. By contrast, *Casablanca*'s privileged position among one of the best films of all time is not (or not only) due to its geopolitical setting. The film is largely celebrated for a romantic plot that is immortalized in memorable sound bites, such as Rick's final farewell, 'we will always have Paris'. The personal and political dimensions of *Casablanca,* however, only make sense as ideological challenges to Nazism and USA's isolationism.

From a historical point of view, the importance of *Rome* and *Casablanca* rests on their contribution to the war's legacy. Both films cast resistance as ordinary and even understated in an effort to appeal to their respective (and large) target audiences. Manfredi is a member of the Italian Communist Party (PCI) and a leader of the Popular Front coalition established in 1943, CLN (*Comitato di Liberazione Nazionale,* Committee for National Liberation).[16] Manfredi's communism is, however, presented as a calculated response to the Nazi attack on Europe and his eventual martyrdom is projected in terms of Catholic hagiography. By contrast, Rick is a 'generic anti-fascist', who rises to the occasion in response to his circumstances. In different ways, the internationalism of men like Rick and Mandredi stands as a direct challenge to the xenophobic activation of social cohesion along class and ethnic lines that informed Italian fascism and German National Socialism, and that was used by the Axis to rally its supporters. Both men are idealists or, to borrow the label used in *Casablanca*, 'sentimentalists', whose uncompromising anti-fascism informs their heroism. As will be seen below, these principles are embedded through the films' references to their participation in the Spanish Civil War.

While it is evident that Manfredi, Pina (Anna Magnani) and the resistant priest, Don Pietro Pellegrini (Aldo Fabrizi), embody mainstream Italian citizens in *Rome*, this may not be immediately apparent in *Casablanca*. Rick and his faithful pianist, Sam (Dooley Wilson), appear to be the only two Americans in the film's main chronotope, the café where European expatriates meet. Altogether, however, these men and women constitute a microcosm of pro-interventionist America, and their charm arises from the way in which they embed stereotypes inherent in American exceptionalism. In this case, exceptionalism means building the USA as a 'melting pot' of hard-working, lower-class European migrants who would make a meritocratic society on virgin land, or *terra nullius*. Indeed, Rick's casual stance and his final sacrifice project this ideal and idealized America and are offered as counterparts to the intolerant Nazi attitude. Rick's sentimental renunciation at the film's end, moreover, demonstrates the impossibility of separating the personal and the internationalist dimensions of his sacrifice, and what they mean for the construction of a better future. As Jack Nachbar observes, '*Casablanca*'s special contribution to explaining the need for wartime sacrifices was to show how such sacrifices could first legitimize memories and then redeem them into dreams of the future'.[17]

Rick's understated patriotism is shown in the sacrifice of his individual romance in the altar of a 'good war'. This war is fought to defend the America celebrated in the film's opening sequence as a country opened to the dispossessed who were welcomed by New York's Statue of Liberty. This context is conveyed as the film starts with a fugitive shot in an Arab market below a large-size portrait of Marshal Philippe Pétain. A French hero of the Battle of Verdun in World War One, Pétain, then in his eighties, became the visible head of the collaborative government established in the south of France called l'État français, although it is normally referred to by the name of the spa town in which its capital was located, Vichy. This murder follows a voiceover over dissolving images of ships and maps that explain Casablanca as the temporary landing place of European refugees seeking the 'freedom' of the USA. To reach this Promised Land, potential migrants need 'letters of transit', two of which are owned by Ugarte (Peter Lorre).[18] These letters, which Ugarte indicates in unclear terms to have been signed by either Vichy General Maxime Weygand or Free French General Charles de Gaulle, are at the centre of the film's plot.[19] Although their usefulness remains a mystery, in *Casablanca*'s world, these letters hold the key to enter the American Promised Land. Rick, then, has the power to help people gain access to America, as he hides in Sam's piano the letters given to him by Ugarte prior to his murder.

Notwithstanding the letters' usefulness (or lack of it), references to their possible whereabouts enable viewers to get some details about Rick's background and attitude. This information comes from Vichy Captain Louis Renault (Claude Rains), who suspects that Rick knows the whereabouts of Ugarte's missing letters. A sympathetic, though corrupt official, Renault is, according to his own appraisal, in charge of the town, pompously telling Rick that 'in Casablanca I am the master of my fate', only to be interrupted by the arrival of the Gestapo at the end of this exchange in Rick's Café. Before this abrupt end, Renault tells Rick that he believes him willing to give Ugarte's letters to a prominent Czech resistance leader, Victor Laszlo (Paul Henreid), who has arrived in the Moroccan coastal town then part of the French Protectorate. Renault introduces Laszlo as a Czech agent who has managed to escape the Gestapo and is in Casablanca with his wife, Ilsa Lund (Ingrid Bergman), whose mention visibly affects Rick. Acknowledging Rick's discomfort, Renault warns him against supporting Laszlo's attempt to fly to the USA to continue his fight against fascism from there. Dismissing Rick's protestations about his unwillingness to help others, Renault classes them as poor efforts to

disguise his 'sentimentalist' credentials, which he corroborates with reference to his awareness of Rick's past in support of Republican Spain, after 'running arms' in Ethiopia to oppose the Italian invasion in 1935. Although not stated explicitly, Rick's presence in Spain at the time would have made him a member or backer of the International Brigades. Rick's ensuing resistance would correspond to the role played by brigades who, after surviving the war, went on to organize the opposition against Nazism in places as distant as the Sobibor death camp.[20] Besides the areas of Southern France, where 400,000 republicans were initially exiled, Republican Spaniards and International Brigades fought against the Nazis in Belgium, Denmark, Italy, the USSR and Yugoslavia.[21] Rick's 'sentimentalism', in other words, is presented as both personal and political, reinforcing the intricate relationship between the romantic and anti-isolationist subplots of the film.

Tellingly, in this segment, Renault refers to Rick having supported 'loyalist' Spain, which is a significant claim to be made some two or three years after the war ended. A few months after its conclusion, in 1939, the military rulers of the country issued the so-called Law of Political Responsibilities that transferred the label of 'rebels', which had been applied to them during the conflict, to those who had supported the government of the Second Republic. This *ex post facto* law went so far as to make the failure to support the 1936 uprising a crime, and backdating this 'rebellion' to the 1934 revolts in the Asturian mines. In sum, Rick's potential support for the resistance would be, for Renault, the logical continuation of his 1930s activities, and this assumption is corroborated later on in the film by Laszlo, when he refers to Rick's idealism and receives an equally nonchalant response.

As with *Casablanca*, the setting of *Rome* is part and parcel of a wartime chronotope that stressed international solidarity and the anti-fascism of the tightly-knit working-class building of the town in which most of the action takes place is crucial to the film's message. In terms of providing archetypes or role models, Rick's or Manfredi's form of heroism demands no public recognition for one's actions. In *Casablanca*, Rick's inconspicuous courage is primarily presented as a personal price that is, for him, economic and, above all, emotional. Rick's past allegiances and sympathies can be deduced, whereas they are explicit in relation to 'engineer Manfredi', about whom we learn at beginning of Rossellini's film to have been a volunteer to the Italian Garibaldi Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. In fact, as Tom Behan notes, these brigades could be found fighting Mussolini's

forces in 'battles which were in turn a dress rehearsal for the Resistance period of 1943–45'. This would be the case of communist leaders Luigi Longo or Giovani Pesce, who would go on to take an active role in the Italian resistance, admitting that Spain had provided them with the necessary training, as did to Tito's Partisans.[22] Like the remaining protagonists of *Rome*, Manfredi is one of the *Italiani, brava gente* who would become archetypal in the Italian memorialization of the war. Manfredi is both a 'subversive', as Major Fritz Bergmann (Harry Feist) remarks, and an ordinary Italian who shares the values of the working-class community to which Pina and her communist fiancé, Francesco (Francesco Grandjacquet), also belong.

These references about the 1930s mean that it is not just to confound the Third Reich's Major Heinrich Strasser (Conrad Veidt) that Rick in *Casablanca* refuses to respond coherently to the question about his nationality. Instead, Rick replies, 'I am a drunkard', indicating that his loyalty is to cosmopolitan America when he adds that he 'was born in New York'. While avoiding easy chauvinism, Rick vindicates the American values associated with hospitality and multi-culturalism, locating *Casablanca* firmly within efforts to support a conflict away from home. Whereas during the first two years of the war some US politicians voiced their unease at the ways in which Roosevelt or Hollywood were rallying against isolationism, their opposition was silenced by the untimely bombing of Pearl Harbour on 7 December 1941.

Curtiz's *Casablanca* casts light, then, not so much on existing resistance in French Morocco as on the prevalent US perspective on the conflict. *Casablanca* was directed in Hollywood by émigré Curtiz, a Hungarian Jew who had changed his name, Mihaly Kertesz, when he joined Warner in 1926. *Casablanca*, Armstrong notes, offers 'a tribute to the Continental comedy' not just in theme but by casting a large number of émigrés, including Hungarian Peter Lorre, German Conrad Veidt and Frenchman Marcel Daio'.[23] Curtiz's film makes the German occupation of Europe the logic continuation of a conflict that had started in the 1930s with the Italian invasion of Ethiopia and the Nazi and fascist involvement in the Spanish war. In this context, the flashbacks of a Paris in which Ilsa and Rick enjoy a formulaic romance stand in for a glamorized version of cultured Europe, now threatened by Nazi destruction. For an American audience, the film assumes, the occupation of Paris, the paradigmatic site of art and love, would have an appeal that would not be achieved with references to the devastation of Poland and the Western Soviet Union or

the harrowing massacres of Jews led by the *Einsatzgruppen*. The invasion of the Europe's core, Paris, is accordingly presented as having 'bombed' Rick's romantic and social 'idealism' in a single sweep. Rick's unassuming heroism at the film's end is a political triumph for which he pays with the loss of his café and by forfeiting his love for Ilsa. Rick's is a type of self-effacement that belongs firmly in its time and place and is also displayed in other romantic films of the era, including David Lean's famous *Brief Encounter* (1945).[24] Rick's Café, in other words, offers a chronotope for its contemporary world, much as the train station where the lovers part in *Brief Encounter*, in that both witness the sacrifices made by ordinary people, which entailed forfeiting one's welfare, happiness or home. Rick's sacrifice, moreover, means that Lazslo will further 'the cause' in America, effectively marking the USA essential to operations on European soil and to the potential success in the war.

In this context, instead of being oversights, *Casablanca*'s array of historical lapses or inaccuracies reveals the mechanisms inherent in its appeal to end isolationism through the construction of a consensual narrative. These historical gaffes include the use of the wrong version of the flag for French Morocco or the fact that no German troops ever set foot in the town during the Second World War. Suspension of disbelief is necessary to believe Laszlo's assertion that the Nazis cannot arrest him because Casablanca 'is still unoccupied France' and 'any violation of neutrality would reflect on [him]'. Likewise, it makes little sense to think that Laszlo could walk around freely and even meet with German officials, especially after having escaped from a concentration camp. Lastly, audiences are invited to share Rick's disbelief in the face of Renault's affirmation that 'In Casablanca, I am master of my own fate', an assertion undermined as soon as it is made when the Germans enter Rick's Café. Viewers are also asked to disregard that the refugees depicted in the film would actually have gone to Casablanca since the usual route out of Germany would have been through Vienna, Prague, Paris or London. Nevertheless, the film's technical advisor, Robert Aisner, followed the unusual path to Morocco sketched in *Casablanca*'s opening scene. In fact, however, *Casablanca* undercuts these claims, highlighting explicitly their potential contradictions, including the theoretical usefulness of the 'letters of transit'. When Rick suggests to Renault that they would not allow his ex-lover, Ilsa, or her husband, Laszlo, to escape, he adds that: 'People have been held in Casablanca in spite of their legal rights', voicing his awareness of the questionable value of documents at the centre of the film's gravity. All these

historical blunders are not only irrelevant but they serve to reinforce the essence of the ideas conveyed by the film. These oversights stress that American sacrifice and solidarity are necessary to win this struggle on behalf of a world to which US audiences of the time would or should feel closely linked.

In *Casablanca*, as in *Rome*, inaccuracies are neither careless nor overtly manipulative. Instead, they let us infer the processes of individual and social memorialization, as well as the potential usefulness of mystifications in healing social division or spur mobilization. These historical fallacies reveal essential truths about attitudes and emotions, which are obviously not meant to stand tests for precision. Instead, as with oral narratives, it is often the discrepancies between events and their memorialization that are more useful to a historian. As Alessandro Portelli argues in relation to the faulty memories about the 'death of Luigi Trastelli', 'oral sources…are not always fully reliable in point of fact. Rather than being a weakness, this is however, their strength: errors, inventions, and myths lead us through and beyond facts and their meanings'.[25]

If Rick's support for the Spanish Republic offers a veiled suggestion that he could have been a communist or a socialist, we are told at the beginning of Rossellini's film that Manfredi was a card-carrying 'red', and his participation in the Spanish conflict immediately singles him out as a potential leader of the Italian partisans. Early in the film, Manfredi is introduced as a volunteer of the Italian Garibaldi Brigade, which was organized by and largely made up of Italian communists, through some photographs. In these pictures, which Bergmann shows to the Italian Police Commisioner (Carlo Sindici), he appears with other brigades in Spain. Cast as overtly homosexual, Bergmann, for Sidney Gottlieb, is 'part caricature…and part cinematic villain', displayed when he tortures Manfredi, 'by putting dark shadows across the top of Bergmann's head, as well as that of the commissioner'.[26] For Millicent Marcus, however, Bergmann is recognizable in historical terms as 'a composite of Gestapo chief Herbert Kappler and Nazi commander Eugen Dollmann'. Marcus proposes historical referents for the main characters, 'Don Pietro, a fictional rendering of Don Morosini, the activist priest…and Manfredi, a figure of Resistance leader Celeste Negarville', arguing that their 'authenticity' is also due to the fact that they are 'popular types'.[27]

The scene in which Manfredi is identified takes place in Rome's Gestapo headquarters and the dialogue is punctuated by the off-scene screams of a 'professor' who is being tortured in the adjacent room. A cut to a close-up

of one of the photographs shows three men in plain clothes, one of whom, Manfredi, has been marked with a circle of black ink. Towards the end of the film, while Bergmann is interrogating Don Pietro, he remarks to him that Manfredi's communism should make him an enemy of the church: 'I'll tell you who he [Manfredi] is. He's subversive; he's fought with the Reds in Spain. His life is dedicated to fighting society, religion. He is an atheist...your enemy'. For Don Pietro, however, Manfredi is not so much an enemy as a martyr who follows the path of Jesus Christ, even if not a Christian believer. Indeed, Don Pietro contemplates with sympathy Manfredi's tortured and semi-naked body, reminiscent of the religious images of Christ's passion (Fig. 2.1). This convergence links the Catholic Church and the communist resistance, making Manfredi, Don Pietro and even Pina like-minded anti-fascists who embody the values of working-class Italians. As Marian Hurley posits, these proposals 'demarcate fascist and collaborationist Italy from the new Italy which will be founded upon the ideals of the resistance'.[28] This Italy disregards the historical agency of the country, its leaders, its army, civil servants and large segments of the population during two decades under Mussolini.

Fig. 2.1 Roberto Rossellini, *Rome, Open City* (1946). Manfredi's tortured and semi-naked body, reminiscent of the religious images of Christ's passion

Rossellini's *Rome's* projection of the unlikely alliance of church, communists and working-class people would become the country's self-image after the war. Indeed, the film is considered one of the main contributors to the construction of the war's legacy, which Michael Rogin summarizes as follows:

> Initiated in response to the Nazi seizure of power in Germany, the Communist Party's Popular Front strategy rejected revolutionary internationalist working-class anticapitalist struggle…in favour of a broadly inclusive national fight against Fascism. The Popular Front aspired to include liberal reformers, white-collar workers and state employees, small property-owners, progressive capitalists, and (in Italy) the lower Catholic clergy. With the overthrow of Mussolini, the Italian Resistance organized itself on a Popular Front basis. *Rome Open City* is its movie.[29]

Manfredi and the remaining protagonists of this film, especially the priest, Don Pietro, and the pregnant mother, Pina, fit in perfectly within these parameters in both cinematic and political terms. They are archetypes of *Italiani brava gente* in a sanitized version of twentieth-century history that foregrounds the exemplary role played by average Italians from September 1943 to April 1945. These eighteen months witnessed the rise and increasing organization of Italian resistance in the northern half of the country. These developments followed the Allied invasion of Sicily on 10 July 1943 and the slow march of the Allies towards the North of the country from 3 September of the same year. The landing of Allied forces in the peninsula was immediately followed by the signing the Armistice of Cassibile and the country's exit from the Axis, a move foreseen by Nazi Germany. As Italian soldiers vacated their posts, the Germans occupied the rest of the country and rescued Mussolini from his imprisonment. Mussolini was then planted in the country's north as leader of the Repubblica Sociale Italiana (Social Italian Republic), also known as Republic of Saló, after the town in which it was based, on Lake Garda. *Republichini*, however, are largely absent in Rossellini's film, which shows the Germans as occupiers and resistance against this occupation, ignoring the fact that Italian resistance was largely deployed in support of the Allied advance.

Manfredi's participation in the Spanish Civil War was important for 1940s Italy as much for the clash of ideologies at the centre of the conflict as for the staggering material and human investment made by the Italian government to support the nationalist rebels. Besides weapons, the Italians sent the Corps of Volunteer Troops (*Corpo Truppe Volontarie*), whose

numbers had reached 50,000 by March 1937. The financial cost of the Italian effort is estimated to have been between 6 and 8.5 billion lire, which amounted to approximately 14 to 20 per cent of the country's annual disbursement.[30] Indeed, the country's expenditure in men and equipment is one reason for Italy's depletion at the onset of World War II, which prevented them from taking a leading role in the war, at least initially. Rosellini's representation concurs with the post-war image of fascism in Italy, which ironically became an alien evil against which the united country fought. As Claudio Fogu remarks,

> [The] first postwar generations of Italians never even acquired an 'official' image of Fascism. On the contrary, beginning with the immediate aftermath of the war, a very active process of forgetting has invested all areas of the regime related to aggressive foreign policy, anti-Semitism, and racism: the brutal invasion of Ethiopia in 1935–1936; the anti-Semitic laws passed in 1938; the aggressive war fought by the Italian fascist army in the Balkans between 1940 and 1943; and the deportation of foreign and Italian Jews initiated in October 1943.[31]

On the other side of the equation, the Italian Communist Party contributed 4,000 volunteers to the Italian contingent of the International Brigades. Italians fought in the Garibaldi Battalion, which was part of the XII Brigade also named after Giuseppe Garibaldi.[32] Manfredi would have been a member of this detachment, although his presentation in this film is not as the left-wing, internationalist activist that Bergmann shows. The casting of Manfredi in *Rome*, like that of Rick in *Casablanca*, shows the contribution made by real and cinematic International Brigades in support of the war effort and in the construction of social consensus at the end of the war. These men went from dissident historical actors in the 1930s to becoming heroes during the war, fighting against Nazi interventionism and US isolationism. Their temporary vindication did not outlast the war in most western countries, where International Brigades disappeared from cinematic and political scenarios, becoming once more personae non-grata with the onset of the Cold War.

Rome and *Casablanca* can rightly be considered foundational narratives designed to seal fissures along class and nationalistic lines, which were apparent prior to and during World War II. These productions show the reincorporation of 1930s resistance fighters to the real and imagined roles of resistance fighters during the war. The films foreground individual sacrifice

and international solidarity, demarcating the socio-political hazards entailed in activating social coherence on ultra-nationalistic lines, as happened during fascism's heyday. Support for the war effort, like the social reconstruction that followed the war, depended on narratives of resistance that mystified, deleted or distorted the recent past. In this context, the cinematic references to the International Brigades in these two films help us trace the processes inherent in the production and subversion of consensual memories. The films treated in the next section of this chapter show how representations of resistance evolved subsequently to monumentalize resistance fighters on different sides of the Cold War divide.

2.2 Monuments and Martyrs

World War II created environments for civilians in which not to resist would be tantamount to collaboration with the occupiers. This context favoured the incorporation of civilians to the rank and file of underground organizations, as either active fighters or occasional supporters. With the war nearing its end, these 'circumstantial' resisters started to dominate the screens, playing an important role in the memorialization of the conflict. The productions that cast these resisters, who are mostly, but not only, men, follow the tradition inaugurated in Rossellini's *Rome,* which mixes anti-fascists who trace their credentials to the 1930s, such as Manfredi, with civilians joining in or otherwise supporting the struggle during the war. Anti-fascists, as seen above, started to resist either reluctantly, like Rick in *Casablanca*, or as a logical continuation of their prior commitments, like Manfredi in *Rome*. By contrast, civilians such Pina or Don Pietro exemplify the roles adopted by those who got involved actively during the conflict in response to the policies of the occupiers and not, or not primarily, as a consequence of their political outlook.

The war's immediate aftermath presented the ideal environment for 'resister films' to help social healing processes, and they mostly did it by avoiding direct confrontation with a murky past, disregarding the complex responses to the German occupation. Cinematic screens from the end of the war and until the 1960s became awash with sympathetic protagonists focused on winning the war and expelling the occupier, even taking up arms against them. For different reasons to be outlined in this section, this was especially important in France, although it can also be seen to some extent and for different reasons in Poland and elsewhere.

Resister films, by definition, rely on the assumption that resistance was inherently good and widespread, which was not always the case. If Poland could claim to be 'first to fight', as stressed by contemporary campaigns, countries such as France or Czechoslovakia were not.[33] Charles de Gaulle's celebrated appeal of 18 June 1940 on the BBC did not have the effect that would be attributed to it thereafter. Its significance was magnified by being complemented with his staged parade in the Champs Elysees during the liberation of Paris on 26 August 1944 and the grandiloquent speech that he delivered then. Both events became the foundational moments of the French Fourth Republic that emerged after the war and were endowed with an aura of sacredness only dispelled by a generation coming of age during the late 1960s.

Representations of heroic groups of Polish resistance fighters were first cast by Andrzej Wajda in his celebrated trilogy. The first of these three films, *A Generation*, charts the loss of innocence on the part of teenage men and women, the lost generation to which the title alludes. Wajda's loyalties were with nationalist Poland and the AK, in which his father had been captain of the 72nd Infantry Regiment. He was assassinated in the infamous Soviet massacre of Polish officers in the forest of Katyn. In *A Generation*, however, Wajda pays lip service to his country's official view of the AK as bourgeois and potentially treacherous, contrasting it with the more honourable AL. Perhaps inadvertently, Wajda's portrayal of resistance as principled but flawed includes the historically accurate detail that AL members were more likely to support Polish Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto and elsewhere.

A Generation was Wajda's first film and is considered to have pioneered the group of directors called Polish School. The members of this group, which includes Andrzej Munk, received their training in the Polish National Film School that had been established in 1948 and flourished during the so-called Polish Thaw, which followed closely the changes in the USSR to be sketched in Chap. 3. Like its Soviet counterpart, the Polish Thaw followed the death of Stalin in 1953 and Nikita Khrushchev's 'secret speech' denouncing Stalin's 'cult of personality' in 1956. In Poland, this speech coincided with the death of the leader of the Polish Communist Party, Bolesław Bierut, in April, which spurred anti-Soviet demonstrations in Poznań in June, when dozens were killed by the army of the PKWN (Polish Committee of National Liberation). The leadership of the Polish Communist Party was subsequently assumed by Władysław Gomułka, who remained in power until the end of Soviet rule with the

remit to moderate the party's totalitarian extremes and chart a 'Polish road to socialism'.

Wajda's *A Generation* was an inaugural film of its movement and, as Ewa Mazierska notes, went on to establish some of the Polish School's salient traits, such as the abandonment of socialist realism or the incorporation of expressionism and motifs inherited from Polish romanticism. *A Generation,* Mazierska suggests, offers 'a testimony to the dual lives that many Poles led [during the war]: by day working in German-controlled factories or going to official schools, by night organizing acts of sabotage, helping Jews, and learning Polish history'.[34] One element that shows the move away from socialist realism is the gradual abandonment of the proletariat as protagonist by foregrounding more individualized characters. In accordance with these tenets, the film's main characters are two young factory workers, Stach Mazur (Tadeusz Łomnicki) and Jasio Krone (Tadeusz Janczar). Stach's coming of age embraces his first job in a factory and his introduction to both communism and sexuality at the same time. While the factory's foreman, Mr Sekula (Janusz Paluszkiewicz), tells him about the proletariat in classic Marxist tirades, Stach finds his inspiration in the young communist, Dorota (Urszula Modrzyńska), an energetic and attractive militant with whom he falls in love when she delivers a speech encouraging workers to rebel against oppression. Stach's romance, however, is cut short, and he witnesses Dorota being led by Gestapo when returning with flowers and breakfast after their night together. Both Dorota and Stach's colleague, Jasio, meet tragic ends, while Mr Sekula is assumed to do likewise, as he departs to help the Jews in the Ghetto Uprising, which few survived. The film ends when Stach meets a group of young people wishing to join the fight. His silent tears as he prepares to indoctrinate them reveal the sense of loss and his reluctant acceptance of the martyrdom to which they all appear to be destined. Entrapment and despair thus pervade a film that presents Poland in its romantic and romanticized role of victim and martyr, the 'Christ of Nations'. The film is also remembered for the role of Mundek, one of the teenagers from Stach's group, played by a young Roman Polanski before he moved to the USA.

Dorota's strength of character and resourcefulness are complemented by her loving, quasi-maternal devotion towards her cause and towards Stach, and these features are mirrored by streetwise Daisy (Teresa Izewska) in Wajda's next film, *Kanal.* In this film, which takes the claustrophobic feel of *A Generation* to extremes, Wajda sets out to represent the last hours of a doomed detachment of AK fighters during the Warsaw Uprising, which took place from 1 August to 2 October 1944. *Kanal* deals with the group's

attempt to escape to the other side of the town, using the city's sewers in which the largest segment of the film takes place. Unusually for any film, audiences learn at the beginning that these people are all doomed, as a masculine voice-over urges: 'Watch them closely! These are the last hours of their lives'. With the end of the film already known, the beginning is both a dirge and, as Matilda Mroz observes, an 'injunction to bear witness and remember', which 'the film shares with spatial monuments in the public domain'.[35] In the absence of actual monuments to the AK in communist Poland, Wajda's film provides a site of memory and mourning akin to the Soviet films to be studied in Chap. **3**. Even if this monumental role was intended by the director, the film has surpassed all expectations, becoming integral to the legacy of the uprising, as Mroz explains, '*Kanal*'s continuing presence testifies to the enduring force of its memorial legacy. The film's commemorative potency must naturally be seen in the context of wartime and post-war private and public mourning practices'.[36]

Wajda's films were released at a time of increasing opposition to Soviet domination in countries such as Hungary and Czechoslovakia, and their meanings were different for different audiences. *Kanal*'s style, moreover, gained the approval of film pundits when it was screened at the Cannes Film Festival. In Poland, however, Mroz posits, the response was 'unsurprisingly, rather more complicated and frequently negative'.[37] *Kanal* foregrounds Polish victimization and heroism in the face of defeat so as to honour the failed uprising that sealed the fate of Poland for nearly half a century. The presentation of the AK in this film differs markedly from that of *A Generation,* which is partly a reflection of the post-Stalinist Thaw that spread through Polish politics and culture, with the slight relaxation of regulations and censorship helping to rehabilitate the AK in official memory. As Paul Coates writes, 'the most serious generational national rendition of wartime experience emerges in "the Polish School" precisely because of film's capacity to reproduce shock, of which it became the homeopathic, therapeutic repetition'.[38] In this regard, *Kanal* embeds the contradictions faced by many Poles, who had actively opposed the Nazi invasion, becoming national martyrs, and who were often more attuned with Christian hagiography than with military effectiveness. On the other hand, Poland's geographical position, between Germany and the USSR, and the role of the Soviet Union as part of the Alliance, rendered the country a pawn or, in the eyes of Poles, a sacrificial victim, in the initial defeat in 1939, as well as in victory's altar after 1945. Wajda's films offer paeans to Polish sacrifices, with their suffering associated with Christ's passion, very much along

the lines established in Rossellini's *Rome*. In an early scene, for example, the wounded body of one of the Home Army soldiers whose last days we are witnessing is carried away by one of his comrades (Fig. 2.2). His limping body passes in front of crosses on the ground, signalling both the number of victims and their martyrdom. Besides honouring the anonymous deaths of AK's militants, Wajda's *Kanal* fulfils an archaeological function, a task undertaken nearly half a century later by Polanski's *The Pianist*, as will be seen in Chap. 5. For this film, however, Wajda not only made use of existing sites, but put his memory and research skills in the recreation of environments that he had witnessed a decade earlier.[39] It is therefore suitable that the film ends with the remnants of pieces of paper, records of the fighters, scattered by the wind, suggesting the loss of the documents related to the Uprising that was imposed in communist Poland.

While Wajda had to deal with censorship and conflicted memories in order to celebrate Polish resistance, directors working in the USA or the UK did not need to worry about official persecution in their celebrations of national heroes. However, they also exercised discreet censorship by deleting aspects that may not have rendered them unfailingly good, especially if the subjects had suffered or were dead. This censorship can be seen

Fig. 2.2 Andrezj Wajda, *Canal* (1957). Martyrdom of Polish Home Army fighters is associated with Christ's passion

with regard to female SOE agents whose work had often been dismissed during the war. When Churchill urged to 'set Europe ablaze', many in the military were frankly astonished at a body of 'amateur' fighters beyond their control. Their misgivings were proved right in cases such as the infamous Operation Nordpool, in which a laughable error meant the death and suffering of many valuable agents. In spite of the network having been compromised, and the absence of the security codes in messages, London kept sending agents at the behest of the Germans, who were 'welcoming' agents on the ground. Nevertheless, in spite of some blunders, it was the work of these agents that was to establish important parameters of what underground resistance was, and cinema played a paramount role in that creation.

As with other resister films, those dealing with SOE agents based in France were initially devised to celebrate their deeds or pay homage to those who, like Szabo, lost their lives. Although the main protagonists of two of these productions are young women, in reality women constituted only a small proportion of agents on the ground.[40] Therefore, the films in which they appear provide unusual counterpoints to the masculinity of staple resister films, as exceptions to the assumption that resisting was a macho activity requiring bravado and physical prowess. A modicum of restraint applies to these films' presentation of two agents, one of whom, Szabo, died in tragic circumstances, while the other, Odette Sansom (then Odette Churchill), was alive at the time, as were other characters in the films, such as Maurice Buckmaster, leader of the French Section of the SOE, and his assistant in recruiting agents to work on the field, Vera Atkins. These two films were partly designed to give their untimely deaths or suffering some significance. Perhaps not surprisingly, the field of action of these two films dealing with female agents, *Carve her Name with Pride* and *Odette,* is France, as resistance movements there and in Yugoslavia were broadly enhanced and supported by the Allies and were given the greatest quantity of people and supplies.[41] France also had the dedicated backing of the largest segment of the UK's SOE agents, Section F, staffed by volunteers who were perfectly bilingual and were often of mixed French and British heritage.

In addition to these two films with female protagonists, the same decade saw SOE agent Patrick Leigh Fermor celebrated in Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's *Ill Met by Moonlight* (1957), which deals with his deeds in Crete. Another film featuring agents is Vernon Sewell's largely forgotten *Battle of the V.I.,* also known as *Missiles from Hell* and

Unseen Heroes (1958). This film deals with Polish resistance in a case reminiscent of the Norwegian Heavy Water sabotage, with agents attempting to foist the development of weapons that could tilt the balance in favour of Germany. At the same time, the USA contributed some films that highlight the heroism of its men in contexts in which the main historical protagonists were local resisters. This can be seen in J. Lee Thompson's blockbuster, *The Guns of Navarone* (1961), set on a fictional Greek island, which shares some characteristics of contemporary productions on escapes of prisoners of war, such as John Sturges' *The Great Escape* (1963).

The notion of heroism celebrated in the two films with female agents is nowhere better expressed than in the last two scenes of *Carve her Name with Pride*. As liberation of the camp in which they are held, Ravensbrück, nears, Violette is taken to be executed alongside two of her colleagues. There, she enacts, to borrow Juliette Pattinson's label, her 'finest hour'.[42] When Szabo, Denise Bloch (Nicole Stéphane) and Lilian Rolfe (Anne Leon) are called, they exchange telling looks in a shot-reverse-shot showing them individually and collectively and then their captors. Throughout the sequence, the shots show the women together in the frame, stressing the collective dimension of their personal decision to show strength of fibre and dignity in their last hour (Fig. 2.3). At this point, Bloch and Rolfe, as Pattinson remarks, 'look to Szabo for support and strength', and Szabo assumes her leading role effectively. The film thus shows respect and reverence to the three women about to be executed, although we can only speculate about their attitude before they met their deaths. In fact, Szabo's companions could not walk and were taken in stretchers to the site of their execution, while Szabo herself was shot by a bullet in the back of her neck. The fictional rendition of their deaths, moreover, assumes that weakness in the face of death would somehow lower the patriotic value of their sacrifice very much in line with the notion of a stiff upper lip prevalent at the time. To demonstrate this attitude the camera follows the three women together as they walk upright in an embrace until they stop to look down at the ditch in which they see the firing squad waiting to execute them. The camera next cuts to mid-close-ups of the women looking at each other and lifting their chins markedly to show defiance. As we hear the firing of the guns, the camera tilts towards the sky and holds the shot a few seconds to emphasize their women's ultimate destination. If this scene consecrates 'the construction of Szabo as a heroine', the ensuing epilogue incorporates her effectively into the pantheon of national heroes.

Fig. 2.3 Lewis Gilbert, *Carve her Name with Pride* (1958). The three women about to be executed comfort each other in their last hour

Back in London, Violette's parents are comforted by their knowledge that the price that they have paid has contributed to the country's future, which is corroborated when their daughter accepts a posthumous award, the George Cross, in 1946. Szabo's daughter receives the medal on her mother's behalf in Buckingham Palace, in front of Szabo's parents, a recognition that also contains the symbolic re-enactment of the restoration of hierarchies, as the family returns to its neighbourhood. The film's politics of unity are thus sealed in this epilogue when Szabo's daughter, wearing a dress that her mother had bought for her in France, goes out to play in the streets in a landscape of terraced houses that we now associate with the lower-middle classes and that appears in productions such as Sidney Gilliat and Frank Launder's World War II film, *Millions Like Us* (1943), or the long-lasting television series *Coronation Street*. Ultimately, *Carve her Name with Pride*'s celebration of a woman's courage in war is qualified by the explicit suggestion that she had joined the struggle because her husband had died, and is made slightly frivolous by the time and money that Szabo spends buying expensive dresses for her and for her daughter in Paris.

Female agents have been interestingly revived in twenty-first century productions, partly because of the type sex appeal that now inheres in the Nazi period. This staple is already shown in early films, such as Janine Boitard (Irina Demick) wearing a revealing summer frock while riding a bike in Darryl F. Zanuck's *The Longest Day* (1962). In these films, attractive women agents or couriers hold their nerves and use their looks to fool and distract the enemy, even though most agents would try to look as plain and indistinctive as possible so as not to attract curiosity.[43] This type of feminine or feminized heroine appears in, for example, the adaptation of Sebastian Faulkner's novel, *Charlotte Gray*, directed by Gillian Anderson (2001), and Jean-Paul Salomé's *Female Agents* (*Les femmes de l'ombre* 2008), loosely based on the life of Lise de Baissac. The use of women's looks and sex appeal also provides the framework for a later film, Paul Verhoeven's *Black Book* (2008), which deals with Dutch and Jewish resistance and will be examined in this book's Conclusion.

The clichés of a German officer helping lift a suitcase with compromising material or an attractive woman walking past controls with the same small suitcase have become cinematic shortcuts, much as the wiring of trains, to signify resistance. In cinema, attractive women who operate underground use their looks to act as couriers, although early French films do not fully adhere to this presentation. Historically, many civilian resisters joined the fight in France when the hope of a German defeat became a possibility, following the Allied advances in North Africa throughout 1942 and, especially, the victory of the Red Army in Stalingrad in February of 1943. Other factors, such as the conscription of workers, opposition to the rounding up of Jews or a combination of those circumstances, also altered the balance towards an increase in anti-German activities from 1943 onwards. In cinema, this was translated in post-war France into representations of an apparently seamless transition from civil disobedience to support or active engagement with resistance, sometimes to the extent of embracing sabotage and partisan warfare.

Despite the absence of collaborators, early French productions subtly challenged the notion of French unity, while concentrating on remarkable individuals who resisted heroically. One of the earliest representations to establish the trend is Robert Bresson's *A Man Escaped* (*Un condamné à mort s'est échappé* ou *Le vent souffle où il veut,* 1956), which

encapsulates the tone of films from the 1950s. Jean-Pierre Melville's third film about the occupation, *Army of Shadows* (*L'armée des ombres,* 1969), which sits at the centre of this chapter, exemplifies why and how this type heroic resister was to disappear from the screen in the following decades. Heroic resisters reappeared on occasion thereafter, more prominently in Berri's *Lucie Aubrac*, clearly designed to vindicate its subject.

As one of the earliest representation of resistance on screen, Bresson's *A Man Escaped* set the tone of many films that followed it. Shot in black and white, Bresson's film is based on the memoirs of André Devigny, a member of the French resistance who passed on information to the British SOE. Originally, Devigny was an officer of the French Army who worked under the nom de guerre Valentin and was one of the three commanders of the Gilbert Network when he was arrested on 17 April 1943. The group, which had paticipated in some counter-espionage actions, was infiltrated by an agent working for the Abwehr, Robert Mogg. After torture and interrogation at the hands of the infamous Head of the Gestapo in Lyon, Klaus Barbie, Devigny was interned in Montluc, which was considered a high-security prison. Following several attempts to escape, he was sentenced to death on 20 August, with the verdict to be carried out eight days later. Four days later, on the evening of 24 August, Devigny managed to escape with a fellow prisoner who had been put in his cell with him, having used a safety pin to unleash his handcuffs and, subsequently, a sharpened spoon to create a space in the rotten wooden floors. Devigny was then hidden by friends and eventually flew to Switzerland, returning to France with the liberating forces in 1944. Unable to find him, the Gestapo retaliated with the arrest two of his cousins, who were sent to death camps.

Devigny, who appears as Lieutenant Fontaine in Bresson's film, wrote his memoirs, entitled *Un condamné à mort s'est échappé* ou *Le vent souffle où il veut*, ten years after the events, while serving in Algiers during the Algerian War. The title of his book, literally, 'a condemned man has escaped', was shortened into English as *A Man Escaped*, with the additional subtitle, which is taken from a Biblical reference, rendered into English as *The Wind Bloweth Where It Listeth*. Using his charismatic directorial approach, Bresson gives the story a documentary feel, concentrating the camera on the main character, often presented in close-ups or extreme close-ups. The scenario is devoid of props, forcing viewers to observe and, perhaps more important, to listen carefully to every minute detail of Fontaine's incarceration and his escape efforts.

Fontaine's characterization shows Bresson's belief in the need to dispense with professional actors to present a narrative devoid of artifice. In fact, Bresson's uniquely personal style is singled out by Kirstin Thompson and David Bordwell as ideally conceived to provoke audiences into searching for information that would normally be part of the storytelling:

> Compared to normal practice, highly restrained acting can seem stylized. Robert Bresson is noted for such restrained performances. Using nonprofessional actors and drilling them in the details of the characters' physical actions, Bresson makes his actors quite inexpressive by conventional standards. Although these performances often upset our expectations, we soon realize that such restraint focuses our attention on details of action we never notice in most movies.[44]

Bresson's style is also remarked on by Tony Pipolo in an essay included with the release of the film in DVD by Criterion. Pipolo observes that Breton's attitude offers a counterpoint to the supposedly non-professional actors of Italian neorealist films, whose gestures and histrionics are poles apart from the subdued style and subtle messages that Bresson wished to convey. Bresson, Pipolo writes,

> believed that actors—indeed, acting itself—were alien to the medium of film, because the camera could detect the slightest sign of artificiality and calculation. This conviction not only proscribed the use of professional actors given to a familiar repertoire of facial expressions, physical gestures, and vocal inflections, it also ruled out the kind of nonprofessionals found, for example, in Italian neorealist films—very popular at the time—who were encouraged to exude emotions and sentiments in order to move the viewer.[45]

The location of the camera in *A Man Escaped* conveys Fontaine's feeling of claustrophobia, which, as in Wajda's *Kanal*, is shared by the audience. Viewers are submerged in the protagonist's atmosphere inside a prison cell that resembles a convent's cell, with a small bed and a barred window that limits our field of vision. In this environment, sounds are essential to the construction of the narrative, and we are led to infer much of what we do not see from what we hear, as well as imagine what is happening off screen. Doug Cummings and Trond Trondsen remark on the intensity that this concentration provokes in viewers,

> The film famously restricts itself to Fontaine's immediate space throughout. The sense of claustrophobia and lack of omniscient perspective submerges the viewer into Fontaine's world. In a bare, concrete cell with nothing but a bed and a barred window that displays a portion of an empty courtyard, the viewer shares Fontaine's joy at the smallest of discoveries – a pencil or a spoon or a box of clothes. Sound reveals a tremendous amount of information: where the prison is situated, what surrounds it, who is near or far, what they are doing.[46]

Although unusual in creative terms, Bresson's film is conventional in its choice of subject matter. With the resister triumphant at the end, the film symbolizes French determination and courage in Gaullist terms, relegating the role of the Allies and attributing to the country's resisters the main roles in the liberation. The Allies are not always fully ignored in productions of the time, as they tend to appear in blockbuster films with US participation. For example, they are shown alongside a marginal French resistance in the aforementioned *The Longest Day,* as well as in Rene Clement's star-studded *Is Paris Burning?* (*Paris brûle-t-il?*, 1966). On the side of the Allies, the film includes roles for General Patton (Kirk Douglas), Brigadier General Sibert (Robert Stack), Sargent Warren (Anthony Perkins) and Lieutenant-General Bradley (Glen Ford). French resisters striving to organize their final assault include Docteur Monod (Charles Boyer), Sargent Marcel Bizien (Yves Montand), Capitaine Serge (Jean-Louis Trintingant), Jacques Chaban-Delmas (Alain Delon), General Leclerc (Claude Rich) and Yvon Morandat, nicknamed 'Pierrelot' (Jean Paul Belmondo). The film also provided cameo roles for Simone Signoret as the owner of a Café, Orson Welles as the Swedish Consul and George Chakiris as a GI in a tank. Clement's film, which is based on a best-seller written by Dominique Lapierre and Larry Collins, charts the last days before the liberation of the French capital in August 1944. The script was written by Francis Ford Coppola and Gore Vidal, and the music was composed by Maurice Jarre, with the theme that closes the film, 'Paris en colère', made into an emblematic song after Maurice Vidalin wrote the lyrics and Mireille Mathieu famously sung it. The title refers to the dilemma faced by General Dietrich von Cholitz (Gert Fröbe) about whether to follow Hitler's orders to set the city on fire before surrendering or not. Notably, the film was shown in black and white in spite of being shot in colour because of the prohibition against using real swastikas in red on French buildings, which were thus green.

Three years after Clément's film, Jean-Pierre Melville directed an untimely masterpiece, *The Army of Shadows*, which was first shown on French cinemas only one year after the demonstrations of May 68 rocked the establishment, actively contesting past myths and effectively closing an era. It was released the same year of Ophuls' *The Sorrow and the Pity*, when de Gaulle's position both as historical mythmaker and as politician was thoroughly questioned in the political and cultural arenas. The film, which was censored for glorifying de Gaulle in *Cahiers du Cinema*, was not released in the USA for forty years. Although *Army of Shadows* was seen as old-fashioned, its portrait of the resistance is far from glamorous, and has been vindicated decades after it was first shown, with the likes of Roger Ebert selecting it as one of his 100 masterpieces.[47]

Melville, who was born into an Alsatian Jewish family with the surname Gumbard, was an active member of the resistance who was decorated at the end of the war.[48] Gumbard adopted the surname of Herman Melville, a writer that he admired for *Moby Dick* (1851). Gumbard adopted Herman Melville's surname as nom de guerre when he became a member of the Gaullist resistance. Melville joined de Gaulle's Free French in North Africa and participated in the Italian Campaign of 1943 and French liberation campaigns of 1944. Ginette Vincendeau suggests that Melville was involved in the resistance in France itself between 1941 and 1943 and that he was jailed in Spain, resulting in the assassination of his brother as he was trying to reach him.[49] While Melville's actions in France itself are the subject of some debate, there is no doubt that he had first-hand knowledge of the resistance and *Army of Shadows* reflects that knowledge.

Although *Army of Shadows* was Melville's only production about the French resistance, two earlier films, *The Silence of the Sea* (*Le silence de la mer*, 1949) and *Léon Morin, Priest* (*Léon Morin, prêtre*, 1961), are set during the occupation. The production of the film thus contradicted Melville's prior claim to Rui Nogeira in an interview that he 'had no intention of making a film about the Resistance'. In fact, Melville went on to shoot this representation of the men and women involved in underground resistance on French soil.[50] *Army of Shadows* is an adaptation of the book of the same title written by another resister, Joseph Kessel, which was published in London during the war, in 1943. Based on Kessel's memoirs of people and events, the book, like the film, offers an unadorned account of Kessel's experience in the resistance. Kessel was born in Argentina to a Lithuanian Jewish family, was educated in France and became a journalist, novelist and screenwriter there. He is credited with scripts that include Luis Buñuel's *Belle de jour* (1967). Kessel

is also renowned for having written the popular 'Chant des Partisans' with Maurice Druon in London in 1943. This partisan song, which was set to music by Anna Marly, was frequently aired on the BBC's World Service, as was another hymn for which Marly wrote the music, 'La Complainte des partisans', also written in London the same year by the Libération leader, Emmanuel d'Astier de la Vigerie, and popularized by Leonard Cohen in the 1960s.

Army of Shadows strikes viewers as a realistic take on its subject, partly on account of its washed-out cinematography and partly for its understated and seedy portrait of the middle-aged people involved in the struggle. Cinematographically speaking, Melville's film closes an era in terms of both style and theme. For a start, although deeply flawed, the resisters are presented as heroic victims, with de Gaulle towering above them, which was an increasingly contested view of the war in the late 1960s. Stylistically, the film's classic narrative and even its cinematography were classed as outdated at a time dominated by the French Nouvelle Vague.

The main protagonist of *Army of Shadows* is a middle-age civil engineer, Philippe Gerbier (Lino Ventura), who leads a resistance cell of the Free French in Marseille. Following the betrayal of a colleague, Paul Dounat (Alain Libolt), who has been turned into an informant, Gerbier finds himself trapped in a Nazi prison camp. The film opens when he is transported by the Gestapo and manages to run away before being interrogated. The most remarkable episode of the film occurs two sequences later and concerns Dounat, who is tricked into showing up for an appointment and then taken to a secluded house to be executed. When they realize that some neighbours have moved to the house next door, Gerbier and three members of his cell, Félix (Paul Crauchet), Le Masque (Claude Mann) and Le Bison (Christian Barbier), argue that Dounat cannot be shot. The group debates in front of their young victim how to kill him silently and who will undertake the unsightly task in an unsettling scene in which the men surround and hold their victim. Their distress is emphasized as the camera moves from one to the next, keeping each of them alone in the frame for a few seconds. Dounat is strangled with a towel made into a tourniquet until he expires and, once his head drops, we get a view of the group contemplating the scene, thereby emphasizing the collective responsibility for the murder. Traitors, or possible traitors, we are reminded, had to be dealt with exemplarity to deter others or even themselves. Although everyone is aware that this was both necessary and common in resistance movements, the scene is disturbing, leading Ebert to comment that: 'We

see the man strangled, and rarely has an onscreen death seemed more straightforward and final'. Once the victim is placed on a bed and covered with a blanket, the non-diegetic music with piano and background orchestra accentuates the darkness of the situation. The men talk softly among themselves and depart, leaving behind them a corpse that stresses that resistance meant sealing one's fate in terms of not only life and death but also morality, feelings and emotion. Overall, this scene is in stark contrast with the romanticized vision of resistance consecrated by many films in France and elsewhere. The film's main topics are the fear that members of the resistance had to live with, and their acceptance of death and torture, expecting no reward. As Ebert suggests: 'Resistance members…must live with constant fear, persist in the face of futility, accept the deaths of their comrades and expect no reward, except the knowledge that they are doing the right thing. Because many die under false names, their sacrifices are never known; in the film, two brothers never discover that they are both in the Resistance, and one dies anonymously'.[51]

Following Dounat's murder, Gerbier travels to London to meet de Gaulle, but cuts his journey short when fellow resistance fighter Félix is arrested. Led by Mathilde (Simone Signoret), the group build an elaborate plan to get Félix out of Gestapo Headquarters in a daring act that increases the film's tension exponentially. The plan is unsuccessful because Félix is unable to move, and they have to abandon it after entering the headquarters. Mathilde is then arrested, and all discuss the fact that she might have compromised them to save her daughter. On her release, her fate is sealed. The decision to murder Mathilde is taken by Gerbier in conversation with his commander, Luc Jardie (Paul Meurisse), a character modelled on two famous resistance heroes: Jean Cavaillès and Jean Moulin.[52] Cavaillès was a celebrated philosopher of mathematics and science at the Sorbonne and the connection is made in the film through Jardie's books, which bear the titles of Cavaillès's philosophical works. Cavaillès went underground with the movement Libération-Nord, concentrating on sabotage and military preparation, and was shot by the Gestapo in 1944. The second referent for Jardie is the famous resistance hero, Jean Moulin, who died in 1943, following his arrest and torture. Moulin was the prefect (or local governor) of Chartres, in the region of Eure-et-Loir, in 1940. Openly anti-fascist, Moulin was dismissed from his position by the Vichy government and joined de Gaulle in London in September 1941, becoming the highest-level public official to join the Free French Forces and de Gaulle's senior representative in France. Like Gerbier in Melville's film, Moulin was parachuted

into France, first on 1 January 1942 and subsequently in March 1943, with the mission to liaise with and unite the diverse resistance groups. He fulfilled this onerous task to perfection. In January 1943, Moulin managed to unite Combat, Franc-Tireur and Libération-Sud in Mouvements Unis de la Résistance (MUR), forming the Armée Secrète (Secret Army) as its military wing. On 27 May, after months of negotiation, Moulin added five more groups, establishing the National Resistance Council, the Conseil National de la Résistance (CUR), under de Gaulle's authority. The next month, on 21 June, Moulin's meeting with leaders of all the major resister groups would be the last of his life, as Barbie's forces interrupted and arrested the men. Moulin's betrayal remains the subject of dispute, and these events are traced in Berri's film, as will be mentioned below.

Once the decision to murder Mathilde is taken, the men agree that they owe her to show their faces before shooting her, as a mark of respect and acknowledgment of their bond. The lorry in which they travel tracks Mathilde, approaching her from behind, and they exchange telling looks with her in a shot-reverse-shot that conveys their mutual awareness of the seediness and necessity of the task. After they shoot her, Mathilde's outstretched corpse is left in the street (Fig. 2.4). Her arms outstretched, and wearing a white overcoat that marks her purity and martyrdom, Mathilde's

Fig. 2.4 Jean-Pierre Melville, *Army of Shadows* (1969). Mathilde's outstretched corpse lies in the street

pose is reminiscent of Pina's famous death in *Rome*. Running after the lorry that takes Francesco and others away, Pina is shot and falls in the middle of the road from which Don Pietro lifts her lifeless corpse, forming a *Pietá* composition that associates Pina's martyrdom with Jesus Christ. Following Mathilde's death, we are given close ups of each of the men through the windscreen of their lorry, with the Arc de Triomphe behind them, signalling an incoming victory from which they are alienated. The film then ends abruptly, with on-screen credits informing us about their deaths at the hands of the Germans all taking place in different places prior to the end of the war.

Army of Shadows succeeds in its presentation of the protagonists' actions as both heroic and shabby, providing a corrective to glamorous representations of resistance. By and large, however, the monumentalization of resistance was to die with other certainties after May 68 in France. This decade, the 1960s, also witnessed the relative relaxation of Soviet censorship, which consecrated the Polish School and gave rise to the Czech New Wave after the Prague Spring of 1968. Although these political and cultural movements share some features, the Czech tone is far from the solemnity of neighbouring countries. Indeed, the main representative of this New Wave, Jiří Menzel, who is considered a 'national hero' in his country, contributed an original take on the Second World War in his most important film, *Closely Watched Trains* (*Ostře sledované vlaky,* 1966), which manages to comprise both parody and tragedy in startling ways.[53] Based on a novel by the same title written by Bohumil Hrabal, *Closely Watched Trains* was awarded an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film on its release, when the director was only twenty-eight years old.

Although the theme of *Closely Watched Trains* is similar to Wajda's *A Generation*, Menzel treats the topic with a degree of irreverence that is mostly absent in most films dealing with the war. The film traces the sexual and political initiation of the film's main character, Miloš Hrma (Václav Neckář), which is presented as an amusing game in the middle of the tragedies unfolding around him. Most scenes take place at the station in which Miloš works and where his colleague, Hubička (Josef Somr), consummates his conquests. When Hubička realizes that Miloš is a virgin, he coaches him in seduction but when Miloš attempts to make love with a train conductor with whom he is in love, Máša (Jitka Bendová), he ejaculates prematurely. Miloš is so distraught at his incapacity that he attempts to commit suicide but Doctor Brabec, played by the film director, tells Miloš that he is not abnormal. Doctor Brabec suggests as a therapy that he should think of

something different when making love and eventually Miloš makes love successfully with resistance fighter Viktoria Freie (Naďa Urbánková). After his achievement, Miloš appears to be pleased and, in his colleague's absence, throws a bomb that was destined for a train carrying German supplies. Miloš is sprayed with bullets and falls on the train, and we catch his last look of self-satisfaction as his romance and his resistance have succeeded. Menzel's portrayal of heroism in this film is curiously disentangled from sacrifice and martyrdom, although it is perhaps more poignant for being casual. The film is an exponent of Czech cultural traditions that, as Peter Hames notes, incarnate anti-authoritarian values and are prominently exposed by Jaroslav Hašek's *The Good Soldier Švejk*.[54]

Closely Watched Trains announces, perhaps prematurely, the transition to a new way of looking at the war that would take place in countries such as France during the following decades. If France had established the trend of resister films early after the war, it would also be one of the first countries to question it. This is perhaps not surprising, given that it was the country that coined and developed official collaboration, a fact that films of the 'Repressed Memory' era largely ignore or background, as they celebrated and helped consecrate the Gaullist official line of the country as a 'nation of resisters'. These films foreground the strengths of the resistance, reinforcing a vision of unity against the occupation, while presenting collaborators, when they do, as isolated members of a minority. Nevertheless, as will be seen in Chap. 4, The Collaborator (1969–74), a wholly different generation, who came of age in the 1960s, started to engage with the complexities of the Franco-French war, questioning this myth.

This chapter has explored the origin of 'national' and 'civil' resistance films, which were contemporary with those which established female agents as cinematic protagonists, in the few roles in which women have remained active participants in World War II productions. Subsequently, women would take secondary or passive roles even in films in which they are supposed to be central to the action, as in Berri's *Lucie Aubrac*. This gender hierarchy also applies to films dedicated to rescuers, a historical category in which women outnumbered men, with some notable exceptions.

While focusing on Aubrac's remarkable adventure to rescue her husband, Raymond, Berri charts Moulin's last days at the hands of Barbie, the notorious 'Butcher of Lyon'. Berri released this film in response to the context of the 1980s and 1990s, when France belatedly confronted in the courts its contribution to the Nazi persecution of socialists and communists and, especially, the rounding up of Jews. The film provides an

outdated perspective that returns viewers to the Gaullism of the 1950s and 1960s, with the explicit aim of restoring its protagonist to the pantheon of resister heroes. *Lucie Aubrac* closes an era in which France first avoided and then confronted its 'dark years', providing a response to films such as Malle's *Lacombe Lucien* (1974), which will be studied in Chap. 4. The film followed the trial of Klaus Barbie (1987), infamously known as 'the butcher of Lyon', and the nemesis of charismatic French resister Jean Moulin. Barbie's trial, however, brought in its train a debate about Raymond Aubrac's role in Moulin's demise. Under oath, Barbie claimed that it was Aubrac and not René Hardy who had given away the location of the meeting to the Nazis. Although unproven, Hardy was the main suspect because of his escape following a 'timid' attempt to shoot him while the others were put in police van. The fact that he had not been handcuffed, as the others were, compounded the suspicion. Berri's film, clearly devised as homage to Lucie and Raymond Aubrac, endorses that point of view with a close-up of Hardy and his guard exchanging complicit looks before Hardy runs away.

Berri's film takes into account the debate about the Franco-French conflict which dominated the era, and which is now known under the label of Henry Rousso's book *The Vichy Syndrome*, first published in 1987. The debates about collaboration during the 1980s and 1990s eventually led to the indictment of Maurice Papon in a protracted investigation that started in 1983 and ended in his conviction in 1998. As France's collaboration in the deportation of Jews became increasingly acknowledged, then-president, François Mitterrand decried efforts to apologize publicly. As quoted by the *New York Times*, as late as September 1994, Mitterrand's words to that effect were: 'I will not apologize in the name of France…The Republic had nothing to do with this. I do not believe France is responsible'. Mitterrand did not deny Vichy's role in the round-ups, though he separated Vichy from France. Mitterrand's attitude has been seen as partly the result of his conscious or unconscious wish to move on from his own role during the 'dark years'. While he had been involved in politics from the 1940s, his initial support for Marshal Pétain only came to light in the 1990s, fostering a controversy about his life and legacy that continues in our days. A few years later, in 1995, Jacques Chirac issued a belated apology to French and migrant Jews.[55]

Like many of his compatriots, Mitterrand had first opted for collaboration with the Germans up to 1943, although he suggested this to be a cover for his resistance efforts. After fighting along the Maginot Line, he

was taken prisoner and subsequently escaped. He went on to work for the Vichy administration from 1941 to 1943, first looking after POWs and afterwards as a civil servant for Vichy's Légion française des combattants et des volontaires de la révolution nationale (Legion of French Combatants and Volunteers of the National revolution). Mitterrand would go on to claim that he did so while spying for the Free French Forces in 1941, according to Jean Lacouture, who argues that Mitterrand established contact with the resistance during 1942.[56] Thereafter, from 1943 to 1945, his contribution to the resistance remains uncontested, and there are records of his meetings with De Gaulle and journeys to London. To this day, however, historians argue whether Mitterrand collaborated or was an undercover resister, with some suggesting the fact that Pétain gave him the highest recognition for civilians, *La Francisque*, to be an acknowledgement of Mitterrand enthusiasm for Vichy.[57] Jean-Pierre Azéma used the expression, 'Vichysto-résistant' for people who, like Mitterrand, joined, or claimed to have joined, the resistance when it was safe or convenient to do so, sometimes even after the war. Mitterrand's activities, in other words, mirror the move in his country that followed the Service de Travail Obligatoire (STO), as well as the successful efforts of the Red Army on the Eastern Front and de Gaulle and British forces in North Africa. It will always be hard to disentangle the extent to which this move was opportunistic, as people sided with the winners, or because the Germans had started to appear vulnerable, and victory a possibility, which had not been the case from 1940 to 1942.

The films studied in this chapter embrace the first twenty-five years after the war. However, some later productions, the most prominent of which is Berri's *Lucie Aubrac*, revived this trend, although the film's reception and criticism attest to its anachronism. In different ways, and across various geographical locations, cinematic anti-fascists who became active resisters during the war survived the twentieth-century, though they lose their 1930s credentials along the way, as will be seen in my next chapter. Resister films have undergone periodic revivals, in places as diverse as Holland, Norway and Denmark, as will be seen in this book's Conclusion. During the war, however, the pedigree of these cinematic heroes is attested to by the manner in which they had forged their credentials during the 1930s. These 'heroes', who embody Popular Front policies and alliances, started to appear in films as early as 1942, initially devised to counter the anti-isolationist stance embraced by exiled European filmmakers working in the USA. In their crudest form, these films projected the multi-sided

conflict of occupied Europe in Manichaean terms to encourage US intervention.

Films that celebrate heroes of the European resistance started to be produced towards the end of the war, establishing parameters that would be long lasting indeed. Their heroism, this chapter has shown, was socially constructed or, to borrow Terence Ranger and Eric Hobsbawm's formulation, invented.[58] Their importance is, however, not how much they are 'made up' but which elements are highlighted, disregarded or constructed, why they are so, as well as the deeds that place them or remove them from the national pantheon. Death, in other words, was necessary but not sufficient to maintain them in the cinematic sanctuary. Curiously, Wajda's AK victims are unlike French resisters or the UK's SOE agents in France in that they have become less flawed and more heroic in national memory decades after the events took place, making them foundational and incontestable heroes in the Poland that emerged after the fall of the Soviet Union. By contrast, France's resistance heroes started to shift positions two decades after the war, and their role continues to be debated and contested. Nevertheless, their lives and deeds delineated a chorography of memory that forms the bases for subsequent representations in film, history or literature. Memories of resistance mark France's landscape, and are especially noticeable in Paris, while they have added symbolic meanings to locations such as the Champs Elysees, the site of Free French and de Gaulle's liberation parades. The debate of resistance versus collaboration in France illustrates the enduring legacy of a civil war whose fissures were carved along class and ethnic lines. The victors sealed those divisions in the West under the social-democratic efforts now ascribed to the war's aftermath, making some political structures more inclusive and expanding social welfare as a means to address or redress social levelling. Female emancipation also achieved a pyrrhic victory and was neither as widespread nor as long lasting as the image of Szabo holding a gun with both hands would suggest. If victory and social consensus had a price, some segments of the population paid dearly. This is a factor that is more clearly demonstrated in the anonymous 'heroes of the people' to be studied in my next chapter, The Partisan. These cinematic men and women embody the millions that lost their lives and that, in the case of the USSR, were not even counted. The films that showcase them, in other words, stand as monuments and as sites of memory.

Notes

1. The film deals with a group of men who have fought in Spain and who, after spending two years in a French internment camp, are sent by the Vichy Government to build a railway in the Sahara.
2. I have studied *Rome* as a 'foundational narrative' in 'Foundational Films: The Memorialization of Resistance in Italy, France, Belarus and Yugoslavia' in *Film, History and Public Memory: New Perspectives*, ed. by Jenny Carlsten and Fearghal MacGarry (London: Palgrave), pp. 83–100.
3. Rousso, *Vichy Syndrome*, p. 10.
4. The organization was set up by Hugh Dalton, then Minister of Economic Warfare, on 22 July 1940, and was often referred to as 'Churchill's Secret Army'.
5. The other two films are Jack Lee's *A Town Called Alice* (1956) and Ralph Thomas' *Conspiracy of Hearts* (1960). These four films are analysed by Penny Summerfield in 'Public Memory or Public Amnesia? British Women of the Second World War in Popular films of the 1950s and 1960s'. *The Journal of British Studies,* 48 (2009), 935–57. Summerfield notes that women not only do not appear as the main protagonists, but more often than not do not appear at all.
6. Bennett, 'The Celluloid War: State and Studio in Anglo-American Propaganda Film-Making, 1939–1941'. *The International History Review,* 24.1 (2002), 64–102 (p. 102)
7. Quoted in Valerie Grove and Jan Struther, *Mrs Miniver* (London: Virago, 1989), p. xi. Bennett considers the effect of *Mrs Miniver* on Boston cinemagoers who had more 'favourable views of Britain' than those who had not seen the film. See 'The Celluloid War', p. 95.
8. The Spanish coalition lasted from February 1936, which is only four months before the military uprising of 18 July 1936, until April 1939, while the French Popular Front, led by Léon Blum, was ousted after one year in power, in June 1937.
9. See Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991* (London: Penguin, 1994), p. 37.
10. Although normally referred to as Brigade, the group was, in fact, a battalion of just over 3000 men, 600 of whom died in Spain.
11. Peter Carroll, 'Ernest Hemingway, Screenwriter: New Letters on for *Whom the Bell Tolls*'. *The Antioch Review*, 53.3 (1995), 261–83.
12. Armstrong, 'We'll Always Have Paris: History and Memory in *Casablanca*'. *Screen Education,* 47 (2007), 133–39 (p. 134).
13. George Orwell provided a poignant eyewitness account of the events in *Homage to Catalonia,* first published soon after he returned from Spain (London: Secker and Warburg, 1938). On this topic, see Chap. 11: 'Defending the Republic from the Enemy Within', in Paul Preston's *The Spanish Holocaust* (London: HarperPress, 2013), pp. 384–427.

14. This support was an exception to the rule and followed the transfer from Serbian Četniks, who were largely monarchic, to Partisans. The change was partly due to the compromises between the Četniks and Axis forces, especially Italy, and the efficiency of the Partisans. However, Četniks, collaboration remains a disputed topic. See Sabrina Ramet, *The Three Yugoslavias: State-Building and Legitimation, 1918–2005* (New York: Indiana University Press, 2006), pp. 145–155 and Marko Attila Hoare, *Genocide and Resistance in Hitler's Bosnia: The Partisans and the Chetniks, 1941–1943* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
15. Caldwell, 'What about women? Italian Films and their Concerns', in *Heroines without Heroes: Reconstructing Female and National Identities in European Cinema 1945–51,* ed. by Ulrike Sieglohr (London and New York: Cassell, 2000), pp. 131–46 (p. 136).
16. The coalition was established on 8 September, following Italy's surrender and the signing of the Armistice of Cassibile. It included representatives of the Italian Communist Party (PCI), Christian Democrats (DC), Action Party (PdA), Liberal Party (PLI), Sociality Party of Proletarian Union (PSIUP) and Labour Democrats (DL).
17. Jack Nachbar, 'Doing the Thinking for All of Us: *Casablanca* and the Home Front', *Journal of Popular Film and Television,* 27.4 (2000), 5–15 (p. 13).
18. Lorre's presence in this film crosses the boundary between fiction and reality, as he had been portrayed two years earlier as a Jewish child murderer in one of the most prominent Nazi propaganda films, Fritz Hippler's *The Eternal Jew* (*Der ewige Jude*, 1940). Hippler's antisemitic film uses the character played by Lorre in Fritz Lang's *M* (*M – Eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder,* 1931) as Lorre's real persona.
19. Weygand had been the Vichy Delegate-General for the North African colonies up to 1941, and any letter signed by him would carry no weight at the time. De Gaulle, who was the head of the Free French government in exile, had been convicted of treason in absentia by a Vichy court martial and had been sentenced to life imprisonment on 2 August 1940. Therefore, a letter signed by him would also have been of little use.
20. Richard Rashke mentions that 'all winter the Jews in the mechanic shop had been whispering about an escape. It began with a French Jew and a Polish Jew…The French Jew, an older man, had fought in the Spanish Civil War against the Fascists'. See *Escape from Sobibor* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), p. 95.
21. For example, in Belgium's mining area of Borinage, 'the first partisan teams united veterans of the International Brigades with communist miners who had access to dynamite'. See Pieter Lagrou, 'Belgium', in *Resistance in Western Europe,* ed. by Bob Moore (Oxford and New York: Berg, 2000), pp. 27–63 (p. 44). Likewise, in Denmark, 'The old fighters from the

Spanish civil war formed the core of what later developed into BOPA, the biggest sabotage organization of the occupation'. See Hans Kirchhoff, 'Denmark', in *Resistance in Western Europe*, ed. by Moore, pp. 93–124 (p. 101). Also, in Italy, as Tom Behan remarks, 'Mussolini's forces sometime found themselves fighting Italian anti-fascists in the International Brigades. At this time brigades such as Luigi Longo or Giovani Pesce participated in the resistance. Pesce went on to suggest that: who went on to suggest that 'Spain was huge moral, political and military training ground. It gave experience to hundreds and thousands of people who the led the European Resistance'. See Behan, *The Italian Resistance: Fascists, Guerrillas and the Allies* (London and New York: Pluto, 2009), pp. 14–15, 17. In Yugoslavia, although initially the Partisan forces were small and poorly armed, Tito called on the cadre of Spanish Civil War veterans whom he trusted and who had experience in guerrilla tactics. See Savo Pešić, *Španjolski građanski rat i KPJ* (Rijeka: Izdavački centar, 1990). For the role played by Spanish veterans in the struggle of Soviet partisans, see John A. Armstrong, *Soviet Partisans in World War II* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1964), pp. 11–12. Armstrong also notes that, although widely used at first, the Soviet veterans of the Spanish Civil War were also 'special targets for the purge' (p. 48).

22. Behan, *The Italian Resistance*, pp. 14–15, 17.
23. Armstrong, 'We'll Always Have Paris', p. 137.
24. Nachbar illustrates how the film's 'most obvious lesson is the necessity of self-sacrifice for the sake of the greater good', offering one example that 'was but one snowflake in a national blizzard of explanation'. See 'Doing the Thinking for All of Us', p. 6.
25. Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1991), p. 2.
26. Gottlieb, 'Introduction: *Open City:* Reappropriating the Old, Making the New', in *Roberto Rossellini's Rome Open City,* ed. by Sydney Gottlieb (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 1–30 (p. 4).
27. Marcus, *Italian Film in the Light of Neorealism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p. 37.
28. Hurley further notes that: 'The protagonists of the film are all either directly involved in the resistance, or support it in a secondary capacity. Consequently, the resistance, and the actions of the partisans, whose ranks comprised almost exclusively working-class men, are fundamental to his [Rossellini's] vision of the new nation'. See 'Working-Class Communities and the New Nation: Italian Resistance Film and the Remaking of Italy', in *The Essence and the Margin: National Identities and Collective Memories in*

Contemporary European Culture, ed. by Anna Saunders and Laura Rorato (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009), pp. 71–86 (pp. 72, 73).

29. Michael P. Rogin, 'Mourning, Melancholia, and the Popular Front: Roberto Rossellini's Beautiful Revolution', in Gottlieb, *Open City,* pp. 131–60 (p. 136).
30. On Italy's role in the Spanish Civil War, see John Coverdale's study *Italian Intervention in the Spanish Civil War* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1975).
31. Fogu, '*Italiani brava gente*: The Legacy of Fascist Historical Culture on Italian Politics of Memory', in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, ed. by Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner and Claudio Fogu (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006), pp. 147–76 (p. 150).
32. The Brigade was formed in Mahora (Albacete) in November 1936 and was made up of seven Battalions: Garibaldi Battalion (Albanian, Italian and Spanish volunteers), André Marty Battalion (Franco-Belgian volunteers), Dabrowski Battalion (also known as the Dombrowski Battalion, with exiled Polish volunteers), Thaelmann Battalion (named after Ernst Thälmann, with German and Austrian volunteers), Figlio Battalion (Spanish volunteers), Madrid Battalion (Spanish volunteers) and Prieto Battalion (other volunteers). The communist-led resistance fighters in Italy also used the title Garibaldi brigades, comprising half of the 'around 12,000–13,000 fighting men'. See Corni, 'Italy', in *Resistance in Western Europe*, ed. by Moore, pp. 157–87 (p. 164).
33. This was plastered in one of the most famous posters about Poland produced in the UK in 1939 by Polish exile Marek Żuławski (1908–1985), who worked for the BBC at the time. The son of Jerzy Żuławski, Marek Żuławski was born into a Polish nationalist family. His father died in the First World War, fighting for Polish independence, while his mother, Kazimiera Żuławska, was recognized as Righteous among the Nations for sheltering Jews in Warsaw during the Second World War.
34. Mazierska, '*A Generation:* Wajda on War', Criterion (https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/1053-a-generation-wajda-on-war).
35. Mroz, 'The Monument and the Sewer: Memory and Death in Wajda's *Kanal* (1957), *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television,* 34:4 (2004), 528–45 (p. 532).
36. Mroz, 'The Monument and the Sewer', p. 529.
37. Mroz, 'The Monument and the Sewer', p. 531.
38. Coates, 'Wajda's Imagination of Disaster: War Trauma, Surrealism and Kitsch', in *The Cinema of Andrzej Wajda: The Art of Irony and Defiance,* ed. by John Orr and Elzbieta Ostrowska (London: Wallflower Press, 2003), pp. 15–29 (p. 17).

39. According to Mroz, 'Many of the fictionalized scenes that follow were modelled on photographs and newsreel footage showing combat, ruined buildings, or insurgents exiting from the sewers'. See 'The Monument and the Sewer', p. 532.
40. M. R. D. Foot notes that, although the exact number is impossible to determine, at its highest, in 1944, it had just over 10,000 men and 3200 women. See *The Special Operations Executive 1940–1946* (London: Mandarin, 1999), p. 78.
41. See Foot, *The Special Operations Executive*, p. 300.
42. Pattinson, *Behind Enemy Lines: Gender, Passing and the Special Operations Executive in the Second World War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pp. 99–112 (p. 104).
43. This epic film had three directors who divided their work according to the geography of D-Day, with Ken Annakin dealing with Great Britain and France, Andrew Marton with the USA and Bernhard Wicki with Germany.
44. Bordwell and Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction,* 7th Edition (Boston: McGraw Hill, 2004), p. 205. Bordwell and Thompson analyse in great detail the unusual sound effects of Bresson's film in a section dedicated to 'Functions of Film Sound: *A Man Escaped'*, pp. 377–85.
45. Pipolo, 'A Man Escaped: Quintessential Bresson', Criterion (https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/2628-a-man-escaped-quintessential-bresson).
46. Doug Cummings and Trond Trondsen, 'Robert Bresson, *A Man Escaped [Un condamné à mort s'est échappé,* 1956]', Review, 2004 (http://people.ucalgary.ca/~tstronds/robert-bresson.com/Words/ManEscapedNewYorker.html).
47. Ebert, 'Great Movies: *Army of Shadows*', 21 May 2006 (http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/great-movie-army-of-shadows-1969).
48. According to his biographer, Rui Nogueira, Melville kept this name after the war because he received his military decoration under it. See *Melville on Melville,* ed. by Rui Nogueira (London: Secker & Warburg, 1971).
49. Vincendeau, *Jean-Pierre Melville: An American in Paris* (London: British Film Institute, 2003).
50. Quoted in Ebert, 'Great Movies: *Army of Shadows*', 21 May 2006 (http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/great-movie-army-of-shadows-1969).
51. Ebert, 'Great Movies: *Army of Shadows*'.
52. See Robert O. Paxton, 'Mellville's French Resistance', *The Criterion Collection* (http://www.criterion.com/current/posts/1711-melville-s-french-resistance).
53. The reference to 'national hero and international treasure' appears in Steve Rose's interview with the director on the fortieth anniversary of May 68. See 'Irony Man', *Guardian,* 9 May 2008 (https://www.theguardian.com/film/2008/may/09/1).

54. Hames, *The Czechoslovak New Wave* (London and New York, Wallflower Press, 2005).
55. Marlisle Simons, 'Chirac Affirms France's Guilt in Fate of Jews', *New York Times*, 17 July 1995 (http://www.nytimes.com/1995/07/17/world/chirac-affirms-france-s-guilt-in-fate-of-jews.html).
56. See Jean Lacouture, *Mitterrand, une histoire de Français* (Paris: Seuil, 1998), pp. 75–79. On this topic, see also Franz-Olivier Giesbert, *François Mitterrand, une vie* (Paris: Seuil, 1996), especially pp. 77–79.
57. Jean-Pierre Bloch, however, suggested that Mitterrand was ordered to accept the medal as cover for his work in the resistance. See *De Gaulle ou le temps des méprises* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1969), pp. 216–18. More recently, Jacques Attali has contested Bloch's claim in *C'était François Mitterrand* (Paris: Fayard, 2005).
58. See *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

CHAPTER 3

The Partisan (1943–74)

The paradigmatic figure of the Second World War partisan is associated with communist resisters and underground urban insurgents, such as those from the French-based Franc-Tireurs et Partisans (FTP).[1] During the war, however, partisans figured prominently in countries on the Eastern Front, especially in the Western Borderlands of the Soviet Union and in the Eastern Mediterranean, including in Yugoslavia, where partisans managed to liberate large segments of the country. These Soviet and Yugoslav combatants were soon mystified in the war's aftermath, with partisans often shadowing the Red and Yugoslav Armies in popular memory. This memorialization was expressed in monuments, literature and, above all, cinema, whose construction of partisans became part of the foundational narrative of the former Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia and the Belarusian Soviet Republic, referred to as a Partisan Republic. Indeed, the cult of partisans went so far in Yugoslavia as to configure an idiosyncratic cinematic genre, Partizanski Films, about their real and imaginary deeds. This chapter will investigate these two sets of historical and cultural figures, while Jewish partisans in Poland and Belarus will be studied in Chap. 7, The Jewish Resister (1987–2015).

Films dealing with resistance in the USSR and Yugoslavia have provided and still continue to provide a platform from which notions of heroism have been both represented and, at times, challenged. These productions have also launched debates about the past and its interpretation, offering a unique vantage point from which to assess the social

M. Camino, *Memories of Resistance and the Holocaust on Film*,
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reconstruction following the conflict. In Yugoslavia, partisan memories, and the films that mystified them, contributed to the relative inter-ethnic concord during the decades that Marshal Tito ruled (1945–80). The violent disintegration of the country in the 1990s attests to the fragility of the social compromise on which this consensus was built. By contrast, twenty-first century memorialization of the conflict in the Russian Federation and Belarus largely follows the parameters established during the Soviet era, providing a window into processes that have been revisited in other Eastern European countries.

The relevance of cinema to the elaboration and consecration of national resistance myths demonstrates that the way the past is remembered is especially important in stimulating, enhancing and cementing social cohesion or, by contrast, establishing or consolidating social fissures. The films studied in this chapter offer paradigmatic examples of the power of cinema not only to represent historical events, but also to contribute effectively to their 'invention' in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's use of the term.[2] These films provided the historical capital on which communal consensus was built in the war's aftermath and that remains significant in the twenty-first century.

Cinema has the salutary effect of bringing to life the experiences of individuals, marshalling empathy for the protagonists of an often simplified and selective past. This view may be somehow pluralist or strictly monolithic, but its relevance depends not so much on the degree of historical accuracy as on the ways in which silences and hyperboles furnish information about social values and ideas. As will be seen below, Yugoslav and Soviet films offer unique vantage points to investigate the social frameworks of collective memory delineated by Maurice Halbwachs and sketched in this book's Introduction.[3] As with the films studied in Chap. 2, these productions were uniquely important in creating or contesting the foundational narratives upon which these nations 'imagined' themselves, in Benedict Anderson's understanding of the expression.[4]

3.1 Yugoslavia

A good number of films released in Yugoslavia during the 1960s and 1970s represent partisans fighting tirelessly against Italian fascists, German Nazis and Serbian Četniks, which were classed as collaborationist villains.[5] These films illustrate the rise to power of communist partisan leader, Josip Broz 'Tito' (1892–1980), as well as the reification of a

common enemy in the form of generic 'fascists' that included Serbian Četniks, Croat Ustaša, Nazi Germans and, on occasion, Italian fascists. Borrowing codes from Hollywood's Westerns, these films project an idiosyncratic Yugoslavian 'third-way' that mirrors cinematically the country's non-aligned political position following its split from the USSR's Cominform in 1948. The films also consecrate the putative union of different ethnic groups, which makes their representation both wistful and poignant after the ruthless dismemberment of the country in the 1990s. Widely popular in the former nation, Partisan films are firmly grounded in the search for unity that dominated the war's aftermath and that started to unravel soon after Tito's death. In hindsight, these films allow us to explore the relevance (or lack of relevance) of a view of the past designed to support an 'imagined community' that no longer exists. This section traces the contribution of Partisan films to the social compromise on which Yugoslavia was rebuilt after the war, as well as the role of cinema as a memorialization tool or atonement strategy.

From the 1950s and, especially throughout the 1960s–1970s, Tito's government funded generously cinematic productions and blockbusters, including many Partisan films, and sponsored the construction of a 'cinematic city', Avala Film, in the country's capital, Belgrade. Among the myriad Partisan films produced at this time, this section will scrutinize the most popular ones: Veljko Bulajić's *Battle of Neretva* (*Bitka na Neretvi,* 1969), Stipe Delić's *The Battle of Sutjeska* (*Sujetska,* 1973), Hajrudin Krvavac's *Walter Defends Sarajevo* (*Valter brani Sarajevo,* 1972), which was remade as a television series in 1974, and one of the last productions of the genre, Žika Mitrović's *The Republic of Užice* (*Užička republika,* 1974). These lavish films spared no expense, offering generous contracts to well-known actors, as well as using armament that might be destroyed or recruiting conscripts. In a particularly famous instance, an existing bridge over the river Neretva was blown up in the filming of the battle of the same name. The site, now a tourist attraction in Republika Srpska's Jablanica, in Bosnia, is discussed in Mila Turajlic's documentary, *Cinema Komunisto* (2010), which brings these films into the twentieth-first century, and is studied in the final segment of this section.

Partisan Films can be read as foundational narratives that present Manichaean views of the Yugoslav Partisan struggle against Četniks, Ustaša and Axis forces, normally represented by evil Nazis or bumbling Italians.[6] These films overtly mystify the successful resistance led by Tito, which achieved the liberation of the country largely by its own means at a

massive cost in human lives and material losses.[7] In 1944, when the Red Army arrived in Belgrade, Tito's Partisans, who had already expelled the Axis forces from most of the country, welcomed it. The films that project this victory cast civilians from Yugoslavia's different ethnicities as equals, and include a good proportion of women.[8] For a few decades, memory of their struggle boosted a sense of togetherness among the diverse ethnicities of the country, supporting Tito's 'non-aligned' stance.

As a fully-fledged genre, Partisan Films developed twenty years after the conflict ended, although there are some precursors, such as Vijekoslav Afrić's *Slavica* (1947). These films were seen and celebrated by large segments of the Yugoslav population both in cinema and, subsequently, on television. Post-1990s, the nationalistic pride shown in these films belongs firmly in a time when what is now a twentieth-century historical concept existed as a 'non-aligned' communist country beyond the Stalinist sphere of influence, an embodiment of 'history as homage', to borrow Robert Rosenstone's label.[9] A good example is provided in one of the last films of the genre, Mitrović's *The Republic of Užice*, which recreates the first liberation by partisans of a Nazi-occupied town. Following its liberation, the Serbian town of Užice became the site of the headquarters of the provisional government of Tito's Partisans, the Anti-Fascist Council for the Liberation of Yugoslavia (Serbo-Croatian AVNOJ), formed in November 1942. This council, as well as the local governments organised by Tito's Partisans, operated in areas not occupied by the Germans, who often forced them to move.

Even before Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa against the USSR on 22 June 1941, the Communist Party of Yugoslavia had set up its Military Committee, out of which the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) would emerge. In April 1941, three months before the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, the Committee urged demobilized soldiers to hide weapons, and three months later, on 4 July, a call to armed resistance was issued. The appeal was followed in forty cities and hundreds of towns in Bosnia, Croatia, Serbia, Herzegovina and Slovenia, which declared themselves 'liberated' republics. They followed the example of Užice, the Partisan Republic represented in Mitrović's film, which delineates the early formation of Tito's Partisans when discussing the options for a future that was thirty years in the making when *Užička republika* was released. When local villagers wonder what would happen after a hypothetical German defeat, Boro (Boris Buzančić) emphasises that they 'won't put up with oppression', exhorting them to resist and warning that a German

triumph would mean destruction. Boro backs up this assertion with reference to the Spanish Civil War (1936–39): 'I know the Germans. I was in Spain', denoting the German support for the rebel army outlined in Chap. 2. Boro's claim is also an implicit allusion to Tito, who worked for the Comintern (Communist International) in Paris during the Spanish conflict, enlisting volunteers from different countries before dispatching them to Spain to fight on the Republican side as part of the International Brigades. It was in Paris that Tito established links with Yugoslav communists whom he called upon to create partisan units across the country soon after its occupation. Tito's trusted leadership, alongside the fact that partisans operated in their own localities, rendered the call to arms effective, and its success increased when the Allies decided to assist partisans with supplies and intelligence.

Within the Second World War, Tito's Partisan Army was unusual on many counts, not least because of its support from the Allies. From 1942 onwards, the Allies switched their allegiance from the royalist Serb militia led by Dragoljub 'Draža' Mihailović, the Četniks, to Tito's Partisans. Initially, as Michael Foot notes, 'Mihailović was hailed, by the BBC, in the English, American, and Russian press, as the first of those resistance heroes and heroines who were to be staple journalist fodder for so long'.[10] From late 1942, however, the Allies transferred their backing to the Partisans because of Četnik ineffectiveness or collaboration with the occupying forces.[11] These vagaries are shown in a romantic light in Louis King's *Chetniks! The Fighting Guerrillas* (1943). The time lapse from the film's incubation to its release meant that the 'heroic Četniks', who in the film appear as Americans donning quaint Yugoslav costumes, had already fallen from grace.

Two of the most popular Yugoslav films rehearsing Tito's Partisan struggle deal with two celebrated battles of the war, Neretva and Sutjeska. The first, Bulajić's *Battle of Neretva*, has the additional honour of being one of the most expensive motion pictures ever made in the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia. The film's budget, personally approved by Tito, is estimated to have been between $4.5 and $12 million, and its stars included internationally renowned actors, such as Sergei Bondarchuk, Yul Brynner, Franco Nero and Orson Welles, who played a cameo role as a Četnik Senator.[12] These actors went to the country attracted by the sums of money paid and to endorse Yugoslavia's position as a friendly communist outpost beyond the Soviet reach of the Warsaw Pact. As seen in Turajlic's documentary, *Cinema Komunisto*, the actual bridge over the Neretva

River, which is located in Jablanica, was blown up during the shooting of the film. This was designed to give *Battle of Neretva* an aura of reality, making the bridge a 'lieu de memoire', in Pierre Nora's definition of the term.[13] Others, including charismatic Serbian actor Velimir 'Bata' Živojinović, who was cast in many partisan films, disagree with Bulajić's version of the story. Bata suggests that the smoke clouded the scene and, after blowing up the bridge twice, the scenes in the film were shot in a studio in Prague, using a miniature replica. Differences notwithstanding, the film exemplifies the extent to which Tito's government would go to furnish national pride. As Dragan Batančev shows, Tito became a de facto producer for the film, contributing to its script and, more importantly, making it 'a state project by urging the Yugoslav economy and Yugoslav People's Army…to extend every possible help and assistance to the film crew'.[14]

Neretva recreates Case White (German 'Fall Weiss'), also known as the Fourth Offensive, which was an Axis attack lasting from January until March 1943. The filming of *Battle of Neretva* took substantially longer than the battle, over sixteen months, and used a combined battalion of 10,000 soldiers, so that two different sets of recruits from the Yugoslav People's Army participated as extras.[15] In addition, four villages and a fortress were especially constructed and subsequently destroyed, and many Soviet-made T-34 tanks that were camouflaged to look like German Tiger I tanks were thrown into the river.[16] Nevertheless, and as indicated by the film's director in Turajlic's aforementioned documentary, the site is today as famous for the film as for the battle itself. Tito's phrase, 'Ranjenike ne smijeno ostaviti' ('Not without the wounded') is inscribed on a stone in the garden of the museum commemorating the battle. Tito unveiled the plaque when the museum opened, on the thirty-fifth anniversary of the battle, in 1978, and is now the preferred location for tourist photographs.[17] However mystified, Tito's words reveal acquaintance with the actual treatment of the wounded and were well-founded. As M. R. D. Foot observes, 'experience, in the first offensive, showed them that wounded who were left behind were massacred; thereafter, wounded preferred to be killed by their own side, or carried away by it'.[18] Although a strategic victory, the battle could also be seen as a partisan defeat, as they lost 11,915 people, while 2506 were captured by the Germans and a further 606 executed.[19] Like the film, the museum celebrates the 'humane' aspect of a battle in which Tito's Partisans reinforced the military assumption that guerrillas can claim victory even when they lose against a conventional army, while the reverse does

not apply, and military forces lose battles with guerrilla even when they win unless the guerrilla are fully uprooted.

Battle of Neretva's view of the war conveys the historical narrative that dominated Yugoslavia during Marshal Tito's rule, foregrounding the partisan relationship with the land, which is characteristic of the genre.[20] This connection can be appreciated in long shots of the beautiful and rugged mountains and rivers in the country, suggesting that the occupiers 'wound' both people and landscape. Batančev refers to this association as pantheistic: 'Bulajić managed to create the impression of drilling and "wounding" the land which partisans, as in some sort of a religious fascination, were not willing to surrender. This almost pantheistic relation of partisans towards the land is also visible in…the demolition of the bridge'.[21] Ironically, however, the production of the film, including blowing up the bridge, as well as a large number of vehicles, was as 'wounding' and destructive towards the local environment, if not more.

Battle of Neretva offers an example of 'Yugoslavism', simplifying what was a multi-layered conflict. This can be seen at the very beginning of the film, when a partisan greets people gathered around him as 'brothers, Yugoslav nations, Serbs, Macedonians, Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins and Muslims'.[22] This myth of ethnic harmonization helped sustain a regime that was built on entrenched antagonisms, which came to the fore after Tito's death. Marko Attila Hoare outlines this perspective as follows:

> The Titoist regime in Yugoslavia encouraged the belief that all Yugoslavs participated in an equal manner and to an equal degree in the Partisan movement and that they did so on a homogenous, all Yugoslav, basis…The Partisan movement was a genuinely multinational movement but the roles played in it by the various Yugoslav nationalities were not equivalent…Serbs in Croatia might fight as Partisans to halt the persecution by the Ustashas; Croats in Dalmatia to resist the Italian annexation of their homeland; Muslims out of fear of the Chetniks; townsmen out of leftist sympathies; and peasants according to traditional patterns of rebelliousness.[23]

By and large, films like *Battle of Neretva* were designed to sanction the togetherness of the entity that emerged at the end of the First World War as the Kingdom of Croats, Slovenes and Serbs. It was renamed as Yugoslavia, meaning South Slavs, by King Alexander in 1929, and was consolidated as a unified nation after World War II. The alliance of the

different ethnic groups was largely grounded on memory of a united fight against an alien, as well as an internal enemy, and the collective effort involved in post-war reconstruction. This notion was harnessed by a cinematic genre, Partisan Films, closely associated with the leader overseeing that country's unity, Tito. A film buff, Tito watched a single film most evenings throughout his life, and he effectively promoted and financed the lavish film industry that flourished during the 'golden era' of Yugoslav cinema, from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s. Within this industry, Partizanski Films stood out in terms of both quantity and prominence, with Tito personally endorsing or correcting them, as documented in Turajlic's production.

Tito not only watched endless reels of film but also sponsored the creation of the country's main production company, Avala Film. This cinematic city, now derelict, thrived during the 1960s and 1970s, when it became the site of many co-productions and hosted international stars such as Yul Bryner, Sergei Bondarchuk, Orson Wells, Sylva Koscina and Franco Nero. In newsworthy terms, the studio's coup the force was the arrival in 1971 of the couple recently formed by Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. Taylor and Burton made numerous public appearances as Tito's guests, which were memorably recorded by the international press in photos with Tito's wife, Jovanka Budisavljević Broz, who had been a Lieutenant General in the Yugoslav's People's Army (JNA) during the war. The couple's visit coincided with the shooting of Delić's *Battle of Sutjetska,* in which Burton played Tito during the war. Tito, who admired Burton, agreed to be played by him, even though he had previously ordered 'not to be seen' in films.[24]

Battle of Sutjeska, which is also known as *The Fifth Offensive*, represents a Nazi attack code named Case Black (German 'Fall Schwarz'). Case Black took place in Nazi-occupied Bosnia-Hercegovina from 15 May to 16 June 1943 and was the greatest engagement of the war in the Balkan nation. Using guerrilla hit-and-run tactics, Tito's Partisans had taken the Durmitor area of northern Montenegro when the Nazis, seeking to uproot the movement, surrounded them with nearly 130,000 troops, made up from 67,000 Germans, 43,000 Italians, 2000 Bulgarians, 11,000 Croatians (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska) and 4000 Četniks.[25] Despite being outnumbered approximately six to one, Tito's forces of around 22,000 partisans halted the offensive and managed to break through enemy lines, suffering 7000 casualties and Tito himself was badly wounded.[26] As with Neretva,

the Battle of Sutjeska boosted Tito's credentials and was made into an integral part of the resistance mythology after the war.

The protagonists of *Battle of Sutjetska* represent ordinary Yugoslavs, with a mixture of peasants, workers and intellectuals from the diverse ethnicities of the former country, which is a feature of other Partisan films. Emphasis is also placed on people's age and ability, with disabled and older citizens also contributing to the struggle. *Battle of Sutjetska* even figures a 'comrade poet' who takes his books with him and reads or exhorts his comrades during the battle against the foreign occupiers and the 'domestic traitors', Ustaša and Četnik. Among these enemies, the Četniks occupy the unenviable position of being represented as unruly hordes, riding horses sabre in hand or cutting the throats of wounded partisans. Historically, however, it was not the Serbian Četniks but the Croat Ustaša who used the so-called 'Serbian Cutter' to murder a disputed number of Serbians probably in the hundreds of thousands.[27] By contrast, the Italian occupiers are handled with a certain degree of respect, seen by the casting of Captain Riva (Franco Nero), who changes sides in this film to fight with the partisans because he wishes to see the end of fascism in Italy. Batančev suggests that Riva's belated heroism could be partly because 'Italian co-producers…helped the distribution of the film on the international market'.[28] Nevertheless, Riva's switch reflects the fact that, following the Armistice of Cassibile on 3 September 1943, many Italian soldiers deserted and some joined Tito's Partisans, who at this time were openly supported by the Allies and on course to win the war. The Italian armistice also meant that Yugoslav Partisans gained equipment abandoned by the Italians, which helped them substantially in the last stages of the war.

In *Battle of Sutjeska* and *Battle of Neretva*, partisans are part of a collective with no single protagonist, although some are identified as individuals with whom we engage as the action progresses. These Yugoslav 'narodni heroji' (people's heroes) belong to multi-ethnic groups that interact, fight together and are willing to sacrifice themselves on behalf of their communities, showing solidarity across ethnic, class, gender, as well as professional divisions. Their attitude is exemplified by the three siblings who photograph themselves at the beginning of *Battle of Neretva* and whose deaths punctuate the action. After one brother, Vuko (Radko Polic), dies early in the film, we get to know the other two siblings, Novak (Ljubiša Samardžić) and Danica (Sylva Koscina). Their deaths, close to the end of the film, are given added poignancy by a brief romance between Danica and Ivan (Lojze Rozman). Ivan proposes to Danica half way through the film, and

they agree to marry when the war finishes. However, Danica dies heroically with her brother, Novak, after she volunteers to join a patrol sent to contain the Četniks.

People's heroes like Danica or Novak provide a foil for the country's leader, Tito, whose conspicuous absence from most Partisan Films is designed to make him more prominent. This can be seen in *Battle of Neretva* when partisans circulate a piece of paper, which is slowly handled from one person to the next while the camera focuses on the person or their hand. The object of our curiosity is revealed with a close-up of the message with a short sentence and a signature: 'Prozor must fall tonight. Tito'. This undisputable command shows Tito as a demi-god or, in Todor Kuljić's words, 'God's surrogate', whose orders are treated as gospel.[29] It is the view preserved in Tito's Mausoleum in Belgrade, which echoes the mummification of Lenin and is now a 'lieu de memoire'. Tito's role filled the vacuum left by the official secularization of the country, becoming an icon of a 'political religion', to borrow Emilio Gentile's formulation.[30]

Partisan films negotiate thus a degree of individualism with the unshakable sense of collective duty of 'people's heroes' efficiently led by Comrade Tito, whose humanity and leadership are praised in no uncertain terms. Only unusual in this sense is Hajrudin Krvavac's *Walter Defends Sarajevo*, which not only focuses on an individual leader and not a collective protagonist, but does away with the familiar tirades about communism and the wisdom of Marshal Tito that punctuate most Partisan productions. Notwithstanding these differences, the fight remains unambiguously glorified in a film with the rare legacy of being highly popular in the People's Republic of China. *Walter Defends Sarajevo* also holds a record number of Germans killed cinematically by a single partisan, Walter, after whose nom de guerre the production is called, played by the charismatic Serbian actor, Bata Živojinović. In this instance, and according to an interested blogger who has painstakingly added the film's body count, the protagonist manages to dispose singlehandedly of forty-two Wehrmacht soldiers.[31]

Walter Defends Sarajevo follows the conventions of WWII films in its use historical footage of blitzkrieg war and blanket bombing, with the added Yugoslav tradition of a prescribed meeting of Germans discussing partisan resistance on a Yugoslav map. This time, the Germans talk about Operation Laufer, which took place in Bosnia's capital, Sarajevo, making this film also unusual in its setting, beyond the country's mountains where the guerrilla war was largely fought and where most partisan

films were shot. Indeed. Sarajevo's landmarks figure noticeably, providing not only the film's setting but also an interpretation of the struggle. Sarajevo is largely united in its rejection of the occupiers and both the Christian and Muslim sides of the city are shown to be equally supportive of Walter's group. The city's labyrinthine streets play their part in the struggle, and even the souk helps the protagonists hide while artisans distract the persecutors by hammering loudly the handcrafted brass works typical of the town.

Sarajevo's skyline is seen from Walter's perspective in a bird's-eye view where the town's Emperor's Mosque (Careva Džamija) can be distinguished, and Walter himself shoots Germans from the tower of the Old Orthodox Church. Within Sarajevo, the underground cells to which Walter belongs operate at night and are filmed using cinematographic conventions associated with thrillers or spy films. The characters, at times indistinguishable, appear and disappear from corners, casting long shadows and creating a degree of suspense reminiscent of films from the Classic Hollywood era. In *Walter,* however, this sombre tone is literally lightened up by the intermittent shooting and fighting sprees, as well as in the film's climatic scene, which is reminiscent of Westerns and played atop a moving train. Here, Walter and his two sidekicks, one of whom, Zus, is played by another actor famous for his partisan roles, Ljubiša Samardžić, duly cheat their Nazi prosecutors and blow them up with their much-needed petrol. The three protagonists first dress as Nazi soldiers and infiltrate the German camp, replacing the machinists. When the plot is discovered, the Germans on the train try to reach the engine only to be shot one by one on the roofs of the coaches and roll down the mountain. Walter then unleashes the coaches where the Germans and the barrels of petrol travel and, although a German manages to stop the train's downhill march, he realises that the engine has also been let loose and is backing down towards them. We watch the coaches explode sequentially from the safety of a distance shared by the three protagonists who had jumped out of the train prior to the crash. Their return to occupied Sarajevo closes an action-packed film that offers a highly positive evaluation of Yugoslavia's 'imagined community' from an urban perspective.

The swift and bloody breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s has given way to different claims on the former country's historical and cultural past, including partisan films. The country's demise has also inspired nostalgia for the shared illusions of social reconstruction in the war's aftermath. This Yugonostalgia pervades Turajlic's portrayal of the country's love

affair with cinema, a reflection of its ruler's obsession, through a selection of interviews with directors, actors and, perhaps more significantly, Tito's dutiful cameraman, Leka Konstantinovic. In charge of Tito's home cinema, Konstantinovic selected a different film to screen each evening to Tito and his wife throughout the Marshal's life. Konstantinovic's yearning defines Turajlic's approach at the film's beginning, when the camera follows his footsteps into Tito's Mausoleum. As he walks to lay a wreath on the Marshal's tomb, the camera zooms in to show the elderly Konstantinovic in extreme close-up, with tears welling up in his eyes as we hear him utter the following words: 'Comrade President Tito. I was your projectionist for thirty-two years and I am grateful for every one of them'.

Cinema Komunisto's long takes of Konstantinovic's wistful expressions and of the ruins of the dilapidated film city, Avala, contrast with sketches showing the social euphoria of the war's immediate aftermath when a sense of collective identity disguised ethnic and religious cleavages. Curiously, this ethos informs the memories of the Partisan movement, which remain important today for the nations that arose from the former country, even if for different reasons. As Hoare notes, the legacy of the struggle contains the foundation from which mutual understanding can be built after the bloody confrontations of the 1990s: 'The Partisan movement forms part of the national heritage of both Serbs and Croats, as well as of Muslims and other former Yugoslav peoples. It represents at the same time a shared tradition of multinational cooperation that may one day help to re-establish friendly relations between the former Yugoslav states'.[32] Likewise, the films that deal with the partisan struggle showcase ethnic harmony and are part of the shared heritage of the former Balkan nations. These films offer not only entertainment, but show a form of social consensus that fostered a temporary sense of community in a deeply divided land.

3.2 The Soviet Union

During World War II, Soviet war propaganda linked resistance against the Nazis to its foundational paradigm, the October Revolution of 1917. This can be seen in the visual campaign to 'defend the motherland' that produced a good number of posters, as well as some prominent films. Much as Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (*Bronenosets Potemkin*, 1925) had recast 1905 as the onset of the Soviet Revolution, Soviet war films associated the early 1940s with 1917, foregrounding the roles, heroism and

spontaneous leadership of ordinary civilians. This vision changed within the course of the war and, by 1944, when the war was all but won, Stalin rebuilt his image as the country's foremost hero. Notwithstanding the prevailing censorship, some Soviet films started to background military heroism a decade after the war, neither mentioning nor showing images of war leaders, prominently omitting that of Stalin. In fact, from the late 1950s onwards, many Soviet films addressed the contradictions faced by civilians who might (or might not) rise to understated (and often anonymous) heroic status in response to the terrible circumstances of a destructive war and not because of their commitment to party politics. Audiences were unambiguously invited to share with them the horrors and, ultimately, their choices (or lack of choices) and tragic fates.

The partisan movement in the Soviet Union started soon after Operation Barbarossa and was only initially a spontaneous uprising. From 1942 onwards, partisans were largely organised by local authorities, party leaders and officers from the Red Army who had found themselves in the rear of the swift three-pronged advance of German forces towards Leningrad, Moscow and Stalingrad.[33] In fact, only one week after the country's invasion, on 29 June 1941, the Council of the People's Commissars of the USSR and the Central Committee of the Communist Party issued a directive to all sections of the party, state administration, trade unions and Komsomol (youth movement) to set up partisan detachments. Although, as Alexander Statiev has shown, these initial efforts were largely futile and chaotic, people from those organizations became increasingly effective, especially from 1942, when they formed reliable partisan units and often vetoed those joining them.[34] From this time onwards, partisan detachments were largely made up of trusted party members or people personally known to the leaders, who included efficient organisers such as Panteleimon Ponomarenko.[35]

Partisan activities were controlled by the respective party committees of the republics whose territories were under the occupation and, by the end of 1941, there were around 2000 partisan units with an estimated 90,000 people operating in them. The primary objective of this guerrilla warfare was to support the Red Army by holding up as many Germans as possible in the rear. They did this mostly through disruption of road and rail communications, blowing up bridges, roads, telephone lines or warehouses. They also gathered intelligence, helped soldiers or prisoners escape and conducted propaganda and education campaigns, urging the population to resist actively or to support resisters. The movement included military formations

conducting reconnaissance missions behind enemy lines. One of these groups is the focus of one of the most important films to come out of the USSR, Andrei Tarkovsky's *Ivan's Childhood* (*Ivanovo detstvo,* 1962; also known as *My Name is Ivan*). In this film, the eponymous character is a twelve-year old scout, Ivan (Nikolai Burlyayev), who does not survive a war that takes away first his mother, then his innocence and, ultimately, his life. Ivan, whose name suggests 'everyman', stands in for innocent Soviet children who lost their childhood, idealized throughout the film in Ivan's dreams and flashbacks in which he appears with his mother in a pastoral, hauntingly beautiful landscape. A similar reconnaissance group, codenamed Zvezda, is the subject of Nikolay Ledevev's *The Star* (*Zvezda,* 2002), to be analyzed in this book's Conclusion. Somewhere between soldiers and innocent civilians, the cinematic representations of these ambivalent figures foregrounds the plight shared by all Soviet citizens in the Western Borderlands.

Besides their immediate, practical effects, which were often limited in military terms, the rear-guard activities carried out by scouts and partisans undermined enemy's morale and helped deter those who might collaborate with the occupiers. At the beginning of the war, and in order to recruit resisters and canvas local support for them, the Soviet official narrative highlighted the role played by ordinary civilians who were forced by the Nazi 'war of annihilation' to fight against the occupiers. These unlikely partisans who died for the 'motherland' were celebrated as national heroes, becoming legendary in every sense of the term. Curiously, women were prominent in these narratives and were protagonists of the most successful partisan films made during the first two years of the war, although their importance diminished thereafter. As Denise J. Youngblood sums up, 'Until late in the war, when the Red Army was on the offensive, most Soviet war films featured partisans and women, not soldiers. By 1944, however, women and guerrillas were being replaced as characters by uniformed officers, the higher ranking, the better'.[36] For the earlier part of the war, partisan women took up arms and fought the enemy bravely and convincingly in films such as the most famous production of the war years: Fridrikh Ermler's *She Defends the Motherland* (*Ona zashchishchayet rodinu,* 1943).[37]

In Ermler's film, Praskovia Lukianova (Vera Maretskaya), known as Pasha, becomes a ruthless partisan, Comrade P, after the invaders tear her peaceful life apart. A young married woman, Pasha discovers her husband's corpse on a truck carrying the dead, soon after he had left his family to 'defend the motherland'. After her two-year-old child

is killed in front of her and she is taken away, supposedly to be raped, she becomes the leader of a band of partisans, who even manage to rescue her when she is about to be executed. Although Comrade P could be seen as inspirational for women, her representation as a sort of Soviet Marianne was largely designed to upbraid men whose reluctance, despair or ineffectiveness required women to fight against an invader that threatened everything they held dear. Also, as Youngblood notes, the film is an obvious attempt to raise morale at a very difficult time for the USSR, 'The defeatist in [the film] are not collaborators, spies, or returned émigrés; they are Soviet citizens demoralised by fear and deprivation'. Women as mothers and carers were equally prominent in contemporary Soviet propaganda and would continue to be thereafter. Youngblood notes that: 'As memorable as these fighting women were in Soviet wartime cinema, it would be a mistake to overemphasize their significance. A number of heroine films closely resembled their counterparts in American and British cinema, depicting women who support the war effort in more traditional ways'.[38]

As the war progressed, the relevance of female partisans on both the field and cinema diminished, and women first died on screen and then disappeared from it in the war's immediate aftermath. Thus, the protagonists of two 1944 films, Olga (Nataliya Uzhviy) in Mark Donskoy's *The Rainbow* (*Raduga,* 1944) and Zoya (Galina Vodyanitskaya) in Lev Arnshtam's production of the same title, *Zoya* (1944), are both executed at the end of their respective films. A young Ukrainian partisan who returns to her village to give birth, Olga, the main protagonist of Donskoy's *The Rainbow*, is eventually sacrificed in a film that was considered by F.D. Roosevelt one of the most effective propaganda pieces of the era.[39] Likewise, Zoya Kosmodem'yanskaya, the main protagonist of Arnshtam's *Zoya* and one of the country's most celebrated heroes, suffers a martyr's death in a film that presents her in unabashedly hagiographic terms. Arnshtam's *Zoya*, in John Riley's words, is 'not so much a biography as a sanctification', which casts Zoya as a 'Soviet Joan of Arc'.[40]

Dead or alive, heroes like Comrade P, Olga or Zoya were displaced from Soviet screens, giving way to the glorification of the Red Army and, subsequently, to films commemorating the leadership of Comrade Stalin.[41] These were, in turn, followed by complex views of the war in productions with flawed or no heroes such as Mikhail Kalazotov's *The Cranes Are Flying* (*Letiat zhuravli,* 1957), Grigori Chukhrai's *The Ballad of a Soldier* (*Ballada o soldate,* 1959) and Sergei Bondarchuk's *The Fate of a Man* (*Sud'ba cheloveka,* 1959). These films were produced during the process of

de-Stalinization now known as Khrushchev's Thaw or, simply, The Thaw, after a novel of the same title by Ilya Ehrenburg published in 1954. Post-Thaw's films shunned the hagiographic tone of the previous decades, testing the permissiveness of the regime with visions that are far from celebratory in tone.

From the mid-1950s to the mid-1960s, Soviet productions undertook a process of demystification of the war, foregrounding brutality, dehumanization and destruction. This perspective underscores one of the most remarkable representatives of the era, Tarkovsky's *Ivan's Childhood*, which, as Youngblood observes, stands apart from prior renditions of the war, which were mostly 'tales of heroic resistance tailored to the particular calamity of the war experience in the USSR'.[42] Tarkovsky's film is based on a short story written by Vladimir Bogomolov, which was simply entitled 'Ivan' and was published in 1957, one year after Khrushchev's speech. The director co-wrote the script with Mikhail Papava, introducing some changes, including the poetic end in which Ivan revels in a dreamy afterlife, running along a beach full of apples, which have fallen off a cart.

Ivan's Childhood was Tarkovsky's first feature film and made him well known in cinematic circles when it was awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival and the Golden Gate Award at the San Francisco International Film Festival on the year of its release, in 1962. Tarkovsky went on to consecrate himself as a ground-breaking auteur, perhaps one the most famous to come out from the Soviet Union, from which he defected in 1983, three years before his untimely death. Paradoxically, the success of *Ivan's Childhood* did not endear Tarkovsky to some in the European left, who censored the 'bourgeois' style of the film's idyllic, symbolic dream sequences. Others, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, defended the film as an exponent of a genre variously labelled socialist surrealism, somewhere between expressionism and neorealism, influenced by pioneer filmmakers such as Dziga Vertov or Salvador Dalí. Sartre's defence highlights both the film's style and content, singling out the use of camera positions to heighten Ivan's helplessness and provoke empathy.[43] Tarkovsky referred to his style as 'sculpting in time' and as a challenge to the logic of 'linear sequentiality' in cinema.[44] As Dina Iordanova remarks, the director deployed this technique 'in favor of heightening feeling through poetic connections', making cinema 'the most truthful and poetic of art forms'.[45] These poetic links convey Ivan's immense tragedy visually through the stunning black and white photography and the unusual frames of destruction in a haunting

Fig. 3.1 Andrei Tarkovsky, *Ivan's Childhood* (1962). The devastation caused by the war frames Ivan's vulnerability

and wounded landscape. The resulting compositions, which, at times, diminish and blur the protagonist's image, heighten Ivan's helplessness (Fig. 3.1). This destruction both threatens and envelops Ivan and extends to both the natural and human environments. Within this scenery, a lonely Ivan is literally framed within the sharp edges of the planks of a broken building and a desiccated tree in the distance. Having lost a loving mother that recurs in his dreams, Ivan inhabits and moves through this injured 'motherland' with which he often merges seamlessly.

Tarkovsky opened the way for subsequent films such as Aleksey German's evocative black-and-white production, *Trial on the Road* (*Proverka na dorogakh,* 1971), based on a story written by the director's father, Yuri German. The main action of German's film, which centres on the diversion of a train, echoes Jirí Menzel's *Closely Watched Trains* (*Ostre sledované vlaky,* 1966), studied in Chap. 2. Like Menzel's film, *Trial on the Road* projects a rather underwhelming sense of heroism, which was probably one reason for the film's removal from circulation on its release. The film was shown again in 1986, during Mikhail Gorbachev's *Perestroika*, a policy overtly supported by German, as well as journalists and directors such as Elem Klimov, who formed the Glasnost Defense Foundation (GDF).[46]

Trial on the Road deals with the difficulties of daily life of a group of partisans, highlighting the necessary compromises made by many. The film questions the division between heroes and traitors, undistinguishable, for example, in the portrayal of two teenage boys who mirror one another and who belong casually in opposite camps. While the partisan boy, Dmitry Mit'ka (Gennadi Dyudyayev), captures the film's protagonist at the beginning of the film, the boy who collaborates with the Germans is initially a prisoner of the partisans, from whom he escapes before raising the alarm that leads to the protagonist's death at the film's end. Because of their confusing roles, stressed by their young age and obvious lack of understanding, these boys illustrate the difficulties of stigmatizing collaboration or mystifying resistance.

The main character of *Trial on the Road* is a repentant Red Army deserter, Sergeant Alexander Ivanovich Lazarov (Vladimir Zamansky), who allows himself to be captured while wearing a German uniform. Lazarov is offered as the film's point of identification and is shown in close-ups, using point-of-view shots that stress his humanity. We learn little about Lazarov's previous life, besides the fact that he was a taxi driver who had deserted from the Red Army and had collaborated with the invaders in an attempt to save his life. The reasons for his change of heart are left for the audience to guess, as he remains silent and aloof until he breaks down after being subjected to a mock execution. The bookends of German's film, and its main message, are voiced through Commissar Igor Leonidovich Petushkov, played with penetrating intensity by an actor famously embodying Tarkovsky's protagonists in subsequent films, Anatoly Solonitsyn. Petushkov, who, at the beginning of the film witnesses the destruction of a village's food supplies, as Germans pour poison on potatoes and take away people's cattle, provides the voiceover that closes the film, 'life is hard and war is miserable'. Presented as a reliable witness, Petushkov's faith in Lazarov is proven right, against the judgement of the Commander, Ivan Egorovich Lokotkov (Rolan Bykov). Lazarov first stops a reconnaissance patrol with two Germans on a motorbike and, in the film's climatic scene, he sacrifices himself to save his colleagues. Lazarov and three partisans, including the translator Inga (Anda Zaice), infiltrate the Nazi camp to stop a train with essential supplies. When their identity is revealed, Lazarov protects his colleagues, shooting from the watchtower, from which he descends wounded to walk away from the camera along the snowy train tracks. In a long shot, we see his diminishing figure fall silently to the ground, his silhouette framed against a washed-out sky and the snow on the ground. Lazarov's inaudible and distant death highlights his

understated heroism in a film whose anti-war message is as clear as it is simple.

The notion of heroism displayed in a film released one year after German's, Stanislav Rostotsky's *The Dawns Here are Quiet* (*A Zori Zdes Tikhie,* 1972), based on a novel by Boris Vasilyev, would appear to be more traditional. Rostotsky returns to the early war's image of the bravery of female partisans through the representation of a detachment made up of five young women. The group is positioned in a railway station far from the front line in a beautiful forest setting in Karelia, in 1942.[47] Sergeant Vaskov (Andrei Martynov), who is wholly unaccustomed to dealing with women, leads them. The first segment of the film introduces the women's different personalities through Vaskov's daily struggles to redress their amateurishness. However, this relative peace ends when one of the women sees two Nazi paratroopers in the forest nearby. To prevent the Nazis from sabotaging the Soviet military facilities, the group decides to attack them, but, on reaching them, the women realize that the sixteen paratroopers outnumber them. They agree to send one of them in search for reinforcements while the others hold the Germans for as long as possible, which they do, dying one by one, while the courier drowns in a quagmire. Only the wounded Vaskov survives.

The film, shot in black and white, is framed by two sequences in Technicolour that take place around the time that the film was released, the early 1970s, as a group of teenage girls and boys enjoy a day out in the forest. The film's last scene sees the chance encounter of one of the girls, who is holding a bunch of flowers, with an older man and a boy in uniform who are silently looking at a stone where a memorial plaque is placed. The camera takes the position of the girl as she reads the names of the five women that we have met and, moved, she places her flowers on their memorial. Her friends, who come looking for her noisily, also stop and show their respect to the dead women, a gesture that is appreciated silently by the man who, as the camera zooms in, we recognize as a grey-haired Vaskov, assuming the young man to be the son mentioned by one of the dead women.

A rendition of a novel by Belarusian writer Vasily Bykov, entitled *The Ordeal* (1970), sums up the perspectives studied thus far in this section.[48] Larisa Shepitko's black-and-white rendition of Bykov's novel was released with the title *The Ascent* (*Voskhozhdeniye*) in 1977, when it won several accolades. The film's cinematographer, Vladimir Chuchnov, who died with Ukrainian-born director, Shepitko, in a car accident, in 1979, photographed

some breath-taking long shots of blizzards and a snowy landscape that leave a long-lasting imprint on the viewer. Chuchnov stresses the immensity and solitude of the cold landscape in tracking long shots that are mixed with mid-close-ups of people struggling in the snow. *The Ascent* opens with one such group running away from Nazis in a scene that sets the tone for the remainder of the film.

The main protagonists of *The Ascent* are two partisans whose destinies are linked but who make different choices when faced with adversity. Although Sotnikov (Boris Plotnikov) appears orthodox in both the Christian and Marxist-Leninist senses of the word, his characterization is unusual. A teacher prior to the war, the slightly-built Sotnikov is not only asthmatic but is soon wounded in the leg, remaining ill and crippled for most of the film. However, Sotnikov gradually acquires a saintly aura that increases as he reaches his final hour in the quasi-Biblical ascent of the film's title. By contrast, Sotnikov's partner, Rybak (Vladimir Gostyukhin), is initially presented as a courageous partisan who not only volunteers to fetch food for the civilian party that they are escorting but also returns to help the wounded Sotnikov, dragging him through deep snow to reach safety.

Sotnikov is wounded after the two men take a sheep from an elderly headman, Pyotr (Sergey Yakovlev), whom they accuse of collaborating with the enemy. As they try to return to their party, Germans and *politsai* locate them, and Sotnikov stays behind to cover Rybak, leading to his wounding and Rybak's return to help him. At this point, Shepitko places the camera on the snow and tracks their slow slog, as Rybak drags the wounded Sotnikov one inch at a time, effectively involving the audience in their struggle. Eventually, the two men reach a cabin where three children live and when their mother, Demchikha (Lyudmila Polyakova), returns, so do the Germans. Demchikha hides them in the loft, but they are discovered when they hear Sotnikov's cough and both are taken into custody alongside a distraught Demchikha, now a suspect of helping partisans. On reaching their cell, they are joined by a Jewish girl, Basya (Viktoriya Goldentul), who has survived the round ups and has been helped by a woman whose name she refuses to reveal. Also arrested is Pyotr, the headman, because he has not denounced the theft of the sheep, which makes him guilty of supporting partisans. They are interrogated by a *politsai*, Portnov (Anatoly Solonitsyn), with Sotnikov undergoing torture for his refusal to reveal the whereabouts of his detachment, while Rybak hesitates and offers to collaborate, initially considering that he will be able to run away to fight another day.

Following a night together in a cell, the group is taken out to be executed, after Sotnikov addresses Portnov in an attempt to exonerate his colleagues, blaming himself for the actions in which the *politsai* had been killed. In the book on which the film is based, Sotnikov wishes to inculpate himself but Portnov ignores him. In the film, however, Shepitko adds a scene in which Sotnikov calls Portnov, who is conspicuously standing outside a circle made by Germans, framed from Sotnikov's point of view. This is followed by a shot-reverse-shot that shows Sotnikov in a mid-close up as he slowly limps his way towards Portnov, who occupies the camera's position. When Sotnikov defiantly faces up to Portnov, the lightening of his short hair creates a soft aura around his head, confirming his transformation into a martyr (Fig. 3.2). From the long shot, the camera moves to a mid-close up and then to a close-up of a revitalized Sotnikov upheld by contempt for the traitor and solidarity with those held with him. At this point, Sotnikov's representation follows the tradition of religious paintings, in which shafts of light would enlighten those cast as saints, which had been used by Eisenstein in *Battleship Potemkin*. Sotnikov's 'passion' is couched as Christology, and he accepts his fate with fervour, effectively inhabiting the liminal space between the living and the divine.

Fig. 3.2 Larisa Shepitko, *The Ascent* (1977). Close-up of Sotnikov (Boris Plotnikov) whose lightened hair makes him hallowed after torture

In the short speech that follows, which encapsulates the film's message, Sotnikov shows Portnov, and thus the audience, that he has found peace in his destiny. Portnov addresses Sotnikov as 'Citizen Ivanov', or Russian everyman, while Sotnikov contests Portnov's belittling irony, pausing intently before asserting that he is: 'Not Ivanov, Sotnikov', adding that he was born in 1917, the year of Russia's October Revolution, and is a member of the Communist Party, as well as a lieutenant of the Red Army. Sotnikov adds that he has a 'father, a mother…', and, following an emphatic pause, '…a motherland'. Sotnikov's hiatus thus accentuates the word Родина (*rodina* or motherland), a concept famously immortalized in Soviet propaganda posters of the time or the statue raised in 1967 in Kiev to commemorate the Battle of Stalingrad, 'The Motherland Calls You' (Родина мать зовёт! *Rodina-Mat' zovyot!*). In these posters, the concept of *rodina* was deployed to widen popular support for the war effort, appealing to Russian nationalism. Portnov listens with his head slightly bent sideways and his penetrative gaze fixed on Sotnikov, until the last words make him lower his eyes slowly and turn away from him. This temporary acknowledgement of Portnov's sense of loss is followed by his raised voice informing the Germans that Sotnikov's words are 'nothing', sealing the group's fate.

Throughout this scene, Sotnikov is presented as a Messiah, an emblem for his country and an ordinary human being in extraordinary circumstances, willing to sacrifice his life for the 'motherland', *Rodina*. This vast motherland is, in many ways, the film's main protagonist and provides a spiritual sustenance, a home, from which Portnov and Rybak will be forever alienated. In other words, *The Ascent*'s pantheism expresses deep-seated religious sentiments, which were proscribed by Soviet communism, while stressing the inner tragedies of those who, through force, selfishness or fear, estranged themselves from their people and their motherland. Indeed, Rybak's ultimate punishment will be his unassailable sense of guilt. His inability to live (or die) with his treason is reminiscent of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and Rybak will remain, at the film's end, beyond Shepitko's parable of redemption.

Death and grief are central to the war experience in these Soviet films, which give a voice to the suffocated mourning that was forbidden under communism, collating the devastation caused by the two main ideologies of the early twentieth century. This is nowhere better summarized than in *The Ascent*'s protracted final scene, where the film's title is made meaningful. In this scene, largely absent from the book, the four people about to be publicly executed make their way

slowly up to the hill where the scaffold awaits them. Their ascent, past civilians who have been ordered to watch the execution, is choreographed with a non-diegetic trenchant score written by composer Alfred Shnittke, which punctuates their passion. At this point, Sotnikov embraces death like a Saviour among his apostles, as the camera shows the group and then pauses to give a view of each of them, a microcosmic perspective of Soviet Belarus and, by implication, the occupied USSR, the 'motherland'. Pyotr, the headman that they had robbed and who they had accused of being a traitor, appears dignified, accepting death with stoicism. The Jewish girl, Basya, who looks over the horizon, striving to contain her childish fear, shares this attitude. Next to her, Demchikha cries silently, probably lamenting the fate of her abandoned children, while the wounded Sotnikov is helped by Rybak to stand on the bench. Rybak's empty noose is positioned to the left of the scaffold, a reminder of his treason (Fig. 3.3). The four people about to be executed represent Soviet citizens, defined by the occupying army as

Fig. 3.3 Larisa Shepitko, *The Ascent* (1977). The four civilians about to be executed accept their fate with dignity

Fig. 3.4 Larisa Shepitko, *The Ascent* (1977). A Soviet boy wearing budenovka (Sergei Kanishchev) witnesses the execution

enemies, the *untermensch*, and all accept their fate. They present an image of courage to local onlookers whose respectful silence conveys their solidarity with the condemned group. The last shots prior to the execution further the links between the condemned and the silent watchers as Sotnikov catches sight of a small boy wearing a budenovka who contemplates the execution with a mixture of admiration and sorrow, crying silently (Fig. 3.4). The sustained close-up of the boy, clenching his teeth, while staring at the condemned, encapsulates the film's standpoint, which stresses the plight of civilians in this war of destruction. Following a shot-reverse-shot that establishes a last connection between the condemned and the onlookers, Sotnikov smiles before his final moment. The camera movement suggests this communication to be directed to the boy, offering a dim vision of future hope.

The religious imagery and music in this scene highlight the intricate relationship between partisans, ordinary people and the landscape. This relationship had been established in the opening scenes, when the group made their way through deep snow inch by inch. It is intensified when Rybak helps the wounded Sotnikov through the soft snow that covers their bodies and it culminates in the intercutting of shots between the condemned, the people and their environment. *The Ascent* displays the

Fig. 3.5 Larisa Shepitko, *The Ascent* (1977). The vast motherland from which Rybak (Vladimir Gostyukhin) is alienated at the film's end

telluric embedment of partisans and civilians with the wild and haunting environment that harbours them. This is a relationship that Rybak loses indelibly, as demonstrated by the final shot-reverse-shot of his anguished face contemplating the motherland from which he is now permanently alienated. The film closes with the image of his wounded self forever detached from a snowy landscape framed by a small church, which he contemplates in sorrow (Fig. 3.5). The film's last image, with a door opened to the vastness of a rural landscape framed by an orthodox church, corroborates the film's appeal to humanist, religious and telluric feelings towards the motherland that transcend the communist appeal to defend it from an impious invader.

Although films such as *Ivan's Childhood* and *The Ascent* are intense, memorable and mildly subversive, not all films produced at this time contested the official, Stalinist view of the war. Among those trying to 'rehabilitate' the

post-war idea that it was not so much 'the people' but their leader, Stalin, the central protagonist of the war, Yuri Ozerov's five-part epic, *Liberation* (*Osvobozhdenie* 1968–71), released to celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of D-Day, clearly stands out. This film, however, is hardly remembered, unlike one of the most remarkable films of the *Glasnost* era, Elem Klimov's *Come and See* (*Idi i smotri,* 1985).[49] Shot while Belarus still was a republic of the Soviet Union, Klimov's film offers a sophisticated view of the harrowing cruelty on the Eastern front, witnessed from the point of view of a child, Florya (Aleksey Kravchenko), therefore reminiscent of Ivan in Tarkovsky's film. Although referring to the plight of Soviet Jews, the film adheres to the Soviet line of integrating the murder of Jews with that of the rest of the population under the German Generalplan Ost, in which some Slavs would be spared to serve as slaves to the master race. Klimov stresses the absence of options for a population whose choices could be to join the Nazis as their subordinate police officers, join the resistance or to be killed otherwise in this war of annihilation, or *Vernichtungskrieg*. The film shows these different 'choices', including some collaborators who, close to the film's end, are the main focus of the people's ire and are unceremoniously shot.

The war's brutality is seen in Klimov's film from the point of view of Florya, a boy of around fourteen, who loses first his childhood, then his family and subsequently his sanity. A long scene that details a village's obliteration culminates Florya's transformation from innocent boy to premature adult. This scene, shot with hand-held camera, is chaotic and unsettling, as we witness people being rounded up and burnt in a barn while soldiers run or drive around to the backdrop of noises, shouts and diegetic music from a gramophone placed on a moving motorbike. Villagers are set alight in a barn whose construction is seen through the mist to resemble a church (Fig. 3.6). The sole survivors and witnesses are an old woman who is prostrated in bed, who is spared on account of her inability to procreate, Florya, and a young woman who stands with bloody legs astride after been dragged away by the hair and dumped on a truck to be gang raped. The colourless partisans, arriving too late to save the people, kill members of the 'master race', pausing before doing likewise with the local collaborators who plead for their lives.

Harrowing as these scenes may appear, they are modelled on the real horrors visited on Belarusians and elsewhere on the Eastern Front. The callous murderousness of *Einsatzkommandos* like the one appearing in the film were daily events for units such as the infamous Dirlewanger Brigade

Fig. 3.6 Elem Klimov, *Come and See* (1985). A barn shaped as a church where the villagers are burnt to death

and embody the staggering viciousness of the war in the USSR.[50] Klimov based the film on his own memory of a war in which 'wait and see' was not an accessible option for people living in the Soviet Borderlands. It was certainly beyond all Jews, whose genocide was submerged within the general war of extermination in Soviet memory.

Immediately after Operation Barbarossa, the USSR became involved in a destructive war that threatened its existence and the livelihood of many of its citizens. The outright savagery meted out on civilians caught behind the fast-advancing German lines remains staggering to rehearse. At a conservative estimate, one in four out of the nine million people in the Belarusian Republic was killed, including two thirds of its Jewish population. Overall, half of the population either lost their home or were displaced, while over 600 villages were completely obliterated in terms of habitat and inhabitants, a number that may easily be multiplied when

factoring in partial destruction. Alongside with Poland and Ukraine, with which Belarus shared shifting borders, Belarus is the place where the murderous and genocidal extremes of Nazi Germany culminated, claiming the dubious honour of being at the forefront of destruction. According to Tim Snyder, of

> the nine million people who were on the territory of Soviet Belarus in 1941, some 1.6 were killed by the Germans in actions away from battle fields, including about 700,000 prisoners of war, 500,000 Jews, and 320,000 people counted as partisans (the vast majority of whom were unarmed civilians)…A rough estimate of two million total mortal losses…seems reasonable and conservative…By the end of the war, half the population of Belarus had either been killed or moved.[51]

Not surprisingly, Belarus contributed substantially to the Soviet partisan efforts with a good number of people. These included some of the country's Jews, many of whom were shot or burned to death in town halls, synagogues or barns, such as that seen in Klimov's film.

Despite these horrors, Klimov's film steers away from mystifying Soviet partisans. This is clear from the beginning of the film, when two of them gulp the food they are offered by Florya's mother, disregarding her poverty, before accepting Florya in their ranks. Partisans wear neutral colours and are mostly filmed in long shots, never cast as figures with whom to empathize. Their leader, Kosach (Liubomiras Laucevičius), is largely silent, and his main actions include abandoning Florya and his 'partisan wife', Glasha (Olga Mironova), an act that can be seen as partly contemptuous and partly a desire to spare their lives. Kosach's second, and perhaps more relevant, action is when he silently nods an order to spray Nazis and local *politsai* with gunshots in the aforementioned scene. This summary execution is shown to be only kinder because of the expressed wish of many in the crowd to torture and burn their prisoners alive in retaliation for the destruction of the village and the murder of all its inhabitants.

Klimov's film exemplifies the cultural transition from the Stagnation, a label given by Mikhail Gorvachev to the period dominated by Leonidas Brezhnev, and Gorvachev's own opening up of the country in the second half of the 1980s, normally referred to as *Glasnost* and *Perestroika*.[52] Films like Klimov's shunned the propagandistic tone of the immediate post-war era, testing the permissiveness of the regime with visions that are far from

celebratory in tone. As Youngblood suggests, the skilful use of images meant that filmmakers could circumvent existing censorship, thereby becoming 'the historians of their generation': 'Working with images rather than words, these directors were able to subvert censorship, thereby functioning as the historians of their generation'.[53]

Although made with estate finance and under the auspices of the country's official production companies, such as Mosfilm or Belarusfilm, Soviet war films produced in the aftermath of The Thaw often inhabit a world far removed from officialdom.[54] In spite of political constraints, post-war Soviet cinema does not subordinate slavishly to the delivery of political messages. The same applies to their genre or style, with many films overtly challenging the aesthetic constraints of social realism or even its post-war 'anti-fascist' heir, neorealism, described in Chap. 2.[55] However, this does not mean that these films do not pay respect to their country's defence or even, at times, to socialist and communist ideas, and not merely as a sort of religious recitation. Needless to say, some Soviet productions, such as Aleksei Simonov's *Detachment* (*Otryad,* 1986), chiefly disregard nationalism or anti-communism as possible reasons for collaboration. In the case of *Otryad,* Simonov presents the anti-Soviet guerrilla as 'bandits', thereby reversing the blanket denominator that Nazi Germany had used for all resisters but using the same Manichaean approach.

As in other countries occupied by Axis powers, active and passive collaboration followed the swift German invasion of Belarus. On arrival, Germans were welcomed as liberators in the Soviet Borderlands, which included much of Western Ukraine, the Baltic Republics and parts of Belarus. People collaborated for ideological reasons, as had happened elsewhere with fascist or pro-fascist parties, hoping to drive back their Soviet oppressors or out of sheer necessity. The conflict's 'grey' zones, in which people might become 'collaborators' or 'resisters' in order to survive or to help their families, were largely obliterated in the official memorialization of the war until the collapse of communism. This mystification, however, remains part of the official history not only of the Russian Federation but also of twenty-first century Belarus.[56]

The predominant Belarusian approach to the past offers a unique example of continuity from the Soviet era, with the singularity of the Jewish plight subsumed within the national narrative.[57] As in Soviet times, Belarus' foundational narrative is grounded on a monolithic version of the

Soviet Great Patriotic War in which all people became heroic resisters.[58] Alexandra Goujon calls this the 'neo-Soviet' version of the past, prevalent under Alexander Lukashenko's dictatorship, whose strict censorship extends to the war's interpretation.[59] Belarus' unusual reverence to its communist past places it at odds with most countries from the former Eastern Bloc, which have seen a revival of nationalist memories that address or even vindicate the fact that the Germans were seen by many as potential liberators. This is especially the case in Ukraine and the Baltic States, although a good number of Belarusians also 'volunteered' to join the police force that fought their own countrymen, as seen in Klimov's film.

Even after the country's independence in 1991, the memorialization of the war in Belarus is not so much on the country as victim but of a community built on active resistance against a murderous occupier. This perspective can be seen in the twenty-first century monument 'Partisan Belarus', which was inaugurated in 2005 and is also apparent in the most important memorial site of the Nazi extermination policies, in Khatyn. Located about fifty kilometres from Minsk, this vast memorial complex is spread over fifty hectares and might have been chosen because of its resonance with Katyn, the site of the Soviet massacre of Polish officers. Kathyn had all its 149 inhabitants, including seventy-five children, burnt alive on 22 March 1943. However, besides offering an example of Nazi violence, Khatyn shows how the Germans were able to mobilize willing or unwilling local support, as research at the end of the 1990s showed that Khatyn had been destroyed by the 118th Police Battalion. This battalion was mostly made up of Ukrainian prisoners of war, deserters and common criminals.[60]

The films analysed in this section display the 'messianic' or redemptive perspective of history outlined by Walter Benjamin's paradigm of victory in his 'Theses on the Philosophy of History'. Written at the beginning of WWII, Benjamin's theses fit quite precisely the memorialization of a conflict that remains a cornerstone of contemporary European politics. As Benjamin would have predicted, the historicism of WWII adopted the victor's narrative, and this narrative was shaped by the dialectic between barbarism and civilization, as Benjamin understood it.[61] Although well suited to World War historicism, Benjamin's affirmation that 'not even the dead will be safe from the enemy' is especially relevant to the Soviet Union's memorialization of the conflict. As is well known, the Stalinist version of The Great Patriotic War went so far as to censor the number

of war victims, both during and after the war, stressing victory, (male) heroism and, perhaps unsurprisingly, the leadership of Comrade Stalin. The favouring of heroic victors was questioned in the cultural arena, especially following Nikita Khrushchev's de-Stalinization in the 1950s. Prominent writers, such as Vasily Grossman and Ilya Ehrenburg, and filmmakers, such as Tarkovsky, Shepitko, Bondarchuk and Klimov, challenged the official version of the past, foregrounding civilian victims, and the harrowing plight of Soviet Jews. In other words, these films create history through constellations (or montages) of the lives and deaths of 'ordinary' people that challenge historicism's teleological assumptions.

If Soviet monuments, such as Volgograd's statue of the Motherland, offer a mixture of grandiose classicism and social realism, Soviet films about the Great Patriotic War challenge expectations of simplistic patriotism and pro-Soviet militancy. If anything, and in spite of censorship, these war films encapsulate the contradictions of the socio-political environment in which they were produced, offering no paeans to the party's policies or to its leaders, past or present. Instead, they portray morally ambiguous, deeply moving human stories that eschew the virile posturing of the paradigmatic 'people's hero' as a foil for his leader, Stalin. Under directors like Klimov, Shepitko and Tarkovsky, these films also subvert the techniques borrowed from socialist realism, effectively linking the spiritual, metaphysical and emotional destruction of the Great Patriotic War in the Soviet Union.

The cinematic representations of partisan resistance in the USSR and Yugoslavia looked at in this chapter are part of a popular history that highlights the roles of ordinary citizens, often fostering a basis for coexistence in the war's aftermath. The shared past of these societies and the films that embody that past display contingent points of union during or after a war where social and ethnic divisions were wilfully erased. These films are historical documents and 'sites of memory', which offer an outlet for collective mourning. They project and imagine people's 'finest hours', dignifying the trail of death that the Nazi invasion left behind. At the same time that Soviet directors were challenging or extending the USSR paradigm of heroic resistance, the roles of perpetrators, collaborators and bystanders in the murder of European Jews were revised elsewhere in Europe. Chapter 4, The Collaborator (1969–74), traces the cinematic 'origins' of these protean historical and cultural figures in 1970s productions from France and Italy.

Notes

1. Francs-Tireurs et Partisans or Partisan Irregular Free Shooters is a term adopted from the guerrilla operating during the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71).
2. See *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
3. See Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 22.
4. See Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991).
5. After the Italian invasion, Tito and Mihailovič tried but failed to establish some common ground to fight the alien invader, meeting in September and October of 1941 and splitting definitively on 1 November 1941.
6. Simon Trew questions the degree of Četnik collaboration with Germans in *Britain, Mihailović and the Chetniks, 1941–42* (London: Macmillan, 1998).
7. Of a total population of around fifteen million people, between one and one and a half million people are estimated to have died, more than half of whom were civilians. On Yugoslav partisans, see Jozo Tomasevich, *War and Revolution in Yugoslavia, 1940–1945. Occupation and Collaboration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).
8. More than 100,000 women joined Tito's National Liberation Army (AVNOJ), with one in four dying, 40,000 wounded and 3000 becoming incapacitated, while 2000 served as officers and 91 were recognized as 'people's hero'. Tito repeatedly expressed his pride to have women serving.
9. Rosenstone uses this label to refer to a 1980s documentary about the US members of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, who fought in the Spanish Civil War: '*The Good Fight*…[is] history as homage—homage to a certain kind of commitment and to a tradition of activism, one in which the filmmakers clearly situate themselves'. See *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995), p. 111.
10. M. R. D Foot, *Resistance: An Analysis of European Resistance to Nazism 1940–1945* (London: Methuen, 1976), p. 192.
11. On this topic, see *British Policy towards Wartime Resistance in Yugoslavia and Greece,* ed. by Phyllis Auty and Richard Clogg (London and New York: Macmillan, 1975).
12. The actual budget was not made public but an estimate given by *Variety* gives the official figure as US$4.5 million but the actual expenses US$ 12.5 million. See Batančev, 'A Cinematic Battle: Three Yugoslav War Films from

the 1960s' (unpublished master's thesis, Central European University, 2012), p. 54, n. 96.
13. See Nora, 'Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire', *Representations,* 26 (1989), 7–24.
14. Batančev, 'A Cinematic Battle', p. 53.
15. Some conscripts lamented having to play cameos of dead German or Italian soldiers, or even switched sides to 'join the Partisans', which provides a light source of humour in Turalic's documentary.
16. Batančev uses the specific numbers for a section of his chapter on this film, '10,000 soldiers, 75 armed vehicles, 22 airplanes'. See 'A Cinematic Battle', p. 52.
17. Tito's own words on this issue were as follows: 'On Neretva in occupied Europe, we have fought one of the most famous and most humane battles—battle for saving the wounded. The fate of the revolution was at stake here and here the brotherhood and unity of our nations won'.
18. Foot, *Resistance*, p. 193.
19. See Hoare, *Genocide and Resistance in Hitler's Bosnia: The Partisans and the Chetniks, 1941–1943* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 333.
20. Miranda Jakiša analyses the symbiotic relationship of Partisan films with the land in these films. She argues that these 'telluric' or 'earth-bound' features are of paramount importance in the creation of the partisan's 'imagined community'. See 'Down to Earth Partisans: Fashioning of YU-Space in Partisan Films', *Kino!,* 10 (2010), 54–61.
21. Batančev, 'A Cinematic Battle', p. 64.
22. As Batančev observes: 'Yugoslavism is visible…in Tito's message to the viewers which reminds them that in the battle of Neretva "brotherhood and unity of all of our nations won"'. See 'A Cinematic Battle', p. 57.
23. Hoare, 'Whose is the Partisan Movement? Serbs, Croats and the Legacy of a Shared Resistance', *The Journal of Slavic Military Studies,* 15.4 (2002), 24–5.
24. A document with Tito's written order not to be shown in cinema is displayed in *Cinema Komunisto.*
25. Air support was provided by the Luftwaffe, as well as the Italian and Croatian Air Forces.
26. Estimated overall casualties were close to 9000, made up of 6500 combatants plus 2500 civilians killed in reprisals, while Axis forces had around 583 killed and 400 wounded.
27. Serbs claim that up to 700,000 were killed, while Yad Vashem lowers the figure to around 500,000 and the USHMM puts it at 320,000–340,000.
28. Batančev, 'A Cinematic Battle', p. 56.
29. Kuljić, *Tito* (Belgrade: Institut za politicke studije, 1998), p. 292.

30. Gentile, *Politics as Religion,* trans. by George Staunton (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006).
31. See H83tr3d's channel (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=igT9BCbeHgQ). H83tr3d has a webpage dedicated to body counts (www.alloutta-bubblegum.com).
32. Hoare, 'Whose is the Partisan Movement?', p. 40.
33. On Soviet partisans, see Kenneth Slepyan, *Stalin's Guerrillas: Soviet Partisans in World War II* (St Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006); Alexander Hill, *The War behind the Eastern Front: The Soviet Partisan Movement in North-West Russia, 1941–1944* (London: Frank Cass, 2005) and Leonid D. Grenkevich, *The Soviet Partisan Movement, 1941–1944: A Critical Historiographical Analysis* (London: Frank Cass, 1999).
34. See Statiev, 'The Soviet Union', in *Hitler's Europe Ablaze, Occupation, Resistance and Rebellion During World War Two,* ed. by Philip Cooke and Ben H. Shephard (New York: Skyhorse Publishing, 2013), pp. 188–212.
35. Ponomarenko had been general of the Red Army before becoming First Secretary of the Communist Party of Belarus (1938–47).
36. Youngblood, *Russian War Films: on The Cinema Front, 1914–2005* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, c.2007), p. 7.
37. The film's title was originally rendered into English as *No Greater Love*.
38. Youngblood, *Russian War Films*, pp. 62, 69.
39. Kenneth R. M. Short. *Film and Radio Propaganda in World War II* (London: Taylor & Francis, 1983), p. 116.
40. Riley, *Dmitri Shostakovich: A Life in Film*. KINO—Russian Film-makers' Companions (Book 3) (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), p. 52. The film's popularity is demonstrated by the fact that it 'was third at the box office in 1944'. Youngblood, *Russian War Films*, p. 67.
41. According to Youngblood, of the seventy major wartime films featuring men as protagonists from 1944, 'only two focused on the partisans, rather than the Red Army…[W]ith the Red Army on the offensive after Stalingrad, the formulas for war films changed. Heroines could be killed (*Zoya, The Rainbow*); Red Army soldiers, sailors and pilots could displace the partisans as heroes (*Two Warriors, Moscow Skies, Malakhov Hill*); [and] directors could imagine taking the war to the enemy in Germany (*Person No. 217*)'. See, *Russian War Films*, p. 78.
42. Youngblood, 'Post-Stalinist Cinema and the Myth of World War II: Tarkovskii's "Ivan's Childhood"' (1962) and Klimov's "Come and See" (1985)', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television,* 14.4 (1994), 413–19 (p. 41).
43. Sartre, 'Discussion on the Criticism of Ivan's Childhood', (Letter to Alicata, editor of *L'Unita*'). The French Letters, no 1009, trans. by Madan

Gopal Singh, *Nostalghia*, 1963 (https://people.ucalgary.ca/~tstronds/nostalghia.com/TheTopics/Sartre.html).

44. Tarkovsky, *Sculpting in Time: Tarkovsky The Great Russian Filmmaker Discusses his Art*, trans. by Kitty Hunter-Blair (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1989).
45. See Iordanova's essay for the film's release by Criterion, 'Ivan's Childhood: Dream Come True', The Criterion Collection (https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/589-ivan-s-childhood-dream-come-true).
46. GDF is a member of the International Freedom of Expression Exchange that works in close collaboration with Reporters Without Borders, Amnesty International, International PEN and other organizations. Besides the two directors mentioned, it was organized by Yegor Yakovlev, Vladimir Molchanov, Igor Golembiovsky and Mark Rozovsky.
47. The film was shot near Ruskeala, the actual setting of the story.
48. Bykov, *The Ordeal*, trans. by Gordon Clough (London, Sydney and Toronto: The Bodley Head, 1972).
49. The film 'drew 28.9 million viewers, ranking sixth at the box office in 1986'. See Youngblood, *Russian War Films*, p. 197.
50. The notorious 36th Waffen Grenadier Division of the SS, also known as the *SS-Sturmbrigade Dirlewanger,* enlisted convicted criminals in its ranks, including Oskar Dirlewanger himself. They became famous for murdering and raping civilians behind the Eastern Front throughout the war, and operated in Poland, Belarus and Slovakia.
51. Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (London: Vintage, 2011), pp. 250–51.
52. These years were marked by the decline of the long-lasting leadership of Leonidas Brézhnev (1964–82), who was followed by Yuri Andropov (1982–84), Konstantin Chernenko (1984–85) and Gorbachev (1985–91).
53. Youngblood, 'A War Remembered: Soviet Films of the Great Patriotic War', *The American Historical Review*, 106, no.3 (2001), 839–56 (p. 855).
54. *Come and See* was co-produced by Mosfilm and Belarusfilm.
55. On the relationship of post-war cinema with neorealism, see Sect. 2.1 of Chap. 2.
56. Twenty-first century Belarus offers a unique example of continuity from the Soviet version of the Great Patriotic War. See Alexandra Goujon, 'Memorial Narratives of WWII Partisans and Genocide in Belarus', *East European Politics and Societies,* 24.1 (2012), 6–25.
57. The first Soviet film featuring Jews as main characters was Alexander Askoldov's *The Commissar* (*Komissar,* 1967), made in 1967 but censored until 1988. The film is an adaptation of Vasily Grossman's short story 'In the Town of Berchichev' ('V gorode Berdicheve'), set in the predomi-

nantly Jewish Ukrainian village of Grossman's birth during the Russian Civil War (1918–22).

58. The translation is sometimes rendered as 'Great Fatherland War'.
59. As Goujon observes, 'With few exceptions, the Soviet era emphasized the heroics of the resistance to fascism rather than the actual crimes and abominations committed by the Nazis'. See 'Memorial Narratives of WWII', p. 7. Lukashenko has ruled Belarus continuously from 1994.
60. This battalion was formed in Kiev in 1942 and headed by *Sturmbannführer* Erich Kerner.
61. Benjamin's famous expression in his V Thesis is: 'There is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism'. See Walter Benjamin. *On the Concept of History*, Gesammelten Schriften I:2. (Frankfurt: Verlag, 1974) (http://members.efn.org/~dredmond/ThesesonHistory.html).

CHAPTER 4

The Collaborator (1969–74)

Mainstream cinema tends to adhere to clear-cut divisions between good and evil, reducing ambiguity to the minimum, often channelled through the main protagonist. A favoured film structure is a three-act redemptive plot, where a 'flawed' protagonist redeems himself (more often than a 'flawed' protagonist redeems herself), half way through the film, with their actions affecting the final act. An equivocal protagonist who turns good at the end has also been proven more successful on stage and on screen. This reduction of ambiguity is partly due to the difficulties inherent in apprehending complexity in the limited time and space of a film production. It is also due to the insipidness that inheres in staging 'goodness', which can appear bland and superficial in drama and its heir, fiction film. As with its theatrical predecessors, 'bad' characters, such as Iago in *Othello,* can command more attention than their victims, especially when these are unapologetically angelic. This paradigm is understood by Steven Spielberg's recreation of the life and deeds of Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson) in *Schindler's List* (1993), which assumes that 'virtue' can appear simplistic and may not command as much empathy as a redeemed character. In fact, the attraction of Schindler depends on his 'redemption', and in making viewers accompany him in this successful, but largely unexplained, transition. In other words, Spielberg displaces Jews from the film's centre and, in the process, makes their status as Płaszów's victims cinematically incontestable. Arguably, a price paid is their diminished status, as they can be seen to be foils and one-dimensional characters, in contrast with

M. Camino, *Memories of Resistance and the Holocaust on Film*,
https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-49969-1_4

Schindler or, more worryingly, Amon Goeth (Ralph Fiennes), as will be seen in Chap. 6, Righteous Gentiles (1987–2011).

The reductive and pervasive Manichaeism of good and evil in cinematic productions means that the history of film is littered with highly successful productions about truants, gangsters and blemished characters who stand out from the rest. Some of these cinematic 'heroes' convert to a cause, following an epiphany that creates the film's centre of gravity, as happens to Schindler watching the evacuation of the ghetto, literally, from his high horse. These are expectations that cannot but be subverted when projecting collaboration in World War II. As will be seen in this chapter, whenever collaboration is the result of a conscious, ideological choice, the characters embodying those traits are secondary and are irremediably callous, selfish and traitors to their own people. However, circumstantial collaboration gives way to complex responses historically and cinematographically. Some cinematic traditions, as seen with Soviet cinema in Chap. 3, address this conundrum through the projection of inner guilt. To do this, filmmakers such as Larissa Shepitko or Sergei Loznitsa rely not only on alternative literary codes but also on unconventional filmmaking, which can be challenging to those accustomed to mainstream filmic narrative. This approach is, however, not the result of a form of cultural Cold War, dividing the East from the West in political and artistic terms. Unusual conventions are embedded in traditions from both sides of the Iron Curtain, including the Polish Film School, Italian neorealism or the French Nouvelle Vague, all of which opted at different times for techniques and styles to match their topics.

European cinema has presented itself as a challenge not only to the economic dominance of Hollywood but also to its stylistic focus on entertainment, wide appeal and accessibility. French cinema, in particular, has put to the test the tenets of archetypal film narrative in terms of content, as well as composition. French filmmakers have attempted to show contemplation and inner thoughts as seen in, for example, Robert Bresson's *A Man Escaped* (*Un condamné à mort s'est échappé,* 1956), studied in Chap. 2. Alongside a different aesthetics and narrative framework, some of these films reject a clear sense of closure or ending, fomenting uneasiness on the part of viewers. It should come as no surprise to find French filmmakers among the first to cast unrepentant or unthinking collaborators as cinematic protagonists. As will be seen in this chapter, this is also historically apposite. Collaborators or, to use the French shortcut, 'collabos', unambiguously presented themselves as victims of their circumstances. They were liminal

historical actors, beyond the moral binaries of good and evil that would behove a nation fighting against its external enemies. This paradigm corresponds historically to places that, unlike the UK or the USA, were occupied during the war, and where collaboration became embedded in daily life, as much a political option as a form of survival and a means to benefit economically.

This chapter departs from these cultural and cinematic premises, taking into account the historical amnesia about collaboration that followed the war. I will investigate the roles played by willing or casual collaborators in cinematic works that broke that tradition of silence in the 1970s. Motives for collaboration in real life and in cinema were as abundant as the collaborators themselves, with ideological and economic reasons often preceding or even leading other motives. These are unmistakable in the main films analysed in this chapter, Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Conformist* (*Il conformista,* 1970), Louis Malle's disturbing *Lacombe Lucien* (1974) and Joseph Losey's *Mr Klein* (*Monsieur Klein*, 1976). Released at a time in which cinema still commanded widespread social attention, these films played an important role in the transition of the French view of its past from a 'nation of resisters' to a 'nation of collaborators', spearheading and documenting historical debates that became public at the time. These films challenged the received wisdom of heroic resistance by casting deeply problematic collaborators as central characters. In cinematic terms, these unlikeable heroes construct an insurmountable fissure between the protagonist and the audience. This Brechtian distance, this chapter will suggest, contributed to a perspective of Franco-French society in terms of a 'perpetrator society'. In the case of Italy, discomfort was the result of bringing to light a past that had been closed and sealed because most Italians had happily embraced the view put forward by Rosellini in *Rome,* as seen in Chap. 2. In Italy, however, this debate did not become as widespread as in France, remaining firmly within the realm of academic historians, politicians and intellectuals.

In the immediate post-war environment, collaborators could be seen as 'heroic' so long as they associated themselves with resistance. This attitude was fed by the claim that the most important collaborators did so to shield their compatriots from the wrath of the occupier. In other words, the argument went, these collaborators keenly awaited the right time to show their true, patriotic colours. Collaboration was thus adopted in France not just by pro-fascist parties but also, and perhaps more importantly, by conservative and even left-wing nationalists, some of whom

went so far as to present collaboration as a form of resistance both during and after the war. This approach was, they argued, the only way to make the best of the terrible situation arising from the swift defeat of French forces in 1940 and to prevent socialists and communists from challenging the status quo. It was this notion that led to the misrepresentation of collaboration as 'the shield' and resistance as 'the sword', in a composite uniting all French citizens.[1] Collaborationism, however, entailed not only economic cooperation but also, and perhaps more importantly, thinly disguised racism and outright antisemitism. This activism, and the apathy with which the deportations were met, ensured that French police played an important role in the round-ups of French and foreign Jews, such as the infamous 'rafle' of the Velodrome d'Hiver, ordered by Pierre Laval.[2]

The wide-spectrum of collaboration in Europe included the willing partnership of pro-fascist parties, such as the Norwegian Nasjonal Samling, the Croat Ustaša or the French Parti populaire Français and Rassemblement national populaire. It also comprised the nationalist or anti-communist resistance of some Eastern countries or regions, such as the Baltic nations, Poland or Ukraine, which reacted against Soviet or Stalinist dominance, often with the additional ingredient of long-lasting antisemitism, as well the association of Bolshevism with Judaism. Antisemitism also had deep roots in other countries, including Austria, where the fact that a small proportion of Jews were overrepresented in professions such as doctors or lawyers was fitted into the worldwide conspiracy to dominate the world articulated in the infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*.

In contrast with Eastern or Central European countries, collaboration with the Germans had different motivations in France, where the concept originates. The term was coined by the leader of the Rassemblement national populaire, Marcel Déat, who wrote in the party's journal, *L'Œuvre*, on 4 November 1940, that true patriots should encourage and strengthen the relationship between France and Nazi Germany beyond mere 'collaboration'. This was the situation in which the hero of World War I, Marshal Pétain, stepped in, presenting himself as a model Frenchman in contemporary posters that stressed his 'Frenchness' as Catholic, traditional and conservative. As Richard Golsan remarks, this 'realistic' image demythologized the resistance by justifying collaboration as arising from 'fate' or 'human nature', downplaying its ideological and socio-political dimensions.[3]

Along those lines, the Gaullist post-war myth of a France unified in fighting the occupying force of Nazi Germany became literally the history

of a bygone era in the years following the upheavals of May 1968. These shifts gathered momentum from the early 1960s, following Adolf Eichmann's trial, leading to a sober appraisal of collaboration that culminated with Jacques Chirac's famous apology, issued in 1995. Acknowledging his country's role in the rounding up of French and alien Jews at the Vel d'Hiv in 1942, Chirac placed another stepping stone in a process that can be traced quite precisely. The process was signposted by several trials of war criminals and collaborators, including Eichmann in 1961, Klaus Barbie in 1987 and Maurice Papon in 1996. It was also delineated by the production and release of television and cinematic productions that often spurred bitter and conflicting debates. Among them, the representations on which this chapter concentrates, released in the 1970s, provide an unusual stance vis-à-vis viewer's identification (or, more precisely, lack of identification) with their main protagonists. This stylistic projection fits in quite precisely within the period framed by the films' release, both historically and artistically. In other words, the filmic distance and alienation from the main characters conveys a positioning towards a past of conflict which acknowledges a sense of 'national' guilt, while eschewing a sense of personal implication. This discomfort, as critics of the films have unfailingly noticed, is as unsettling as it is politically ambiguous, not only by highlighting the grey areas between collaboration and resistance but also by minimizing personal choices and individual agency.

Although its demise was gradual, the origins of the Gaullist mythology of 'nation of resisters' originates in two historical moments: the mythical *Appel du 18 juin* on the BBC and de Gaulle speech at the Liberation of Paris in 1944. The famous Appeal, following France's swift and humiliating defeat, was issued in London by General Charles de Gaulle, who was largely unknown at the time, and was subsequently edited and released in posters that were plastered throughout the country, addressed to 'Tous les Français'. In this Appeal, de Gaulle urged people to resist, using the hackneyed phrase that a battle and not a war was lost when the bombastic Maginot Line was unceremoniously bypassed by German troops. The second, and perhaps most important landmark, is de Gaulle's staged walk along the Champs Élysées the day after the Liberation of Paris, which was planned and filmed from different angles. After this walk, he delivered his, hyperbolic celebration of 'eternal', 'true' and 'unique' France restored once 'martyred Paris' had been liberated 'by itself' and 'its own people', with help from other 'fighting' Frenchmen.[4]

De Gaulle's words, which eventually granted a side note to the Allies, and his mystification of a 'Paris liberated by its own people', disguise more than they reveal. What they show, moreover, is the subject not so much of historical revision, although this was and is clear, but of his astute political thinking. It is a foresight that was shared by France's main allies and that led to the concerted amnesia of the post-war years in which resisters invented or reinvented themselves, as suggested in Chap. 2. This search for consensus and social harmony was marked by the scapegoating of women accused of sleeping with the enemy, the *tondues* immortalized in photographs; the silence about the Franco-French conflict, as well as attentisme and active collaboration.[5] Among those events earmarked for oblivion were the shameful round-up of communists, socialists and Jews during the conflict, as well as the disregard for the contribution towards the liberation made by colonials, Eastern European Jews and Spanish Republicans.[6]

While it is not always true that victors invariably write the whole history of a war or conflict, they define the parameters within which it will be written. In the case of World War II, it was the victors who consolidated the meaning of 'the good war' for future generations, although the thin veneer of this definition also clouded a great deal. Not surprisingly, it is a concept that has not withstood the test of time beyond the shores of the two non-occupied Allied powers, Great Britain and the USA. Whereas in these two nations the notion of a good war was reinforced by the increasing knowledge and awareness of the Holocaust, other countries were not so well placed to face up to the potentially divisiveness of this exposure. In France, these 'revelations' provoked what Henry Rousso has termed 'The Broken Mirror' (*le miroir brisé*), from 1971 to 1974, a time in which the social and political divisions that had been disregarded after the war came to the fore, following the events of May 1968.[7] Before this era, Rousso identifies the immediate post-war environment, from 1945 to 1953, as a time of 'Unfinished Mourning (le deuil inachevé)', followed by 'Repressed Memory' (*le refoulement*), which lasted until 1971. The 'broken mirror' would in turn lead to six 'obsessive' years confronting deportation and a period of 'normalization' from 1980. The 1970s confrontation with the past provoked, and was provoked by, a handful of powerful cinematic interventions whose admission of collaboration marked the era, and that are the focus of this chapter.

Heirs to well-worn dramatic traditions, cinematic productions about the 'good war' tend to divide their universe in two even halves. On the

one hand stand the shrill and brutish German villains who walk in unison and humiliate civilians, especially, but not only, if they look Jewish. On the other hand, the activists and the victims, often led by a man with whom the audience is invited to identify. In historical terms, this is the paradigm of the 'outsider' and the 'insider', seamlessly transported to occupied Europe in the war's immediate aftermath. At this point, the grey areas between collaboration and resistance, which often included the greatest spectrum of the population, did not figure in mainstream films, though they made their way into some literary works, such as those written by French author Patrick Modiano, who received the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2014.[8]

Up to the late 1960s, collaborators, when appearing in films, were blunt and uncomplicated secondary characters, cast as sidekicks to the main villains. To present the ambiguity of collaboration through a main protagonist is unusual, to say the least, although Franco Solinas and Gillo Pontecorvo used Primo Levi's 'grey zone' in their unusual transition of a girl from innocent victim to active collaborator and to heroic resister in *Kapò* (1960), as will be seen in this book's Conclusion. Such casting presents some technical difficulties, partly because the active collaborator, who is normally cast as a man, is a liminal character, standing between the brutal Axis forces and their own people. Precisely for that reason, their historical referents were despised with more intensity by their contemporaries, who reserved their greatest contempt, at least publicly, for them, as seen with the French treatment of women accused of 'horizontal collaboration', the *tondues*. If their sense of non-belonging were not enough to class them apart, the collaborationists' actions challenge important cultural milestones in war and society, including basic feelings of human solidarity or communal identification. In this case, solidarity is understood as the collective defence against an invader perceived as alien, as were, for example, the Germans for the French. All this means that collaborators have innate potential to be cast as outright villains, acting out of ambition or psychopathic tendencies, inviting revulsion and, as a result, sometimes also a degree of attraction. To revert this paradigm can be technically difficult to create on screen because of the challenging spatial and temporal constraints of cinema, and can alienate viewers because of their dubious morality.

The films analysed in this chapter address this conundrum through an overt or covert use of Hannah Arendt's concept of the 'banality of evil', which was developed in relation to the trial of one of the architects of the Final Solution, Adolf Eichmann, held in Israel in 1961. Hunted by Mossad

agents in Argentina, where he had disguised himself as Richard Clement, Eichmann was smuggled out of the country and taken to Israel. There, he was famously tried behind a glass case in a trial that made headlines around the world for its use of testimonies of Holocaust survivors, who became as important, if not more, than the criminal on trial. The trial not only became a landmark on these grounds, but it also redefined the category of Holocaust survivor. It also spurred European Jews who had lost family, friends and homes to tell their stories in the form of testimonies, bearing witness to murders for which no corpses would ever be found, as will be seen in Chap. 5, Holocaust Testimony: Survivors, Ghosts and Revenants (1947–2002). The films produced at this historical juncture thus bear witness to changes in the apprehension of judicial and moral guilt, which many perpetrators had evaded after the war. For viewers, this resulted in an awareness of the glacial disdain for human life that became a defining moment of modernity, witnessing how those who planned the execution of unspeakable crimes made sense of the events. Whereas some thinkers saw these people and their deeds as markers of the end of the Enlightenment as an era of increasing understanding and tolerance, including different religious beliefs, for the likes of Theodor Adorno and Zygmunt Bauman, it was the opposite. For these theorists, as explained in this book's Introduction, the Shoah was the crux of modernity itself, culminating the tenets that informed the so-called age of reason.

The effectiveness of the camp system, for these philosophers, is the epitome of 'modernity', and Eichmann's bureaucracy is the 'banal evil' that demonstrates it. Bertolucci's film, *The Conformist*, takes good note of those debates in a production based on Alberto Moravia's earlier narrative, which was first published in 1951. Although, as suggested in the second section of Chap. 2, Italians have memorialized the war as something that happened to them, in historical terms, they cannot be classed as anything other than perpetrators. This is not just because fascism originated in Italy and enjoyed a lot of support there in the 1920s and 1930s, but also because Italians participated actively in massacres during the invasion of Greece and Yugoslavia, even if their cruelty was no match for the German level of effectiveness. Indeed, Italians issued the 1938 Regio Decreto for the Purity of the Italian Race, an Italian version of the Nuremberg Laws. Despite the fact that many Italian Jews were integrated into their societies, a sizeable proportion found their way to the camps after a number of scandalous round-ups. Although the proportion of Italian Jews murdered did not reach that of Eastern countries, it did surpass that of some neighbouring

countries, such as occupied France, or other Axis countries, as, for example, Bulgaria. There has been no public apology to the country's Jews, partly because Italians do not see themselves as heirs to Mussolini's regime. Italy also ignored initially one of the earliest and most eloquent accounts of Holocaust survival, Primo Levi's, whose engagement with the guilt and shame of camp life remains seminal, as will be seen in Chap. 5 and in this book's Conclusion.

Strictly speaking, Bertolucci's film would not belong in a genre about collaboration, as Italy was an aggressor in the Second World War. However, as seen in Sect. 2.1 of this book, Italy's memorialization of the conflict effectively distances Italians from this role, extending geographically and chronologically the resistance that took place in northern towns in the last eighteen months of the war. *The Conformist* brings to the fore Italians' contribution to the outbreak of the war, thereby stressing the dimensions of an Italian civil war, as proposed by Claudio Pavone.[9] As the other films studied in this chapter, *The Conformist* embeds the post-1968 take on the Holocaust from the point of view of 'banality of evil', which relies on 'perpetrator societies' and where complicity is not limited to the hierarchy, penetrating all social layers. Bertolucci's production contests the image of innocence prevalent in Italy and this perspective is shared by a film released the same year, Vitorio de Sicca's *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* (*Il giardino dei Finzi-Contini,* 1970), which deals with the deportation of Italian Jews and is based on the eponymous novel written by Giorgio Bassani, first published in 1962.

Bertolucci's *The Conformist* stresses the decadence of early twentieth-century, upper-class Italians, weaving greed and sexual promiscuity in the construction of the atmosphere from which fascism emerged, which he would chart in detail in his ground-breaking *1900* (*Novecento,* 1976). Bertolucci's contribution to cinematic Nazis showcases the self-indulgence of a class whose degeneracy is social, cultural and sexual. His film is part of a tradition that associates Nazism with sexual depravity and cabaret scenes, which have become a staple of Nazi Heritage films, as in Bob Fosse's *Cabaret* (1972). These representations range from the casting of Major Bergmann (Harry Feist) as a camp homosexual in Rosellini's *Rome* to the use of female ambiguous sexuality as tantalizing device, as seen in *The Conformist*, or to the famous tango scene between two childhood friends in Paul Verhoeven*'s Soldier of Orange* (1977). Indeed, some of these films display a form of 'Sexual Fascism', often called Nazisplotation, which associated Nazism with sado-masochism in films

made in the 1970s, many of them in Italy. While some of them do not reach the quasi-pornographic ambiance of Liliana Cavani's *Night Porter* (*Il portiere di notte,* 1974), or Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò or the 120 Days of Sodom* (*Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma,* 1975), all cast Nazi villains as sexual deviants. Later French films, whose titles speak for themselves, subscribed to this trend, mixing overt sexual scenes and even paedophilia, as in Guy Pérol's, *Commando Hot Rabbits* (*Le Commando des chauds lapins,* 1975), James Gartner's, *Special Train for the SS* (*Train spécial pour SS,* 1977), Mark Stern's *Elsa Fraulein SS* (1977) and José Benazérat's appositely called *Brothel SS* (*Bordel SS,* 1978).

The Conformist is based on a novel of the same title written by Alberto Moravia, which was first published in 1951. The main protagonist is an Italian fascist, Marcello Clerici (Jean-Louis Trintignant), who, as the title suggests, 'conforms' to his time and place, 1930s Italy, by offering an extreme example of the total absence of empathy that defines the 'banality of evil'. As the film begins, Clerici is in Paris finalizing preparations to assassinate his former teacher, the anti-fascist Luca Quadri (Enzo Tarascio), who had escaped Italy for the safety of France. Clerici has become a member the Italian fascist organization, OVRA (Organizzazione per la Vigilanza e la Repressione dell'Antifascismo or Organization for Vigilance and Repression of Anti-Fascism), which undertook these crimes at the time. Clerici travels to Paris on his honeymoon with his new wife, Giulia (Stefania Sandrelli), which provides his alibi for the journey. In Paris, they meet Quadri and his wife, Anna (Dominique Sanda), with whom Clerici appears to fall in love. Also attracted to Anna is Clerici's wife, Giulia, though the women's lesbian attraction appears to be directed to the men, especially to Quadri. The film's baroque interiors convey its sexual politics, through a mise-en-scène associated with the fascist era, using 1930s decor that foregrounds the large drawing rooms and halls through red and yellow filters, which accentuate decadence and the self-indulgence of the elites.

For practical and cinematic reasons, Bertolucci starts his film *in medias res,* with Marcello already embarked on this final mission, and provides little explanation for his motivations. Moravia's book, by contrast, deals at length with Marcello's upbringing, constructing a hypothetical reasoning for his lack of empathy, presented as the result of growing up in a dysfunctional, wealthy and loveless family, who is 'disorderly and lacking in affection'. While his young mother pays no attention to her child, his older father beats him up periodically with gusto, to the extent that Marcello believes that his father turns his ring inwards to inflict greater pain:

> Just as his mother's manifestations of affection were sporadic, casual, obviously dictated more by remorse than by maternal love, so his father's severities were unexpected, unjustified, excessive…his father wore on his little finger a ring with a massive setting which, during these scenes, always happened, by some means or other to get turned round towards the palm of his hand, thus adding a more penetrating pain to the humiliating severity of the blow.

In case those circumstances were not explicit enough, Moravia has the caring servants, 'the elderly cook and the youthful maid', whose kitchen is a 'quiet domestic scene' tell each other that: 'If you don't want to look after children, it is better not to bring them into the world'. The scene thus typecasts wealthy people as devoid of feelings, showing solidarity and motherly love as remits of the lower classes with stereotypical Italian mammas at the centre of big families that share food and love generously. This is precisely what the servants do, offering Marcello a piece of 'last night's pudding' kept for him.[10]

Bertolucci's *The Conformist* brings to the fore the largely obliterated fascist past in Italy, which was more sinister than the caricature of bumbling and ineffective Italian soldiers led by an equally ineffective leader that are often seen in film productions. The typecast of the Italian leader and his soldiers as comic instead of brutal characters has had a long legacy, starting with Charles Chaplin's trenchant portrait of Mussolini as Benzoni Napaloni (Jack Oakie), leader of Bacteria, in *The Great Dictator* (1940). Mussolini is also parodied in Roberto Begnini's *Life is Beautiful* (*La vita è bella,* 1997), and the image of largely innocent Italian soldiers appears in, for example, John Madden's *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* (2001) or the Oscar-winning *Mediterraneo,* directed by Gabriele Salvatores in 1992. In Salvatores' film, Italian soldiers stationed on a beautiful and isolated Greek island remain unaware that the war has ended. While on the island, the unassuming soldiers participate in village life, including taking turns to sleep with the local prostitute. Needless to say, the use of a woman's body as a site of homosocial bonding is meant to be funny and helps consecrate the vision of Italy as a country of good, friendly people. In this view, Italians spend a good portion of their days engaged in large family dinners in which smiling women serve generous amounts of food and red wine, as seen in commercials of Italian products. Madden's *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* offers a similar portrayal with Penélope Cruz as the Greek beauty, Pelagia, falling for the Captain in the title role (Nicholas

Cage), whose unruly Italian soldiers spend most of their time with the local prostitutes. Needless to say, the appeal of those images reflects not only Italy's political rehabilitation, but also the extent to which homosocial bonding is considered a form of cultural heritage that is worth celebrating.[11]

Bertolucci's *The Conformist* has no purchase on that myth, as demonstrated in the film's climatic scene, when Clerici and his fascist colleagues follow the car in which his two friends travel. On an isolated stretch, they fake an accident and shoot Quadri. Anna, realizing the danger, runs towards the car in which Clerici sits, exchanging looks with him in a shot-reverse-shot composition that brings home his impassive callousness and 'the banality of evil' that the film foregrounds. Shocked by his attitude, Anna screams before running to the woods, where she is chased and shot dead while Clerici waits in the car. The film then cuts to 1943, after the invasion of Italy when Marshal Badoglio signed the Armistice of Cassibile and abandoned the Axis. With partisans now roaming in town, Clerici loudly accuses his former paramilitary colleagues of being the 'homosexual fascists' who had assassinated Quadri. Clerici again watches impassibly as they are taken away, exchanging glances with the boy that one of them was courting prior to his arrest as the film ends.

The relationship between deviant politics and sexuality that is explicitly exploited by Bertolucci found expression in the aforementioned Italian and French productions of the 1970s Nazisplotation, and is used as a backdrop of Louis Malle's *Lacombe Lucien*, released four years after Bertolucci's film. The protagonist of the eponymous film, Lucien Lacombe (Pierre Blaise), is neither a committed fascist nor a credible opportunist, choosing to join the losing side only months before the war's end. Lucien decides to collaborate with the local fascists after he is rejected from the ranks of the *maquis* by his former teacher, Robert Peyssac (Jean Bousquet). A courier and resistance leader under the name Lieutenant Voltaire, Peyssac discards Lucien's approach, telling him that he is too young, although Peyssac's dismissive attitude suggests that he does not trust Lucien's intellectual abilities or trustworthiness. As a consequence of this encounter and of an untimely puncture, Lucien walks into a hotel in which members of the *Gestapo française*, the *Carlingue*, are enjoying a lavish party with champagne and high-class prostitutes. To ally their suspicions, Lucien makes himself a useful member of the group by revealing Voltaire's true identity.

Within the film's first fifteen minutes, *Lacombe Lucien* has offered an unusual take on French collaboration and the 'banality of evil', exemplified by Lucien's nonchalant attitude when joining the *Carlingue*. This paramilitary force had been founded by an ex-policeman, Pierre Bonny, who had been prosecuted for corruption and embezzlement of funds in 1941, and was disbanded after liberation. Henri Lafont and Pierre Loutrel, nicknamed Pierrot le fou (Peter the Mad), both criminal gangsters, led it. The group, which was active between 1941 and 1944, was also known as *Bande de la Rue Lauriston*, after the name of its headquarters at 93, rue Lauriston, in Paris' 18th arrondissement. The Germans referred to it as Active Group Hesse, after the name of the SS officer who oversaw its creation. The Carlingue recruited some 30,000 men, many of them from North Africa, and their main targets were resistance fighters, especially the rural *maquis*.

Lacombe Lucien bears witness to the growing awareness of collaboration prominent in French cinema from the late 1960s. The transition between representations of French resistentialism to the acknowledgment of the country's complex levels of collaboration had a precedent in Alan Resnais's ground-breaking documentary, *Night and Fog* (*Nuit et brouillard*, 1955). The reluctance to deal with these issues can be seen in the now-famous censorship of a scene in which a French police officer is seen to be supervising an internment camp, whose image was subsequently blurred to make his kepis indistinguishable. As outlined by Henri Rousso, France's 'Gaullist myth' was consciously and subconsciously designed 'to minimize the importance of the Vichy regime', deleting the active support that it commanded amongst the French population. As Rousso puts it, 'The Vichy syndrome consists of a diverse set of symptoms whereby the trauma of the Occupation, and particularly that trauma resulting from internal divisions within France, reveals itself in political, social, and cultural life. Since the end of the war, moreover, that trauma has been perpetuated and at times exacerbated'. Rousso explains how this 'Vichy Syndrome' constructed 'La Resistance' as an object of collective memory, which would help reconcile different groups and minimize the differences between them, particularly between Gaullists and communists. More importantly, this 'resistance' was to be '[identified]…with the nation as a whole'.[12] The different attitudes of the era are neatly summarized in Jacques Audiard's *A Self-Made Hero* (*Un héros très discret* 1996), featuring a young man who 'invents' his past as resistance hero,

Fig. 4.1 Jacques Audiard, *A Self-Made Hero* (1996). Albert Dehousse (Matthew Kassovitz) inserts himself in the picture as veteran of the resistance

literally putting himself in the picture while welcoming prisoners of war (Fig. 4.1).

The confrontation with France's collaborative past was brought to a head in Marcel Ophuls' documentary *The Sorrow and the Pity* (*Le Chagrin et la Pitié*, 1969), which established the tone and dimensions of the debates in the following decades. Although this four-hour documentary was commissioned by French public television, it was not shown on the small screen until 1981 because of the then-controversial representation of Franco-French hostilities. In fact, the furore created by Ophuls' documentary when it was released in cinemas meant that venues had to be guarded by volunteers from attacks by right-wing militants. *The Sorrow and the Pity* effectively inaugurated France's encounter with a murky past that is at the centre of Malle's *Lacombe Lucien*.

Malle acknowledged that *Lacombe Lucien* was made possible by Ophuls' documentary, which laid the ground for challenges to the resistentialist myth. Ophuls, however, disowned any connection with Malle's view, famously declaring 'I hate *Lacombe Lucien*'. For Ophuls, Malle's nonchalant approach to collaboration was untenable, as the emphasis of his documentary was that collaboration had been a conscious choice, partly determined by class, religion and ethnicity. *The Sorrow and the Pity* shows the upper

classes and traditional Christians to have felt threatened by an increasingly militant communism or socialism and, consequently, to have embraced wholeheartedly Vichy's collaboration with Nazi Germany. By contrast, it was mostly Jews, intellectuals and the working classes, as represented by Pierre Mendes, Emmanuel d'Astier de la Vigerie and the brothers Alexis and Louis Grave, who opted consciously to resist actively or passively. Ophuls rejected Malle's suggestion that Lucien's untimely puncture determined his choice, highlighting the fact that people knew what their decisions signified. By contrast, Malle's portrayal of the 'grey area' between resistance and collaboration is seen, at least in part, to depend on circumstances, some of which, as with the case of Lucien, appear to be beyond people's control.

Andrew Sobanet, who has traced the debate between Malle and Ophuls, stresses how Malle refuses to condemn or vindicate Lucien's choices, avoiding issues of moral and individual responsibility: '[Malle] dilutes the importance of Lucien's personal choices and responsibility, discouraging spectators from judging his behaviour and its consequences'. By contrast, Sobanet affirms, we are invited to judge and condemn the tribunal that sentences Lucien to death at the film's end, as the sentence and execution are cursorily presented after he has rescued his Jewish girlfriend, France (Aurore Clément), and her grandmother. It is, moreover, the only time we see Lucien obviously happy, as the information is framed while he is in what appears to be his natural habitat, using his resourcefulness to help the two women survive. This, for Sobanet, shows that the film offers 'a critique of wartime justice'.[13]

Malle considered setting Lucien's story in either the Vietnam War or the Algerian War of Independence from France, which provided him with a good example of the 'banality of evil'. In interviews conducted by Philip French, Malle indicates that he had initially developed the idea in 1962 while in a fort in east Algeria. While there, Malle witnessed a meaningless assault on a village in search for informers, which he thought to be partly undertaken for the benefit of the viewers, namely, Malle, his assistant, Volker Schlöndorff, and a *Paris Match* journalist. For Malle, it was 'absurd' and 'stupid' to see how one hundred soldiers 'entered a small hamlet… woke up the peasants and scared them or beat them to find out about the Algerian guerrillas—it was a horror scene'.[14] More disturbing for him, however, was the 'banal' attitude of the intelligence officer, the *officier of renseignement*: 'he was the one who was torturing. He was perfectly normal, perfectly well-behaved, middle class – he was writing to his fiancée every day…There was something about him that I found enormously

scary; it was the first time I was confronted with the banality of evil'.[15] The protagonist in the title role of *Lucien Lacombe,* however, embodies a wholly different take on Arendt's assessment of Eichmann's punctilious effectiveness, as Golsan remarks,

> [The] collaborators in Malle's film amuse themselves by drinking, baiting each other, and indulging their cruellest and most inhuman whims…Betty Beaukieu, when not complaining…amuses herself by watching captured resistance fighters tortured. All the collaborators are busy absconding with the possessions of others, and all delude themselves with feelings of self-importance.[16]

Malle ultimately decided to use his own memories of the war, supplemented by his research on collaboration, as well as the ethical parameters of the 'banality of evil' in Algeria and elsewhere. This choice was partly determined by the release of Ophuls' film, and Malle treats collaboration not of the elite but of ordinary people, which had not been shown in fiction films until then. *Lacombe Lucien* would be one of the first, if not the very first, to do so, and remains one of the few productions to have tackled the issue from such a challenging perspective. Malle used historical documentation about collaborators in villages, which was illegal to disclose at the time, and, with help from an historian, managed to trace and interview some collaborators. He decided to cast a Jewish cosmopolitan family in hiding alongside Lucien, and met with writer Modiano to elaborate the plot. According to Malle, Modiano, who had already written two novels about the occupation, devised most of the narrative about the Jewish family who find themselves at Lucien's mercy. The family is made up of a wealthy and educated Jewish tailor from Paris, Albert Horn (Holger Lowenadler), his young daughter with whom Lucien will fall in love, significantly named France, and his mother, Bella (Therese Giehse), who comes from an undefined Eastern European ghetto and does not speak French. While working on the script, Malle and Modiano were told of a local youth in Limoges, Hercule, who had worked for the Gestapo as a *Carlingue* and had denounced local resisters, and who provided the inspiration for Lucien.

According to Malle, casting Lucien was one of the most difficult and important tasks of the film, and he documents interviewing 'hundreds of teenagers'. Pierre Blaise met with Malle at the end of one of the casting interviews, having arrived late. The relationship between Malle, and the

film's technicians with Blaise, who died in car accident two years after the film was released, replicated the relationships within the film. Blaise, who refused to be given orders, made the character so much his own that he went on to edit lines which he thought he would not say. Malle was proud of his ability to coach the uncouth Blaise and duly obliged, allowing Blaise to configure his role to the extent that Blaise considered himself an extension of his character: 'Pierre Blaise was so good, he got me into trouble. A lot of people saw the film almost as an apology for a collaborator because Blaise was so moving and disturbing that you could not completely hate him'.[17] This ambiguous response is conveyed in the film by Albert, who voices the audience's response when he tells Lucien that he cannot hate him, although Albert has good reasons to do so. As Pauline Kael succinctly puts it, 'There is nothing admirable in Lucien, yet we find we can't hate him'.[18]

An equivocal attitude towards the character is created effectively by the use of an impersonal camera, which uses a third-person narrative through the presentation of Lucien mostly in mid-close ups. To quote Golsan, 'Malle's camera attempts also to mirror accurately the characters' feelings and emotions, without necessarily commenting on them or attempting to explore them in depth'.[19] Moreover, on the few instances when we get close to him, Lucien's expression tends to be one of puzzlement and lack of empathy, and we are always unsure about what he thinks and what he will do, sensing that he can he can turn violent at any time. Lucien's and the film's ambiguous position towards collaboration are signposted by the film's foregrounding of the watch, standing in for the march of history, for mortality and for the importance of material goods. For Lucien, the watch is, like his new, ridiculous suit, a sign of his new status, whereas for Albert and his family it is a sign of their impending deadline. When Lucien changes the watch from one pocket to the next, he shows that their time is now at the whim of those who, like him, have been empowered by the circumstances with the lives of others.

Although *Lacombe Lucien* does not go so far as to offer an overt apology for collaboration, it was seen by many as providing a bold justification for it. The successful, ambiguous casting of the character in the title role was not simply ground-breaking vis-à-vis France's view of its role in World War II. For Rousso, 'What was problematic about the film was its philosophy…Malle created a murky, ambiguous atmosphere by following the uncertain fortunes of a young French aide to the Gestapo, a character who, of all the types of French collaborationists, is the most difficult to understand and the hardest to excuse because it is unmotivated by ideological misconception'.[20]

Rousso considers Malle one of those filmmakers who 'distinguished themselves by flirting with scandal', and *Lacombe Lucien* the most important film produced during the transitional years of 'The Broken Mirror'. *Lacombe Lucien* stands between the 'repressed memory' of the 1950s and the 'obsession' with the 'dark years' that would outlast the century. This momentous change was triggered by the release of Ophuls' *Le Chagrin et la pitié* in 1969, the translation into French of Robert Paxton's *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order 1940–1944* (*La France de Vichy*) in 1973 and Malle's *Lacombe Lucien* the following year.[21] Historian Marc Ferro, as Rousso notes, was one of the first to remark on the book's and the film's unsettling dimensions, as well as

> the political consequences of this new interpretation of Vichy. It would disturb the left because it demolished the reassuring notion that only the elites had betrayed France in 1940…It would disturb the Gaullists because they were cast as 'heirs of the regime they fought against.' And it would disturb 'all who leaned toward Pétain, who believed, or wanted to believe, and who tried to make others believe that the Marshal was playing a double game'. In the event, however, the book [Modiano's] was defended primarily by the left.[22]

Lucien's attitude towards collaboration is as casual as his antisemitism. He asks Albert whether it is true that Jews are enemies of France and exploits him and his family, but he is also a saviour to France and Bella at the film's end. His conflicting approach is very much a reflection of a widespread outlook in early-twentieth century Europe. While few admitted to be overtly antisemitic, claiming to be friends with Jews or to hold no personal animosity against them, many held long-standing prejudices about Jews in professions, such as bankers, doctors and lawyers. The Christian view of Jewish greed seen in *The Merchant of Venice* or *The Jew of Malta* was never far from the surface, as was the accusation of having murdered Jesus Christ. Indeed, very few actively opposed the round-ups of Jews, while some benefited from their plight and deportation. One striking example of this attitude appears in *The Sorrow and the Pity* and is transformed into a Kafkaesque drama by Joseph Losey in *Mr. Klein* (1976). When interviewed in the 1960s, Mr Klein of Clermont-Ferrand defended an advertisement that he had placed in a right-wing newspaper claiming to have a long Christian lineage. Fearing that his Jewish-sounding name could affect his business, Mr Klein clarified that his family had not only been Christian since time immemorial, but had fought in the First World War. Mr Klein also affirmed

not to have collaborated or harboured antisemitic feelings, which he substantiated with reference to Jewish acquaintances or friends. Ophuls thus managed to link claims of 'old Christianity' with French nationalism and with support for Petain and the Marshal's conservative view of France and Frenchness, which implicitly excluded the country's Jews.

Although the source of Losey's film is unclear, Ophuls', in *The Sorrow and the Pity,* is thought to have inspired either the character or its name. Like Mr Klein in Ophuls' documentary, the main protagonist of Losey's *Mr. Klein* does not collaborate overtly, as Marcello Clerici or Lucien Lacombe do in *The Conformist* and *Lacombe Lucien* respectively. Losey's Klein, however, benefits directly from the plight of French Jews, from whom he buys works of art at low prices. After one of his unscrupulous deals takes place, Klein receives the local Jewish newspaper addressed to him, which he considers initially to be mistaken. Klein's subsequent efforts to 'clear his name' only lead others to believe that he is trying to hide his true identity, and he finds himself increasingly mistrusted and avoided by his former friends. Eventually, Klein finds himself in the position of those he had exploited, while he starts to doubt his true identity. The Kafkaesque plot in which he is involved leads him to become a victim of a round-up of Jews, and the film closes when he is pushed onto a carriage in a train alongside other Jews, including one of his previous customers. When the doors are locked, we see a close-up of Klein's face behind the barred window, with the Jew with whom he had bargained at the beginning of the film behind him, and both are illuminated by a lamplight as the train starts moving. The camera remains static, while the train moves, allowing us to catch sight of people destined to die through each of the windows. The diegetic noise of the train provides the background for a voiceover that rehearses the dialogue in which Klein had offered his client a cut price in gold coins for an artwork from Dutch Golden Age painter Adrian van Ostade. Credits start rolling and the screen then fades to black.

The script of *Mr Klein* was written by Fernando Morandi and a prolific scriptwriter, Franco Solinas, who worked with director Gillo Pontecorvo in the scripts of *Kapò* (1960), as well as the director's masterpiece, *Battle of Algiers* (*La battaglia di Algeri,* 1966). Losey's troubling account of alienation makes viewers feel that they could also be persecuted and offers an analogy for Losey's own trajectory. Born in the USA, Losey had to work in the UK from the 1950s, after the HUAC blacklisted him for his support of left-wing causes in the 1930s and 1940s. Although Losey

joined the Communist Party after the war, in 1946, the CIA's accusation that he was a KGB agent was not demonstrated. In this film, Losey presents local antisemitism in all its forms as collaboration with the Holocaust, contesting the war myths from the attitude shown in the aforementioned films, especially *The Sorrow and the Pity* and *Lacombe Lucien*.

Films such as *Mr Klein*, *The Conformist* and *Lacombe Lucien* tackle the banality of evil in terms of the ethical debate of good and evil that is commonly known as 'deontology' versus 'consequentialism'. Deontologists, among them Immanuel Kant and the twentieth-century philosopher W.D. Ross, hold that the moral worth of an act is intrinsic to the act itself, while consequentialists, including Utilitarian Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, believe that the moral worth of an act lies primarily in its consequences. For deontologists, morality is determined by actions and intentions. As Kant posits, for an act to be good it must accord with his famous Categorical Imperative in which a moral act first requires 'good will'. In other words, for Kant, one should act as one would have everyone else act in the same circumstances, and not as a means to an end. This signifies that the act must be performed out of a sense of duty as opposed to one's own inclinations. By contrast, consequentialists, as the term suggests, assign ethical value of actions to their consequences, regardless of whether they are wilfully intended or not. Thus, those who collaborated in order to save themselves as, for example, *Sonderkommandos,* would be morally beyond the pale for consequentialists. By contrast, Lucien Lacombe would be morally right in his final act, when he acted on his own volition to rescue France and her grandmother. The consequence was that both lives were saved, which would be a good act for consequentialists, regardless of Lucien's motivations.

The films studied in this chapter offer moral assessments of the political situations to which they refer and, perhaps more importantly, in which they were created. Even when based on real people, the protagonists are composites of the experiences of many individuals and provide, above all, an acknowledgement of the morality of the 'grey zones' that developed in occupied Europe. Their attitudes can be compared to Levi's assessment of Erich Mühsfeldt. Tried and hanged in Krakow in 1948, Mühsfeldt first hesitated and then ordered that a girl who had survived the Auschwitz gas chamber be killed, as will be seen in this book's Conclusion. While the moment of hesitation could be read as a remnant of humanity, Levi believes that a 'single, immediately erased instant of pity is certainly not enough to absolve Mühsfeldt. It is enough, however, to place him too,

though at its extreme boundary, within the grey band, that zone of ambiguity which irradiates around regimes based on terror and obsequiousness'.[23] The main characters of the films studied in this chapter inhabit 'that zone of ambiguity', adjusting to it in a self-serving manner, thus failing deontology's and consequentialism's morality tests on all grounds, other than in Lucien's last act.

This chapter has shown how collaboration could be self-serving, willing, opportunistic or circumstantial, but always was a slippery slope, where the fuzzy boundary between passive compliance to active collaboration would be bypassed eventually, sometimes with full acceptance by the collaborators. Collaboration also provided people, such as Lucien, with a new identity and purpose, as well as unlimited power over those below them and sometimes little or no power in relation to their own situation. Despite this fact, the assumption that collaborators shielded their contemporaries helped many collaborators reintegrate into post-war society. Some did this embracing the banality of evil that prevented them from feeling guilty, in accordance with the Nazi scheme that distanced perpetrators from their victims, as will be seen in my next chapter. With limited justice meted out to criminals in the war's immediate aftermath, history, film or literature have become the arenas in which many have been tried. The 1970s cinematic productions that addressed collaboration were, and, to some extent still remain, highly controversial. However, they established landmarks with a before and an after in our efforts to come to terms with this era, leading to the widespread memoirs and testimonies to be analysed in my next chapter.

Notes

1. The analogy of the shield and the sword was presented by Pétain in his trial, where he suggested that de Gaulle was 'the sword' and he was 'the shield'. See Michael Curtis, *Veredict on Vichy: Power and Prejudice in the Vichy France Regime* (New York: Skyhorse, 2013), p. 10.
2. See below, Chap. 6, Righteous Gentiles (1987–2011), with reference to Roselyne Bosch's take on Vel d'Hiv in her film *The Round Up* (*La Rafle,* 2010).
3. Golsan, *Vichy Afterlife: History and Counterhistory in Postwar France* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2000), p. 59.
4. 'Paris, Paris outragé, Paris brisé, Paris martyrisé mais Paris libéré ! Libéré par lui-même, libéré par son peuple avec le concours des armées de la France, avec l'appui et le concours de la France tout entière: c'est-à-dire de la France qui se bat. C'est-à-dire de la seule France, de la vraie France, de

la France éternelle'. De Gaulle's victory speech of 25 August 1944 is reproduced in full in Wikipedia (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liberation_of_Paris#De_Gaulle.27s_speech_.2825_August.29).

5. On the *tondues*, see Alison M. Moore, 'History, Memory and Trauma in Photography of the *Tondues*: Visuality of the Vichy Past through the Silent Image of Women', *Gender & History*, 17.3 (2005), 657–81.
6. John F. Sweets dedicates Chap. 5 of his book to these 'outcasts': 'Communists, Spanish Republicans and Jews'. See *Choices in Vichy France: The French under Nazi Occupation* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 99–105. Spanish republicans who entered Paris with General Leclerc could not use any political references, and named their tanks after Spanish towns (for example, Guadalajara) to make their presence felt. On this topic, see Evelyn Mesquida, *La Nueve: Los españoles que liberaron París* (Barcelona: Zeta, 2010).
7. Rousso, *The Vichy Syndrome: History and Memory in France since 1944,* trans. by Arthur Goldhammer (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1991), pp. 98–131.
8. Modiano, whose father's ancestors were Sephardic Jews from Greece, is a French writer whose oeuvre is mostly dedicated to fictional works about the occupation of France.
9. Pavone, *A Civil War: A History of the Italian Resistance*, trans. by Peter Levy and David Broder (London: Verso, 2013).
10. Moravia, *The Conformist,* trans. by Angus Davidson (London: Granada, 1983), pp. 24–25, 29–30.
11. On homosocial bonding, see Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's seminal *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).
12. Rousso, *Vichy Syndrome,* p. 10.
13. Sobanet, 'Wartime Collaboration and Postwar Judgment in *Lacombe Lucien* and *Le Chagrin et la Pitié*', *Contemporary French Civilisation,* 31.2 (2007), 231–262 (p. 235).
14. *Malle on Malle,* ed. by Philip French (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), p. 90. The information about the filming and casting in these pages is drawn from French's edition of Malle's interviews.
15. *Malle on Malle*, p. 91.
16. Golsan, 'Collaboration, Alienation, and the Crisis of Identity in the Film and Fiction of Patrick Modiano', in *Film and Literature: A Comparative Approach to Adaptation*, ed. by Wendell Aycock and Michael Schoenecke (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 1988), pp. 107–21 (p. 117).
17. Quoted in French, *Malle on Malle*, p. 96.
18. Kael, '*Lacombe, Lucien*', *The New Yorker,* 30 September, 1974, p. 94; reprinted in The Criterion Collection (https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/416-lacombe-lucien).

19. Golsan 'Collaboration, Alienation, and the Crisis of Identity', p. 116.
20. Rousso, *Vichy Syndrome,* p. 235.
21. Paxton, *Vichy France: Old Guard and New Order, 1940–1944* (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1972).
22. Rousso, *Vichy Syndrome,* p. 253.
23. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. by Raymond Rosenthal (London: Abacus, 1989), p. 41.

CHAPTER 5

Holocaust Testimony: Survivors, Ghosts and Revenants (1947–2002)

Surviving a compromising situation, especially as the result of a last-minute attempt or rescue, is a hackneyed cinematic plot that sits at the centre of many adventure, science fiction and Western films. Its use as a ploy to keep audience's interest was first established when David W. Griffith used parallel editing in his xenophobic landmark, *Birth of a Nation* (1915). In Griffith's film, the rescue takes place in the protracted final sequence, when two actions set in different locations converge, as the Ku Klux Clan riders reach the cabin where a young woman and her white family are under siege by black attackers. The intercutting between the horses' frantic gallop through the countryside and the hut where the terrified family are hounded by hostile 'tribes' established a relationship between the two different settings that would inform cinema syntax thereafter. In this type of scene, the excitement of the audience is stimulated by the increased tempo of the action, and both are underscored by the crescendo of the non-diegetic music. Two parallel scenes create the expectation that they would merge at the end, with rescuers arriving just in time to save the good people.

The use of a final rescue as the culmination of two simultaneous scenes has not waned with time. It is even deployed when the genre may not be suitable, as is the case with films that deal with the Jewish genocide, which, as Primo Levi eloquently put it, is not about survival but about death. Holocaust survivors, for Levi, are both a reality and an oxymoron: 'we the survivors are not the true witnesses, those in possession of the unspeakable

M. Camino, *Memories of Resistance and the Holocaust on Film*,
https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-49969-1_5

truth are'.[1] But those who, according to Levi, are 'in possession of the unspeakable truth', disappeared in a short space of time. Their death could be relatively fast, as happened in the *Einsatzgruppen* mass shootings in Eastern Europe, in the gas chambers developed on Polish soil as part of Operation Reinhard or in the gas vans, which were first tried in Chełmno. It could also be protracted, arising from disease, epidemics or beatings in ghettos, or from starvation or exhaustion in work camps, assignments or the final death marches. As all European Jews were earmarked for death, regardless of their background or religious attitude, those who survived to tell their stories are not only the exception to the rule, but were able to do so through a combination of age, luck and even selfishness. However, as Raul Hilberg drily observes, the odds were slim even when the requirements of youth, health and a will to live were fully met, so that survivors 'were lucky *after* they had tried to save themselves'.[2] The chances of survival increased when people had the chance to comply with the Nazi genocide in one way or another, leading to unshakeable feelings of guilt and shame. Thus, in his analysis of 'The Survival Strategies of the Jewish Leadership in the Wierzbnik Ghetto and Starachowice Factory Slave Labor Camps', Christopher Browning concurs with Levi in that survivors in those unusual places were likely to be some of those who were willing and able to bribe the corrupt German guards or factory managers in one way or another.[3]

In cinematic terms, stories about survival invite audiences to feel relief or even happiness when one person or a small group defy the odds. Moreover, narratives of survival create winners and losers, with the implicit assumption that it was possible to survive through strong will, as well as help and a good degree of fortune. Such presentation would very much fit with the hackneyed cinematic ploy of 'conquering your dreams' through desire, dedication and unfailing hope. In spite of these obvious shortcomings, stories of survival have become essential tools in witnessing and memorializing the genocide of European Jewry. The reasons for this frequency range from psychological need to cinematic expectations and to the simple fact of the availability of source material. Equally important, however, is the changing roles of Holocaust witnesses, which this chapter will outline. Changes in witnessing the Holocaust were especially foregrounded in Adolf Eichmann's trial, which provoked an increase in personal testimonies. These testimonies often became a means to facilitate mourning but could also re-traumatize survivors. These processes helped foreground the difficulties that many survivors had when coming to terms with guilt and shame, two feelings articulated by Levi in his first testimony, *If This is a Man*.[4]

Although the main witnesses in Holocaust trials were, initially, Nazi Germans and, especially, Allied military personnel, European Jews gradually accepted and adopted the role of 'speaking for the dead'. The category of Holocaust survivor was thus redefined alongside a personal commitment to represent the victims and to bear witness to the slaughter. As the Holocaust was an 'event without a witness', testimonies were provided by people who 'returned from the dead'. Claude Lanzmann categorizes these vicarious witnesses as 'revenants', a term which encapsulates the contradictions inherent in surviving the Holocaust. Ed Vulliamy sums up Lanzmann's reasoning as follows:

> To find the right word to describe those who survived the Nazi exterminations is the perennial difficulty of anyone trying to write on the subject. 'Victims' is clearly wrong, since it both belittles and confuses them with those who perished; 'survivors' is a passable word, but Lanzmann finds a better one: 'revenants' – the returned, which in French can also mean ghosts.[5]

Films based on testimonies about Holocaust 'revenants' contributed to redefining, widening and, often, blurring the categories of Holocaust survivor, resister and witness. While these narratives have an aura on account of being surrogate 'speakers for the dead', survivors were, by definition, excluded from the genocide. This chapter will study the cinematic rendition of their stories, alongside 'semi-fictional' testimonies about Jewish attempts to survive, exemplified by the on-screen credits at the onset of Frank Beyer's film, *Jacob the liar* 'The story of *Jacob the Liar* is not true. Honest. But maybe it is true after all'. These testimonies effectively occupy the liminal space between death and life, embodied by the *Muselmänner* living in a 'state of exception', as defined by Georgio Agamben. *Muselmänner*, according to Agamben, were recognized in the camps as being 'already dead' and, consequently, outside the rule of law and beyond the moral system, where 'not only is law completely suspended, but fact and law are completely confused'.[6] The first mention of the term was in Levi's *If This is a Man*, where Levi proposed 'the Muselmann [to be] the complete witness'.[7] For Agamben, Levi's paradoxical statement embeds the contradictions of witnessing and giving testimony, as the *Muselmann* is 'the non-human, the one who could never bear witness'. However, 'the one who cannot bear witness is the true witness, the absolute witness'.[8] Agamben, moreover, sees the concentration camp as a realization of 'the

state of exception', a 'permanent spatial arrangement which, as such, remains outside the normal order'.[9] All camp inmates in death camps were consequently reduced to 'bare life', destined to become sooner or later *Muselmänner*, shunned by the rest of inmates as though they were already dead, offering a warning about what everyone in the camp would become sooner or later.

The 'state of exception' created by the Nazis, often referred to in French as 'l'univers concentrationnaire', was one in which 'no observer could remain untainted', as Dori Laub puts it, with antisemitism permeating all frames of reference.[10] Hostility and animosity pervaded everywhere within the camp as Jews were made complicit in the murder of other Jews, robbing people of the last remnants of dignity or humanity, which Levi classes as the 'most demonic' aspect of Nazi ideology.[11] Survivors were left not so much with memories of their past but with an event that had no closure and would infuse every aspect of their subsequent lives.

Early films based on Holocaust testimonies attest to Agamben's formulation, foregrounding the 'bare life' to which camp inmates or ghetto inhabitants were reduced. The legitimacy of the responses of these 'revenants' is never questioned in these films, whereas the deeds undertaken by Jewish resisters or partisans who took up arms are shown to be legitimate but also questionable, as will be seen in Chap. 7, The Jewish Resister (1987–2015). Revenants' attitude is presented as a response to the circumstances in which they find themselves and the films that cast survivors do not interrogate the lawfulness of their responses. This challenge would arise in later films, which followed the end of the Cold War, when Jews started to be cast as underground fighters or as partisans in guerrilla warfare, willing and able to fight and kill, even ruthlessly, as in Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* (2009).

Until the late twentieth-century, the paradigmatic survivor of cinematic productions was either a pacific civilian, as will be seen in this chapter, or one rescued by righteous gentiles, as will be seen in my next chapter. Historically, however, a sizeable proportion of European Jews to have survived the Holocaust fought in the local forests or worked in camps as *Sonderkommandos*. Films that deal with witnessing or pacific resistance have contributed to the definition of Holocaust survivor as a historical taxonomy that evolved substantially well after the events took place. Initially used to refer almost exclusively to camp inmates, it came to embrace European Jews who had not been aware of their survival during

the war, upon realization and internalization of the events that had taken place, as well as the overall design that had led to them. As Hilberg remarks, 'No ironclad definition of the term *Jewish survivor* was fashioned during the post-war period. The concept has no distinct boundaries … Members of communities that were left intact and people who continued to live in their own homes are hardly considered survivors at all. At the other end of the scale, individuals who emerged from the woods or the camps are the survivors par excellence'.[12] The only European Jews excluded from this category would be those living in Great Britain and in neutral or unoccupied areas of the continent, including Sweden or Switzerland, as well as USSR civilians living to the east of Moscow and Stalingrad.

The definition of Jewish survivor is thus dependent on the contingencies of surviving and the idiosyncratic classification of who was and was not Jewish. For this study, the definition of who was and who was not Jewish follows necessarily the Nuremberg Laws, which made Jews a 'race' and thus an inescapable hereditary condition. As all European Jews were targets of the Nazi *Endlösung der Judenfrage* or Final Solution to the Jewish Question, Jewishness was much more than a cultural or a religious grouping, or an ethnicity. In fact, the Nazi taxonomy included many men and women who might not have considered themselves Jewish, as well as secular or converted Jews. Jewishness is here considered as an ethnicity that takes into account Nazi attribution, as well as self-identification. This definition also takes into account the ways in which the Jews who lived in Europe in the twentieth century understood and defined themselves during the various stages of coming to terms with a past that was both individually and collectively traumatic.

In the war's immediate aftermath, some Jews, especially in Eastern Europe, were not cognizant of the Holocaust's reach or its widespread implementation, having limited access to news, as will be seen below in relation to Beyer's *Jacob the Liar*. Subsequently, some of these survivors narrated their life stories, often using the frameworks of collective memory, contributing to the construction of a Holocaust narrative in which survivors and witnesses became coterminous terms. Survivors, revenants and witnesses are thus overlapping categories that are treated here in terms of their contribution to making Holocaust testimony relevant to history, memory and justice. The stories of Holocaust witnesses, moreover, participated actively in the incorporation of personal testimonies into mainstream historical accounts. In fact, recorded testimonies from survivors of massacres or violence provide eloquent examples of the potential

uses of oral history. A paradigmatic written testimony is Rigoberta Menchú's, who narrated to Elizabeth Burgos the plight of indigenous Guatemala's K'iche' Maya in *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia (My Name is Rigoberta Menchú and this is how my Conscience was Born,* 1982). Menchú was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1992, the anniversary of Christopher Columbus' momentous arrival in the Americas.[13] As historical sources, testimonies give us information not so much about the events that took place, even when they also do so. More important, however, is the information about how people perceived their own experience, their own interpretation of it and how they made sense of it afterwards both as individuals and as members of a community. Holocaust testimonies are, therefore, informative and revealing in terms of shifting perceptions, and are underscored by an ongoing commitment to honour and remember the dead and establish a legacy that stands in for the missing people.

Survivors' testimonies are mostly written or delivered as memoirs and, as such, they bridge the spaces between history and autobiography. From the point of view of this book, it is useful to treat them as first-hand sources, in spite of the time lapse between the events and their representation. Precisely because of this lapse, testimonies enable us to infer changes in ideas, attitudes, emotions and feelings, as well as the different stages of coming to terms with a traumatic past. These elements are not easy to deduce from historical sources such as official documents or the putative revelations of war criminals on trial. Some stories of survival have been adapted to the screen and now form a 'sentient history', designed to involve audiences through empathic connection. This history is often rendered accessible through creative material, including literature, cinema, music, poetry and painting. In other words, films about real and (partly) imagined Holocaust witnesses occupy an important position in Holocaust memorialization, primarily as means to introduce the topic or to reach wider audiences. They also, and more importantly, present an alternative way of approaching the past, enabling the transference of witnessing from the source to the destination. As vicarious observers, readers and viewers of Holocaust testimonial accounts corroborate Lanzmann's assertion that the Holocaust can only be represented in its absence, as a 'fiction of the real'.[14]

By and large, the films studied in this chapter are adaptations of life stories, sometimes published as books before reaching the big screen and sometimes written after a film or documentary was produced. These films largely endorse unquestionably the testimonies presented, focusing on

mourning or remembrance as a means to legitimize the present. As I will demonstrate below, any potential inconsistencies between the events and their representation are irrelevant for this type of analysis. These narratives provide information about Holocaust dimensions that are important to those who articulate them. They are not so much about what happened, which should be widely known by now, but how it was perceived and apprehended by those who were closer to the events or involved in them involuntarily. It is in this sense that a story such as Beyer's *Jacob the Liar*, which starts with the proviso that the events described may or may not be true, encapsulates myriad untold stories. Details, in other words, may be or may not be accurate, but the stories possess an essential truth that takes us beyond facts and their immediate meanings.

The films that project Holocaust testimonies established survival or witnessing as a sub-genre of Holocaust films. Early Holocaust films that treated survival as a form resistance were produced in Eastern Bloc countries, where the trend all but disappeared in the last third of the twentieth-century, though it gave way to some Polish productions or co-productions. As Jan Láníček and Stuart Liebman remark,

> Research in Europe and the United States during the last decade has modified some scholars' claims that, after the general scope of the disaster had become widely known during the latter days of World War II, people around the world quickly and decisively moved away from any engagement with the reports of the mass murder of the Jews … Because they were the most ambitious and achieved the widest international distribution, the most important among these films were those produced in Eastern Europe between 1944 and 1949.[15]

One of the earliest of these films, Wanda Jakubowska's *The Last Stage* (*Ostatni eta,* 1947), deals with women interned in Auschwitz, and was released in Poland. In this film, although most of the women are Jewish, their ethnicity is backgrounded. This is a feature that inheres in two films released in the 1960s to be studied in this chapter: *The Shop on Main Street* (*Obchod na korze* 1965), directed by Ján Kadár and Elmer Klos in Czechoslovakia, and Wolfang Luderer's *Living Goods* (*Lebende Ware,* 1966), made under the auspices of DEFA (Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft), a state-controlled East German production company. Two Polish directors would recast this tradition after the demise of communism: Agnieszka Holland in *Europa, Europa* (1990) and Roman

Polanski in *The Pianist* (2002), a Polish-USA co-production that has become the archetypal survivor film. This Polish revival, as will be seen below, is intimately linked to the foregrounding of Polish 'Righteous among the Nations' to be studied in the next chapter, Righteous Gentiles.

Jakubowska's *The Last Stage* rehearses her own life story through the protagonist, Marta Weiss (Barbara Drapinska), and different women that Jakubowska met in Auschwitz, where Jewish, Poles, as well as French, Russian and Dutch women were imprisoned. This semi-autobiographical production, written by Gerda Schneider and Jakubowska, was filmed in the camp itself before it became a memorial site, with scenes in the barracks also shot in the actual scenario and former inmates acting as extras. After the film introduces the realities of camp life in Auschwitz, Marta, a Polish Jew, arrives by cattle car with her family, who are killed on arrival, while Marta's life is spared because of her knowledge of languages. Marta learns the fate of her family when she sees the smoke from the crematoria and enquires about it, and this information about the camp and its activities is complemented with bird's-eye view of the women working that include their surroundings. The women are forced to stand in dire conditions and are routinely punished, beaten and killed, while some of them are required to play music. The women are treated for their constant illnesses in the *revier* by a Russian doctor, Eugenia (Tatjana Gorecka), a prisoner herself who does as much as she can with very limited supplies. When Eugenia refuses to inform on other women, she is tortured and murdered, as is her nurse, Nadja (Mariya Vinogradova), for different reasons. Marta, however, manages to escape and smuggles information about the camp to a resistance broadcaster. When she returns, she is tortured and sentenced to death by hanging but, as the execution is about to take place, another prisoner cuts the rope tying Marta's wrists and hands her a knife, which she uses to free herself on the scaffold before warning her executioners that the Russians are coming. Marta even manages to slash the face of the Nazi commander who had tortured her and, before the guards can retaliate, we hear the noise of planes overhead. While Marta raises her head towards the sky in hope, the Germans scatter, and the Red Army, as *deus ex machina,* liberates the inmates.

Although paying lip service to the country's masters, the USSR, the film is unique in its early representation of women and life in the camps. It is also important in tracing the transition between surviving and resistance and, above all, in providing some of the first images of a camp that has

now become an iconic shorthand for the Holocaust. Jakubowska's film treats the Holocaust as a feature of the general destruction visited on the area by the Nazi invasion, a feature that inheres in most productions from the Eastern Bloc prior to the dissolution of the USSR. These countries, including East Germany (GDR), fashioned their own cinematic traditions to deal with the Second World War, always under Soviet censorship. This meant that, from 1944 onwards, the Holocaust was submerged within the victimization of all citizens by Nazi Germany. Paradoxically, however, this representation was convenient for the assimilation of East Germany and other countries of the Warsaw Pact into the pervasive paradigm of universal victimhood. In the case of East Germans, their own Nazi past was effectively backgrounded by being projected onto capitalist West Germany (GDR), the direct heir to the previous nation. To a lesser extent, this also applied to Czechoslovakia, then reunited into one country as it had been after World War I, when it was created from the amalgamation of Slovakia with Bohemia and Moravia. Prior to this 'reunion', the so-called Slovak State, which had joined the Axis, was a nominally independent country, whereas the Czech Republic became the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and was administered directly through the appointment of a Reichsprotektor who reported directly to Berlin. This position was initially held by Konstantin von Neurath, and was subsequently taken up by one of the most prominent Austrian Nazis, Reinhard Heydrich, after whom the operation leading to the construction of death camps was named following his assassination in Prague in May 1942. The occupation of the Protectorate was relatively mild by comparison with Eastern Europe, as Czechs occupied a privileged position in the Nazi racial hierarchy and the Protectorate was considered part of the Reich.

As seen in Chap. 3, The Partisan, strict censorship does not invariably result in unequivocal endorsements of the status quo, a claim that applies as much to cinema as to literature and art in general. Even films that appear to be compliant with the dominant codes present subtle or covert messages that do not toe the official party line, following the well-worn literary tradition of using allegories and oblique references that could escape the censors' eye, but which trained audiences would seek and read. This is certainly noticeable in countries such as Czechoslovakia, which boosted a sophisticated cinematic tradition and produced two of the most unusual Holocaust films, Alfréd Radok's surreal *Daleká cesta* (1948), rendered into English as either *The Long Journey* or *Distant Journey*, and Kadár and Klos's *The Shop on Main Street*, released in 1965.[16]

Radok's *The Long Journey* charts the difficulties of a mixed marriage between a Jewish woman and a man, both doctors, a plot that had been rehearsed one year earlier by the East German director Kurt Maetzig in *Marriage in the Shadows* (*Ehe im Schatten,* 1947), where stage actors form the couple. Maetzig's *Marriage in the Shadows* follows the couple's ordeals from 1933, when the Nazis rose to power, and is based on the tragic life of the famous German actor Joachim Gottschalk and his wife Meta, who jointly committed suicide and killed their nine-year-old son, Michael, in 1941. In the film, Elisabeth Maurer (Ilse Steppat) and Hans Wieland (Paul Klinger) are both successful actors working in Berlin. In spite of witnessing the rise of antisemitism, Elisabeth decides to stay in Germany even after she is prevented from pursuing her career. Following Kristallnacht, Hans convinces Elisabeth to marry him for her protection, to which she agrees. Hans then refuses Joseph Goebbels' orders to divorce his Jewish wife, but is warned by a friend that Elisabeth will be taken to the Theresienstadt camp. When the Gestapo arrives to execute their orders, they only find their corpses. *Marriage in the Shadows* is unlike others from the Eastern Bloc in that it presents unambiguously Jews as the main victims of National Socialist persecution. The film was very successful in East Germany, where it sold over twelve million tickets, making it the second highest-grossing production of the year in which it was released, 1947.[17]

Marriage in the Shadows avoided censorship in East Germany, which was not the case with Radok's *Distant Journey* in Czechoslovakia. Radok started to make *Distant Journey* soon after war's end and, like Jakubowska, was able to shoot some scenes in the camp itself, in this case, Terezín, the site in which the Therensienstadt camp was located and where Radok's own father and grandfather had died. Although 35,000 Jews did not survive Terezín, the camp was used to highlight to the Red Cross how 'the Führer gives the Jews a city', and conditions there were, by and large, better than in most camps. The camp is also famous for having hosted some famous Jewish composers such as Pavel Haas, who died in the camp, or Gideon Klein, who was taken to Auschwitz and then to Fürstengrube, where he died. Radok himself suffered directly because of his being part Jewish in accordance with the Nuremberg Laws, and was deported to a camp near Wrocław, from which he managed to escape. The end of the war did not mean an end of his plight, as he was subjected to the Stalinist repression of Czechs and Jews, until he fled into exile in Sweden.

Radok's film weaves fact and fiction into a complex narrative that charts the rise of antisemitism in Prague from the late 1930s. Unlike the doomed couple of *Marriage in the Shadows*, the main protagonists of

Distant Journey, Hana Kaufmannová (Blanka Waleská), and her Aryan husband, Antonín Bureš, known as Toník (Otomar Krejca), survive the Holocaust, though not all members of their family do. In the film, the women in the camp, and Hana among them, are forced to clean the streets before foreign visits arrive, and are routinely hungry. A scene that is rehearsed in other films, including *The Pianist*, shows the inmates throwing themselves on the remains of a plate of food thrown to the ground. Conditions deteriorate to the point that the Jews are not only hungry but despair as a result of being constantly humiliated, exhausted from working long hours, and witnessing young children shipped to be gassed. They are eventually liberated, which they celebrate loudly in scenes that must have looked unreal even at the time. This joy contrasts with the photographs and footage of liberated camps that had been already widely disseminated, which showcase the despondence and total lack of energy on the part of survivors. Hana and her husband are reunited, though their family is decimated in a film that is about survival as much as about death and suffering.

Although the film avoids criticizing Soviet domination, the censors had placed the complete Czechoslovak film industry under scrutiny, and Radok's production was banned. It was only shown more than forty years later on Czech television, in 1991, following the Velvet Revolution, when it was warmly received and has been widely praised ever since. In spite of the fact that it was not seen by its contemporaries, and cannot have contributed to the traditions traced in this chapter, the film's production relies on existing cyphers that are relevant to my analysis. For a start, it demonstrates that widespread awareness of the Jewish plight did not arise in the 1970s. Although not often considered in surveys on Holocaust films, these are the earliest examples of the type of testimonies about individual and collective life stories that would flourish in the following decades.

Distant Journey is unusual in using an elliptic narrative that is presented through the viewpoint of the Jewish doctor, Hana, who shares the film's focus with her husband, Toník. Initially, antisemitism appears in the form of casual prejudice against their marriage, with Toník's father deliberately missing their wedding in sign of protest. As with mixed couples elsewhere in the Reich, Toník and Hana are subjected to their neighbours' gossip and condemnatory stares, and this is followed by the removal of Hana from her practice and the prohibition for her to attend theatre or any public meetings. In the well-known sequence of events, deportation orders soon ensue, with a harrowing scene when the Jews are taken away to camps, in this case, Theresienstadt.

Radok's film uses German expressionism, with unusual camera angles and a wide array of symbolism, such as the clock with the hands stopped or a rucksack with a prisoner's number, standing in for the departed. Some of the action, including the most gruesome details, take place off-screen, and are heard and imagined but not seen. The now-widely seen footage of Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (*Triumph des Willens*, 1935), prefiguring widespread Nazi indoctrination, also appears ominously. Curiously, Radok leaves a frozen frame of this footage on screen while the action progresses, thus juxtaposing past and the present and highlighting the fact that his film is a representation. Documentary footage, as Lanzmann argues, can distance viewers from what they see, and harrowing scenes of death and murder can be uncomfortable to watch and alienate audiences. However, as Nathanael Hood observes, 'despite its flaws, *Distant Journey* is a devastating film of great historical import. It was one of the first films to ever acknowledge and address the horrors of the Holocaust. It brought one of the worst tragedies in human history to life. In doing so, it bares careful watch over our future, making sure that such horror will never be repeated'.[18]

East Germany is also the location of a Bulgarian-GDR co-production featuring one of the first instances of a 'Good German', Konrad Wolf's *Stars* (*Sterne*, 1959). As the main protagonist is the German and not the Jews, the film is only marginal to this chapter's study. However, the references to partisans, who are eventually joined by this Good German, Walter (Jürgen Frohriep), and the cinematic reference to Greek Jews, offer an unusual angle on the topic that is roughly contemporary with and complements the Eastern productions treated here. The Good German in this film is an artist and corporal in the Wehrmacht whose real name is not revealed but who is known by his colleagues as Walter. His life is tranquil and idyllic, removed from the front-line in a quiet Bulgarian village, allowing him to focus on his art. This peace is broken when a transit camp for Greek Jews on their way to Auschwitz is set up in the village. Most Greek Jews who were killed in Auschwitz were from Salonika and distant towns as far as Ianina or the island of Corfu, which meant that they endured the longest and most gruelling journeys, lasting up to three weeks. In this case, the Jews stop in Walter's transit camp, and he falls in love with one of the women in the transport, Ruth (Sasha Krusharska).

Walter's humanity, the focus of this film, is contrasted with the brutality of Kurt (Erik S. Klein) and the other Nazis, which is brought into sharper focus by the quiet dignity of the deported, shown when they sit silently, while

non-diegetic Jewish songs are heard. To rescue Ruth, Walter enlists the help of local partisans, Petko (Stefan Pejchev) and Blashe (Georgi Naumov), but they are unable to prevent the deportations. Unlike the parallel scenes of rescue mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the film frustrates our expectations and, when the rescuers arrive, the train has just left. Walter runs behind until he sees the yellow star to which the title alludes that has been torn off Ruth's clothes and is lying in a puddle, illuminated by the night sky. The star also reminds Walter that in one of their walks together, Ruth said that: 'Every human being has got a protective star in the sky, but once you rip it off from its place, humans can do nothing but die'. Changed by these experiences, Walter follows Ruth's command not to obey immoral orders and joins the local partisans to fight against the regime for which he had worked unquestioningly until then. The film closes with a shot of Ruth staring out to the sky from the barred window of her carriage.

Wolf's film is unusual in the way that it addresses German guilt soon after the war, admitting the horror of what Germans had done to Jews and, by implication, to their humanity. This position is important because the mainstream memorialization of the war in East Germany was that the country, made up of socialists and communists, had been the victim of a capitalist war, which it had won. *Sterne* won the Special Jury Prize at the 1959 Cannes Film Festival, which also acknowledged one of the most renowned Holocaust films of the time, Kadár and Klos's *The Shop on Main Street,* six years later.

The Shop on Main Street was produced in Czechoslovakia in 1965, winning a special mention at the Cannes Film Festival the same year and the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film in 1966. Using neorealist techniques, including 'ordinary' actors for its main characters, Kadár and Klos offer a remarkably human portrait of events unfolding in an unnamed, small village. The main protagonist is a modest carpenter, Anton Brtko, known as Tóno (Jozef Kroner), whose reward as part of the Aryanization of the town, which reassigned Jewish property to those classed as Aryan, is a haberdashery. An old Jewish woman, Rozália Lautmannová (Ida Kamińska), who is deaf and absentminded, runs the shop. When Tóno tries to explain to her what he is doing there, she does not quite understand him. A local man, Imrich Kuchár (Martin Hollý, Sr.), who opposes Aryanization, tells Tóno that the business is not profitable and that Rozália relies on local charity, from which he might also benefit if he agrees to let her stay there. The Jewish community thus gives Tóno a weekly payment,

which he accepts, telling Rozália that he is her nephew who has come to help in the store. Once Tóno establishes himself in the shop, they grow fond of each other but their tranquillity ends when deportations start. Tóno tries to hide Rozália when he sees the police walking towards the house, but she panics and Tóno accidentally kills her. Unable to live with his guilt, Tóno commits suicide, completing a narrative that can be seen as an allegory for the country's acceptance of collaboration and 'peaceful' opposition to the murder of its Jews. Tóno, as an embodiment of an 'ordinary' Czech, does not wish to inflict harm on 'his' Jew, who is here represented as innocent, weak and victimized by others. The film successfully creates a bond between Tóno and the audience, who witness the tragic destiny of Czechs and Jews, although Tóno is able to choose his own death.

The same year that *The Shop on Main Street* was released, an Eastern German film, Wolfgang Luderer's *Living Goods* (*Lebende Ware*, 1966), also dealt with a similar topic, though from a wholly different angle. Set in Budapest after the invasion of the Wehrmacht that followed the capitulation of Hungary to the Allies, *Living Goods* dramatizes the career of SS-leader Kurt Andreas Becher (1909–1995), played by Horst Schulze. An Obersturmbannführer, Becher was Commissar of concentration camps and Chief of the Economic Department of the SS Command in Hungary's capital, after it was occupied by Germany in 1944. Becher was ordered by Himmler to extract as much profit as possible from Hungary in order to provide funds for the war effort, and he promised to save lives of Jews for a very high ransom. Hungarian Jews thus become the 'living goods' of the film's title, and the few who survived in this way paid dearly for it. The film, like the historical character on which it is based, is not so much about a 'rescue' but about the exploitation of the predicament of Jews, reminiscent of the early career of Oskar Schindler. The film's focus, however, is not so much on the 'rescuer' as on his 'goods'.

The action in *Living Goods* takes place in March 1944, soon after Hungary abandoned the Axis. Adolf Eichmann (Hannjo Hasse) is putting the Final Solution into effect, whereas Kurt Becher, as Himmler's special representative, is given the task to requisition Jewish property to buy equipment and horses to support the flailing war effort. Becher offers Dr Ferenc Chorin (Siegfried Weiss), a wealthy Jewish businessman, and one of the directors of the Manfred Weiss Group, the chance to avoid deportation for him and his family. In reality, and according to Yehuda Bauer, the convoluted negotiations involved the directors of the company. Some of them were Christian converts but, under the Nazi criteria

established in the Nuremberg Laws of 1934, they were Jews, and thus marked for annihilation. Chorin would transfer the majority shareholding of his company to Becher in a deal to last twenty-five years. In exchange, Becher offered him and his co-owners the chance to exchange 'cash against life', with a transfer to a neutral country.[19] As with the 'choices' that European Jews were often given, the options here would be limited, in this case paying dearly to be alive or be deported to die in the gas chambers.

As presented in the film, after this operation is successful, Becher negotiates other 'rescues', working in association with Rudolph Israel Kasztner (Wolfgang Greese), leader of the Jewish Council and the Aid and Rescue Committee (Va'adat Ezrah Vehatzalah, or Vaada). Kasztner, who claimed to have rescued 20,000 to 30,000 Jews, was eventually charged with profiting from the murder of Hungarian Jews and executed in Israel in 1957. By contrast, Becher was not even indicted and would go on to provide evidence in Eichmann's trial in 1961, when he was one of the richest men in the Federal Republic of Germany, partly from the money that he had sent to Switzerland during the war. Ironically, then, the film highlights the flaws inherent in the selective administration of justice meted out to those who collaborated in or otherwise benefited from the Final Solution. Rescue, in this case, is qualified, although the line between what Lester D. Friedman calls 'compassionate capitalism' and humanitarian rescue is central to Becher's and Schindler's stories, as will be seen in Chap. 6.[20]

East Germany would go on to produce one of the most remarkable films to have come out of the former country, Beyer's *Jacob the Liar*, whose creation and production were contemporary with Luderer's film, but which would take nearly a decade to be released. Beyer's film offers an unusual representation of the Holocaust, especially considering that it was produced under the auspices of DEFA, the aforementioned East German production company. Beyer had already released an earlier film dealing with the Holocaust, *Naked among Wolves* (*Nackt unter Wölfen,* 1963), about the rescue of a four-year-old Polish Jew towards the end of the war. The boy is smuggled in a suitcase into Buchenwald by a group of prisoners transferred from Auschwitz, while the Red Army is quickly advancing into Germany from the east. Children were forbidden in camps, and whoever would be hiding them would be shot on sight, so that Hofel (Armin Muller-Stahl) asks the camp leader, Walter Kraemer (Erwin Geschonneck), to hide the boy. Everyone is moved by the boy's predicament and his survival becomes a means for them to overcome their apathy and avoid changing into

Muselmänner. As a symbol of the future, the boy's survival gives the inmates a sense of purpose, increasing their desire to live and to preserve a remnant of dignity and humanity so that even the Kapos help hide him. Although the boy is eventually discovered, the film ends when the Germans leave on the impending arrival of the Red Army as *deux ex machina*. A remake released in Germany in 2015, directed by Philipp Kadelbach, finishes with the camera tilting towards a blue sky, a common device to signal a brighter future for the survivors, either on this earth or beyond it.

After *Naked among Wolves*, Beyer adapted *Jacob the Liar*, which was, like the previous film, written by Bruno Apitz, a member of the German Communist Party who had been imprisoned in Buchenwald from 1937 until the camp's liberation in 1945. It was also produced by the state-controlled DEFA, which ensured that its executives and filmmakers adhered to the party line, with real and imagined challenges to the rules severely punished.[21] However, as Elizabeth Ward argues, 'we must be cautious in overstating the relationship between State and Studio', and should not overestimate the reach of censorship because 'the realities of filmmaking in East Germany reveal a far more complex matrix of intertwining local concerns and short term needs than expressed in the official ideological rhetoric of the State'.[22] Widespread political censorship means that films and literature were often the only sources that questioned the country's official narrative. Films such as Beyer's thus offer a unique window from which to explore the Holocaust and its memorialization in East Germany, an exceptional location for the convergence of its Nazi past and contemporary Cold War politics of the 1960s and 1970s.

Jacob the Liar offers a belated example of the opening up resulting from Khrushchev's Thaw, which embraced Soviet-dominated countries in the Eastern Bloc, as seen in Chaps. 2 and 3 of this book. Beyer's was the only East German film to be nominated for an Oscar, which is not the only reason to mark its relevance to its time and place. The film is based on the novel of the same title written by the East German Jewish author Jurek Becker, published in 1969 with two alternative endings. Unusually, Becker's novel was originally planned as a script for the film and was only issued in print when the film failed to pass the necessary hurdles for its production. Becker worked with director Beyer on this film, which was eventually ten years in the making. However, Beyer was blacklisted alongside other East German directors while preparing the shooting, although *Jacob the Liar* had not been censored. In addition to Beyer's problems, the film's production company, DEFA, was faced with financial difficulties

and interrupted many projects in which they had already invested funds. Eventually, *Jacob the Liar* was co-produced by a West Germany company, DFF (Deutsche Film Fernsehen), having failed to enlist support from Poland. According to the director, Poland's refusal to co-operate obeyed to the country's conflicting memorialization of Jewish-Polish relations and its own antisemitic past.[23] Following the book's publication, Jacob's story became an immediate bestseller, and Becker was awarded the Heinrich-Mann Prize and the Charles Veillon Prize in 1971, prior to the film's release.

Becker's book is based on his own memory of the war and the Holocaust, which he supplemented through research. Although there is no record of his birth, it is assumed that he was born in 1937 in Łódź, which was known by the Nazis as Litzmannstadt. He spent two years as a boy in the town's famous ghetto, which was made into a labour camp by the leader of its *Judenrat,* Mordechai Rumkowski, also known as King Chaim, and classed by Hannah Arendt as 'the Führer of Łódź'.[24] To this day, Rumkowski remains a controversial figure for the degree to which he complied with the Germans' orders. His was a paradoxical role also undertaken by other Jewish leaders who Arendt censors and Levi places in the 'grey zone'.[25] Rumkowski's attitude was informed by his desire to make the ghetto profitable so as to facility the survival of some inmates. However, he is mostly remembered for his famous plea to people in the ghetto to give up their children in order to strengthen their chances of survival. On September 4, 1942, Rumkowski delivered his 'Address at the Time of the Deportation of the Children from Łódź Ghetto'.[26] In many ways, Rumkowski's life and deeds embed the complexities of collaboration for Jews everywhere and for ordinary civilians in Eastern Europe. The Nazis created an environment which not only limited the actual choices people had, but was also devised to make people complicit in the repression or murder of their own families, friends or neighbours. It is worth remembering that Rumkowski was killed in Auschwitz with his family in August 1944. While he may have lasted longer than others from Łódź's ghetto, for the Nazis, he was no different from them. Thus, as Levi notes, regardless of whether we condemn his choices, we have no right to judge Chaim Rumkowski, as he was an unwilling inhabitant of the 'grey zone' or, in Agamben's formulation, the 'state of exception'. Rumkowski's motivations, in other words, are irrelevant to his occupancy of the grey zone:

> That a Rumkowski should have emerged from Lodz's affliction is painful and distressing … no tribunal would have absolved him, nor certainly can we absolve him on the moral plane. But there are extenuating circumstances: an infernal order such as National Socialism was, exercises a frightful power of corruption, against which it is difficult to guard oneself. It degrades its victims and makes them similar to itself, because it needs both great and small complicities. To resist it a truly solid moral armature is needed, and the one available to Chaim Rumkowski, the Lodz merchant, together with his entire generation, was fragile.[27]

While living in Łódź Ghetto, Becker met and befriended Jakob Heym, on whom he based the film. Jakob survived his deportation to Ravensbrück and, subsequently, to Sachsenhausen, although most of his family was murdered. Jakob was reunited with the only survivor of his family, his father, after the war, and both moved to East Berlin.

The title of the book and the film, *Jacob the Liar*, refers to the dilemma about what is or is not a lie. Also, whether ethical considerations are irrelevant in situations such as those created by the Nazis at this time. The book's narrative is written as a first-person account of a man born in 1921 who has survived the initial German onslaught and now owns a pancake shop in a ghetto somewhere in Eastern Europe. This ghetto is generic in the film, although this is partly because Beyer asked the Polish authorities to shoot in the location of previous ghettos, and was refused permission to film in the country. Because of this limitation, the director chose to deploy a quasi-theatrical setting, with stage props designed to suggest any of the locations reached by many European Jews who were shifted from there to their deaths. The 1999 remake of the film, directed by Peter Kassovitz, follows Beyer's choice of using an unnamed ghetto. Although Kassovitz retains the original spelling of the name, Jakob, he backgrounds the protagonist's Jewishness, prominently through the casting Robin Williams in the attire of an early twentieth-century working-class European in the title role.

Unlike many films which claim to be historical or based on true events, *Jacob the Liar*'s opening intertitles remind the audience that the veracity of the events depicted may not be reliable: 'The story of *Jacob the Liar* is not true. Honest. But maybe it is true after all'. The film introduces thus its thematic concern about the ethics of truth and falsehood from the very beginning. The story starts when Jacob (Vlastimil Brodský) is sent to the German Officer Headquarters for allegedly breaking the nighttime curfew.

Whilst waiting in the office, Jacob hears a BBC radio broadcast which announces that the Soviets are only twenty kilometres from a neighbouring town, Bezanika.[28] The officer in charge concedes that Jacob has committed no offence and Jacob is allowed to leave. As his neighbours do not believe that Jacob would be allowed to leave the Headquarters alive, Jacob is inundated with requests for information. His repeated denials only reinforce their assumption that Jacob does know more than what he admits. Eventually, Jacob colludes and tells them that he heard the news about the advancing Red Army on his secret radio. When Jacob notices that this news gives people hope, he starts inventing more good news. The news discourages one of his friends, Mischa (Henry Hübchen), from stealing potatoes and risking his life, and another, Kowalski (Erwin Geschonneck), from despairing and committing suicide. Jacob's inventive does not end there and, when he adopts an eight-year-old orphan, Lina (Manuela Simon), he consoles her with the story of a princess who became ill because nobody could provide her with a cloud. Jacob tells Lina that the princess was cured when a gardener brought her a cloud made out of cotton wool because she thought that clouds were made of cotton. Throughout these scenes, Beyer questions the boundaries between the real and its representation.

Jacob eventually reveals the truth to his best friend, Kowalski, who, in despair, hangs himself. This event is immediately followed by the announcement that the ghetto is to be liquidated and its inhabitants will be deported. Up until this point, the film adheres to the book's narrative, but, given the medium's conventions, it has to choose between one of the two endings in the book. In the first ending, Jacob is killed while attempting to escape from the ghetto, which is not Beyer's choice but was adopted by Kassowitz in his remake. In Kassowitz's version, Jakob Heym dies a martyr at the hands of the Nazis and, immediately after his death, the Red Army arrives and liberates the ghetto. Kassowitz thus manages to convey both hope and hopelessness at the end, allowing the readers a vicarious sense of relief and vindicating posthumously Jakob's lies. By contrast, Beyer's film ends in the train, when Lina asks Jacob whether it is true that clouds are made out of cotton wool. The expression on her face, and her untimely realization of a lost dream, close the film, as Lina looks out and we get a view of the autumn sky that she is contemplating. Our knowledge of her destination gives the film the epilogue that seals the devastating feeling that the audience will take with them when they leave the cinema.

From its release, Beyer's film has provided an unusual example of East German cinema and of the country's memorialization of the Holocaust. Indeed, the film is rare for its time in that it does not pay homage to communist resistance, focusing instead on Jewish victims and hope, foregrounding individual experiences. As Becker explained, 'I have no emotional access to a mountain of corpses. Crimes committed against peoples have to be broken down into crimes against individuals in art. People living now need to feel that this injustice was perpetrated not only on the crazy number of six million but on groups of two, on families and on the solitary individual'.[29] This position concurs with the contemporaneous drive to foreground testimonies during the Eichmann's trial. As Gideon Hausner, the leader of the three judges presiding over the trial remarked, Eichmann's trial was to redress the failings at Nuremberg, in which 'a few witnesses and films of concentration camps horrors, interspersed with files of documents … although efficient and simple … failed to reach the hearts of men'.[30]

Beyer's film was produced at a time of increasing interest in the Holocaust and of the vindication of personal testimonies, following Eichmann's trial in 1961. It is a time in which Holocaust films started to be seen by mainstream audiences in different countries, and is roughly contemporary with the widening and redefinition of the category of Holocaust survivor traced in his chapter.[31] This 'Holocaust wave', Ward remarks, consecrated the iconography that has become part of Holocaust memory:

> While the sudden increase in films dealing with Jewish persecution certainly brought much-needed visibility to an under-discussed event in film, the sheer number of productions also led to the formation of Holocaust iconography with showers, barbed wire fences and Stars of David becoming imbued with a semiotic significance. Consequently, by the 1970s critics and audiences had become ever warier of the use of such staple images.[32]

Jacob the Liar shows the role of film as a source for historical analysis, especially, but not only, when the official narratives are controlled by the state and are subject to political censorship. The film offers a clear illustration of how the Nazi persecution of Jews was seen in East Germany at a time when the country had a rather unusual position towards its own past, perceiving itself as part of the Soviet bloc and thus, by implication, as supporting the Allies. In this way, and in spite of censorship, the film offers a nuanced narrative of the political and cultural environment in which it

was created. While Beyer does present Jewish characters as the sole victim group, he was not the first East German director to place Jewish victimhood as the central narrative focus of a film, as seen above.

The films looked at in this chapter illustrate how individual testimonies of the Holocaust are essential in the creation of a collective memory of an event for which there is no better witness than the *Muselmann*. While this collective memory relies on individual stories, it constructs a framework which enables these narratives to make sense of the past in the present both as a means to come to terms with trauma and to work through it. As testimonies, the stories are narrated from the protagonist's point of view, often as first-person narratives on paper and alternating between first and third-person narrative on film. The presence of an omniscient narrator is normally, if at all, limited to establishing context, while our perspective remains firmly tied to the narrator's experience. This means that the events close to him or her are often magnified, to the detriment of the politics that inform them. We tend to see cruel SS officers, kapos and collaborators more often than the Nazi bureaucrats giving orders behind the scene. In addition, we encounter Polish antisemites more often than Ukrainians, who frequently staffed the camps, or even Germans.

Accusations of Polish antisemitism and Polish counter-arguments informed the country's refusal to participate in the production of Beyer's film. It has also spurred some Polish directors to challenge those claims by presenting alternative views, sometimes nuanced but, more often than not, partly hagiographic, as will be seen in Chap. 6, Righteous Gentiles. They have done this mostly in films that cast Polish rescuers, though the two films related to Holocaust witnessing that close this chapter make the argument from a wholly different perspective.

After the fall of the Soviet Union, some countries of the former Eastern Bloc rewrote the past, deleting the official narrative of communist resistance to Nazi Germany and re-nationalizing the events. Poland, with a sophisticated cinematic industry and a fervent desire to separate its tradition from the communist-dominated era, vindicated the Home Army's role, while questioning its antisemitism and local contribution to the persecution of Polish Jews. Largely, directors found inspiration in stories of Righteous Poles, as will be seen in Chap. 6, although some unusual perspectives of revenants have been produced in the country. Released during the dismantling of the Soviet Bloc, Agnieszka Holland's *Europa, Europa* (*Hitlerjunge Salomon,* 1990), showcases the difficulties of segregating rescue from resistance in a unique story of survival. Holland's film was co-produced

by Germany, France and Poland, though the dialogue is mostly in German. Its release was not uniformly welcomed, with German critics voicing their discomfort with the film's ambiguity, as well as the picaresque of the film's protagonist. Małgorzata Pakier links the film's lukewarm reception in Germany with the country's historical situation and the impending challenges of the reunification of East and West Germany after the fall of the Berlin Wall the previous year.[33] Holland, however, blamed the film's criticism on the country's failure to deal with its past, arguing that: 'I have many German friends, but I was really shocked at how the minds of the people changed after unification. The arrogance and xenophobia which was hidden is now official. They felt guilty many years after the war, but it was official guilt. This time is over. This generation hates all those people who put them through the official guilt'.[34]

Holland's film is based on the autobiography of Solomon, or Shlomo, Perel, *Korim li Shelomoh Perel!* (*I Was Hitler Youth Salomon*), written in Hebrew. The book was first published in French in 1990 with the title *Europa, Europa*, and subsequently in Hebrew (1991), in Polish (1992), in German (1993), and in English (1997).[35] Solomon or, as he is known in the film, 'Solly' (Marco Hofschneider), becomes an unlikely member of Hitler's Youth, but not before he joins the Komsomol during the Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland. Born in Łódź and separated from his family, Solly's adventures are marked by his need to disguise his penis. Circumcision, as Ruth Johnson argues, is Solly's 'visible stigma', and was the main marker of Judaism for the Nazis.[36] Ironically, Solly is asked to take the stand in a lesson in phrenology imparted to the Nazi Youth, with the measures of his brain designed to show his schoolmates the immanent differences between Aryan and Jewish skulls. While this creates a good degree of suspense in the film, it ridicules the Nazi racial ideas, creating comic relief and inviting laughter. In this scene, Solly is offered as an exemplar Aryan with part-Baltic heritage, which accounts for his dark features and his departure from the ideal, Nordic or Germanic, specimen. His skull, however, measures up to the desired Aryan features, which relieves Solly's (and the audience's) anxiety. This parodic stance is neither without sharp critics nor outright defenders, as has happened with other films that have challenged the Nazi ideology with humour, starting with Charles Chaplin's *The Great Dictator* (1940) and Ernest Lubitz's *To Be or Not to Be* (1943), and culminating in the debates surrounding Roberto Benigni's Oscar-winning *Life is Beautiful*

(*La vita è bella,* 1997). The film, according to Janet Lungstrum 'offers an alternative strategy or imaginative logic for sustaining the memory of the Shoah'.[37]

The historical events surrounding Perel's life allows Holland's film to chart the co-production economies of the film onto the screen. In other words, the film offers a wide spectrum of good, bad and ambiguous characters, whose attitudes are not, or not only, determined by national or ethnic heritage. It has Germans who do not overtly support Nazism, as seen by Solly's gay friend and Nazi soldier, Robert Kellerman (André Wilms), or subtly oppose it, such as Leni's mother (Halina Łabonarska). While this avoids demonizing the Germans, it also plays on the hackneyed *topos* of the shared victimization of Germans, Poles and Jews. Indeed, Solly's adaptability is complemented by having the film pay special attention to the ways in which Nazi ideas permeated all levels of society, targeting the young, such as Leni (Julie Delpy). While she becomes the object of Solly's attention, Leni imbibes Nazi ideology and wishes Solly to impregnate her in order to provide more Aryan children for the Führer. Although Solly is torn between his love and his fear to reveal his Judaism, Leni's mother offers him a point of support. However, *Europa, Europa* also shows the dangers inherent in pretending to support Nazi ideology when Solly joins his tearful colleagues on hearing about the German defeat in Stalingrad. *Europa, Europa,* moreover, shies away from attributing guilt, linking Poland at the turn of the century with the exculpatory trend of the immediate post-war environment in occupied Europe, especially in Axis countries.

Europa, Europa foregrounds the collective participation in the Nazi terror but attributes no individual agency to the task, besides the minor role played by the teachers who try to indoctrinate their pupils. This is also extended to the Soviets in the early part of the film, where the ideologues who appear to rehearse the party line are largely non-descript characters, while the only female teacher who is given some screen space is quick to defend Solly's attitude. His superficial commitment to the communist ideas enables Solly to become a Komsomol member, thereby condemning the antisemitism of his Polish Catholic counterpart, Zenek (Andrzej Mastalerz). Later in the film, we meet another outsider in the aforementioned Nazi soldier, whose love for Solly is shown to be stronger than his commitment to Nazi ideology. This conciliatory attitude towards all sides of the war has the deleterious effect of levelling victims, bystanders and perpetrators. A similar attitude pervades the paradigmatic survivor film, Roman Polanski's *The Pianist.*

Although Polanski's *The Pianist* was released in 2002, it is based on a story which first appeared in 1946, and whose trajectory is intimately linked to the development and use of survivor's testimonies that are traced in this chapter. *The Pianist* rehearses Władysław Szpilman's biography, which was written by Szpilman's friend, Jerzy Waldorff, and first published in communist Poland one year after the war's end. The book was originally entitled *Śmierć miasa* (City of Death), rendered into English as *Death of a City*, which refers to Warsaw. It was not very popular on publication, partly due to the lack of enthusiasm for Holocaust narratives in Szpilman's home country and its ambivalent representation of Poles and Germans. Other reasons for its lukewarm reception included the fact that Poles saw themselves as foremost victims, and that their resistance in the Home Army (Armia Krajowa, AK), and Polish nationalism in general, was censored under communist rule. In addition, the immediate post-war climate in Poland and elsewhere was informed by the wish of many to return to some sort of normality in the face of devastating loss of life, physical destruction, displacement and widespread poverty. Eventually, and following the popularity of Holocaust narratives from the 1970s and 1980s, Szpilman's book was reprinted by his son, Andrzej, initially in German, under the title *The Miraculous Survival* (*Das wunderbare Überleben,* 1998), and then in English as *The Pianist*. Following the success of Polanski's film, it has now been translated into more than thirty languages.

In Szpilman's book, both Poles and Germans are shown to be capable of evil and good. Whereas some Poles sell Jews and take little notice of their precarious situation, others, such as Dorota (Emily Fox) and her husband (Valentine Pelka), risk their lives and livelihoods to help some of them. Polanski's attempt to appeal to a broad Western audience explains the ambivalent portrayal of Poles and Jews in the film, demonstrated in the contrast between Dorota and the Polish woman who screams in the street 'a Jew! Stop the Jew!'. Polanski casts Jews as 'honorary Christians' so as to help to offer a view of multiple perspectives, whilst potentially sacrificing Jewish authenticity in favour of widespread filmic appeal. Likewise, Nazi Germans are not only the cruel and loud SS men who shoot and beat up people routinely and randomly but also compassionate humans, shown in the representation of Wilm Hosenfeld, played by Thomas Kretschmann. These characteristics made the topic more relevant at the end of the twentieth century, following the end of communism and the subsequent vindication of the role of the Polish Home Army in World

War II. In addition, they offered an alternative view to the conflict between Christian and Jewish Poles that backgrounded or questioned Polish antisemitism. As seen by Mieczysław B. Biskupski, the representation of Polish antisemitism in cinema was firmly established in the famous US television miniseries, *Holocaust* (1978), written by Gerald Green and directed by Marvin J. Chomsky. In this eight-hour series, historical inaccuracies that reinforce the prevalence of Polish antisemitism include Polish soldiers in military uniform supervising Jewish transports, which they never did, and even executing Jews during the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, which did not happen anywhere during the war. Polish antisemitism is also at the centre of a film about Auschwitz without Jews, Alan J. Pakula's *Sophie's Choice* (1982), based on a novel of the same title written by William Styron and first published in 1979. Perhaps one of the most prominent embodiments of this conflict is Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985), a documentary widely admired everywhere outside of Poland. On the other side of the equation, some Polish directors, including the country's most celebrated one, Andrzej Wajda, tend to cast 'good Jews' as non-Jewish Jews, who are first Polish citizens.

As a Holocaust survivor and a consecrated filmmaker, Polanski was ideally placed to undertake the representation of survival in Poland during World War II. Polanski undertook this task in *The Pianist*, a co-production between France, Germany, the United Kingdom and Poland that presented the director's stance in the debate about Polish-Jewish relationships. By the time the film was produced, however, the general perception of Polish antisemitism was hard to shake, in spite of repeated attempts to counter it in Poland. Poland perceived itself as the victim par excellence, the 'Christ of Nations', even prior to the Nazi invasion and the long-lasting communist repression. While it is hard to argue against the heavy toll paid by Poles during the war, both in human and economic terms, Polish suffering, as that of Belarusians, Russians and Ukrainians, only diminishes in importance when the plight of European Jews is taken into consideration. Indeed, more than half of the total victims of the Holocaust were Polish Jews, a figure that is not normally added to the 2.5–3 million Christian Poles anywhere other than in Poland. It was on Polish soil that the death camps built as part of Operation Reinhard were located, a fact that Poland resents and contests when these are referred to as 'Polish Camps'.[38] Whereas some critics, of whom Lanzmann is one of the most outspoken voices, believe that Polish passivity was a necessary ingredient in the Shoah, others contend that most nations would not have acted differently in the

circumstances. Antisemitism, Lanzmann reminds viewers of his documentary, was not a German invention, and had been an ingredient of Christianity since the church's early days. The extent to which the hated bystanders contributed to the Nazi destructive machine will always remain a subject of contention. As David Seymour has suggested, this distinction inheres in the putative division between genocidal and non-genocidal antisemitism that lies at the core of the very concept of modernity, prominently put forward by Adorno and Horkheimer in *Dialectic of the Enlightenment*.[39] In Poland, however, references to the country's antisemitism are hotly contested as it obliterates the role played by the Germans and their allies. Also, for Poles, this argument disguises not only Poland's oppression by Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia, but the role of Poles in helping a few thousand Jews, including Szpilman, hide from the Nazis. From the perspective of this chapter, the Polish passive role in both the vicious repression and their heroic rescue of some Polish Jews have been amply documented, and both need to be acknowledged.

These debates, and the history behind them, inform a remarkable, harrowing production that charts the most important developments affecting Polish Jews in Warsaw during the war, including their ghettoization in 1940 and the Ghetto Uprising in 1943. It also shows in great detail the doomed Warsaw Uprising of 1944 and the subsequent destruction of the city, as well as the town's 'liberation' by the Red Army. Polanski uses reliable documentation in his historical reconstruction, to the extent of showing images that are clearly modelled on photographs of the time, such as those included in Stroop's Report on the destruction of the Ghetto.[40] Szpilman's perspective, however, is that of an observer, who is never close to the action, and, like him, we view the events from a distance. This is particularly noticeable in relation to the Ghetto Uprising, where we are positioned behind the window of an apartment while the struggle takes place in the street below and behind the ghetto's wall.

The Pianist is a mainstream production, which means that the director makes some choices designed to widen the film's appeal. One of the most important selections is the fact that all those Jews with whom the audience identifies, are 'like us', meaning, to borrow the coinage devised by Isaac Deutscher, 'Non Jewish Jews'. By avoiding an overtly Jewish portrayal of Szpilman's story, the film seeks to accommodate European stereotypes to create more empathy with the characters. To de-emphasize Judaism as a religion concurs with Deutscher's comment that 'the masses of Europe have become accustomed to identify the Jews primarily with trade and

jobbing, money lending and money-making'.[41] This stereotype is reinforced by Polanski when he shows Jews benefiting from the plight of other Jews and enjoying a copious meal at a restaurant while most Jews are starving and living in dire conditions.

The Pianist focuses on the Szpilman family, who are noticeably non-practicing Jews. The only notable indications that the viewer receives that the family is Jewish comes from a menorah that is seen on the table at the opening of the film, as well as their own recognition that they will be targeted by the Nazis. There are no instances when we see the protagonists praying. Additionally, there are no markers of Judaism in dress or custom, despite the fact that the majority of the more than three million Jewish people living in Poland before World War II were poor, Orthodox Jews living in shtetls. In fact, this absence is the more noticeable because we are given establishing and wide-angle shots of crowds of people going to the Jewish ghetto or living in the ghetto.

Equally interesting in *The Pianist* is the fact that goodness is shown through Catholic symbolism. Polanski thus deploys the Polish tradition in which he was first trained when he acted in Andrzej Wajda's *A Generation* (1954) and which was established by the television miniseries *Holocaust* (1978), directed by Marvin J. Chomsky. The marginalization of the Jewish religion and the imposition of Christian tropes mean that the film was designed to appeal primarily to Western audiences, which is corroborated by the widespread use of English and American actors. Noticeably, although all Jews speak English, the Germans speak their own language, marking them as aliens. In the film, Christian symbolism is used to suggest that goodness equates with religiously-sanctioned behaviour, particularly seen in the actions of Hosenfeld. Lighting is used by Polanski to demarcate Hosenfeld and Szpilman as good men. When he helps Szpilman, Hosenfeld tells him, 'Don't thank me. Thank God', while the lighting casts him in the hagiographic style reminiscent of Christian paintings (Fig. 5.1). Beams of light have been part of cinema since its beginning, and were firmly established in Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (1927), where Richard Taylor notices that it is 'borrowed from religious paintings'.[42] This is corroborated when Hosenfeld and Szpilman meet for a final time, as Hosenfeld is framed by a window, which lights him up, offering him a hallowed space to walk away. Lighting is also used to create empathy when Szpilman appears playing the piano. Lastly, the bread and jam that Hosenfeld

Fig. 5.1 Roman Polanski, *The Pianist* (2002). Wilm Hosenfeld (Thomas Kretschmann) is framed by a window which lights him up and offers him a hallowed space to walk away

gives to Szpilman are clearly Eucharistic, and they are also lit with a shaft of light (Fig. 5.2). Hosenfeld's Christian charity gives Szpilman the gift of life through food, in the form of Eucharistic bread. In other words, while this is a film about Szpilman's survival, Judaism is minimized, while Christian traditions are used and amplified to create empathy towards the main characters.

Widely popular, *The Pianist* stands as an anachronistic homage of the man who is honoured in the film, who did not live to see it. Szpilman's narrative, however, was one of the earliest testimonies which, like Levi's, had to wait to be listened to, and were consecrated as legitimate historical narratives after Eichmann's trial. These narratives presented the contradictions inherent in surviving, or trying to survive, with many of them becoming increasingly important long time after they were written. Most productions dealing with Holocaust survivors provide small glimpses of hope in what were dire and desperate historical situations.

Fig. 5.2 Roman Polanski, *The Pianist* (2002). The Eucharistic bread and jam that Hosenfeld offers to Szpilman is lit with a shaft of light

Even if this hope is partly fabricated, its re-enactment serves to establish a link between the past and the present. In other words, representations of survival, or of desperate attempts to survive, can preclude the sense of historical closure that 1945 meant for unoccupied countries. It also brings the war, as well as the failures to deal with its causes in the 1930s, into the present, ushering in a form of mourning that serves the past as much as the future through 'lessons of history', in this case summed up by 'never again'.

The process of bringing the past effectively into the present prevents distance and oblivion of the events, as well as the narratives inspired on them. The films studied in this chapter thus convey the conflict between what Tony Judt calls the 'measure of neglect and even forgetting [that] is the necessary condition for civic health' and the need for individuals and communities to bear witness to traumatic events.[43] For viewers, especially those in Western countries, it serves as a reminder of what could and perhaps should have been done to prevent these events from happening. Although this can be salutary, it contains the possibility that the ways in

which events are distorted, often necessary to transfer them to the screen, may be unethical. Another risk is that films re-present trauma or post-traumatic stress disorder for the victims, as well as a form of surrogate trauma for their descendants. However, to retrieve memories is crucial to individual and collective identity and the recognition of survivors or witnesses of these overwhelming events.

Underpinning these films is the belief that traditional historical narrative is insufficient for communicating the dimensions of the Holocaust and the Nazi war of annihilation. Film has proved to be one of the most important means to come to terms with this past. The filming of Holocaust testimonies, in other words, has paved the way for an understanding of history that is personal and intimate, becoming an essential tool to approach the murder of European Jews. Interestingly, although the 1960s and 1970s saw an increase in the centrality of Jews in Holocaust narratives, it is the figure of the Western rescuer who dominates the screens in the following decades. My next chapter investigates the increase focus on these historical figures, epitomized by the film that is now the main entry point to Holocaust Studies, Stephen Spielberg's *Schindler's List* (1993).

Notes

1. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, trans. by Raymond Rosenthal (London: Abacus, 1989), p. 213.
2. Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933–1945* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993), p. 190.
3. Christopher Browning, '"Alleviation" and "Compliance": The Survival Strategies of the Jewish Leadership in the Wierzbnik Ghetto and Starachowice Factory Slave Labor Camps', in *Gray Zones: Ambiguity and Compromise in the Holocaust and its Aftermath,* ed. by Jonathan Petropoulos and John Roth (New York: Berghahn, 2005), pp. 26–36.
4. Levi, *If This is a Man* and *The Truce,* trans. by Stuart Woolf (London: Abacus, 2013).
5. Vulliamy, 'Claude Lanzmann: the Man Who Stood Witness for the World', *Observer,* 4 March 2012 (https://www.theguardian.com/film/2012/mar/04/claude-lanzmann-memoir-shoah-interview).
6. Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive* (New York: Zone Books, 1999), p. 170.
7. Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*, p. 82.
8. Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*, p. 150.

9. Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* (California: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 169.
10. The term 'l'univers concentrationnaire' was first used by David Rousset, who published a book about his experience in the camp with that title in 1945. The book was translated into English as *A World Apart* and was first published in 1951. See Dori Laub, 'An Event Without a Witness: Truth, Testimony and Survival', in *Testimony: Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis and History,* ed. by Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 75–92 (p. 80).
11. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, p. 37.
12. Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders*, p. 187.
13. Some of Menchú's claims, including her presence during her brother's death, have been questioned. Following an investigation, a handful of details appear to have been fabricated, although they are seen to be largely representative of her life. Moreover, criticism over her inclusion in syllabus or David Horowitz's accusation of Menchú as a 'Marxist terrorist', appear to be politically motivated. Greg Grandin sums up the debate in 'It Was Heaven That They Burned: Who is Rigoberta Menchú?', *The Nation*, 8 September 2010, p. 3 (https://www.thenation.com/article/it-was-heaven-they-burned/).
14. Bernard Cuau, 'Le lieu et la parole', in *Au sujet de Shoah: le film de Claude Lanzmann* (Paris: Belin, 1990), p. 301.
15. Jan Láníček and Stuart Liebman list the productions treated in this chapter, as well as others, in note 2 of their article 'A Closer Look at Alfred Radok's Film *Distant Journey*', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, 30.1 (2016), 53–80 (https://doi.org/10.1093/hgs/dcw005).
16. Láníček and Liebman offer a thorough contextualization of the film's production and reception in 'A Closer Look at Alfred Radok's Film'.
17. These figures have been drawn from the chart provided by Inside Kino on the page dedicated to GDR films, 'Die ErforlGreichsten DDR-filme in Der DDR' (http://www.insidekino.de/DJahr/DDRAlltimeDeutsch.htm).
18. Nathanael Hood, 'Forgotten Classics of Yesteryear', July 2011 (http://forgottenclassicsofyesteryear.blogspot.co.uk/2011/07/daleka-cesta-distant-journey.html).
19. See Yehuda Bauer, *Jews for Sale?: Nazi-Jewish Negotiations 1933–1945* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp, 282–83.
20. Friedman compares Schindler's 'compassionate capitalism' with the depredatory industrialism of those around him. See *Citizen Spielberg* (Urbana, II: University of Illinois Press, 2006), p. 306 and *passim*.
21. Elizabeth Ward notes a famous example of East German film censorship, which resulted in the banning of nearly the entire year's production in December 1965, following accusations of 'nihilism', 'skepticism' and 'morally corrupting philosophies'. See 'Contesting the Memory of Frank Beyer's

Jacob the Liar (1974), in *The Holocaust in the Twenty-first Century: Contested/Contesting Memories,* ed. by David Seymour and Mercedes Camino (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 163–81 (p. 178, n. 10).

22. Ward 'Contesting the Memory', p. 165.
23. This was Beyer's interpretation, as presented in Beate Müller's biography. See *Stasi – Zensur – Machtdiskurse: Publikationsgeschichten Und Materialien Zu Jurek Beckers Werk* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 2006), p. 102.
24. Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Classics, 1994), p. 119.
25. Arendt chastises Jewish leaders throughout her book, especially in Chap. 7, which centres on 'The Wannsee conference, of Pontius Pilates' (pp. 112–34). Levi's chapter on the 'Grey Zone' appears in *The Drowned and the Saved*, pp. 23–51. Rumkowski receives attention after kapos and *Sonderkommandos*, with Levi classing his case as *impotentia judicandi* (pp. 43–51) and criticizing 'Chaim I' as 'a small tyrant, impotent with those above him and omnipotent with those below him' (p. 46).
26. Holocaust Education & Archive Research Team, 'Chaim Mordechai Rumkowski', (http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ghettos/rumkowski.html).
27. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, pp. 49–50.
28. Bezanika is a fictitious name.
29. Jutta Voigt, 'Lust auf Legen', *Sonntag*. April 20, 1975; quoted in and translated by Ward, 'Contesting Memory', pp. 172–73.
30. Gideon Hausner, *Justice in Jerusalem* (New York: Herzl Press 1974), p. 292.
31. As Lawrence Baron observes, the number of films dealing with the subject doubled during the decade. See 'Film', in *The Oxford Handbook of Holocaust Studies,* ed. by Peter Hayes and John K. Roth (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 444–60 (p. 446).
32. Ward, 'Contesting the Memory', p. 174.
33. Małgorzata Pakier offers a thorough summary of the film's reception in 'A Europeanisation of the Holocaust Memory?: German and Polish Reception of the Film *Europa, Europa'*, in *A European Memory?: Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance,* ed. by Małgorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth, (New York and Oxford: Berghahn, 2013), pp. 191–203. See also the brief appraisal offered in Janet Lungstrum's 'Foreskin Fetishism: Jewish Male Difference in *Europa, Europa*', *Screen,* 39.1 (1998), 53–66; at p. 54; and Deanne Schultz, *Europa, Europa*: A Test Case for German National Cinema', *Wide Angle,* 16.3 (1995), 39–51.
34. Interview published in the *New York Times*, 14 January 1992; quoted in Pakier, 'A Europeanisation of the Holocaust Memory?', p. 199.

35. French: *Europa, Europa,* trans. by Lysette Hassine-Mamane (Paris: Ramsay, 1990); Hebrew: *Korim li Shelomoh Perel!* (Tel-Aviv: Yedi`ot Aharonot, 1991); Polish: *Europa, Europa* (Warszawa: Wydawn Cyklady, 1992), German: *Ich war Hitlerjunge Salomon* (München: Heyne, 1993; Berlin: Nicolai, 1998, 2001); and English: *Europa Europa* (New York: Wiley, 1997).
36. Johnson explores circumcision as a marker of Jewish identity in 'The Jewish Closet: *Europa, Europa*', *Camera Obscura,* 18.1 (2003), 1–33. Johnson uses the theoretical framework developed by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick in *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990).
37. Lungstrum, 'Foreskin Fetishism', p. 53.
38. Polish complaints about references to Polish camps, which have also been endorsed by Israel, flares up whenever there are mentioned in the press, and they have threatened to sue on more than one occasion. The use of Polish Death Camps was outlawed in Poland in 2016, where it can carry a sentence of up to three years in jail.
39. *The Dialectic of Enlightenment,* trans. by Edmund Jephcott (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002).
40. Stroop Report, https://web.archive.org/web/20110717080003/http://www.holocaust-history.org/works/stroop-report/jpg/img023.jpg.
41. Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 45.
42. See Taylor, *The Battleship Potemkin: The Film Companion* (London, 2000), p. 44.
43. Judt's incisive summary reads as follows: 'The first post-war Europe was built upon deliberate mismemory—upon forgetting as a way of life. Since 1989, Europe has been constructed instead upon a compensatory surplus of memory: institutionalized public remembering as the very foundation of collective identity. The first could not endure—but nor will the second. Some measure of neglect and even forgetting is the necessary condition for civic health'. See *Postwar: A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005), p. 829.

CHAPTER 6

Righteous Gentiles (1987–2011)

When Nicholas Winton died on 1 July 2015, UK media, including the BBC, *The Telegraph* and *The Guardian*, referred to him as 'Britain's Schindler', an epithet that had been applied to him consistently from the late twentieth century.[1] Winton's deeds, however, were unlike Oskar Schindler's, which took place after the Final Solution was implemented. Instead, Winton was a humanitarian who witnessed the plight of European Jews in the 1930s, in this particular case, those living in the Czechoslovak Sudetenland, just prior to the war's onset. The Sudetenland was integrated into the Reich on 29 September 1938, following the Munich Agreement, which epitomized Appeasement. It was marked by Neville Chamberlain's untimely condonation of the annexation in his 'Peace in our Time' speech, now largely understood to have facilitated Hitler's expansionism. The following year, in March 1939, the remaining area of Czechoslovakia, a country formed at the end of World War I, was split into two.[2] The so-called Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, which largely coincides with today's Czech Republic, was placed under a German Reichsprotektor, while the Slovak Republic or Slovak State (1939–45) became part of the Axis and was run as a 'puppet' regime by the Catholic Father Tiso. These takeovers were immediately followed by antisemitic laws and Nazi-inspired pogroms. As a result of the increasing hostility, Jews living in the area tried to follow the path already traced by Austrian and German Jews in the previous years, migrating to European countries, Latin America, Palestine or, preferably, the United States.[3] Winton's humanitarianism stepped into this environment.

M. Camino, *Memories of Resistance and the Holocaust on Film*,
https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-49969-1_6

As a sympathetic witness of the events that were to lead to the liquidation of a large proportion of European Jews, Winton organized children to be evacuated in the Kindertransport, which transferred 669 infants to the United Kingdom. On arrival, these children were taken to foster homes, often organized by the Quakers and other humanitarian groups. This scheme, which had started in 1933, eventually evacuated around 10,000 Jewish children from Nazi-dominated areas, such as Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia. It was largely funded by the Central British Fund for German Jewry, which was subsequently renamed World Jewish Relief, an organization that closed after the invasion of Holland on 10 May 1940. Winton's arrangement took place during the persecution and random massacres of Jews now considered the prelude to a genocide that few thought possible at the time.

Winton's humanitarian deeds differ substantially from those of Schindler, who operated following the systematic mass murder of all Jews that followed the invasion of the Soviet Union. This genocide was first undertaken by the infamous mobile units that followed the Wehrmacht, the *Einsatzgruppen*, in shootings that took place close to where Jews lived. It increased with the deportations to the Polish reservation known as the *General Gouvernement* and the incorporation of gas vans. These were used for the first time in Chełmno to exterminate Jews arriving from the Łódź Ghetto, some of whom had been taken there from places such as Germany and Austria. These massacres were soon followed by the launch of the *Endlösung*, or Final Solution, thought to have been formally agreed at the Wannsee Conference on 20 January 1942 and renamed Operation Reinhard after the murder of the Protectorate's Reichsprotektor, Reinhard Heydrich, on 27 May of the same year.[4] This 'solution to the Jewish problem' targeted all Jews indiscriminately and led to the swift construction of gas chambers, which were designed to increase capacity and speed the annihilation of all European Jews, as well as distance the murderers from the murdered.

The industrialization of mass murder provided a means to preserve the mental well-being of the men who had to undertake unsightly assassinations of civilians on an individual basis. As explained by Christopher Browning, some of these 'ordinary men' were distressed by the fact that they were massacring unarmed civilians, including children, women and the elderly, who would walk alongside their executioners to the edge of a ravine or ditch, where they were shot in the back of the neck. They would thus die looking down at their friends, neighbours or relatives, on top of

whose corpses they would fall, soon to be covered by those following them. A thin layer of mud was thrown on top of the pile of corpses, which moved and swelled as those mortally wounded were left to die and bodies started to decompose. Massacres of this sort took place behind enemy lines in Poland and in the Soviet Union, with the most numerous claiming the lives of more than 33,771 people in Babi Yar, on the outskirts of Kiev. Their close proximity to their targets meant that the executioners' clothing was inevitably stained by blood, bone splinters and spilled brain matter. Browning quotes the eloquent description of this process from one anonymous testimony given at the trial of Reserve Police Battalion 101 in the 1960s:

> At first, we shot freehand. When one aimed too high, the entire skull exploded. As a consequence brains and bones flow everywhere. Thus, we were instructed to place the bayonet point on the neck…The shooters were gruesomely besmirched with blood, brains, and bone splinters. It hung on their clothing.[5]

Although the shooting practice of this Police Battalion improved thereafter, the carnage remained unabated, and the men became increasingly accustomed to it. They were encouraged to undertake their tasks by speeches that reminded them that Jews had caused the war and the allied bombing of German cities. The task, these harangues emphasized, was not pleasant but necessary to save one's own family, and executioners were helped by generous amounts of alcohol.[6] Heinrich Himmler's praise of the 'decent fellows' involved in this work outlines the rationale that infused them:

> Most of you know what it means when a hundred corpses are lying side by side, or five hundred, or a thousand. To have stuck it out, and at the same time—apart from exceptions caused by human weakness—to have remained decent fellows, that is what has made us hard. This is a page of glory in our history, which has never been written and is never to be written...We had the moral right, we had the duty to our people, to destroy this people which wanted to destroy us.[7]

Himmler was, however, worried about the effects that this mode of annihilating human beings might have on the mental well-being of those 'decent fellows', and sought to separate the murderers from their victims. This was first done by using Trawniki men, many of whom where

antisemitic Ukrainians and, subsequently, by building mass-murder compounds on Polish soil.

Whereas, as Browning observes, there does not appear to have been a shortage of executioners, Schindlers were indeed scarce, especially in Axis countries. This makes Schindler's story a rather exceptional one, which is only representative of a very small proportion of Europeans and that shrinks even further in the case of Germany or Austria. However, as the repeated use of the name demonstrates, Schindler's actions have now become the yardstick with which to assess other rescuers, including those who hid one of the most famous victim of the Holocaust, Anne Frank. In the same vein, the film that showcases Schindler's deeds has become *the* Holocaust film, providing an entry point not just to the deeds of righteous gentiles but to Holocaust studies in general. Prior to the release of Spielberg's *Schindler's List* in 1993, few people would have known the names of rescuers, including Miep Gies, who was recognized for her efforts by Israel as Righteous Among the Nations in 1997, after receiving the Order of Merit of the Federal Republic of Germany and Wallenberg Medal from the University of Michigan in 1994. Gies, her husband, Jan, Victor Kugler, Johannes Kleiman and Bep Voskuijl helped hide and feed Anne Frank, alongside seven Jews for two years.[8] Films or television programmes about these events show Gies as a minor character, although her commitment and labour must have been considerable. It was only following the revived interest in rescuers that Gies was celebrated in interviews and documentaries, such as Jon Blair's *Anne Frank Remembered* (1995). After the release of Spielberg's film, other righteous gentiles have found their ways into books, television documentaries and docudramas, as well as the fiction films that are the focus of this chapter.

Cinematic rescuers are, by and large, based on historical referents, and the films about their actions are partly devised as rolls of honour, or monuments, to their deeds, much as the films mentioned in the second section of Chap. 2, Monuments and Martyrs. Their actions were largely ignored as a form of resistance in the immediate post-war era, shadowed by the sequential focus on resisters, perpetrators and victims. From the 1980s onwards, their ranks and the variety of their tasks have been more widely investigated, and rescuers have been firmly placed as paradigmatic heroes often on par with soldiers or saboteurs. However, as Winton humbly declared, what they did was to undertake a humane task that should have been considered standard practice in normal circumstances: to help other

humans in need. For many, however, especially in Eastern Europe, this voluntary task was extremely risky not just for rescuers, but also for their families and neighbours, who paid dearly with their lives, often after being tortured.

Rescue films form a sub-genre of Holocaust films, which fulfils several objectives. Firstly, these narratives contribute to assuaging guilt through their deployment of the well-worn cinematic ploy of redemption. This redemption applies to people who, like Schindler, are just 'like us', ordinary human beings with whom we can easily identify. Unlike Browning's 'ordinary men', however, Schindlers are ordinary not in following orders but in their ability to challenge them, even when appearing to comply, which Schindler effectively did. Also, and in line with mainstream filmmaking, productions about rescuers display a good degree of hope and optimism with which to counter one of the most hopeless historical situations, giving viewers stories that end happily, when survival was the exception to the norm. This point needs to be emphasized, as these films' contribution to what Bill Nichols labels 'discourse of consolation' serves not only to assuage guilt but also to minimize the Holocaust's outreach. Moreover, this discourse, as Nichols notes, is underscored by Christian values, with Schindler cast as a white male Christian saviour who redeems 'those less fortunate or farsighted than themselves', along the lines of the protagonists of Spielberg's *Amistad* (1997) and *Saving Private Ryan* (1998). The film's controversial end, Nichols argues, sums up Spielberg's 'discourse of consolation' and is shared by other 'patriarchal rescue movies' looked at in this chapter that show protectors to be 'male heroes of gentle character, empathetic nature, and altruistic impulse'.[9]

If survival was unlikely, rescuers were even more unlikely in terms of both audacity and proportion of the overall population even in countries in which 'hiding or abetting Jews' was not invariably followed by harsh retaliatory measures. Real or imagined support for Jews in Poland or the USSR, it is worth stressing, was systematically punished with widespread executions of relatives and neighbours or even the annihilation of whole villages, hostages or random civilians. These measures were not only applied in relation to Jews and were even taken against houses or villages without men who were assumed to have joined the partisans, the Polish AK or the Soviet Red Army, as seen in Chap. 3, The Partisan (1943–74). Nevertheless, they were methodical in their brutality and extent whenever Jews were involved.

This chapter will explore the motivations for the rise of films whose main protagonist is a rescuer acting as a civil resister out of political,

religious or humanitarian beliefs. I will show how the widespread use of the label 'Schindler' attests not only to the remarkable impact of Spielberg's film. It also demarcates a period in the memorialization of the war that is broadly characterized by the need to identify (with) understated heroes who risked their lives and those of their families to maintain their humanity. Largely, these films are designed to highlight the bravery of civilians who acted not because of prior commitments or political outlook, but simply as the result of witnessing human suffering. A large proportion of these films proliferated around the turn of the century and focus on Polish rescuers, which is only in part because a higher number of Poles has been recognized by Israel. Central to the analysis that follows is an assessment of the fact that the most famous rescuer, Schindler, fits in within the tradition of 'Good Germans' in cinema about the Nazi era.

Taken as a genre, productions about 'righteous gentiles' participate in the widening of the concept of resistance to include people not traditionally classed as 'active resisters', such as female couriers or those rescuing Allied pilots.[10] These films, this chapter will argue, embody the centrality of the Holocaust in European re-construction especially, following the end of the Cold War and the demise of the Soviet Union. To illustrate these points, this study departs with an analysis of Louis Malle's *Au Revoir les Enfants* (1987), a precursor of a genre that climaxed with *Schindler's List* five years later. These two films will be complemented with three productions released in the twenty-first century. John Kent Harrison's *The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler* (2009; henceforth *Irena Sendler*) and Agnieszka Holland's *In Darkness* (*W ciemności,* 2011) deal with Polish rescuers, while Roselyne Bosch's *The Round Up* (*La Rafle,* 2010) deals with the notorious round-up of Jews in the Velodrome d'Hiver in 1942. This chapter will also take into consideration films and television productions that engage with the two most famous 'rescues' of European Jews: the sheltering of Anne Frank and the extraordinary evacuation of Danish Jews. My investigation will illustrate how the socio-cultural parameters expressed in these films are firmly embedded in the construction of biopolitical anthropology, as defined by Michel Foucault.[11]

There is now a plethora of films that bring to light acts of kindness of Righteous Gentiles who are considered (and mostly were) truly heroic, even when their actions led to no reprisal, as in the remarkable rescue of Danish Jews. This rescue took place after a tip-off from a German diplomat, Georg Ferdinand Duckwitz, to the leader of the Danish Social Democratic Party. The Danish resistance organized the shipping of 7220

Jews with nearly 700 non-Jewish partners to Sweden, which had agreed to take them. The rescue, using fishing boats, took two weeks. Another 464 Danish Jews were deported to Theresienstadt, but were allowed to be assisted by the Danish Red Cross, resulting in a low number of casualties, at fifty-one. The altruism of all those involved has, however, been questioned, noting, for instance, the high price charged by some fishermen for the transport, although the rescue remains a unique event in the context of the annihilation of European Jewry.[12]

Even if the paradigm of righteous gentiles culminates in *Schindler's List,* earlier films about rescuing Jews made in the USA Europe had already established this tradition. This trend can be seen in, for example, an early representation of the Danish rescue, Bent Christensen's *The Only Way* (1970). In this Danish film, in which English is the only language used, Jane Seymour plays the daughter of a Jewish doctor in a Jewish family that looks American in everything but the menorah in one of the corners of their mansion. This is also the case of another Danish film about these events, released in 1991, Kenneth Madsen's *A Day in October* (*En Dag I Oktober,* 1991), also in English. After *Schindler's List,* another film about the Danish rescue makes this event fully 'American'. Ken Cameron's *Miracle at Midnight* (1998) casts John Patterson as the Danish Christian Dr Karl Koster and Mia Farrow as his wife, Doris, and the couple have two children, eighteen-year-old Henrik (Justin Whalin) and his sister Else (Nicola Mycroft). This Christian family, a metonymy for their country, hide the family of Rabbi Ben Abrams (Barry McGovern), whose Irish accent differentiates him from the rest. Largely, all appear American, coinciding with the film's intended audience, providing another archetypal example of the 'Americanization of the Holocaust'.

For cultural historians, the 'boom' of 'rescue films' is interesting for what it tells us about changes in collective and individual values and attitudes, as well as the fluctuating principles with which they are evaluated. For a start, the films emphasize passive resistance, which clearly coincides with the 'de-militarization' of memories of World War II, which started during the war itself and continued unabated in the following decades, eventually allowing for the belated vindication of conscientious objectors and deserters of the previous conflict. This trend is also related to the focus on different historical protagonists after the social 'turn' of the 1950s and the second-wave feminism of the 1960s. Consequently, the roles undertaken by women and civilians who might have been previously belittled or ignored have now been reassessed as essential contributions to

the war effort. At the same time, the Holocaust became *the* defining event of twentieth-century history. As groups and nations began to review (or disguise) their role in persecuting national or migrant Jews, there arose a need to find, vindicate and consecrate people trying to shelter them. These 'rescuers' thus became good, national citizens to be used as role models and as points of identification for present and future generations. In the context of World War II, it is much easier to find perpetrators and active collaborators than altruist rescuers. Even more pervasive than those three categories are the so-called bystanders, sternly chastised in Claude Lanzmann's *Shoah* (1985). Lanzmann's censoring of bystanders follows their inclusion as a category in Raul Hilberg's ground-breaking *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders,* first published in 1992.[13] For Lanzmann, however, it is not just apathy but also the antisemitism of Polish Catholics that determined their complicity as bystanders and made possible the establishment of death camps on Polish soil. Controversially, Lanzmann's documentary goes to great lengths to show how Poles ignored the plight of Polish Jews or benefited from their slaughter, a claim that is contested by some of the films studied below.

Rescuers such as the Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, who managed to save tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews in the last stages of the war, or the Carmelite Père Jacques de Jésus, who provided the model for Père Jean (Philippe Morier-Genoud) in Malle's *Au Revoir les Enfants*, were honoured by Israel before their deeds became more widely memorialized in films.[14] Soon after its establishment, the State of Israel created a World Holocaust Remembrance Centre, known as Yad Vashem, in 1953, by an act of the Israeli Parliament (Knesset). Yad Vashem subsequently formed a special commission to investigate the efforts of Righteous Gentiles to help Jews migrate or hide, leading to their public acknowledgement from 1963 as Righteous Among the Nations. This early recognition became more widely known in the last decade of the twentieth-century, after the success of Spielberg's film, at a time when the official narratives of national and widespread resistentialism that had inspired post-war reconstruction had been widely challenged in Western European countries. This movement coincided with the opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in 1993 and an increase in the recording of testimonies of Holocaust survivors, as traced in Chap. 5. These parameters influenced the full cinematic treatment of Polish rescuers Irena Sendler (Anna Paquin), in Harrison's *Irena Sendler*, and Leopold Socha (Robert Więckiewicz), in Holland's *In Darkness* (2011). However,

as will be seen below, the vindication of Polish Righteous has as much to do with their work during the war as with attempts to offer a counter-image to antisemitic Poles. This topic remains highly sensitive in a country that protests officially when the compound 'Polish camps' is used for Nazi death camps located in Poland, as will be seen in Chap. 7, The Jewish Resister (1987–2015).

Rescues of sorts were already cast in early representations of survivors in East Germany, as seen in the film directed by Wolfang Luderer, *Living Goods* (*Lebende Ware,* 1966), mentioned in Chap. 5. Luderer deals with the 'sale' of Jews in Budapest after the invasion of the Wehrmacht that followed the capitulation of Hungary to the Allies in 1944. Hungarian Jews became 'living goods', and Luderer treats the exploitation of their predicament in a film whose protagonists are the 'rescued' Jews, and not their 'rescuer'. This means that, although straddling both perspectives, Luderer's film is not so much about saviours as the means to survive or witness the Holocaust.

In chronological terms, Malle's *Au Revoir les Enfants* can rightly be considered a pioneer 'rescuer' film, although it is also one that does not fit the genre precisely. In this case, the focus is neither on the rescuer, as in *Schindler's List,* nor on the rescued, as with Leberer. In fact, the film deals with a failed rescue, as the protégées are ultimately deported and gassed in Auschwitz-Birkenau, while the rescuer, Père Jean, dies in Mauthaussen. The events are filtered through the eyes of the film's main protagonist, Julien Quentin (Gaspard Manesse), who befriends a Jewish boy, Jean Kippelstein (Raphael Fejtö), brought to the school under a false surname, Bonnet. The fact that Julien is neither rescuer nor rescued provides an appropriate point of identification for a potential audience who feels protective towards the children, which is a device used in other Holocaust films such as Roberto Benigni's *Life is Beautiful* (*La vita è bella,* 1997) or Mark Herman's *The Boy in the Stripped Pyjamas* (2008). However, this narrator is not simply deployed to foreground the evil imposed on an innocent world. Rehearsing some material from his own childhood, Malle addressed the memory of France's 'dark years' and his own privileged childhood, paying homage to those who adopted an active role sheltering Jews from deportation and to the unfortunate Jews who were rounded up in France. Also, and perhaps more importantly, the film offers a counter-narrative to his controversial casting of Franco-French hostilities in *Lacombe Lucien* (1974), which had shown collaboration to have been both political and opportunistic, as seen in

Chap. 4, The Collaborator (1969–74). Although not cast as protagonists, Jews in both films appear to be dignified and cultured, while the harsh image of Catholic France shown in *Lacombe Lucien* is softened in the later production.

In spite of its emotional baggage, Malle's *Au Revoir les Enfants* shifts the focus away from unlikely Holocaust survivors, Good Germans or Righteous Gentiles to concentrate on Julien's unprejudiced witnessing, thereby rejecting any pretence to speak vicariously for the dead or identify with the understated rescuer. The fact that the motifs of Père Jean are not the film's focus means that they are seen to be primarily a response to the situation and are uninflected by ulterior motifs. The emphasis on Julien's memory, and his belated homage to his lost friend and teacher, highlight his loss, and, by implication, that of his country. The film's location, in a rural boarding school, and Malle's selection of actors also avoid having to choose between 'non-Jewish Jews' or 'others' in terms of appearance or attitude. Musical and scholarly talent notwithstanding, Jean Bonnet is very much like any of the upper-class French Catholic pupils in this school. This is conveyed in the final sequence, where the hidden Jews are sought among the remaining pupils and it is only Julien's complicit gaze that gives his friend away, while the police simply address any brown-haired student. Most French Jews, it is worth noting, were largely secular in dress and attitudes, which was shared by many of those who had migrated to the country from Eastern Europe in the 1930s. Although other Western European Jews were largely undistinguishable from their countrymen and women, this was not the case in early twentieth-century Poland, where the largest proportion of Jews lived in impoverished conditions in shtetls, while a small but significant proportion of urban, educated Jews lived in the main towns. Thus, 'non-Jewish' Jews in films set in Poland reflect what historically was the exception rather than the rule, whereas the opposite is true of French films.[15]

The last scene of Malle's film, which brings home the meaning of the title, encapsulates the director's position about France's tragic loss in these 'dark years'. A bird's-eye view shot shows three rows of children, who are standing in the cold courtyard in front of the school buildings, bathed in washed-out, blue-tinted autumn light. The boys are faced by a row of armed Germans standing by the buildings, creating a sort of corridor between them. The atmosphere conveyed is reminiscent of a roll call in a prison or camp, as well as a guard of honour, and both meanings are true to those on either side of the corridor. Whereas the Germans'

intention is for the scene to be exemplary, the children decide for themselves the meaning of a show that they are forced to watch while being told that Père Jean and the Jews are traitors and enemies of France. As the Jewish boys and the priest walk past in front of them, Julien and Jean exchange glances, and a shocked Julien raises his hand slowly to farewell his friend. Last in the line is Père Jean, who walks unhesitantly until he hears a child bidding him farewell, which is followed by others repeating a heartfelt, 'au-revoir, mon Père'. Père Jean turns to look at the children and bids them farewell, 'au revoir, les enfants', adding quietly but solemnly, 'see you soon'. This stoic and moving response reveals the affect and strength of his convictions, which are shared by the children and embraced by the viewers. The camera then lingers on Julien's sad but composed face, with tears welling up, as on-screen credits announce the fate of those deported in their respective camps, Auschwitz and Mauthausen. It is with a sense of finality that a voice-over interrupts the scene, informing us in the first-person singular pronoun that 'I have never forgotten that day', bringing the events of the film into the present, more than forty years after they took place.

Malle's film makes sadness and loss, and not anger, primordial emotions, and these are features shared by many Holocaust films, although few have succeeded to the extent of Spielberg's *Schindler's List*. Spielberg's film centres on a rescuer and includes non-Jewish Jews as secondary protagonists, concurring with aspects of the commodification or 'Americanization' of the Holocaust that have inspired Peter Novick's controversial claim that the Holocaust has become 'virtually the only common denominator of American Jewish identity'.[16] The film's importance is not just due to the high standards of the production, but its longstanding impact on the status of rescuers that it put on the cinematic map. In fact, *Schindler's List* provides the main entry point to the Holocaust not just in the USA. It has acquired the aura of official representation, providing the benchmark for other films about the events. Spielberg's film has been widely analysed, praised and censored, influencing the definition of Righteous Gentiles and their historical importance.

The main character of Spielberg's film, Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson), is a flawed human being, whom we first meet as a womanizer and ruthless capitalist. Eventually, Schindler becomes a compassionate industrialist who cares for his workers, going so far as to squander his fortune to save as many of them as he can. Helped by Neeson's remarkable performance, Spielberg creates a bridge of empathy between the rescuer

and the film's audience, which enables us to occupy Schindler's position, as it were, believing that we might have acted like him in a similar situation. The identification with the rescuer means that we extend our sympathy, laced with paternalistic protection, towards the Jewish victims. Rescuer, victims and audience are thus placed in opposition to the archetypal Nazi evil represented by Amon Goeth (Ralph Fiennes). Cast against his previous romantic roles, Fiennes embodies the random brutality of Goeth, a 'bad' German who relishes his power to humiliate and kills with gusto. Whereas audiences are familiar with this is a type of cinematic villain, embodied in the shrill SS officers of World War II films, these are unnamed and anonymous, unlike Goeth, whose characterization has been seen as unsuitably charismatic. Goeth is a brute Nazi, unlike the 'bureaucratic' war criminals, famously embodied by Eichmann, who organized countless murders, and for whom Hannah Arendt famously coined the expression 'the banality of evil'.[17]

Spielberg's approach means that the main protagonist of *Schindler's List* is afforded a complex and slightly mysterious personality, while 'his' Jews are largely uncomplicated, innocent victims. Schindler is introduced to the audience as an enigmatic man who, like Rick (Humphrey Bogart) in *Casablanca*, is heard before the camera eventually reveals his face, thus heightening our interest in his persona. In the first segment of the film, Schindler is seen to be an active member of the Nazi Party who participates willingly and actively in the exploitation and debauchery surrounding him. With other Nazis, he is shown eating, drinking, robbing others and enjoying the sexual favours of younger women, very much like a Roman emperor would do in a Hollywood film. Schindler partakes of the Nazi sexual promiscuity, political corruption and murderous activities, which are presented as inextricably linked.

Contrasting with Schindler, the Jews that are given speaking roles in Spielberg's film mostly appear to be middle-class Europeans, thus eradicating difference with Spielberg's intended audience. Viewers are invited to identify, firstly, with the rescuer and, subsequently and through him, with Jewish victims, shown to be innocent but, in cinematic terms, largely unidimensional. Spielberg's Jews are uniformly passive and in need the protection of Schindler, cast as a larger than life, ultra-masculine father figure. The Jews are feminized and look up to their masculine saviour, exemplified in many scenes in which the camera is placed alongside them, at low angle to emphasize Schindler's power, accentuated by the focus on his

Fig. 6.1 Stephen Spielberg, *Schindler's List* (1997). Schindler (Liam Neeson) watches the destruction of Płaszów's ghetto from his horse

broad shoulders in double-buttoned suits. Schindler is often shot from the ground floor at the top of stairs of his factory, and a low-angle is used when he witnesses the destruction of Krakow's ghetto from his horse, above the chaos unfolding beneath him (Fig. 6.1). With the camera slightly tilted upwards, a dazed Schindler, placed on the right of the frame, looks to a point below, where the ghetto is meant to be. The left of the frame is occupied by a grey sky cut through by the bare branches of a tree, providing a pathetic fallacy that emphasizes the darkness of the deeds that Schindler is contemplating. This event marks the centre of the film and will lead to his epiphany and repentance, which raises the obvious question of where Schindler had been prior to this moment. Notwithstanding the sincerity of his feelings, Schindler was not just any German civilian but an active member of the Nazi Party, the NSDAP, whose ideology and paramilitary strength buttressed the rise of Hitler from the early 1930s.

On the other side of the spectrum, foregrounding rescuers like Schindler demonstrates that disobedience was an option that was not automatically punished. Relegating murderers such as Goeth to secondary, if appealing, characters, rescue films also demonstrate how the Final Solution was a

choice made by some that required being supported actively or passively by many. As one of the survivors from Schindler's group remarked, 'Whether Schindler was good or bad was beside the point. No other Germans wanted to get involved. Ninety percent of the German and Austrian people didn't give a damn [about] what was going on in the camps—and they knew. Schindler wasn't a hero—just a human being. They were in short supply'.[18] As ever so often in American morality tales, family and public life are intimately linked, so that promiscuity embeds a corrupt public life and vice versa. Schindler's redemption, therefore, embraces both spheres and includes his commitment to marital fidelity, which flies in the face of the real Schindler's ultimate flight from Krakow with both his wife and mistress in the same car, a fact that Spielberg cannot not have known.

The search for helpers and rescuers to honour in films such as *Schindler's List* and the emphasis on survivors when referring to the Holocaust are part of a 'discourse of consolation' in the face of unspeakable sadness and suffering. However, taken to its logical end, the focus on rescuers and survivors can hinder mourning for the innumerable victims of the genocide of European Jewry. Rescuer films such as *Schindler's List* focus on empathy and individualization, thereby backgrounding, disregarding or even obliterating the millions of anonymous deaths that make up the Holocaust, finding relief in identifiable survivors or their rescuers.

The backgrounding of Jewishness is a feature of many important films on the Holocaust, including a film in which a Polish Jew is the main protagonist, Andrzej Wajda's *Korzcak* (1990), which rehearses the life of the famous doctor, Janusz Korczak (Wojciech Pszoniak). In charge of an orphanage for Jewish children, Korczak accepted his own death as he voluntarily accompanied the children when they were rounded up and taken to Treblinka. As with Malle's *Au Revoir les enfants*, Wajda's film is not about a rescue, but an honourable death, which, in accordance with romantic Polish tradition, is modelled on Christian martyrdom. A secular Jew, Korczak, who had changed his name from Henryk Goldszmit to Janusz Korczak, is presented in Wajda's film as, first and foremost, a Polish patriot, whose Jewishness is cultural and subservient to his Polish nationalism, with no visible markers of Jewishness in terms of clothing, beard or side locks. *Korczak* is a hagiographic film in which the character in the title role embraces his death with Christ-like resignation and, one assumes, reaches heaven before Treblinka as, at the film's end, the train's last car releases the children in a paradisiac landscape. It should come as no sur-

prise to know that Lanzmann, on viewing the film in Cannes, accused it of clouding Polish complicity in the Holocaust, while Marek Edelman, the anti-Zionist survivor of the Ghetto and Warsaw Uprisings, praised it.

Ewa Mazierska has argued that Wajda's hierarchy is shown by the way the production deals with the nobility of Poles who resisted during the war, risking their lives and those of their families to help or rescue Polish Jews.[19] As Mazierska puts it, in Wajda's films 'good Jews are non-Jewish, the bad are faithful to the tradition'. In accordance with this paradigm, 'good Jews' appear dressed as middle-class Poles of the time, whereas 'Jewish Jews' are cast together in the ghetto, wearing black hats, *kippahs* and long *kapotas*. Moreover, Wajda's rescuers are taken from the Polish middle or upper classes, whereas, according to Emanuel Ringelblum, 'Polish workers were much less disposed to antisemitism than their more educated and affluent counterparts, who were highly susceptible to the appeals from the Polish Right'.[20] In fact, Wajda's rescuers go so far as to highlight ungratefulness on the part of Jews who are even seen to denounce or round up other Jews. This happens sometimes through their inability to understand the situation or even their selfishness, an attribute of Wajda's Jews that can also be seen in other Polish films. This attitude, Mazierka shows, is apparent in *Korczak* and in the portrayal of Irena Lilien (Beata Fudalej) in a later Wajda film, *Holy Week* (*Wielki tydzień*, 1995). Indeed, the poster of *Holy Week*, foregrounding an image of the crucifixion, establishes that link. In a setting that uses the austere colouring of devotional paintings of the Spanish Baroque, the composition consists of two feminine hands belonging to two different people, placed on top of one another both nailed together to a cross. Blood starts to pour from the wound of the top hand, which holds tenderly the palm of the silver, metallic-coloured hand underneath, whose blood has been drained already. A segment of the wooden cross underneath sits on the dark grey background, reminiscent of Francisco Zurbarán's religious paintings and Still Lives. The Christological symbolism of this image is unambiguous, with the 'healthy' hand joining voluntarily the martyrdom of the condemned, thus suggesting a righteous Pole, who chooses martyrdom in solidarity with the crucified Jew. Also, at the beginning of *Katyn* (2009), a mutilated sculpture of Jesus Christ's crucifix is unveiled underneath a cape, one of the 'corpses' of AK officers, while *Kanal*, studied in the second section of Chap. 2 (see Fig. 2.2), also uses a crucifix to identify AK fighters with Christian martyrs.

Wajda's representation of the relation between Polish Catholics and Polish Jews is echoed in two films released in the twenty-first century that focus on Polish Righteous: Harrison's *Irena Sendler* and Holland's *In Darkness*. A Polish-US co-production that uses Polish and US source material, Hamilton's *Irena Sendler* deals with the life and deeds of an unassuming Polish social worker, Irena Sendler (Anna Paquin). A member of Zegota (Rada Pomocy Żydom or Council to Aid Jews), a group that was active from 1942, Sendler worked in Warsaw. She led a cell that managed to evacuate around 2500 children from the Warsaw Ghetto to place them with Catholic Polish families or in Catholic orphanages and convents. Sendler was eventually caught and tortured, but was rescued on her way to execution when Zegota bribed the guards for her release.

Sendler's trajectory offers a good example of a belated vindication of a rescuer. Although she was honoured as a Righteous Among the Nations by Yad Vashem in 1965, her international recognition only came after she was made an honorary citizen of Israel in 1991. Spurred by the increasing interest in rescuers following Spielberg's film, students at a high school in Uniontown, Kansas, read an article about her and, helped by their teacher, Norman Conrad, set out to investigate her life. The result of was a play, *Life in a Jar*, first performed in 1999, which takes its title from the container in which Irena had kept details of the children so as to facilitate family reunions after the war. Following the success of her life story, Sendler was not only the subject of a major television film production, but was awarded Poland's highest civilian decoration, the Order of the White Eagle, on 10 November 2003, and, subsequently, the Polish-American award 'Jan Karski, For Courage and Heart', given by the American Center of Polish Culture in Washington, D.C. This honour is named after the famous Polish courier of the Home Army who went into the Warsaw Ghetto to inform the world about the conditions of the Jews there. Other awards, a nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize and interviews for documentaries followed until Sendler's death in 2008, aged ninety-eight. Since then, Sendler's memory has been honoured with the establishment of a prize for Polish and USA teachers created in her name: 'Irena Sendler's Award: For Repairing the World'. Although Sendler is now the most widely recognized Polish rescuer, she was neither the only one nor the first to be seen on American television. Richard A. Colla's *Hidden in Silence* (1996), which preceded *Irena Sendler*, is dedicated to the deeds of the Podgórski sisters, Stefania Podgórska (born 1925, known as Fusia, played by Kellie Martin) and Helena Podgórska (born 1935, played by Gemma Coughlan), who hid thirteen Jews in a cel-

lar. Colla's production, however, was not as popular as Harrison's, partly on account of its limited release.

Harrison's co-production about Sendler is based on the book written by Polish writer Anna Mieszkowska in 2007, *The Mother of Holocaust Children: Irena Sendler and the Rescued Children from the Warsaw Ghetto*.[21] Oscar-winning Anna Paquin played the title role of a script written by Harrison and Lawrence John Spagnola, and the film was nominated by Poland for an Academy Award for the Best Foreign Language Film, although it failed to win the prize. As the book's and film's titles suggest, the focus of both is Sendler's 'courageous heart', stressing her empathy with Holocaust victims, as well as her Catholicism and nationality. Indeed, one unstated objective of the film and of the awards given to it is that it offers a view to counter the prevalent image of Polish antisemitism. Sendler sums up this aim early on in the film when, addressing Jewish parents reluctant to part with their children, she insists that: 'Outside these walls there are Poles who are prepared to risk their lives to save your children'.

Irena Sendler received some praise because of its subject matter, the same reason that inspired criticism, of which Ginia Bellafante's in the *New York Times* is representative. Bellafante argues that the film 'recounts her [Sendler's] story with none of the zeal, passion, terror and chaos that her mission involved...and wind up with something that feels lazy, as if they believed the project's noble goals were enough to carry it'.[22] Also singled out for criticism are the use of American English and the inconsistencies of the production's 'archaeology', including shops with English signs, such as the 'Laundry' in which Irena receives clandestine funds and identification papers.

Also devoted to the heroism of Poles is Holland's *In Darkness*, released two years after *Irena Sendler,* in 2011. It is based on a book by Robert Marshall, published in 1990 and with a screenplay by Canadian writer David F. Shamoon. Holland, who had written the script of Wajda's *Korzcak*, focuses her 'rescue' story on the life of Leopold Socha (Robert Wieckiewicz), who had a change of heart when confronted directly with the plight of Holocaust victims. In Holland's film, the child, Krystyna Chiger (Milla Bankowicz), dressed in a green jumper, triggers Socha's epiphany, very much as the girl in the red coat does for Schindler in *Schindler's List*. Chiger, the sole living survivor of the group at the time that Holland's film was released, subsequently wrote a

memoir entitled *The Girl in the Green Sweater: A Life in Holocaust's Shadow* (2008).

In Darkness dramatizes the difficulties that Socha and his friend and co-worker, Szczepek Wróblewski (Krzysztof Skonieczny), encounter when they hide a group of Polish Jews for over a year. Unlike Schindler, Socha is a lower-class Catholic Pole who works in the sewers and is a part-time burglar in his spare time. Socha is even portrayed initially as mildly antisemitic, profiting economically from the predicament of the Jews and buying their rescue at a high price. Eventually, Socha decides to help 'his' Jews (or a selected number of them) after they run out of money to pay for their upkeep. By doing so, Socha risks his life and that of his family, which is highlighted during the film when he walks before the hanged corpse of his colleague, Wróblewski.

The film is set in the Galician town in western Ukraine known mostly as L'viv or Lviv, which was then part of Poland, where it was called Lwów, while Germans referred to it as Lemberg, the name that it had when it was part of the Habsburg Empire. Although the town's ethnic composition changed dramatically after the Second World War, prior to 1939, Jews comprised around a third of Lviv's population, while half were Catholic Poles and sixteen per cent Ukrainian. These percentages were reversed at the war's end, when the number of Poles shrunk to twenty per cent while Ukrainians became the dominant ethnicity, making up fifty per cent of the census. Jews were then less than six per cent of the total population and their numbers continued to decrease by emigration to become negligible, at around one per cent, by the time the Soviet Union broke up in 1991.

At the beginning of the war, as Jews fled Western Poland to the relative security of the Soviet-dominated east, Lviv's Ghetto saw its Jewish population double to reach *circa* 200,000 at the time of Operation Barbarossa in 1941. Like most of eastern Poland and Western Ukraine, Lviv was occupied within days, and the Jews were soon subjected to pogroms and massacres, with the remainder eventually sent to their deaths in one of the most famous Reinhard Camps, Belzec. Deportations started in April 1942, and the last vestiges of the ghetto were liquidated in June of the following year. At this point, Socha used his knowledge of the city's sewer system to shelter a group initially comprising twenty Jews, ten of whom lived to see the Soviet liberation of the town in July 1944 when there were only around 1,000 surviving Jews in Lviv. Socha and Wróblewski were helped by their wives, and the four of them were recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by Israel in 1978.

Lviv's ethnic mix underlines the complexity of political and ethnic allegiances in the area, with Ukrainians pitched against Poles, Jews and Soviets, and not just because of their wish to establish a homeland. *In Darkness* acknowledges the town's ethnic mix by having characters who speak Polish, Yiddish, German and Ukrainian. Elżbieta Ostrowska believes that this variety projects historical authenticity: 'Language is used to accentuate the supposed realism of the picture, with two variants of Polish, one of which is the local dialect used by the lower classes of Lvov (inhabitants of the borderlands, or Krosy), in addition to literary Polish, Yiddish, Hebrew, German and Ukrainian'.[23] As is well known, many Ukrainians welcomed the Nazis, and their nationalist groups participated actively in massacres of Poles and, especially, of Jews. Lviv was not an exception, and we see this in Holland's film when Nazis use Socha's friend, Bortnik (Michal Zurawski), to round up the Jews. These facts were kept largely silent during the Soviet era, although war reporters, such as Ukrainian Jew Vasily Grossman, recorded their disbelief on finding out the roles of their Ukrainian neighbours in round-ups and massacres. While working for the official newspaper, *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star), documenting the war, Grossman was anxious to find out about his mother, Yekaterina Savelievna, whose fate he learned eventually, in 1943. Savelievna was murdered in Berdichev, Ukraine, in the first massacre of civilians by *Einsatzgruppen*, assisted by local Ukrainians, in September 1941. Grossman had moved to Ukraine with his mother from Geneva, where his parents, who had been actively involved in the revolutionary movements of the early twentieth century, had met as students and where they lived for three years before separating. Yekaterina, a French teacher, and her son settled in Berdichev, a town where half of the population were Jews, most of whom were assassinated in early massacres. Grossman, who was very close to his mother, was haunted for years afterwards by memories of the manner of her death and guilt at abandoning her, eventually dedicating his masterpiece, *Life and Fate* (1960), to her.

The round-ups of Jews continued unabated in towns such as Berdichev and Lviv, only to accelerate with the creation of camps and deportations from ghettos. On witnessing the liquidation of the ghetto, Socha tells Wróblewski that he will help the Jews and take their money before turning them in to the Germans for a reward, as Polish *szmalcownik* did during the war. The Jews that both men hide in the sewers are, at times, demanding and contemptuous, and are deeply suspicious of Poles, who they see as untrustworthy, warning each other 'never [to] trust a Polack'. Their

morality is also questioned by showing one of them, Yanek (Marcin Bosak), having furtive sex with his girlfriend, Chaja (Julia Kijowska), while his wife and child lay nearby in the sewers.

Holland's intended message is never too far from the surface and is spelled out in the film's multiple dedications. Marek Edelman, an anti-Zionist hero of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, gets two dedications, one at the beginning and another one at the film's end. The first appears on a blank screen, 'To Marek Edelman', and he shares the last one with Socha and other 'Polish Righteous'. Edelman's choice is significant vis-à-vis the director's position in the charged context of Polish-Jewish relations. A member of the socialist Bund (General Jewish Labour Bund), Edelman was active in the foundation of the Jewish Combat Organization (ŻOB) during the war, and was involved in the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, becoming its leader when Mordechai Anielewicz, on being surrounded, committed suicide, as will be noted in Chap. 7. Edelman managed to escape using the sewers and subsequently participated in the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. In spite of his political activism, Edelman was an outspoken anti-Zionist and made a number of public declarations against the State of Israel, which alienated him from the ghetto survivors who migrated there and established a kibbutz and museum in memory of the uprising, Beit Lohamei Haghetaot (Ghetto Fighters House Museum). Although Edelman remained controversial in Israel until his death, he was widely respected and acknowledged in Poland, especially following his participation in the *Solidarność* movement of the 1980s. Edelman received of Poland's highest decoration, the Order of the White Eagle, on 17 April 1998.

The film's last dedications come after a final scene in which the Jews are liberated and walk out of the sewers into the open air. As they come out, Socha welcomes them before mystified onlookers as 'My Jews. These are my Jews'. Socha's wife, Wanda, serves them sandwiches and drinks while Socha urges them to 'Eat something, my Jews', telling the neighbours the words that close the film: 'These are my Jews; they are my work!'. The scene fades to white to inform viewers that 'Socha's Jews spent 14 months in the sewers of Lvov'. This white background is next used for Socha's epitaph, with on-screen credits informing viewers that Socha died shortly after, on 2 May 1945, trying to rescue his daughter from an 'out-of-control Russian army truck'. A series of didactic messages follow, with the next one telling us that an anonymous Pole suggested at Socha's funeral that his death was 'God's punishment for helping the Jews', followed with

another screen that hammers home the message: 'As if we need God to punish each other'. Holland completes the sermon with a mid-close up of the girl, Krystyna Chiger, staring at the bright sky, while the non-diegetic orchestral music accentuates the religious overtones of the scene. However, as the screen fades to black, there is still another occasion for the information about Chiger's memoirs, *The Girl in the Green Sweater*, and the additional comment that, like other Jews who went to 'Israel, Europe or the US', Krystina escaped 'Soviet Lvov'. These are charged statements to make, as Jews might have as many reasons to abandon 'Soviet Lvov' as 'Polish Lvov' or 'Ukranian Lvov'. Indeed, while there is no reason to doubt the wishes of Jews or others for leaving the USSR, Polish Jews in Internally Displaced People's camps indicated their wish not to return to Poland, and Ukraine is unlikely to have been a destination of choice for them either. Notwithstanding the fact that most Jews had lost everything, including homes, friends and family, survivors did not fail to record that Poland was 'very bad for Jews', as seen in, for example, the interview of Paula Biren, a survivor of Auschwitz, in Lanzmann's *Shoah*. Living in Cincinnati in the 1970s, Biren says that she could not face the prospect of returning to Poland in answer Lanzmann's question 'You never returned to Poland since?' A similar answer is given by in Mania Salinger in Andre Singer's *Night Will Fall* (2014), when she declares that 'it was so bad in Poland, so bad for Jews'. Salinger eventually migrated to the United States with her husband, an American Jew whom she met on liberation. The same destination was reached by Sobibor survivor, Thomas Blatt ('Toivi'), who mentions explicitly in in his memoirs:

> I, too, had reacted with disbelief when I returned to Izbica in 1943 from the ghetto of Stryj and heard terrible stories about Poles murdering and betraying the few Jews who managed to escape to the forest or to neighboring villages, and about the various organizations' zeal in eliminating Jews.[24]

To counter these facts, Holland's final dedication to Edelman offers a reminder about the Poles recognized as Righteous Among the Nations by the Israeli government for having risked their lives to save Jews. Holland indicates that both 'Leopold and Wanda were honoured with the title Righteous Among the Nations', naming them 'among more than 6,000 Poles honored by Israel', dispelling any possible doubt with the addition that this number is higher than any other nation. It is undoubtedly fair to acknowledge that the conditions in which these rescues took place were

among the most challenging in occupied Europe. It is worth remembering, however, that Jews made up ten per cent of the overall Polish population and that a mere 200–300,000 survived from the approximately 3.3 million in pre-war communities. The fact that a good percentage of Jews lived in small urban centres could as easily have facilitated their rounding up and their disguise. Poles saving Jews were matched by those fleshing them out, the so-called *szmalcowniks* who extracted bribes, blackmailing Jews in hiding with denunciation. Their ability to distinguish Jews from Poles was important in the case of urban, professional Jews, who might have passed unnoticed by Germans but were easily distinguished by their fellow citizens.

As in Wajda's *Kanal*, the sewers make up a chronotope for resistance to occupation in Holland's film, attesting to their effectiveness, which is amply documented in photographs related to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising and the Warsaw Uprising. Indeed, the sewers' symbolism as icons of underground resistance has acquired an iconic state, making them the most important chronotope for Polish memorialization of the conflict. Sewers are liminal spaces that stand between the spaces of the living and the dead and are metaphors of entombment, creating a form of claustrophobia that acts as *memento mori*, a reminder of mortality. Ostrowska notes the connection of *Kanal* to *In Darkness* with the ghetto's ineffability for viewers, who lose their geographical sense of direction:

> the film undermines the dominant Western spatial discourse in its division of space into the categories of the safely habitable and the dangerously uninhabitable…A dark, labyrinthine space is almost clichéd as an image of danger, and that is how it initially functions in Holland's film…The film's visual design insists on making the fictional space invisible and illegible for us.

Ostrowska goes on to suggest that *In Darkness* 'mobilizes a dual perspective', which, she believes, does not privilege either the Jewish or the Polish point of view, supporting this argument with the film's cinematography, lighting and the time allocated to each of the main characters: 'Neither the Jewish viewpoint nor the Polish one takes precedence. In the absence of a master narrative, and without a stable position of spectator identification, Holland mobilizes a dual perspective'.[25] Duality, however, does not mean parity of treatment in a film whose perspective is Socha's, even if Jews are afforded a good portion of filmic space and are given agency, names and individual personalities. Like Schindler, Socha is

transformed by the experiences and offered as a point of identification, and his epiphany and redemption are designed to carry the audience's sympathies from beginning to end, which the last segment of the film makes explicit. The film starts and finishes with Socha, whose actions remain at the centre of the narrative as a flawed hero very much in the terms established by Aristotle and brought wholesale to mainstream cinema. Ostrowska's suggestion of a 'double memory, double narrative' entails a pecking order in a film devised as a vindication of ordinary Poles, which challenges subtly the pervasive representation of unmatched heroism and martyrdom stressed by the likes of Wajda. Roger Ebert argues that, although *In Darkness* 'has the best of intentions', Holland's film 'is a boring dirge, lingering far too long in sewers and wringing as much righteousness as possible out of scenes so dimly lit, they border on obscurity'.[26]

Like Spielberg's *Schindler's List*, Holland's and Harrison's films present the Holocaust from the point of view of a sympathetic, compassionate viewer who is transformed into an active participant in the rescue of Jews. This type of viewpoint offers several advantages. Firstly, it allows viewers to transition from a semi-detached position to one of identification with and endorsement of the rescuers. Secondly, in the case of *Irena Sendler* and *In Darkness*, it reinforces the idea of Poland as victim in this struggle, which is historically incontestable. Thirdly, it contests the castigation of Poles as irredeemable antisemites by giving the limelight to acts of heroism and solidarity that, like Schindler's, were scarce and that took place in harrowing circumstances. This view is not limited to Poland, even if Poland is the country where most of the actions on which these films are based took place. A twenty-first French film, Roselyne Bosch's *The Round Up* (2010), views the imprisonment of Jews at the Velodrome d'Hiver in 1942 through the perspective an outsider, a recently graduated Protestant nurse, Annette Monod (Mélanie Laurent). Assisting a Jewish doctor, Dr David Sheinbaum (Jean Reno), Monod courageously and selflessly tends to the Jews incarcerated, first in the Velodrome and, subsequently, in Beaune-la-Rolande, the internment camp to which these Jews were sent prior to their deportation.

The protagonists of Bosch's film, Monod, the child, Jo Weisman (Hugo Leverdez), and a young woman who escapes the incarceration, Anna Traube (Adèle Exarchopoulos), are based on real people, while Dr Sheinbaum is a composite of more than one doctor.[27] The production of *The Round Up* was costly and elaborated, with around 9000 extras used for the scenes shot at the Velodrome d'Hiver, which was reconstructed

from facsimiles, and a concentration camp recreated in Hungary. The film was a resounding success in France, where the debates about the role of French police in rounding up Jews had been the subject of debate since the 1970s, as seen in Chap. 4. The reception outside of France was, by contrast, lukewarm, with a balance between mild praise and outright criticism for its clichés, as well as for what, for some, is an unwelcome sense of relief provided by the ending. Nevertheless, more than three million saw the film in theatres, and an audience of seven million watched it on French television, surpassing the accomplishments of the two most popular Holocaust films, *Schindler's List* and *The Pianist*.[28] Its release on DVD was also successful, remaining at the top of the selling charts for three weeks, making it the number one French film of 2011.

The circumstances surrounding the well-known rounding up of Jews, many of them from Eastern Europe, are sketched in the film. These are Jews who migrated in the 1930s, often preferring the United States and, if not possible, the United Kingdom and France on account of these countries' liberal political traditions. Several conversations between the members of Jo's family highlight this point of view. When Jo's sister, Charlotte (Charlotte Driesen), perceives the increasing threat, her father, Schmuel Weisman (Gad Elmaleh), reassures her, alluding to France's tradition of 'liberty, equality and freedom'. Once held in the Velodrome, Schmuel apologizes to his family for his inability to protect them, expressing the despair and humiliation of parents unable to feed or care for their children during the transports, in ghettos or prior to their murder.

The characterization of Weissman as a peaceful communist and a cultured, secular Jew is also stereotypical in many films studied in this book, where sympathetic Jews are slightly built, wear glasses as sign of their intellectuality, live in harmony with their neighbours, read and play music. Bosch also makes efforts to show that Weissman's children are 'normal', playing and dancing, while questioning innocently the discrimination directed towards them, against which they do not retaliate. *The Round Up* thus follows the archetypal treatment of Holocaust victims, which, while idealizing them by making them more civic than their persecutors or Gentile neighbours, infantilizes them. Bosch highlights the Franco-French divisions along socio-political lines, vindicating those who took risks to counter the persecution, the 'righteous', as do other French films or books about the plight of French Jews. In the Gaullist tradition studied in Chap. 2, those who endorse collaboration are presented as betrayers of French (revolutionary) values and of France itself. Unlike the earlier films, however, Bosch shows the participation of French police and politicians in

the rounding up of the Jews. Bosch does this through the intercutting between the lives of those about to be deported and the debates between the principal agents of these events, Marshal Philippe Pétain (Dr. Roland Copé), Pierre Laval (Jean-Michel Noirey) and Laval's deputy, René Bousquet (Frederic Moulin).

Bosch's film acknowledges French agency and the difficulties of coming to terms with those events, thereby participating in debates that are never far from the limelight. For example, in the seventy-fifth anniversary of the round-up, the newly elected French President, Emmanuel Macron, refuted those who, like Marine Le Pen of the right-wing French National Front, disowned Vichy as a brief interlude that was 'not French'. As Le Pen put it: 'I think that, generally speaking, if there are people responsible, it's those who were in power at the time. It's not France'. Le Pen thus follows the established argument about Vichy, suggesting that France had rallied behind de Gaulle and that Vichy regime 'was not France'.[29]

As with the other films studied in this chapter, Bosch's relies on redemption and consolation, acknowledging Spielberg's *Schindler's List* as its master narrative. These films simplify a complex picture, which is arguably a requirement of cinema in general. By so doing, however, they have the potential to displace the vicarious mourning associated with the Holocaust, and often background or disguise criminality. These stories are extraordinary in the history of the genocide of European Jewry, which makes them both suitable and unsuitable for their cinematic treatment, as shown in this chapter. Whereas disregarding rescuers had obeyed a 'militaristic' hierarchy of remembrance, films that focus squarely on rescuers make Jews secondary characters, who are cast in order to exalt Gentile heroism. Rescue films, however, show that the Holocaust was a specifically Jewish tragedy, whose dimensions permeate crimes against humanity past and present. The Holocaust is a universal symbol and, as David Seymour argues, will forever be caught between universalism and particularism, a sign of the utmost barbarism and a marker of modernity.[30] Within this paradigm, rescuers vindicate and champion Christian Europeans. Although these outstanding moral characters may be 'inspirational', they remind us that many Schindlers did have choices and that these choices reverberate and matter today as they did then. The choices of European Jews, by contrast, were rather limited, and often zero, as will be seen in the analysis of 'grey zones' in this book's Conclusion. Some Jews, however, chose to resist actively, taking arms or otherwise, in order to survive or, more likely, to die fighting or to exact revenge. My next chapter focuses on films whose protagonists recreate these Jewish resisters.

Notes

1. Caroline Davis, '"British Schindler" Sir Nicholas Winton Dies Aged 106', *Guardian,* 1 July 2015 (http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jul/01/british-schindler-sir-nicholas-winton-dies-aged-106); Anita Singh, 'Sir Nicholas Winton at 105: the Man Who gave 669 Czech Children the "Greatest Gift"', *Telegraph,* 2 July 2015 (http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/czechrepublic/10844808/Sir-Nicholas-Winton-at-105-the-man-who-gave-669-Czech-children-the-greatest-gift.html); the BBC Radio Berkshire documentary is based on Chris Browning's interview, 'Nicholas Winton's Children: The Czech Jews Rescued by "British Schindler"', BBC, 1 July 2015 (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-berkshire-30895961).
2. Czechoslovakia was an independent nation from 1918 to 1939 and, subsequently, from 1945 to 1991. It split into two nations followed the so-called 1989 Revolutions, known as Velvet Revolution in the Czech Republic.
3. The increasing migration of Jews from Germany created anxiety in some countries, including the USA, and the addition of Austrian Jews exacerbated these fears. A conference, held in the French resort of Evian in July 1938, was convened to address the issue, with countries expressing concern for the fate of refugees but establishing firm quotas that effectively closed their borders. The USA and the UK issued further laws expressly designed to limit the number of Jews into the USA and Mandatory Palestine in 1939.
4. Heydrich died of his wounds a few days later, on 4 June.
5. Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993), pp. 64, 65.
6. Browning, *Ordinary Men,* pp. 106–108.
7. These words, often known as Himmler's Posen Speech, were delivered to SS officers in Poznan, on 4 October 1943 (http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/people/h/himmler-heinrich/posen/oct-04-43/ausrottung-transl-nizkor.html). Holocaust deniers, including David Irving, question the translation of *ausrotten*, meaning 'root out', which, to him, mean deportation and not mass murder. The reading of the term as extermination was, however, clear to officers, such as Oswald Pohl, and is attested to by the events that followed. See the proceedings of the Trials of War Criminals before the Nuremberg Military Tribunals (popularly known as the Green Series). U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, 1950, volume V, pp. 664–668 (http://www.nizkor.org/ftp.cgi/people/p/pohl.oswold/pohl-testimony.02).
8. The eight people were: Anne, her father, Otto, her mother, Edith, and her sister, Margot, three Jews from the Hermann family, Auguste and Peter van Pels, and a German dentist, Fritz Pfeffer. Otto Frank was the only survivor of these deportations. He was taken to Auschwitz, where he

was liberated by the Red Army on 27 January 1945, taking six months to travel back to Holland, where he found out the fate of all those who hid with him.

9. Nichols, 'The 10 Stations of Spielberg's Passion: *Saving Private Ryan, Amistad, Schindler's List*', *Jump Cut* 43 (2000), 9–11 (p. 9).
10. These include two films set in Holland and Belgium respectively, Martin Koolhoven's *Winter in Wartime* (*Oorlogswinter,* 2008), and Todd Komarnicki's *Resistance* (2003), based on Anita Shreve's 1995 novel of the same title.
11. Foucault defined this concept in his 1976 essay, 'Society Must Be Defended', which was given as a lecture on 17 March: 'What we are dealing with in this new technology of power is not exactly society (or at least not the social body, as defined by the jurists), nor is it the individual body. It is a new body, a multiple body, a body with so many heads that, while they might not be infinite in number, cannot necessarily be counted. Biopolitics deals with the population, with the population as a political problem, as a problem that is at once scientific and political, as a biological problem and as power's problem'. See *Society Must be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–76*, ed. by Mario Bertani and Alessandro Fontana, trans. by David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), p. 245.
12. For details about the rescue, see Emmy E. Werner, *Conspiracy of Decency: The Rescue of the Danish Jews during World War II* (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 2002).
13. Hilberg, *Perpetrators, Victims, Bystanders: The Jewish Catastrophe 1933–1945* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993).
14. Wallenberg, who appears to have worked for US intelligence, died in Soviet custody in 1947 or thereafter, either executed, poisoned or from a heart attack. International efforts to establish the fact and a Russian investigation and rehabilitation at the beginning of twenty-first century have not been conclusive.
15. See Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968).
16. See Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), p. 7. Novick's is not a new claim, with Abba Eban sharply censoring the commercialization of the Holocaust as early as the 1950s, when he famously claimed that 'there is no business like *Shoah* businesses'. Eban, however, was referring to the profit made robbing and appropriating Jewish property during the Second World War, in the context of the Reparations Agreement signed by the governments of Israel and West Germany in 1952. As Yehudit Feuer notes, Eban 'refers to the exploitation of human suffering and loss during the Nazi regime by politicians, administrators, attorneys, and various organizations, to mention just a few of the more or less high ranking public activists and actions involved in the "business"'.

See 'From Despair to Hope and Back', *Haaretz,* 13 April 2015 (http://www.haaretz.com/life/haaretz-bookshelf/1.651589). The idea has been taken out of context, however, not just by those censoring the memorialization of the Holocaust but, more importantly, by Holocaust deniers for whom it provides an argument to reinforce conspiracy theories that continue the legacy of *The Protocols of the Elders of Sion*.

17. See Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil* (London: Penguin, 2006).
18. Quoted in Friedman, *Citizen Spielberg* (Urbana, II: University of Illinois Press, 2006), p. 316.
19. Mazierska, 'Non-Jewish Jews, Good Poles and Historical Truth in the Films of Andrzej Wajda', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television,* 20.2 (2000), 213–26.
20. Mazierska, 'Non-Jewish Jews', pp. 218, 220.
21. It was translated into English as *Irena Sendler: The Mother of the Holocaust Children* (Westport: Praeger, 2010).
22. Bellafante, 'Female Oskar Schindler of the Warsaw Ghetto', *New York Times*, 7 April 2009 (http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/18/arts/television/18hear.html).
23. Ostrowska, '"I will wash it out": Holocaust Reconciliation in Agnieszka Holland's 2011 Film *In Darkness*', *Holocaust and Genocide Studies,* 29.1 (2015), 57–75 (pp. 70–1).
24. Thomas 'Toivi' Blatt, *From the Ashes of Sobibor: A Story of Survival* (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1997), p. 173. See Chap. 7 for details of Blatt's participation in the Sobibor Uprising.
25. Ostrowska, 'I will wash it out', pp. 68, 62.
26. Ebert, '*In Darkness*', 15 February 2012 (http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/in-darkness-2012).
27. In the film, Anna Traube escapes from the Velodrome, leaving her mother and sister behind, while in real life, the three of them escaped and were reunited with their father in Limoges.
28. John Lichfield, 'Film awakens France's shame in the Holocaust', *Independent*, 8 March 2010 (http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/film-awakens-frances-shame-in-the-holocaust-1917807.html).
29. See 'Marine Le Pen Denies French Role in Wartime Roundup of Paris Jews', *Guardian,* 9 April 2017 (https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/09/marine-le-pen-denies-french-role-wartime-roundup-paris-jews).
30. Seymour, 'Holocaust Memory: Between Universal and Particular', in *The Holocaust in the Twenty-first Century: Contested/Contesting Memories,* ed. by David Seymour and Mercedes Camino (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 15–31.

CHAPTER 7

The Jewish Resister (1987–2015)

Of all the stories of Jewish resistance, that of Alexander Aronowich Pechersky, known as 'Sasha' Pechersky, must surely stand out. Born in 1909 in Kremenchuk, in Ukraine, Pechersky grew up in Rostov-on-Don, where he returned and settled after the war. Although Pechersky had studied music and drama, following Operation Barbarossa, he was conscripted into the Red Army, as most Russian young men were, gaining promotion to lieutenant in August 1941. Only two months later, in October, Pechersky was arrested when his unit was surrounded by the German Third and Fourth Panzer armies in Vyazma, Smolensk, during the Battle of Moscow. A good illustration of the horrors of the Russian front, Vyazma would be largely obliterated, and only 700 people from a pre-war population of 60,000 lived in the three buildings that were left standing in 1944.[1]

After his arrest in Vyazma, Pechersky survived typhus and tried unsuccessfully to escape, ending up in a penal camp in Borisov, 400 kilometres west of Vyazma. From there, he was taken to an *Arbeitlager*, or work camp, near Minsk, in Belarus, where he was identified as a Jew and transferred with other Jewish POWs to a camp for prisoners inside Minsk itself, in Shirukuja Street.[2] Finally, a group of Jewish POWs, with Pechersky among them, were transported to the notorious death camp of Sobibor, located in the frontier between Poland and Ukraine, in September 1943. It was in Sobibor that Pechersky led one of the most important escapes from a Nazi extermination camp on 14 October 1943 with his colleague, Alexander 'Kali Mali' Shubayev, as well other Soviet POWs and Jewish

M. Camino, *Memories of Resistance and the Holocaust on Film*,
https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-49969-1_7

inmates, including Solomon Leitman and the camp's underground leader, the Polish Jew Leon Feldhendler.

Although Pechersky's story of resistance and survival is an extraordinary event in a history of mass murder, the Sobibor Uprising was part of a marked increase in opposition to Jewish deportations from 1942. As Christopher Browning sums up in his preface to the memoirs of Sobibor survivor, Thomas 'Toivi' Blatt, 'The Sobibor uprising and breakout in October 1943, in which Blatt was a participant, was…part of a wider trend in altered Jewish response in Poland'.[3] Whereas in the earlier part of the war, most Jews believed (or wanted to believe) that they were being deported to work camps or that their lives could be otherwise valuable as sources of labour, this changed gradually as knowledge of Nazi massacres and death camps spread. By 1943, information about the *Einsatzgruppen* death squads and mass murder in gas vans and camps had reached most places in Eastern Europe, revealing or confirming the Nazi objective of outright annihilation of European Jewry. Unlike in Western Europe, there was no clear relationship between resistance and retaliation behind the eastern front, where collective responsibility was uniformly applied and all Jews, as well as a sizeable proportion of Slavs, were marked for slow or quick death. Responses to German demands thus changed as people saw or started to believe information about the destinies of those deported. Thus, in January 1943, the first time that the Nazis tried to vacate Warsaw's Ghetto, they were stopped, and a larger force endured a few days of desperate fighting three months later, in April. Inmates of Treblinka revolted in July of the same year, and there was an uprising in the Bialystok Ghetto the following month, while the escape from Sobibor took place two months later.

The escape from Sobibor has not received as much scholarly or public attention as the uprising in Warsaw's Ghetto partly because the camp was completely obliterated after the uprising and there is not much material evidence about it, though some of its survivors have written memoirs or given interviews.[4] Also, the main 'protagonists' of the uprising were either dead or in the USSR, where the Holocaust was not acknowledged as targeting Jews and where Jews themselves became the objectives of Stalin's campaign against 'rootless cosmopolitans' in the late 1940s. For the present study, however, Sobibor offers the most suitable point of departure for a study of cinematic representations of Jewish resistance. Firstly, the uprising's success, even if limited, is rather exceptional, providing a vicarious sense of relief that is scant in the history of the genocide. Secondly, and

perhaps more importantly, because the event was rehearsed in one of the first films about Jewish resistance, Jack Gold's *Escape from Sobibor* (1987), which exemplifies the complicated relationships between politics and ethnicity that obstructed the early memorialization of the Holocaust.[5] For a start, Soviet Jews planned and led the uprising, with logistical help provided by the camp's underground, led by Leon Feldhendler, and supported by two Ukrainian kapos. For different reasons, both the USSR and Poland disguised, minimized or deleted the struggle of Jews in the war's aftermath, as will be seen below. In addition, the Cold War and the Stalinist repression cast a long shadow on the memorialization of the war, which only started to lift from the 1980s onwards.

Gold's television docudrama about the Sobibor Uprising, to which some survivors contributed, is central to my analysis because it displays the priorities and paradoxes of past and present understandings of the Holocaust in the Eastern Bloc. Said otherwise, the film stands at the crossroads of fluctuations arising from the weakening and dissolution of the USSR. The film's presentation of Russians in the film attests to that liminal moment. Other films studied in this chapter show how these political shifts facilitated the revision of the role played by Polish and Soviet Jews in resistance and were essential to their historical vindication in Western cinema. This transformation was consolidated by the time that Jon Avnet directed a television production about the last months of the Warsaw Ghetto, *Uprising* (2001), and culminates in Edward Zwick's adaptation of the struggle of the Bielski's partisans in Soviet Belarus, *Defiance* (2008), both of which are studied in this chapter.

Like *Escape from Sobibor*, productions about Jewish resistance are mostly based on historical events, even when they take some liberties in their recreation. By contrast, Jewish resistance in some twenty-first-century films, which Daniel Magilow suitably labels 'revenge fantasies', are largely fictional. Magilow sums up the change in attitude in the production of these films and their positive reception as a 'rejection of stereotypical notions of Jewish masculinity as frequently represented in the past in popular Holocaust cinema', in which men 'are weak and victimized', as presented in the two canonical Holocaust films, *Schindler's List* and *The Pianist*:

> In addition to Ben Kingsley's accountant character in *Schindler's List*, for instance, whom critic Ilene Rosenzweig dubbed 'the king of the Jewish wimps,' other examples include Roberto Benigni's clever neurotic in 1997's

Life is Beautiful; Adrian Brody's Academy Award-winning portrayal of Władysław Szpilman, the sensitive artist and title character of Roman Polanski's 2002 *The Pianist*.[6]

Two of the most prominent films that exemplify Magilow's 'revenge fantasies' are Paul Verhoeven's *Black Book* (*Zwartboek,* 2008) and Quentin Tarantino *Inglourious Basterds* (2009), the first of which is studied in this book's Conclusion. This chapter also incorporates the failed attempt to escape Auschwitz in László Nemes' *Son of Saul* (*Saul fia* 2015), as noted in this book's Introduction. While *Son of Saul* relies on the audience's knowledge of the Holocaust's topography, it confronts its *aporia* in ground-breaking cinematic style and thus offers a suitable example to round up the cinematic transformation from Holocaust victims to Jewish resisters traced in this chapter.

Up to the last decades of the twentieth century, the idea of Jews and resistance in World War II appeared to be oxymoronic, at least outside of Israel. Notable events, such as the uprising in Warsaw's Ghetto or the escape from the extermination camp of Sobibor, were treated as exceptions that confirmed the general tenet that Jews were either innately pacifist or rendered passive and apathetic by the fierce onslaught launched on them. That Jews had gone to their deaths 'like lambs to the slaughter' was assumed as much of a truism as the irreversible loss of Jewish communities in Europe. However, from the 1960s onwards, a revision of the roles of civilians, as well as a long-overdue challenge to the resistentialist myths on which many European countries had built themselves, brought in their train a salutary reassessment of Jewish resistance. This coincided with, and was partly encouraged by, a series of events, such as Adolf Eichmann's trial in Jerusalem in 1961 and Israel's Six-Day and Yom Kippur Wars (in 1967 and 1973 respectively), which projected images of Israeli Jews in military and active roles.

The widening scope of understanding active resistance also corresponds with a broadening of the spectrum of collaboration, adding layers of complexity to the categories of victims, perpetrators and bystanders. This expansion has entailed a positive re-evaluation of the contribution to the war effort by civilians as active resisters, as seen throughout this book. In other words, resisters are no longer a category to describe partisans or 'anti-fascist' militants performing sabotage operations, such as those studied in Chaps. 2 and 3 of this book, even though these remain paradigmatic examples. Similarly, bystanders are not classed as innocent, ignorant and passive but also as agents who enabled or facilitated the

construction of 'perpetrator societies' through their implicit or explicit acceptance of the status quo. This reappraisal has been contemporaneous with the rise of gender studies and the establishment of social and cultural history as sub-disciplines on a par with political or military history. Together, these elements have converged in furthering a view of European Jews not just as victims, even though they were obviously so, but as partisans, fighters and survivors who could bear witness to the crimes visited on themselves, their families and their communities. As with Pechersky's life story, the investigations into these activities were aired in, and were often stimulated by, cinematic releases that have become points of access into Holocaust Studies and that are the focus of this chapter. This chapter thus treats Jewish survival and various forms of non-compliance as active resistance.

As argued in Chap. 5, stories about surviving the Holocaust provide a sense of spurious hope or emotional relief. However, these narratives are unusual and extraordinary, as are those of gentile rescuers. The pervasiveness of these stories, moreover, risks making exceptions the norm, clouding the extent of genocidal murder and, in extreme cases, making survival appear to be a realistic option. In addition, the proliferation of survivors' narratives lessens the reach of Holocaust crimes. On the other hand, and as with other cultural representations of the Holocaust, personalizing the events allows a level of empathy that transcends the faceless references to millions of corpses, in accordance to the dictum that one death is a tragedy and millions just a statistic. As seen with *Schindler's List,* empathy can provide an entry point to studies of the Shoah, even while blurring historical understanding of the genocide of European Jewry by focusing on a 'Good German'.[7]

A further charge to the reassessment of the division between victims and perpetrators is that it distorts the apprehension of resistance and collaboration, providing grounds to justify the latter. Although most scholars of resistance include practices that stretch to civil disobedience or even obstructive collaboration, the line between collaboration and resistance continues to be the subject of heated debate. In other words, every redefinition of resistance opens the possibility of justifying collaboration by presenting it as arising from threats and dutiful obedience or as a form of resistance. In fact, this was (and to some extent remains) the legacy of some of the war's most famous collaborators, including Vidkun Quisling and Marshal Pétain. In their understanding (and that of their supporters),

their collaboration furnished a 'shield' to protect law-abiding citizens of their countries from the occupiers, as outlined in Chap. 4, The Collaborator (1969–74).

All those contradictions notwithstanding, most historians now unambiguously class as acts of resistance deeds such as keeping and storing memoirs in ghettos, hiding people (or oneself), bearing witness, and helping or assisting Jews or POWs physically, morally or spiritually during the war, especially in Eastern Europe. Early post-war historiographies or hagiographies of resistance largely ignored or minimized these actions, favouring armed resistance and sabotage, especially blowing up trains, providing intelligence, killing prominent Nazis, such as Reinhard Heydrich, or executing local collaborators. However, survivors were keen to emphasize that the support they received and the preservation of memories played an essential role in their efforts to survive or to fight during the war. From a historical point of view, this preservation has provided subsequent generations with material from which to study European Jewry and must surely be considered one of the most significant acts of resistance, particularly in the climate in which it took place. This chapter will assess the contribution of films to the memorialization processes of Jewish resistance, taking into consideration the material on which they are based and the time in which they were produced.

Gold's *Escape from Sobibor* was one of the first films to make Jewish resistance the centre of action, providing one early example of Jewish resistance on Western screens. The film was shot during the last Soviet decade, now usually referred to as the Era of Stagnation, under the leadership of Leonidas Brezhnev (1964–85).[8] Charismatic Dutch actor Rutger Hauer plays Pechersky, a role for which he received a Golden Globe for Best Supporting Actor. Hauer joined a cast that included well-known actors, such as Jack Shepherd, who played Itzhak Lichtman, and Alan Arkin in the role of resistance leader Leon Feldhendler. Shot in Yugoslavia's defunct cinematic city, Avala Film, Gold's production mixes adventure with homage to the lives and deeds of these camp inmates, which is made explicit at the film's end when the camera freezes with each of the main characters in the frame to explain their fates in some detail.

Of special interest is the fact that, as aforementioned, Pechersky was still alive while the film was produced, although he could not be consulted about it. This is also the time in which the Holocaust was fast becoming a household word in the West and was largely associated with innocent victims and not with partisans, resisters or avengers. It was certainly not

remotely linked to Red Army soldiers, Russian Jews or Soviet citizens, which Pechersky was. Pechersky's *habitus* embodied some idiosyncrasies that, for different reasons, did not fit in well with either Soviet or Western celebrations of war heroism, although these were acknowledged in the emerging Israeli narrative that provided a niche for resistance. Pechersky's role, in other words, sums up the contradictions inherent in segregating the Holocaust from other actions in WWII, as he could be perceived, and was at various times, a brave Red Army lieutenant, a Soviet POW, a war hero, a Soviet Jew and, from the 1980s onwards, a Holocaust witness and a Jewish resister. In other words, in the early post-war environment, Pechersky's credentials were not likely to endear him to either Cold War apologists or pro-Soviet bureaucrats because of his communist past or his Jewish heritage respectively. As seen in Chap. 3, and until Khrushchev's denunciation of Stalin's 'cult of personality' in 1956, Soviet apparatchiks preferred to honour, first of all, Comrade Stalin, and, after him, young, anonymous Russian soldiers and loyal military commanders, a shifting category if ever there was one.[9] Elsewhere, socialist or communist Jews were proscribed in 1950s America and marginalized in most European countries.

Our knowledge of Pechersky's actions, as those of other Soviet Jews, comes initially from Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman's investigations for the *Black Book of Soviet Jewry*, which offered details about this uprising soon after it took place.[10] The story of this collection, which resulted from the collaboration of the Soviet Jewish Antifascist Committee with American Jewry, provides a good index to the Soviet attitude towards Jews both during and after the war. Collecting Jewish testimonies was initially promoted, then side-lined and subsequently forbidden by Stalin, in line with the developments of the war and the subsequent 'anti-cosmopolitan' repression of the late 1940s. Bringing to light the murder of European Jews was officially encouraged while the Alliance against the Axis held together, when it was seen as a way to strengthen ties with the USA, from which the Soviets were receiving military aid under the Lend-Lease Agreement. However, it became gradually backgrounded and eventually outlawed from 1944 onwards, as the change of direction in the war was consolidated and the disagreements that would fracture the Alliance and culminate in the Cold War started to be appreciated. The repression of Soviet Jews thus took place as Stalinism reinstated itself, suppressing 'nationalities' and all possible or imagined dissidence. This subjugation went so far as to

include Grossman, whose articles as war correspondent in the official newspaper, *Red Star* (*Krasnaya Zvzeda*), which were widely read, helped boost the morale of Red Army soldiers.[11]

From a post-Cold-War perspective, details about the Sobibor Uprising, which were ignored or belittled in both East and West, make Pechersky and those who organized the escape essential to our understanding of the transformations taking place in the later part of the twentieth century. It must be noted, however, that Gold's *Escape from Sobibor* was not structured as homage to Pechersky and that the film has more than one main protagonist, including Leon Feldhendler, Toivi Blatt (Jason Norman), Shlomo Szmajzner (Simon Gregor), Itzhak Lichtman and Kapo Porchek (Linal Haft).[12] Pechersky himself only appears more than half way into the film, and is never offered as the main point of identification for the audience. Although Feldhendler's leadership is highlighted, we know little about him besides what Blatt says in his account of the uprising: 'Amid despair, the core of a conspiracy came into being. The leader was Feldhendler, a thirty-three-year-old flour mill worker, a rabbi's son, and former head of the Judenrat of Zólkiewka, a small city in Eastern Poland'.[13] In fact, Gold's main protagonist, as the title suggests, is the escape from the camp and the collective effort to make that possible.

The sources for the film, *Escape from Sobibor*, concentrate on life in the camp itself, with some details of the memoirists' lives before deportation. Pechersky himself did not write about the events but his testimony was used in an extract on the uprising included in the *Black Book*.[14] He is introduced in the film after we have familiarized ourselves with other main characters, and we see him from the point of view of Feldhendler and Lichtman perched on a window in their workshop. From their vantage point, we watch the arrival of healthy-looking 'Russian soldiers' marching in unison on orders from a hyper-masculine Pechersky wearing Red Army uniform. The inmates wonder why the Russians are there, with Feldhendler rightly guessing that 'they're Jews', which is confirmed the following day by Kapo Porchek. In the film, and in Sobibor, these Soviet prisoners, Blatt remembers in his memoirs, gave the inmates the urgency and added resolve to fulfil their plans, which accelerated with the increasing apprehension of the camp's impending end: 'The Soviet Jews infused us with hope and a vision of Hitler's defeat. Although we were sure we would not live to see it, it was good to know that the Nazis' end would soon come and that someone would avenge us'.[15]

Although it would be too easy to cast Pechersky and Feldhendler in hagiographic terms, *Escape from Sobibor* concentrates on their leadership

Fig. 7.1 Alexander 'Sasha' Pechersky (Rutger Hauer). Jack Gold, *Escape from Sobibor* (1987)

and the collective participation in the uprising. The events in Pechersky's life are unique, which renders him larger than life, something that Hauer's casting in this film achieves through his size, wholesome appearance and blond hair (Fig. 7.1). This gives Pechersky an air of self-assuredness and confidence, literally standing out from the rest of the cast, who are brown-haired and slightly built, very much like Pechersky appears in contemporary photos (Fig. 7.2). Gold's film does not provide background information about Pechersky's life or actions, although we are given details about Pechersky's married status in a 'confession' that he makes to Luka (Joanna Pacuła). During the evenings, Pechersky meets with Luka, probably a German-Dutch Jew, to speak with Feldhendler and organize the uprising, following Szmajzner's suggestion.[16] Although there could only have been a handful of meetings in the two weeks that the preparations

Fig. 7.2 Alexander Pechersky. Yad Vashem Photo Archive, Jerusalem. 4216/2

lasted, from 29 September, when Feldhendler first contacted Sasha, to the planned date of the uprising, 13 October, these gatherings are central to our view of Pechersky in Gold's film. Unaware of Luka's feelings for him, Pechersky, appearing slightly boorish, tells her that they were only 'playing' and that the supposed romance is a decoy devised by Feldhendler to discuss openly details about the uprising. Pechersky adds that he cares deeply for Luka but that he is happily married and loves his wife and daughter very much. At the time, Pechersky had been married to Lyudmila Vasilievna for ten years, since 1933, though in 1944 Pechersky would go on to wed the nurse who took care of him, Olga Kotova, with whom he spent the rest of his life.[17]

This romance, and Luka's unrequited love, are cinematic additions to Pechersky's characterization as a slightly aloof soldier. In fact, the short summary about the uprising included in *The Black Book* mentions that Luka, who is referred to as Lukya or 'the girl', 'guessed from the start that she had

been drawn into a serious game. She quietly went along with the conspiracy'. This segment emphasizes that 'Pechersky was twice as old as the eighteen-year old girl', and that she trusted him and 'wanted to believe in him'.[18] Luka has remained important in the memorialization of the uprising, as she gave Pechersky a 'good-luck' white shirt to wear during the event, which has been preserved. This detail is used with theatrical connotations in the film, where, as Luka gives Pechersky the shirt, it becomes a sort of mantle that will protect its bearer and will be Luka's *memento mori*. The film's final summary rehearses Pechersky's efforts to find out Luka's fate, but that no trace of Luka was found, leading to the conclusion that she probably died during the uprising, either in the camp or the landmines surrounding it. Luka's shirt, however, survived the war and, unwashed, was treasured and cared for by its owner, Pechersky, while his granddaughter, Natalia Ladichenko, took it with her to Israel for the commemoration of the seventieth anniversary of the uprising, in 2013.[19] The shirt is on display at the Museum of Rostov-on-Don, the town in which Pechersky spent most of his life, and a photograph is displayed at the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum (Beit Lohamei Haghetaot) in West Galilee, Israel.[20]

In the film, Feldhendler and Pechersky organize the different stages of the uprising, with Pechersky advising on its military aspects. Blatt, who was privy to the plans, outlines the phases of the uprising in his book, noting the decision to kill colleagues who might threaten to disrupt the operation. They all kept the plans secret from other inmates:

> Despite some objections, it was necessary to include Kapos Pozycky and Bunio in the conspiracy, especially as Pozycky was suspicious already … A consolidated command was formed, and though Leon was the initiator and head of the conspiring group, at this point Sasha assumed full responsibility for technical planning and military matters. The crucial element was strictly enforced secrecy.[21]

The plan, which was less than three weeks in the making, would start with the murder of relevant guards quickly in sequence, and different people were assigned various chores to that end. Szmajzner was tasked with robbing rifles from the armoury of the SS, which the rebels hid, while others fabricated knives and managed to smuggle pincers to cut the wired fences, although they were not able to use them. As Blatt mentions in his memoirs, those who worked as valets and the young women who served in the camp took care of the ammunition:

> The *putzers* (young Jews selected by the Nazis to server as valets) and girls who sorted the captured Soviet ammunition in Lager IV were in charge of stealing ammunition, if possible. Combat groups of three persons each were established, including a detachment for an attack on the armory.[22]

The Sobibor plotters decided that the opportunity to run away should be given to everyone in the camp, which then held more than 500 inmates destined to die. On the appointed day, 13 October, a truck with additional SS arrived, which made them wonder whether their plan might have been discovered. After finding out that the Nazis were paying a social visit, they decided to postpone the uprising one more day. A series of calls were scheduled at 4 p.m. on 14 October for individual camp officers to enter cabins to try either a coat or a pair of boots. The first to do so was deputy commandant Johann Niemann who visited the tailor's shop to try on a new uniform and was killed by Alexander Shubayev, known as Kali Mali, with a blow from an axe, the first of seven guards killed, as listed in the report. The Soviet Jews proceeded to kill guards inside several buildings, murdering them with axes, knives or blows to the head.

Revenge is offered as an explicit motivation for Jews in the film, with Zuckerman plunging a knife while reminding his victim: 'My name is Hershel Zuckerman and don't you forget it'. This attitude, according to film critic John Corry, aligns *Escape from Sobibor* with traditions used in action films, which he considers out of place for the subject in that it does not observe due reverence and respect for the dead. However, Corry also notices that this gives audiences a degree of satisfaction, an ingredient brought home in later films, as will be seen below: 'Assistance appears in the persons of Russian Jewish soldiers, captured by the Germans. Their leader, played by Rutger Hauer, says the prisoners are capable of killing if they must…This is enormously satisfying; thank God the Jews are fighting back'[23]

The Jews taking revenge in this film are those already in the camp before the Soviet Jews arrive, which serves to extend the notion of revenge and a sense of belated justice. While this might have been historically true, *The Black Book* emphasizes that Pechersky had informed 'kapo Bzhetsky' that the murders would only be undertaken by Soviets soldiers trusted by him, who 'must kill the German officers…within a very short time...no more than an hour. Only the prisoners of war whom I know personally and can rely on will kill the Germans'.[24] Feldhendler voices this ethical dilemma when he tells Pechersky that Jewish civilians are immanently peaceful: 'We don't know how to kill'. The Soviet soldier accepts the challenge and responds

that the Russian Jews know how to kill if they must and that they will do so. Gold, however, makes the point of presenting at close range the murder of a selected number of guards, whose demise we have grown to wish at this point in the film, foregrounding different attitudes towards revenge and resistance that intersect with assumptions about Jewishness in the film.

Although Jewish revenge has been aired increasingly in films made in the US and in Europe from the end of the twentieth century, it has remained a contested subject on grounds such as those outlined by Corry. Cinematic representations of Jewish resistance do not converge to the extent of resistentialist chronotopes traced earlier in this book, although films around the turn of the century show Jewish violence to have become more acceptable, at least culturally. Before, Jews and violence did not always agree, with the likes of Dustin Hoffman threatening not to accept the role of Thomas 'Babe' Levy in John Schlesinger's *Marathon Man* (1976) unless the director changed the final scene. In the book, Levy murders a criminal, Dr Christian Szell (Lawrence Olivier), who has robbed diamonds from Jews in Auschwitz, whereas in the film, the man literally falls on his own sword, in this case, a knife. As quoted by Magilow, Hoffman's argument in rejecting the scene was that this type of revenge would liken Jews to the Nazis.[25]

The Sobibor murders were timed prior to the roll call, when the prisoners were planning the escape. However, in the film, as the prisoners gather and line in the courtyard, they notice that one of the murders has been discovered, which leads Pechersky to shout orders for all to run away with Feldhendler urging them to bear witness, 'Those of you who survive, bear witness, let the world know what has happened here. God be with you'. All start running towards the fences in a final, protracted scene that lasts nearly ten minutes, choreographed with the type or non-diegetic, orchestral music used in the climax of adventure films. Corry objects to this accompaniment, which he considers unsuitable for a Holocaust film: 'When the prisoners break out, tearing down barbed wire and running through a mine field, the soundtrack gives us triumphal music. The escape may indeed be a triumph, but the music is inappropriate. It belongs in a war movie, not a movie that touches on the deaths of 6 million people'.[26]

Although SS Oberscharführer Karl Frenzel urges guards from their towers to shoot randomly at the runaways, inmates run towards the fences. More than 300 of them managed to exit the camp, one third of whom (80–100) died in the attempt, either shot by guards or blown up in the surrounding minefields. During the following days, many of the remaining

escapees were shot from airplanes or otherwise recaptured and murdered. The Security Police Report about the uprising, dated 17 March 1944, mentions that 'a large number of prisoners were shot' and that '159 were treated according to order', meaning that they were executed, commending 'All the men of the Einsatzcommando [who] were equal to the task'.[27] At the war's end, the survivors amounted to fifty-three, including Pechersky, who found his way through the forests and joined a group of Soviet Partisans, as he told Blatt in an interview four decades later in Rostov-on-Don,

> With the help of a peasant near the Bug River, we crossed the river on the night of 19-20 and reentered my Motherland, the Soviet Union. Two days later we meet Voroshilov partisans and joined with them in fighting the Germans behind the German lines by sabotaging their transport and annihilating small garrisons.[28]

Following the escape, Himmler ordered to destroy and abandon Sobibor, where a memorial and small museum stand today in remembrance of the quarter of a million people, mostly Jews, murdered there.[29]

Not shown in the film is the escape's aftermath, when Pechersky and his Soviet colleagues abandoned a group of around sixty survivors in the forest with no money or weapons, promising them that they would return. Although grateful for his life, Blatt confronted Pechersky about their abandonment in an interview held in Pechersky's modest apartment, on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the escape, in 1979. Pechersky answered that: 'My job was done. You were Polish Jews in your own terrain. I belonged in the Soviet Union and still consider myself a soldier. In my opinion the chances for survival were better in smaller units'. Pechersky added that people would have followed them, which Blatt admits to be most likely, concluding that, in spite of Pechersky's defection, 'I don't think any of us today would point a finger of judgement at him'.[30]

Pechersky's fight was not over, however. He walked in the forest with Shubayeb (Kali Mali) and Arkady Moishejwicz, meeting another two Soviet POWs, one of whom, Yakov Biskowitz, testified at Eichmann's trial. At the trial, Biskowitz explained how the five of them joined a group of Jewish partisans led by Yehiel Grynszpan in the Skrodnitze forest, engaging with them in sabotage and hit-and-run strikes on German detachments. Kali Mali died in one of those skirmishes and Pechersky eventually joined another group, the Voroshilov Partisans, with whom he fought in Belarus until the Red Army liberated the area. As Stalin had

given orders not to surrender on punishment of death (Order 270), all prisoners of war were suspect of collaboration and were sent to serve in penal battalions to undertake the most dangerous tasks. Pechersky again survived and the commander of his battalion, Major Andreev, sent him to testify about Sobibor to the Extraordinary State Commission, a Soviet office in charge of investigating Nazi crimes on USSR soil. Pavel Antokolsky and Veniamin Kaverin summarized Pechersky's account, which was subsequently edited by Grossman and Ehrenburg for *The Black Book*.

Pechersky was then promoted to captain and, following a wound on his foot, discharged to a Moscow hospital, where he met his second wife, Olga Kotova, who nursed him to health. His recognition, however, did not last long, as Pechersky had to endure the ensuing hostility against Jews under the repression of 'rootless cosmopolitans'. He was arrested in 1948 on those charges with his brother, who died in captivity after a diabetic coma. Pechersky was only released in 1953 after Stalin's death and died in 1990, one year before the dissolution of the Soviet Union and three years after he was denied the chance to attend the release of Gold's *Escape from Sobibor*.

Besides in Israel, international recognition of his deeds also escaped Pechersky while he was alive, as he was denied permission to travel not only to the release of Gold's film but also to testify in post-war trials, including the Nuremberg and Eichmann's trials. He was able to testify in the Soviet Union, where he was the main prosecution witness at the trial of eleven guards from Sobibor held in Krasnodar in 1963. Although Pechersky's deeds remained largely unacknowledged in his own country throughout most of his life, moves to recognize his deeds in Israel and, subsequently, in Rostov-on-Don eventually succeeded in the Russian Federation. On his behalf, his granddaughter received the Order of Courage from Vladimir Putin in 2016.

Pechersky and the Sobibor resisters faced the most adverse odds, and some of them survived to tell the story. However, as ever so often in survivor's narratives, the escape itself entailed generosity, as well as selfishness and guilt, on a par to that described by Levi and studied in Chap. 5 and in this book's Conclusion. In addition, Pechersky and surviving Soviet Jews had to suffer official hostilities in the country for which they had fought and where a large proportion of them lost their lives. The remaining escapees from Sobibor endured similar fates as they made their way to different places, with some, probably including Feldhendler himself, finding their deaths at the hands of antisemitic locals, either directly or following the revelation their whereabouts to the Germans. Blatt's own story of survival exemplifies the difficulties

they met in villages or neighbourhoods where the few who could and would help Jews were rightly scared of the consequences. The proximity of the Soviets and the money that Toivi and his two friends had with them helped at times, though the misadventures and miseries that they suffered, including being shot and left for dead on more than one occasion, attest to their sheer resilience. Blatt sums up the difficult decisions that he had to make in his memoirs: 'Under Nazi law, Jewish presence in any public place meant certain death', while, to them, 'forests offered no real security either':

> Various partisan groups and roving gangs of bandits roamed the country, robbing in order to exist. There were Polish anti-Nazis, Communists and anti-Communist groups; there were Ukrainian pro-Nazi groups, who fought the Poles and Soviet Partisans. Despite their differences, they had something in common: generally all, expect the Soviets and some Polish leftist partisans, robbed and killed any Jews they might encounter.[31]

Though produced during the last decade of the Cold War, *Escape from Sobibor* already foresees the 'Thaw' between the two main blocks, as well as the inward erosion of the USSR domination of its satellite countries, which started in Prague and Hungary in the 1950s and 1960s and continued in the 1980s in Poland. The two films looked at next, Jon Avnet's *Uprising* (2001) and Edward Zwick's *Defiance* (2008), are post-Cold War productions that belatedly acknowledge the complexities of the Soviet contribution to the war effort. Whereas historians and contemporary politicians, including Churchill, did not avoid the subject, it is one that is seldom confronted in mainstream American films, most of which focus on the Western front, where the US was heavily involved.

Avnet's *Uprising* stands out among post-Cold War productions that address Jewish resistance, as it deals with the most important event, the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. As Gold's, Avnet's is a television production, in which Hank Azaria plays the main leader of the uprising, Mordechai Anielewitz, a characterization reminiscent of Hauer playing Pechersky. A member of the Jewish Combat Organization, ŻOB (Żydowska Organizacja Bojowa), the slightly-built Anielewitz was twenty-one at the time of the Uprising and contemporary images show a very young man (Fig. 7.3), which sharply contrasts with Azaria's imposing physique, as well as age and demeanour. Azaria was born in 1964 and was in his late thirties at the time that *Uprising* was made, and his casting and deeds show a degree of self-assurance and maturity that contrast with the reality of resistance in

Fig. 7.3 Mordechai Anielewitz. Yad Vashem Photo Archive, Jerusalem. 5322

Warsaw's Ghetto. His casting dilutes the idealism and youth of the protagonists, while avoiding direct references to the Bundism, Zionism, socialism or communism that inflected this resistance. The film has also been singled out as one extreme example of the representation of Poles as unredeemed antisemitic caricatures, with Mieczyslaw B. Biskupski arguing against its the backgrounding of Germans, blaming the Holocaust on Christian Poles. Biskupski traces this tradition to the mini-series adaptation of Leon Uris' *QB-VII* in 1974, noting that during the war itself Poland received less attention in cinema than 'quiescent Czechoslovakia, collaborationist France or insignificant Norway'. The US mini-series *Holocaust,* Biskupski argues, consolidated this anti-Polish bias, setting the tone for later films that 'embittered' the relationship between American Poles and Jews.[32]

The debate between the official condemnation of antisemitism and individual prejudices in the USSR is addressed from a sophisticated angle in Zwick's *Defiance*, which shows the attitude of citizens towards Jews to be as mixed as that of their leaders. *Defiance* displays some similarities, as well as stark differences, between the Soviet approach to 'the Jewish question' and that of neighbouring regions and nations with sizeable proportion of Jews, especially Poland. After the Soviet revolution, antisemitism, as Zwick's film shows, had less to do with official politics, as was the case Nazi Germany, than with local traditions of Jewish exclusion and xenophobia. Antisemitism became a criminal offence punishable by law after the Soviet revolution, although it was by no means as extinct as Jews would have liked more than a generation later, in the 1940s. In fact, in its various demonstrations or denominations, antisemitism remained widespread in Soviet areas that had been part of the Pale of Settlement, where it was often tolerated. From the Soviet official perspective, however, Jews were no different from other 'nationalities', and the promotion of every form of nationalism was sternly condemned as a deviation from the party line.

During the First World War and on Lenin's initiative, the Bolshevik faction of the 4th State Duma (1912–17) eliminated all antisemitic laws and restrictions, recognizing Jews as a 'nationality'. Prior to the Bolshevik Revolution, Jews had been excluded from education and state service and were obliged to settle within the Pale of Settlement, where most of them lived in extreme poverty. At the end of 1917, when he took power, Lenin endorsed the establishment of special departments for Jewish affairs in both the ruling Communist Party (the Yevsektsiya) and the Commissariat of Nationalities, which was, perhaps ironically, headed by Joseph Stalin at the time. Yiddish, which was spoken by the majority of Soviet Jews, was recognized as their national language, and Jews increasingly gained access to education, with many of them relocating to urban, industrial centres such as Kiev or St Petersburg (renamed Leningrad from 1924 until 1991).

During his time in power, Lenin campaigned actively against antisemitism and charged against 'right-wing' groups, such as the White Army and Ukrainian nationalists, accused of inciting pogroms, which were outlawed alongside their instigators in a decree of July 1918. Lenin appears not to have capitalized on real or potential inter-ethnic tensions to further Bolshevik goals. Indeed, his stance against antisemitism was not weakened even after he was a victim of an assassination attempt by a Jewish woman,

Fanya Kaplan, who worked for the Social Revolutionaries, in 1918. By way of contrast, Stalin is thought to have held antisemitic views, though he was careful not to voice them. Firstly, during the 1930s terror, Stalin charged against some of his (perceived or real) enemies, which included prominent Jews, such as Leon Trotsky, who was murdered in Mexico on Stalin's orders. A similar hostility was displayed in the post-war campaign against 'rootless cosmopolitans', a euphemism for Soviet Jews. This Stalinist repression, which affected the likes of Pechersky, Grossman and Ehrenburg, is widely considered a thinly veiled attack on professional Jews, many of whom subsequently migrated to Israel when they were able to do so. Indeed, Nikita Khrushchev went so far as to class Stalin's anti-semitism as class envy, suggesting that the prejudice had informed his opposition to the love affair between his daughter, Svetlana Iosifovna Alliluyeva, and the Jewish Soviet filmmaker, Aleksei Kapler, who was subsequently sentenced to ten years in exile in the industrial city of Vorkuta (near the Arctic Circle). Svetlana was seventeen and Kapler forty-years old at the time, which is presented as a reason for Stalin's condemnation of the affair, instead of, or in addition to, Kapler's ethnicity. Stalin's persecution of Soviet Jews culminated in the arrest, torture and execution of Jewish doctors in the so-called 'Doctor's Plot' in 1952–53, the proceedings of which were only halted by his sudden death. At this time, Lavrentiy Beria, the infamous leader of the NKVD (*Narodnyi Komissariat Vnutrennikh Del* or People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs), who would be executed soon afterwards, liberated the remaining doctors.

Even if the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party had criminalized antisemitism, anti-Jewish prejudice remained rampant especially, but not only, in the Soviet Borderlands, which include the Baltic Republics, Western Ukraine, Belarus and Western Russia. The fact that some Soviet 'nationalities' participated actively in the persecution of Jews during the Holocaust was largely silenced during the communist era, as the official party line was that all Soviet citizens had been equally targeted by the Germans and all had opposed the invasion. Ukrainian antisemitism, widely acknowledged as a factor in the nation's active collaboration with Nazi Germany in the Holocaust, was thus a taboo subject during Soviet times. As Ukrainian-born journalist, Grossman, wrote, one of the most distressing aspects of the war for surviving Jews was to learn the role that neighbours had played in the massacres of members of their families. It was probably also hard not to be able to mention it, as references to collaboration were censored both during and after the war. During the war,

collaboration went unmentioned because of morale and the projected image of a united country. After the war, Soviet official historiography deleted the Holocaust of Soviet Jews, merging it with the Nazi 'war of annihilation' against all Soviet citizens. This attitude allowed Ukrainians, Balts and East Germans to disassociate themselves from their passive or active roles in the genocide, a subject that remains contested in these nations.

Long-held Christian views about the role of Jews in the assassination of Jesus Christ contributed to the accentuation of antisemitism in the USSR, as it did in Poland. This interpretation was compounded in those regions by class envy at the educational and professional success of some Jews, as well as the association of Jews with Bolshevism. This confluence of factors meant that traditional Christian antisemitism was complemented by anti-communism and that repression against Jews was seen or presented as a way to reverse Soviet crimes, supposedly instigated by Jews in control of the *nomenklatura*. On the other side of the equation, many Eastern European Jews supported Zionist, social-democrat, socialist and communist movements, all of which, in different ways, offered them the promise of emancipation or social equality. The October Revolution was important for Soviet Jews because it enforced secularization in the country and proscribed antisemitism, although the official stance and the popular feelings did not converge immediately.[33]

Largely, and in spite of the widespread purges and terror of the 1930s, the status of Jews improved after the Soviet Revolution, with a good proportion of them becoming urban, secular and active in social and cultural life, as well as political parties, including the Bolsheviks. Indeed, many Jews, including Grossman and Ehrenburg, rushed to defend their motherland after the German invasion, when many of them still endorsed the Soviet system, if only from memories of their fraught and difficult past. Although the lives of Jews were by no means easy under the Soviet regime, they suffered in a similar proportion to other ethnicities or religious minorities. Even if it is difficult to compare and measure distress, fewer of their numbers were killed or displaced by comparison with Tartars or Ukrainians. This 'equality of suffering' ended suddenly with the Nazi occupation, which decimated the Jewish population of the Western USSR in their own villages and towns (or close to them) in massacres carried out by the four *Einsatzgruppen* that followed the Wehrmacht. These crimes were complemented by subsequent mopping-up operations of remaining survivors and forced denunciations of those hidden on punishment of

death for any family protecting Jews, as well as partial or total destruction of villages, as mentioned in Chap. 3. Among the scattered Jewish survivors of the invasion, some run away to the local forests, joining partisan groups as part of Soviet, Zionist or mixed detachments, or *otriads*, opting to fight as the only means of survival or simply to die fighting.

A renewed interest in Jewish resistance has uncovered or highlighted evidence that challenges the assumption that Jews were led to their slaughter without a fight. In this context, the area of Western Belarus that borders Poland, with large forests and swamps, offers some remarkable examples to supplement the uprisings in Warsaw's Ghetto in April 1943 or in Sobibor in October of the same year. One of these examples is provided by the remarkable survival of 1230 Jews in the Naliboki Forest of north-western Belarus as part of a communal-cum-resister group, known after its leader as the Bielski Partisans.

Released in 2008, Zwick's *Defiance* is an adaptation of Nechama Tec's 1993 book, *Defiance: The Bielski Partisans,* which deals with the establishment of an *otriad* in a densely forested area by the Bielski brothers during the winter of 1941–42.[34] This twenty-first-century action film presents the Bielskis as 'ordinary', flawed heroes who respond to the circumstances in which they find themselves with courage and determination, as well as violence. Tuvia Bielski (Daniel Craig) becomes the de-facto leader of this kibbutz-like *otriad*, during their first winter, in a film that assumes knowledge of the Holocaust that was not readily available to mainstream television audiences in the 1980s, when *Escape from Sobibor* was produced.

Defiance starts when Asael (Jamie Bell) and Alexander ('Zus') Bielski (Liev Schreiber) return to their home in Stankiewicze after Operation Barbarossa (22 June 1941). On reaching their village, they find that nearly all its inhabitants, other than their younger brother, Aron (George MacKay), have been murdered by *Einsatzkommado* and local police in a destructive operation of Belarussian villages such as that described in Elem Klimov's *Come and See* (1985) in Chap. 3. Arriving back from the Lipiczánska Forest, Tuvia meets with his brothers and they proceed to revenge the death of their parents in a scene that sets the tone of the film. Fully armed, Tuvia challenges the Belarusian collaborationist police chief (Sigitas Rackys), who had boasted of murdering Jews in an earlier scene. Tuvia interrupts a domestic scene, bursting in the *politsai*'s house while he eats dinner with his wife and two teenage sons. When one of the sons makes a move for his weapon, Tuvia shoots him and then his brother before

murdering the policeman as he pleads for his life. The mother, whose desperation is there for all to see, holds her hands outstretched while beseeching them to kill her too, but they leave her behind to mourn her family in the film, although in reality she was also murdered that day. This violence establishes the mood of a production that acknowledges the brutalization of its protagonists even if, as with Sobibor's final revolt, we are unable to challenge the morality of these actions. From the film's onset, therefore, Zwick's representation of Jewish resistance contrasts with the image of 'Jewish wimps' of previous productions. Zwick himself refers to this choice as follows:

> I think there's been an extraordinary, inevitable and very necessary emphasis on six million who died, but I think there's some historical or even some iconic redress to be made about those who survived, and how they survived. And I think there's a false impression that Jews only went willingly and that the idea was that there was no impulse to resist when in fact every time there was an opportunity it was taken. This is one such time in which it was very successful.[35]

Defiance focuses on the group's challenges in the first winter of the Nazi invasion. As increasing numbers of local Jews enter the forest seeking refuge within the Bielski camp, tensions between Tuvia and Zus increase. After Zus questions Tuvia's leadership abilities and Tuvia mocks Zus' relationship with one woman in the camp, a fight breaks out between the brothers, and Zus leaves to join the Soviet partisans. From this point onwards, both siblings lead separate lives, with Tuvia organizing survival in the Bielski camp and Zus fighting the Germans. The film thus challenges doubly the notion of Jewish passivity in a story of survival that stresses the utility (or lack of utility) of violence and the morality of some necessary actions. To present this clearly, Zwick casts the two protagonists, Zus and Tuvia, as embodiments of the two positions. While Zus becomes an advocate of direct, violent action against the Germans, Tuvia adopts a humanist mantra, insisting that they 'must not become like them'. When Zus answers 'no, but we must kill like them', Tuvia sums up the film's main message, 'our revenge is to live'. Zuvia thus classes survival as a form of active resistance, undermining a sustaining tenet of Nazi ideology that classed Jews as *untermensch*. In this regard, Zus provides an effective foil for Tuvia, who edges closer to those who would criticize Jewish violence as transforming Jews into Nazis. Besides their verbal confrontation, their two positions are

compared when Zwick juxtaposes sequences from the idealized wedding of Asael Bielski and Chaya Dziencielsky (Mia Wasikowska) in the camp with Zus and the Soviet partisans fighting Germans and blowing trains up. For the director, this intercutting encapsulates the film's essence, which is the need to use violence to preserve life: 'I think it was the fact that their defiance was to perpetuate the spirit of life, was not to let that be taken away from them. The contradictions of having something as jubilant and as life affirming as a wedding in the midst of the need to protect themselves violently was very much at the heart of the film'.[36]

In case there are doubts about the film's design, when the commander of the Soviet partisans, Viktor Panchenko (Ravil Isyanov), challenges Tuvia with the affirmation that Jews do not fight, Tuvia bluntly retorts that: 'These Jews do'. This exchange between them also addresses the Soviet treatment of Jews, when Tuvia tells Panchenko, a character mirrored in partisan leader Panteleimon Ponomarenko, that 'the Motherland does not discriminate between Jews and non-Jews'. Panchenko's nonchalant expression acknowledges his acquaintance with the fact that antisemitism was a crime in the Soviet Union but that he is unlikely to punish offenders if antisemitism does not interfere with his command or the overall success of the fight. This condonation is corroborated later on in the film when Panchenko is challenged by Zus regarding the antisemitism of his second-in-command. Pachenko, again in a rather casual tone, asks the culprit to apologize to the man that he had beaten.

Zwick uses a degree of artistic license in his cinematic interpretation of the story, especially in his casting of the four brothers. For example, it is tacitly implied that Tuvia and Zus are the oldest of the Bielski brothers while the adolescent Asael was, in fact, two years Zus' elder, having been born in 1908. Zus, who had been born in 1910, was in reality four years younger than Tuvia, who was the eldest. The age hierarchy appears inverted, partly due to Schreiber's imposing physique and his credible performance as older sibling in the film. Craig's subtle but powerful embodiment of Tuvia's leadership abilities is slightly coloured by his attempts at recreating an Eastern European accent, which is meant to offer a semblance of realism. This search for authenticity is shown in the use of accents, different languages, casting and the film's striking scenery. While talking to partisans or to locals, Russian and German are often used and subtitled, which is unusual in mainstream American productions. Likewise, the choice of location, north of the Belarusian border in Lithuania, adds an aura of realism to a film that was shot 200 kilometres north of the actual base of operations of

the Bielski Otriad. The film's legitimacy is furthered by the use of descendants from the Bielski Otriad as extras.

The film's realism is complemented by symbolic scenes, as well as a fictitious rendering of an ultimate 'rescue'. Following a challenging winter for both Tuvia's Jewish community and Zus' partisan unit, the brothers are reunited after Zus and several partisans save Tuvia's group from a ferocious German attack. Also fictitious is the climax of the film, in which Tuvia and his weakened, hunted band of Jews come under attack from German tanks and a seemingly endless stream of soldiers before being saved by Zus. Tec was initially ambiguous towards the inclusion of such invented scenes within the film, noting that Tuvia had even told her personally that he had 'preferred to save one old Jew than to kill twenty Germans'.[37] However, in an interview with the Polish newspaper *Rzeczpospolita*, Tec admitted that the liberties taken with the story strengthened its dramatism and after watching 'the film several times, I have to say, I like it more and more'.[38]

Most of the action in *Defiance* takes place in the forest that becomes essential to the film's significance, confirming it as the chronotope for partisan struggle, as in *Come and See*. The prominence of the forest, which embraces the Jews' fight for survival in Biblical terms, is an aspect stressed by the director, who responded to the question about turning the forest into a 'character' as follows:

> I think so, very much. The cities were traps. No one could hide in the cities. But the forest is what sheltered them. The forest was their salvation. Traditionally, in literature and in history, the forest has been always the place where people go for refuge, to be changed; the lover, the outlaw, the bad man, the fool. The forest is that place of transformation. All the people who are there, they still to this day, talk about the beauty of the forest. The beauty of the natural world juxtaposed with the horror of the surrounding elements was very important to me to try to dramatize.[39]

The use of the forest and the telluric embedment of the partisans is highlighted in a particularly iconic scene of the film in which a column of Jews led by Tuvia and Asael leave their camp behind and traverse a vast swamp with German forces in hasty pursuit after them. Also, towards the end of the film, the Bielski Partisans march again through water towards a brighter future. These scenes are highly reminiscent of the Biblical story of Moses leading the Israelites across the Red Sea in flight from the Egyptians (Figs. 7.4 and 7.5). This religious imagery is consolidated by the choice of

Fig. 7.4 Edward Zwick, *Defiance* (2008). The flight of the Bielski partisans reminiscent of Moses' exodus from Egypt across the Black Sea to reach Sinai

Fig. 7.5 Edward Zwick, *Defiance* (2008). Biblical imagery of Jews in flight is associated with renewal and a new baptism

the film's end, when Zus and Tuvia, now reconciled, walk towards the forest and are enveloped by the surrounding trees, which Zus says are 'beautiful'. Zus' words lead to the on-screen credits that sum up the legacy of this struggle and the destinies of its main protagonists. Viewers are informed of Asael's death fighting with Soviet partisans and both brothers setting up a taxi and truck business in the US, where they lived largely anonymous lives.

As ever so often with Holocaust events in Poland and in the former Soviet Borderlands, the film became a catalyst for debates because of its perceived anti-Polish bias. Released in Poland as *Opor* (Resistance), *Defiance* was either booed or removed from cinemas, partly because Poles attribute to the Bielskis a massacre of 128 Poles in Naliboki in 1943. The Bielski Otriad's alleged involvement in banditry and the murder of hundreds of Poles within the Naliboki forest has led to a wave of condemnation, with commentators responding to the film in such ways as: 'in the books and movies, its members are portrayed as heroes. The local people, however, remembered them as "brutal and unscrupulous thugs"' and 'the historical truth is the last thing you should look for in Edward Zwick's film about Jewish partisans'.[40] The most vocal attack on the film was voiced by the conservative newspaper *Rzecpospolita*, which has, in turn, been accused of antisemitism, for writing that: 'The Jewish groups were not squeamish when it came to procuring food. They turned to pillaging, murder and rape'. *Rzecpospolita* charged against Zwick for '[putting] on a pedestal a man [Tuvia Bielski] who was bandit and hero rolled into one'.[41] Another Polish newspaper, the liberal *Gazeta Wyborcza*, also disapproved of the representation of the Bielski brothers, although recognizing that they were not involved in the Naliboki events. Nonetheless, reporters Piotr Głuchowski and Marcin Kowalski, who conducted their own investigation, depict Tuvia Bielski as 'probably a smuggler', adding that 'Tuvia personally fought against neither the Germans nor the Poles, but his people attacked Home Army units. The Bielski partisans participated, for instance, in the treacherous disarmament of Polish partisans by the Soviets on 1 December 1943'.[42]

Although *Defiance*'s historicity appears to be prejudiced and slanted to Poles, it can also be argued that the most significant departures from the film's historical referents are cinematic decisions to make the story into an adventure film in which Jews are active agents. These decisions are constrained, moreover, by cinema's pecking order, which means, first of all, appeal to a wide public and, secondly, faithfulness to the historical bases of the deeds presented. These constraints are alien to films that take the representation of 'revenge fantasies' to their limits, such

as Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* and, especially, Verhoeven's *Black Book*, which merges Holocaust and resistance cinema and will be studied in this book's Conclusion.

Representations of the deeds carried out by the likes of Pechersky, Anielewiz, Feldhendler or the Bielskis offer a suitable complement to the roles of Jews as victims, which has traditionally received more cinematic attention. Partly produced as 'revenge fantasies', these films offer a salutary addition to popular cinema of Holocaust victims or Gentile rescuers, and it is one that finds referents in the historiography of World War II but which had not been considered suitable for mainstream productions until the late twentieth century. These films widen the spectrum of Holocaust and resistentialist films substantially, a subject that remains challenging in nations or regions that fell under the Nazi occupation, especially those that would be under Soviet control after the war. These countries, Poland, the Baltics, Ukraine, Belarus and Russia, contain most of the areas where the Jewish Pale of Settlement was located and where the highest proportion of Jews lived and died. It was also the location of the most important extermination camps, as well as the waves of rear-guard mass murders carried out by the *Einsatzgruppen* that followed the Wehrmacht's advance and that inaugurated the Holocaust. However, it was also the area in which Jews rose and contested the onslaught launched on them. The end of the Cold War, and a change in our understanding of the complex responses to the occupation, have facilitated the production of feature films in which Jews appear as flawed heroes capable of violence and retaliation, adding a missing and neglected ingredient to earlier films. This book's Conclusion will examine those trends in relation to the twenty-first century revival and re-nationalization of resister narratives, assessing their impact in our understanding of 'grey zones'.

Notes

1. Quentin Reynolds, an American journalist who visited the town after the German withdrawal in 1943, described Vyazma's destruction in *The Curtain Rises* (New York: Random House, 1944).
2. Initially designed to host Jews, the camp in Shirukuja Street became the principal destination for POWs in Minsk. Additional information about

the camp and a contemporary photograph are held in the archive of the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum in Israel.

3. Browning, Foreword, *From the Ashes of Sobibor,* by Thomas 'Toivi' Blatt (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 1997), p. xviii.
4. In relation to Sobibor's Uprising, see especially Yitzhak Arad, *Belzec, Sobibor Treblinka* (Urbana: Indiana University Press, 1987). Testimonies and memoirs other than Blatt's, include Miriam Novitch, *Sobibor: Martyrdom and Revolt* (New York: Holocaust Library 1980) and Shlomo Szmajzner, *Inferno em Sobibor: A tragédia de um adolescente judeu* (Rio de Janeiro: Edicoes Block, 1968).
5. The film is based on the book written by American journalist and author Richard Rashke, *Escape from Sobibor* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1983), which was republished in 1995, using Sobibor survivor, Esther Rabb, as consultant. Blatt served as a technical adviser for Gold's film and worked with Rashke to locate and interview Sobibor survivors in the late 1970s and 1980s.
6. Magilow, 'Jewish Revenge Fantasies in Contemporary Film', in *Jewish Cultural Aspirations,* ed. by Bruce Zuckerman, Ruth Weisberg and Lisa Ansell (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 2012), pp. 89–109 (p. 98). Magilow adds to this list the attitude of Shmuel (Jack Scanlon) in Mark Herman's 'family Holocaust film', *The Boy in the Stripped Pijamas* (2008), which is based on John Boyne's book of the same title. Shmuel is beaten by an SS man following the betrayal of his friend, Bruno (Asa Butterfield), whom he soon forgives. Bruno, the son of the camp's commandant, is the film's main protagonist and victim, as well as the point of identification for the audience.
7. An appraisal of the advantages and disadvantages of this position is given in the essays included in *The Holocaust in the Twenty-first Century: Contested/Contesting Memories,* ed. by David Seymour and Mercedes Camino (London and New York: Routledge, 2017).
8. Although Stagnation literally refers to the rule of Leonid Brezhnev (1964–1982), the 'era' includes its continuation under the shorter leaderships of Yuri Andropov (1982–84) and Konstantin Chernenko (1984–85).
9. See Catherine Merridale, 'War, Death, and Remembrance in Soviet Russia', in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century,* ed. by Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 61–83 and *Ivan's War: Life and Death in the Red Army, 1939–1945* (London: Faber & Faber, 2005).
10. The long title of this collection of testimonies is *The Black Book: The Ruthless Murder of Jews by German-Fascist Invaders Throughout the Temporarily-Occupied Regions of the Soviet Union and in the German Nazi Death Camps Established on Occupied Polish Soil During the War 1941–1945*, but it is

normally known as *The Black Book of the Holocaust* or, simply, *The Black Book*. The book has been published in full as *The Complete Black Book of Russian Jewry*, ed. by Ilya Ehrenburg and Vasily Grossman, trans. and ed. by David Patterson (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2002).

11. A selection of Grossman's articles written for *Red Star* has been edited and translated by Anthony Beevor and Luba Vinogradova in *A Writer at War: a Soviet Journalist with the Red Army, 1941-1945* (New York: Vintage Books, 2013).
12. The name is given in Blatt's book as Pożycki, whereas in *The Black Book,* he is listed as Bzhetsky. See *The Complete Black Book*, p. 494.
13. Blatt, *From the Ashes,* p. 199.
14. The segment on the uprising, based on Pechersky's testimony and entitled 'The Uprising at Sobibor', was written by Pavel Grigorievich Antokolsky and Veniamin Aleksandrovich Kaverin. See *The Black Book,* pp. 487–500.
15. Blatt, *From the Ashes,* p. 198.
16. Luka has been identified as Dutch Jew Gertrude Poppert-Schonborn from a German family who had migrated to Holland. Research leading to her identification was undertaken by Jules Schelvis, a Dutch Jew who was sent to Sobibor with his family and was subsequently transferred to work in Lublin, from where he managed to escape. See *Sobibor: A History of a Nazi Death Camp* (Oxford: Berg 2007), first published in Dutch as *Vernichtungslager Sobibor* in 1993.
17. For details about Pechersky's life, and his subsequent marriage to Olga Kotova, see Selma Leydesdorff, *Sasha Pechersky: Holocaust Hero, Sobibor Resistance Leader, and Hostage of History* (London: Routledge, 2017).
18. *The Black Book,* p. 494. The writers of this segment in the book stress that Luka, to whom they refer as Lukya, had been brought up in a communist household, migrating from Germany to Holland, and was used to not asking questions: 'Pechersky and Lukya [sic] remained on friendly terms throughout those tragic days. Lyuka understood the meaning and the aim of their friendship. Having grown up used to conspiracies from her childhood, she asked no questions and knew that Pechersky had his reasons for not sharing his plans with her' (p. 495).
19. See Ofer Aderet, '70 years on: An Unlaundered Relic of a Sobibor Hero', *Haaretz,* 14 October 2013 (http://www.haaretz.com/jewish-world/jewish-world-features/.premium-1.552199).
20. The news of the commemoration and a photo can be seen on the webpage of the Ghetto Fighters' House Museum (http://www.gfh.org.il/Eng/?CategoryID=349&ArticleID=575&SearchParam=sobibor).
21. Blatt, *From the Ashes,* p. 145. Blatt outlines the plan's phases, including the need to kill anybody threatening the operation and Pechersky's suggestion to use of the main gate to avoid land mines on pp. 144–45.
22. Blatt, *From the Ashes,* p. 141.

23. Corry, 'TV Review: Does the Holocaust Defy Dramatization', *New York Times*, 12 April 1987 (http://www.nytimes.com/1987/04/12/arts/tv-review-does-the-holocaust-defy-dramatization.html).
24. *The Black Book,* p. 497. According to *The Black Book's* account, the names and times of those in charge of the murders and those murdered, which differ in other accounts, are as follows: first, Kali Mali dispatched Untersturmführer Ernst Berg just before 4pm, followed ten minutes later by Semen Mazurkevich, who 'killed Michel, chief of the guards. At the same time Arkady Vaispapir killed the head of the death camp, Oberscharfurer Gettinsger'. The first two were killed in the tailor shop, while the third murder took place in the shoe shop, as seen in the film. The fourth was Friedrich Gaulstich, killed by Shleima [Solomon] Leitman (p. 499). In fact, as noted above, Kali Mali killed SS-Untersturmführer Niemann, who was in command of Camp II, the extermination area. Others, such as Yehuda Lerner, also took part, as seen in his 1979 interview with Claude Lanzmann, shown in Lanzmann's documentary, *Sobibor, 14 octobre 1943, 16 heures* (2001), which was an offshoot of the recordings made for his documentary *Shoah* (1985).
25. Magilow introduces his article on 'revenge fantasies' with a summary of these events. See 'Jewish Revenge Fantasies', p. 89.
26. Corry, 'TV Review'.
27. The Holocaust Research Project reproduces the Report in full at: (http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ar/images/Sobibor%20(1).jpg), and translated into English at: (http://www.holocaustresearchproject.org/ar/images/Sobibor%20(2).jpg).
28. See the excerpts provided by Blatt's daughter, Rena Smith, 'Interview with the Leader of the Sobibor Revolt', reproduced in The Jewish Virtual Library (http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/interview-with-alexander-aronowicz-pechersky-leader-of-the-sobibor-revolt).
29. The estimates range from 170,000 to 250,000 with Raoul Hilberg putting it around 200,000 victims, including 1000 Poles. Besides Polish and Soviet Jews, the camp hosted 33,000 Dutch Jews, only nineteen of whom survived.
30. See Blatt, *From the Ashes*, pp. 159, 233.
31. Blatt, *From the Ashes,* pp. 159–60.
32. See Biskupski, 'Poland and the Poles in the Cinematic Portrayal of the Holocaust', in *Rethinking Poles and Jews: Troubled Past, Brighter Future,* ed. by Robert Cherry and Annamaria Orla-Bukowska (Lanham and Plymouth: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007), pp. 27–42 (pp. 27, 29).
33. On this topic, see Zvi Y Gitelman, *A Century of Ambivalence: The Jews of Russia and the Soviet Union, 1881 to the Present* (Urbana, Ill: Indiana University Press, 2001); Benjamin Pinkus, *The Jews of the Soviet Union: The*

History of a National Minority (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) and Adam Ulam, *Lenin and the Bolsheviks* (London: Fontana, 1966).

34. Tec, *Defiance: The Bielski Partisans* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1993). Tec is a Holocaust survivor and scholar who managed to escape from Poland posing as a Catholic. Tuvia Bielski, who migrated to the US, became a taxi driver and died in 1987, before the book was released.
35. Zwick, 'Defiance – Edward Zwick Interview', Jay Wertz, *Historynet*, 13 January 2009 (http://www.historynet.com/defiance-edward-zwick-interview.htm).
36. Zwick, 'Defiance – Edward Zwick Interview'.
37. Piotr Zychowicz,'Tewje nie był gwałcicielem, kobiety same się do niego garnęły' (He was not a rapist, and the women had been spitting on him'). Interview with Nechama Tec, *Rzeczpospolita*, 23 January 2009 (http://www.rp.pl/artykul/55362,252686_Tewje_nie_byl_gwalcicielem.html).
38. Zychowicz, Interview with Nechama Tec (see note 37).
39. Zwick, 'Defiance – Edward Zwick Interview'.
40. Marek Sadowski, 'Opór', *Rzeczpospolita*, 3 March 2011 (http://www.rp.pl/artykul/621093-Opor.html). Piotr Gontarczyk, 'Żydzi z czerwoną Gwiazdą' (Jews with red star), *Historia,* 3 March 2011 (http://www.historia.uwazamrze.pl/artykul/888768-Zydzi-z-czerwona-Gwiazda.html).
41. Quoted in Kate Connolly, 'Jewish Resistance Film Sparks Polish Anger', *Guardian,* 5 March 2009 (http://www.theguardian.com/film/2009/mar/05/defiance-film-poland).
42. Piotr Głuchowski and Marcin Kowalski, 'The True Story of the Bielski Brothers', *Gazeta Wyborcza,* 6 January 2009 (http://wyborcza.pl/1,86871,6125087,The_True_Story_of_the_Bielski_Brothers.html).

CHAPTER 8

Conclusion: Chronotopes and Grey Zones

King Haakon VII of Norway was an unusual monarch for his time and place. Born in Denmark as Prince Carl, he changed his name to Haakon on taking Norway's crown, following the invitation of the Norwegian parliament when the country became independent from Sweden, in 1905. Prince Carl accepted the role on condition that it be ratified by Norwegians in a referendum in which he was supported by more than three quarters of them. Haakon VII became the head of a parliamentary monarchy and was vested with executive powers that were normally devolved to the Council of State, practically renouncing absolute power for consensual, democratic and negotiated authority. The beginning of World War II, however, changed everything for Haakon and for Norway. Even though the country had declared neutrality, Norway eventually became engulfed in the conflict when it was invaded alongside its neighbour, Denmark, in Operation Weserübung, on 9 April 1940. King Haakon's agonizing decision not to acquiesce to the German requirements, which led to his eventual exile for the duration of the war, is the focus of a Norwegian film released in 2017. The Norwegian title of Erik Poppe's *Kongens nei* (*The King's Choice,* 2017), which translates literally as 'The king, no!', gives away the drama at the centre of a production that deals with the days immediately following the invasion and the factors that led to Haakon's pronouncement.

The King's Choice offers a history lesson, partly embedded in the detailed on-screen credits that punctuate the film and situate the action.

M. Camino, *Memories of Resistance and the Holocaust on Film*,
https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-49969-1_8

Poppe's film celebrates the unifying role of the monarch, and is not meant to raise many questions about Haakon's decision or the country's attitude. Norway's response to the Nazi occupation differed to that displayed by neighbouring Sweden and Denmark, which also wished to remain neutral in the conflict. The strategically importance of Norway's coast and the commerce of Swedish iron ore partly determined the Nazi attitude to Scandinavia. While Sweden was allowed to remain neutral, provided they supplied iron ore, Norway and Denmark were earmarked as 'benign' occupations, which were designed, above all, to facilitate that commerce and to forestall Allied operations in the North Sea. Like other Scandinavians, Norwegians were considered Aryans, thus not destined to be decimated and enslaved, like the Slavs, or exterminated, like the Jews. As racial superiors, Danish and Norwegians could join the Waffen-SS, which they did initially, though Norwegian volunteers proved not to be as effective as their German 'cousins', and many were unhappy to wear German uniforms. Norway's democratic tradition, and the minute number of Jews in the country did not prevent the persecution of its Jews, however, contributing to a crime for which they apologized in 2012.[1]

While Denmark surrendered after only a few hours of the German attack, Norwegians proved harder to occupy, and the Nazis encountered peaceful resistance, as well as some sabotage. These events, and Haakon's decision not to sign the country's surrender, have been sources of national pride, forming the generic chronotope of the country in resistance, literally incarnated by the king. Films such as *The King's Choice* consecrate this synecdoche of national unity, heroism and courage, conforming to the widespread mythology of casting resistance in World War II as uncontested 'good'. This book's Conclusion looks back at the topics and films studied throughout through the lens of these chronotopes, as well as challenges to them.

Overt or covert challenges to the mythology of people united in resistance against an alien occupier remain scarce in popular culture, though they abound in historical works. Not only are they scarce, but they are not unproblematic, as they tend to cast 'Good Germans' or otherwise be wilful or unconscious efforts to deny or justify the crimes committed by Nazi Germany, its satellites and its collaborators. Challenging these tenets, as this book has shown, does not often appear in national productions from occupied countries, and Norway is not an exception. Although prominent fascists are seldom protagonists in films, Norway was home to one of the most renowned, Vidkun Quisling, after whom all those who collaborated

would be named. Quisling's surname was made into a famous coinage by Winston Churchill who chastized 'traitors' as 'a vile race of Quislings'. Many Norwegians, however, did oppose the German invasion, creating and maintaining resistance networks that offered active and passive resistance, famously including the stance of the country's teachers against Nazi indoctrination. The country was also home to a one of the most famous sabotage events of the war, which was widely aired in cinematic productions. In 1943, Operation Gunnerside was the culmination of a series of attacks that destroyed the Norsk Hydro Plant in Telemark, where production of heavy water for atomic bombs was progressing. As with the rescue of the Jews in Denmark noted in Chap. 6, this event has become legendary in Norway's memorialization of the war, fostering the mythology of a country of resisters. Books and, especially, films, starting with Jean Dréville and Titus Vibe-Müller's *Operation Swallow: The Battle for Heavy Water* (*Kampen om tungtvannet,* 1948), screened only three years after the end of the war, have consecrated these 'heroes of Telemark'. Beyond Norway, the events were popularized in the 1966 blockbuster, *The Heroes of Telemark*, directed by Anthony Mann and with a star-studded cast that included Kirk Douglas and Richard Harris.

The King's Choice is not the only Norwegian film about the war released in the twenty-first century in Norway. The indigenous resistance, working alongside the SOE, is cast in Joachim Rønning and Espen Sandberg's *Max Manus: Man of War* (*Max Manus,* 2008), while Petter Næss' *Into the White* (*Cross of Honour*) (2011) deals with British and German pilots meeting in a remote and isolated part of Norway. Resistance against all odds is also the focus of a late twentieth-century production, Hans Petter Moland's *The Last Lieutenant* (*Secondløitnanten*, 1997), which shows the lone struggle offered by a retired naval officer. These are stories that return to their intended audience, primarily Norwegians, images of ordinary heroism and of democratic, civilized nationalism. *The King's Choice* treads those grounds, while making the monarch a metonymy for his nation, so that his choice is that of his subjects, with whom Haakon, played by the Danish actor Jesper Christensen, fully identifies.

The King's Choice thus adheres to the cultural parameters established in popular culture and, like *Max Manus,* was very successful in a country in which World War II remains a source of identity. Likewise, Denmark, named by Hitler a 'model protectorate' and chastised by Churchill as 'Hitler's tame canary', shares a similar pattern in the memorialization of a conflict that permeates European politics. As seen in Chap. 6, Righteous

Gentiles, Denmark has used its remarkable rescue of the country's Jews to counter the fact that its occupation was as placid as it could be, at least up to 1943. This contradictory perspective is highlighted by Ole Christian Madsen's *Flame and Citron* (*Flammen & Citronen,* 2008). Although the film celebrates the lives of two resisters from the Holger Danske group, Bent Faurschou Hviid (known as Flammen) and Jørgen Haagen Schmith (known as Citron), played by Thure Lindhaart and Mads Mikkelsen respectively, it does not glamorize their deeds, departing substantially from the hagiographic martyrologues that have dominated cinema. The pair, who operated especially from 1943 onwards, killed some collaborators and Nazi officers, probably numbering close to twenty, and were eventually traced and murdered. The film in which they appear was the most expensive Danish production, and yielded the highest box office returns in the country on its release, stimulating considerable debate about the challenges that it posed to the Danish memorialization of the war.

Flame & Citron casts the morality of murdering putative collaborators and, by implication, Danish resistance as a whole, in ambiguous terms, echoing Melville's *Army of Shadows*, which is cited by the director as an influence.[2] As a result, the popularity of the film was not without controversy, and it sparked a dynamic debate not only about those historical details that the film 'got wrong', such as the deaths of the protagonists. The dispute also focused on the usefulness and ethics of their deeds, as both protagonists even doubt whether they have been utilized and are killing the wrong people. If that were the case, resistance would be deprived of its moral compass and it would simply be criminal. By contrast, *Max Manus,* as Helle Bjerg, Claudia Lenz and Erik Thorstensen observe, highlights 'the positive aspects of the history of the occupation'. This is ratified by having Manus (Aksel Hennie) 'anointed' by King Haakon in London, so that his 'actions are symbolically ennobled'.[3] Undoubtedly, Manus is cast in heroic terms, even as he is rendered more human when suffering post-traumatic stress disorder after the liberation. Manus' mental breakdown is not the result of questioning his actions but the realization of the personal cost that he has paid, including the loss of friends from the 'Oslo Gang' to which he belonged.

Both *Max Manus* and *Flame & Citron* are central to Sabine Hake's analysis of 'Postfascist Identity', in which Hake identifies three grounds on which the films differ from earlier productions: 'political justification, emotional validation, and aesthetic celebration of violence'. Hake's study of these two

films, alongside Paul Verhoeven's *Black Book* (*Zwartboek,* 2008) and Robert Guédiguian's *Army of Crime* (*L'Armée du crime,* 2009), emphasizes that: 'heroic stories of resistance to a foreign invader offer reliable emotional returns especially in the cinemas of small nations'.[4] The paradigm of national unity against an alien invader arguably applies easily to unoccupied countries, such as the United Kingdom, for which World War II provides ratification of its 'exceptionalism'. A good example of this attitude can be seen in debates about Christopher Nolan's *Dunkirk* (2017). Released soon after the country voted to exit the European Union, known by its shorthand as Brexit, the film was celebrated in the tabloid press for its representation of a form of heroism immanent to the British character. Unlike the appeal to American exceptionalism, imperial nostalgia is never too far in its British equivalent. In the case of World War II, it blatantly disregards the obvious disparity between the notion of a brave small island standing alone against the world and the large empire that was then ruled by the nation. By contrast, elsewhere in Europe, the war underscores civic oppositions that can be traced to the political and military sides of a conflict that embraced civilians like no other. In this context, most films, as with *The King's Choice,* tend to rehearse celebratory views that are not likely to be contested by large segments of their target audiences, even when they include subtle challenges to the official narrative. A minority of releases, however, present alternative perspectives, often aligned with styles that do not adhere to established cinematic trends. The countries of the former USSR and its satellites also observe these constraints in different ways.

As direct heirs to the USSR, the Russian Federation and Belarus are two countries whose official view of the war relies on the heroic and tragic loss of life that devastated its population, as seen in Nikolay Lebedev's *Star* (*Zvezda*. 2014). Lebedev, a declared admirer of Steven Spielberg, tried to emulate Spielberg's techniques in *Saving Private Ryan* (1998). Lebedev's representation of Operation Bagration in *Star* concentrates on a group of scouts sent to work behind enemy lines on a reconnaissance mission to provide intelligence for the army.[5] *Star* is set in the summer of 1944, as the German Wehrmacht prepared a tank division codenamed Viking for an offensive on Russian land, near the Polish border. The action follows seven snipers codenamed Star (Zvezda), a name with multiple religious and political connotations. They are all aware that they are the third party to attempt the task and that they are likely to follow the destiny of the previous two detachments, which have failed to return. The team successfully

infiltrates enemy lines, lose their radio and find out the German plans, which they desperately need to relay back to their headquarters. The team's attrition starts as they try to get hold of a German radio and, one by one, all pay with their lives to pass on their important message.

The men's courage and silent heroism are, therefore, the main focus of this action film, even if the last lines uttered by the two last survivors reject the notion of willing sacrifice, admitting that 'no one wants to die'. Indeed, the film's last scene pays homage to the Red Army, partisans and volunteers who fought in the war and are seen to march to the tune of rousing, militaristic non-diegetic music against the misty landscape as the film ends. As shown in Chap. 3, The Partisan (1943–74), this landscape embodies the motherland, whose telluric relationship with the protagonists is the central chronotope to these productions, as was to Stalin's recruitment efforts. A final voiceover, delivered by the captain at base camp, Andrei Barashkin (Andrey Egorov), informs us that all, himself included, died in the offensive and that the men were given posthumous awards in 1964.

Star displays the notion of popular heroism prevalent in the Soviet memorialization of the war, even though it was made and released more than ten years after the collapse of communism. As with many of the films looked at in this book, Lebedev's is a literary adaptation, this time of an eponymous memoir written by Emmanuil G. Kazakavich in 1947, which was based on his own experiences in the war. Kazakavich, however, stressed the war's horrors in a narrative that qualified the prevalent glorification of resistance and victory at the time. Likewise, Lebedev's *Zvezda* follows that trend, avoiding the representation of stereotypical evil Nazis in a film whose emphasis is on the youth of the protagonists, highlighted in close-ups. Even more important is the film's monumental role, as the men will die far from their homes, emphasized by including Mongolia in the case of Private Temdekov (Amadu Mamadakov). *Star* does not question the fact that Soviet partisans who operated behind enemy lines were a centrally controlled movement under direct orders from Moscow.

Contrasting with the heroism of resisters displayed in *Star,* Sergei Loznitsa's *In the Fog* (*V tumane*, 2012) highlights the plight of those suspected of collaboration. The film is based on a novel of the same title by Vasily Bykov, a Belarusian writer who also wrote the book on which Shepitko based *The Ascent*, studied in Chap. 3. The novel, which was published in 1989, deals with a man wrongly believed to have collaborated with the invader. Set in Belarus, in the Western borderlands of the USSR,

the film opens when the protagonist, Sushenya (Vladimir Svirskiy), is taken out of his house by two partisans, supposedly to be executed on account of his collaboration. In flashback, we learn that he had been arrested alongside others and had been released in the belief that this would be a punishment worse than death, which proves to be sadly accurate. Sushenya thus faces impossible moral choices that are not of his making, which the film's tragic end illuminates. Although Russia's memorialization of the war routinely pays homage to those then revered as Heroes of the Soviet Union, this reverence does not go without question. Directors such as Lozinstka deal with the terrible situation of civilians or those suspected of collaboration in sensitive and original ways.

As in Russia, Norway or Denmark, World War II has been and remains a constant point of reference in cinema or in the news of Europe and the USA. While the Holocaust is used (or misused) as a warning about the lessons of history to prevent violations of human rights, references to the war differ depending on whether the country was occupied or not, and the degree to which its leaders and politicians colluded with Nazi Germany. The tensions between re-nationalization of individual and collective memories and an 'internationalist', in this case pan-European, approaches to the past, which would see the conflict as a continental civil war, remain very much alive. Whereas Europe's national cinemas tend to vindicate their own country's position as resister or rescuer, Hollywood tackles the war and the Holocaust in mainstream cinema, even in blockbusters, as well as the odd unusual or irreverent take, such as Quentin Tarantino's *Inglourious Basterds* (2009). Most twenty-first century films choose between nostalgia for an idea of a homogenous nation-state united in resistance and an ambiguous attitude towards the past and its mystification. As Hake remarks, these films show 'a renewed fascination with the transformative power of violence…[which] is often aesthetic, but also serves to release the tensions and give expression to anxieties about present conflicts and contradictions'.[6]

European films about World War II offer simulacra and re-enactments of the post-war mythology of resistance, with many celebrating national identity unquestioningly. They also use and abuse cinematic 'Good Germans', stressing moral ambiguity to erase the complexities, guilt and shame that are part and parcel of the memorialization of the conflict. These traditions, the development of which has been traced in this book, are prominent in films that highlight the putative pacifism of Axis soldiers, who might be forced to fight very much against their wishes. Perhaps not surprisingly, some of these films have been made in Italy, or refer to

Italy's role in the war, as seen in Chap. 4. An earlier Italian 'pacifist' film is Francesco Rosi's adaptation of Carlo Levi's 1945 book, *Christ Stopped at Eboli* (*Cristo si è fermato a Eboli,* 1979), set before the war broke out. Rosi's is an unusual film that deals with civil resistance, anticipating the trend of many films in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Levi's book highlights the starvation of the Italian South and cost its anti-fascist author an 'internal exile' sentence given by Mussolini's Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State between 1935 and 1936. Another example of this trend is offered in Gabriele Salvatores' *Mediterraneo* (1991), which won an Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film on its release. Other Italian films background the war to observe its effects on individuals, as happens in, for example, Guido Chiesa's *Johnny the Partisan* (*Il partigiano Johnny,* 2000), or focus on the crimes committed by the 'liberators', as in Marco Tullio Giordana's *Wild Blood* (*Sanguepazzo,* 2008). In a similar vein, Ari Taub's *The Fallen* (2004) deals with an improbable friendship among American, Italian and German soldiers, confusing the fight and the division between friends and enemies. Although marginal to this study, these films illustrate the difficulties of historicizing and coming to terms with a conflict that reveals deep political and social cleavages in Italy and other European countries.

The twenty-first century has also seen the release of two films featuring secret agents in which women play the main roles, including the adaptation of Sebastian Faulkner's novel, *Charlotte Gray,* directed by Gillian Anderson (2001), and Jean-Paul Salomé's *Female Agents* (*Les femmes de l'ombre* 2008), based on the life of Lise de Baissac. These twentieth-first-century films' deployment of female protagonists relies on the practice established in earlier films, which, as shown in Chap. 4, The Collaborator, was furthered by Nazisploitation. This trend, which flourished in the 1970s, ranges from accentuated sexual innuendo to outright sadomasochism, with the setting providing a form of heritage background. Also important for the consecration of this image is the never-ending attraction of stylish women in 1940s tight skirts and stiletto heels, as well as a French accent, which link these films with the prototypically romantic settings exploited by perfume advertizing.

These parameters provide the framework for Verhoeven's *Black Book*, which merges Dutch and Jewish resistance and was promoted in the USA as a Holocaust film. The chronotopes exploited in this film provide a suitable summary of the analyses provided in this book, as well as the contradictions inherent in challenging established views. A Dutch-German-British

co-production, *Black Book* was 'the most expensive Dutch film, made for $21 million and grossed $10.508 million in the first year alone'.[7] Returning to Holland after twenty years working in Hollywood, Verhoeven revisited the occupation years, which were the topic of one of his earlier films, *Soldier of Orange* (*Soldaat von Oranje,* 1977), an adaptation of Erik Hazelhoff Roelfzema's war memoirs. While *Soldier of Orange* used historical referents to show the different destinies of the two upper-class youths, *Black Book* is a fictional account. Both films, however, show the complex responses to the Nazi occupation in Holland, although their similarities end there.

Soldier of Orange shows widespread Dutch support for the Nazis, as one of the protagonists joins the Waffen-SS (23rd SS Volunteer Panzer Grenadier Division Nederland). This Legion, recruited by the local fascist leader, Anton Mussert, fought on the Eastern Front against the Red Army and in 'anti-partisan' operations, considered a euphemism for the indiscriminate murder of Jews, communists and large numbers of civilians in the USSR, especially, but not only, in Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. By contrast, *Black Book,* as critics observe, rehashes Verhoeven's characteristic style, offering a giddy mixture of sex and violence with the Holocaust and Nazi occupation as backdrops. The film, to quote Manohla Dargis' review for the *New York Times*:

> relies on the same formula that has fueled Mr. Verhoeven's big-studio career, namely frenzied sex and violence, bodies thrashing with the ecstasy of coitus and thrashing into paroxysms of death, sometimes at the same time. The thrashing rarely lets up in "Black Book," a film in which a Jewish woman's body is saved from the off-camera death camps, gas chambers and ovens to become a site of negotiation, a means of survival and an erotic spectacle.[8]

Black Book follows the adventures of Rachel Stein (Carice van Houten), a Dutch-Jewish woman who survives the murder of her family when trying to escape the Nazi occupation.[9] Stein subsequently renames herself Ellis de Vries and joins an eclectic Dutch resistance group, which includes monarchists, one communist and one mole. She becomes active in this group because of her personal desire to revenge her family and not because of any political stance. She is given the task to infiltrate the SS's Sicherheitsdienst (Security Service), which she does, seducing the head of the Gestapo in The Hague, Ludwig Müntze (Sebastian Koch), with whom she falls in love. Stephen Hunter questions the morality of this presentation, classing the film as 'a large piece of cheese':

> Possibly it's no surprise that the Dutch are renowned for their dairy products, as the new Dutch film "Black Book" manages to turn World War II into a large piece of cheese…Two or three massacres in and Rachel takes up with a Resistance cell and is given the job of seducing the Gestapo chief… The movie's morality is as dicey as its plot. It makes sure we understand that the handsome secret police colonel, Muentze (Sebastian Koch), is a "good" German…Presumably Muentze has been sending Jews off to the camps for the whole war, though the movie fails to note it…most of the rest of the film examines the internecine struggles of the Resistance cell itself, that is when it's not contriving to get Rachel…into her sensational '40s lingerie – or out of it.[10]

As Hunter suggests, it is hard to imagine that the head of the Gestapo, Müntze, would remain a sensitive man, unaffected by antisemitism, in 1944 Holland, the western European country that lost the highest proportions of its Jews.

The success of the deportations of Dutch Jews, we are led to infer, would somehow have taken place at a distance from Müntze's Gestapo and without his involvement. If this clearly defies the logic of this war, it does concur with the recurrent cinematic topos of myriad 'Good Germans' that were somehow harder to find during the conflict. As outlined in Chap. 6 in relation to righteous gentiles, 'Good Germans', such as Müntze, trace their cinematic ancestors to earlier Eastern European films but become established in late twentieth and early twenty-first century mainstream productions. These 'Good Germans' are protagonists of Christian martyrologues, prominent among which stand Marc Rothemund's hagiographic *Sophie Scholl: The Final Days* (*Sophie Scholl: Die letzten Tag*, 2005) and *The Pianist's* casting of Wilm Hosenfeld, as seen in Chap. 5.

In spite of her efforts, and to Rachel's distress, Müntze is eventually court-martialled by the Germans when the Allies arrive. Following the various twists and turns of this convoluted plot, Ellis finds herself in Israel, where we see her in the film's bookends. This location accords with Margaret Olin's analysis of Israel as the site of redemption in 'the topography of Holocaust films', which Olin describes as follows:

> Many narratives of Holocaust survivors end with the moment of emigration to Palestine, sometimes several years after liberation. In films of such memoirs, which form a genre of 'Holocaust escape films', Israel is often the destination of the plot, just as it was at least the initial destination of many survivors in the years immediately following the war. These endings provide

> the plot with closure, but often they are assigned another function as well. Israel is often tied closely to the documentary verification of the action, the place where the film asserts its claim to truth. [11]

In *Black Book,* however, Israel is shown to be preparing for war, which has raised questions about the morality or suitability of the analogy. In other words, the film's end embeds the implicit suggestion that Israel's involvement in war might be likened to the Nazi era, which Ella Taylor finds simply abhorrent:

> If Verhoeven is merely telling us that everyone is tainted by the exigencies of war, or that human nature is frail, period, he is guilty of nothing worse than banality. At the end of *Black Book*, though, he slips in a scene of Israeli soldiers armoring up, which suggests either the equally banal thought that war never ends or, idiotically, that the Israelis are just as bad as the Nazis…*Black Book*…contributes only to those twin hazards of modern consciousness the inability to distinguish between kinds and degrees of evil, and a mindless urge to shock.[12]

Despite its shortcomings, or because of them, *Black Book,* with its blunt deployment of female sexuality and agency, stresses compromises that were unique to women, inserting contradictions that have been highlighted throughout this book. *Black Book*, in other words, offers a coarse representation of choices made by women, foregrounding the moral ambiguities of women who survived the Holocaust by trading their sexual services. Indeed, the film's representation of 'the grey zone' can be compared with the attitude of Edith (Susan Strasberg) in Gillo Pontecorvo's, *Kapò*. This is a topic studied by Sarah Horowitz, who highlights the double standards used to censor these women, such as the criticism of Fanya Heller's *Strange and Unexpected Love*, where Heller describes her relationship with a Ukrainian guard, after being urged by her parents to be 'nice' to him. As this 'uniformed Ukrainian' had 'the right to grant or take her life', Horowitz notes, 'love was a viable currency in the genocidal economy'. Criticism of Heller's attitude abounds, however, which Horowitz summarizes as follows: 'if Heller did not love Jan then she prostituted herself; if she did love him, then she consorted with the enemy'.[13]

The female protagonist of *Kapò*, Edith, is a fourteen-year old Jewish girl who runs away from her family during the selection and will do anything to survive, becoming the lover of a German guard. Eventually, Edith finds her redemption when she immolates herself to save others, clearly embodying

Primo Levi's definition of the 'grey zone'. As with Edith in *Kapò,* Heller's relationship appears to have been uncoerced, although one needs to take into consideration the contextualization of these women's 'choices', as with the case of *Sonderkommandos* or leaders of the Jewish Councils in ghettos. In this context, Horowitz describes that Heller's aunt, who was raped by a German soldier, had chosen not to tell, and Heller's parents suggested to her that she do likewise. In other words, these women's guilt and shame concur with the feelings described by Levi, but differ on account of their sexuality, whose use as currency is demonized.

Moral ambiguity, as Levi argues, has often been used as a license to exculpate murderers through an aesthetic affectation that contains the possibility of complicity or, worse, denial. This terrain is negotiated by some of World War II productions looked at in this book, which qualify celebratory views of history with segments about these 'grey zones'. It is worth remembering in this context that, notwithstanding his lucid description of the corrupting environment of the camps, Levi found the moral equivalence of victims and perpetrators abhorrent, rejecting the suggestion that 'a murderer' may be lurking 'inside him':

> I am not an expert of the unconscious and the mind's depths…I do not know, and it does not much interest me to know, whether in my depths there lurks a murderer, but I do know that I was a guiltless victim and I was not a murderer. I know that the murderers existed, not only in Germany, and still exist, retired or on active duty, and that to confuse them with their victims is a moral disease or an aesthetic affectation or a sinister sign of complicity; above all, it is precious service rendered (intentionally or not) to the negators of truth…confusing the two roles means wanting to becloud our need for justice at its foundation.[14]

As shown in Chap. 2, from the war itself, many films adopted Manichaean views of good and evil. These productions simplified a complex historical situation to mobilize social consensus, firstly, behind the war effort and, subsequently, to facilitate social reconstruction and reconciliation. Taken to its logical extreme, this position enabled the progressive de-Nazification of Germany, while it provided a sense of national unity and international solidarity elsewhere. On the other hand, some films that 're-nationalize' the struggle project the nostalgic chronotope of social harmony where hegemonic social relations appear immanent and 'natural'. Popular culture, moreover, has often been mobilized to justify the limited and selective justice imparted at the war's end. This selective justice

proved to be a politically astute move that took into consideration the history lessons of World War I. However, it afforded neither closure nor justice to many. Levi's words again offer a transparent summary that close his last book, *The Drowned and the Saved*:

> Let it be clear that to a greater or lesser degree all [perpetrators] were responsible, but it must be just as clear that behind their responsibility stands that great majority of Germans who accepted in the beginning, out of mental laziness, myopic calculation, stupidity, and national pride the 'beautiful words' of Corporal Hitler, followed him as long as luck and the lack of scruples favoured him, were swept away by his ruin, afflicted by deaths, misery, and remorse, and rehabilitated a few years later as the result of an unprincipled political game.[15]

The films studied in this book helped to create or undermined the 'political game' to which Levi alludes, or do both to some degree. Analysing their strengths and shortcomings or elucidating their chronotopes is not only a form of cultural interpretation. It is also a moral exercise that offers poetic justice where real justice was missing. This poetic justice contests the institutional 'rehabilitations' highlighted by Levi, as well as the 'mental laziness, myopic calculation, stupidity, and national pride' that sustained the camps and enabled the state of exception and widespread murders of World War II.

Notes

1. Norway paid compensation for the property seized from Jews in 1998, but issued the formal apology for its role in the deportations in 2012. See 'Norway Apologises for Deporting Jews during Holocaust', BBC, 27 January 2012 (http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-16761558).
2. See Guy Lodge, 'Interview: "Flame & Citron" director Ole Christian Madsen', *In Contention,* 7 August 2009 (http://www.incontention.com/2009/08/07/interview-flame-citron-director-ole-christian-madsen/).
3. Bjerg, Lenz and Thorstensten, Introduction, in *Historicizing Uses of the Past: Scandinavian Perspectives on History Culture, Historical Consciousness, and Didactics of History Related to World War II*, ed. by Helle Bjerg, Claudia Lenz and Erik Thorstensen (Bielefeld: Verlag, 2011), pp. 7–26 (pp. 11, 10).
4. Hake, *Screen Nazis: Cinema, History, and Democracy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2012), pp. 190, 191.

5. The successful Operation Bagration, codenamed after the Georgian Prince Pyotr Bagration, general of the Imperial Russian Army killed at the Battle of Borodino (1812), was part of the Belorussian Strategic Offensive against German forces. It took place between the third anniversary of Barbarossa, 22 June, and 19 August 1944.
6. Hake, *Screen Nazis,* p. 222.
7. Hake, *Screen Nazis,* p. 213.
8. Dargis, 'Bedding That Nice Nazi, and Other Wartime Perils', *New York Times*, 4 April 200 (http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/04/movies/04blac.html?mcubz=1).
9. According to Hake, Verhoeven closely follows the narrative model established by two recent Dutch World War II films, Ben Sombogaart's *Twin* (*De Tweeling*, 2002), which approaches Dutch-German relations through the motif of doubling, and Martin Koolhoven's *Winter in Wartime* (*Oorlogswinter*, 2008), which takes conflicting family loyalties as an entry point into the self-understanding of a country divided between resistance and collaboration. See *Screen Nazis,* p. 215.
10. Hunter, 'War Is Hell, and So Is "Black Book"', *Washington Post*, 20 April 2007 (http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/04/19/AR2007041901815.html).
11. Olin, 'Lanzmann's *Shoah* and the Topography of the Holocaust Film', *Representations,* 57 (Winter, 1997), 1–23 (p. 8).
12. Taylor, 'Guerrillas of Orange', *LA Weekly*, 4 April 2007 (http://www.laweekly.com/film/guerrillas-of-orange-2148217).
13. Horowitz, 'The Gender of Good and Evil: Women and Holocaust Memory', in *Gray Zones: Ambiguity and Compromise in the Holocaust and its Aftermath*, ed. by Jonathan Petropoulos and John K. Roth (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006), pp. 165, 173.
14. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved* (London: Abacus, 1989), pp. 32–33.
15. Levi, *The Drowned and the Saved*, p. 170.

Filmography

Slavica, dir. by Vijekoslav Afrić (Avala Film, 1947)
Charlotte Gray, dir. by Gillian Anderson (Universal Pictures, 2001)
Zoya, dir. by Lev Arnshtam (Soyuzdetfilm, 1944)
The Commissar (*Komissar*), dir. by Alexander Askoldov (Mosfilm, 1967)
A Self-Made Hero (*Un Héros Très Discret*), dir. by Jacques, Audiard (AFMD, 1996)
Uprising, dir. by Jon Avnet (National Broadcasting Company, 2001)
Brothel SS (*Bordel SS*), dir. by José Benazérat (Les Films du Chêne, 1978)
Life is Beautiful (*La vita è bella*), dir. by Roberto Begnini (Miramax Films, 1997)
Lucie Aubrac, dir. by Claude Berri (AMLF, 1997)
The Conformist (*Il conformista*), dir. by Bernardo Bertolucci (Paramount Pictures, 1970)
1900 (*Novecento*), dir. by Bernardo Bertolucci (20th Century Fox Italia, 1976)
Jakob the Liar (*Jakob der Lugner*), dir. by Frank Beyer (PROGRESS Film, 1974)
Naked among Wolves (*Nackt unter Wölfen*), dir. by Frank Beyer (PROGRESS Film, 1963)
Anne Frank Remembered, dir. by Jon Blair (Sony Pictures Classics, 1995)
The Fate of a Man (*Sud'ba cheloveka*), dir. by Sergei Bondarchuk (Mosfilm, 1959)
The Round Up (*La Rafle*), dir. by Roselyne Bosch (Gaumont Film Company, 2010)
A Man Escaped, also known as *The Wind Bloweth Where It Listeth (Un condamné à mort s'est échappé* or *Le vent souffle où il veut*), dir. by Robert Bresson (Gaumont Film Company, 1956)
Battle of Neretva (*Bitka na Neretvi*), dir. by Veljko Bulajić (American International Pictures, 1969)
Belle de jour, dir. by Luis Buñuel (Valoria, 1967)

M. Camino, *Memories of Resistance and the Holocaust on Film*,
https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-49969-1

Miracle at Midnight, dir. by Ken Cameron (American Broadcasting Company, 1998)
Night Porter (*Il portiere di notte*), dir. by Liliana Cavani (Ital-Noleggio Cinematografico, 1974)
The Great Dictator, dir. by Charles Chaplin (United Artists, 1940)
Johnny the Partisan (*Il partigiano Johnny*), dir. by Guido Chiesa (Fandango, 2000)
Holocaust, dir. by Marvin J. Chomsky (National Broadcasting Company, 1978)
The Only Way, dir. by Bent Christensen (Universal Marion Company, 1970)
The Ballad of a Soldier (*Ballada o soldate*), dir. by Grigori Chukhrai (Mosfilm, 1959)
Is Paris Burning? (*Paris brúle-t-il?*), dir. by Rene Clement (Paramount Pictures, 1966)
Hidden in Silence, dir. by Richard A. Colla (Schröder Media, 1996)
Casablanca, dir. by Michael Curtiz (Warner Bros., 1942)
Mission to Moscow, dir. by Michael Curtiz (Warner Bros., 1943)
The Battle of Sutjeska (*Sujetska*), dir. by Stipe Delić (American International Pictures, 1973)
The Rainbow (*Raduga*), dir. by Mark Donskoy (Artkino, 1944)
Operation Swallow: The Battle for Heavy Water (*Kampen om tungtvannet*), dir. by Jean Dréville and Titus Vibe-Müller (Hero Film and Trident, 1948)
Battleship Potemkin (*Bronenosets Potemkin*), dir. by Sergei Eisenstein (Goskino and Mosfilm, 1925)
She Defends the Motherland (*Ona zashchishchayet rodinu*), also known as *No Greater Love,* dir. by Fridrikh Ermler (Alma Ata Studio and Central Art Film Studio, 1943)
Cabaret, dir. by Bob Fosse (Allied Artists, 1972)
Special Train for the SS (*Train spécial pour SS*), dir. by James Gartner (Eurociné, 1977)
Carve Her Name with Pride, dir. by Lewis Gilbert (Rank Organisation, 1958)
Wild Blood (*Sanguepazzo*), dir. by Marco Tullio Giordana (01 Distribution, 2008)
Escape from Sobibor, dir. by Jack Gold (Columbia Broadcasting System, 1987)
Man from Morocco, dir. by Mutz Greenbaum (as Max Greene) (Pathé Pictures Ltd., 1945)
Birth of a Nation, dir. by David W. Griffith (Fox Searchlight Pictures, 1915)
Army of Crime (*L'Armée du crime*), dir. by Robert Guédiguian (StudioCanal, 2009)
The Courageous Heart of Irena Sendler, dir. by John Kent Harrison (Columbia Broadcasting System, 2008)
The Boy in the Stripped Pyjamas, dir. by Mark Herman (Miramax Films, 2008)
The Eternal Jew (*Der ewige Jude*), dir. by Fritz Hippler (Terra, 1940)
Europa, Europa, dir. by Agnieszka Holland (Orion, 1990)

In Darkness (*W ciemności*), dir. by Agnieszka Holland (Sony Pictures Classics, 2011)
The Last Stage (*Ostatni eta*), dir. by Wanda Jakubowska (Film Polski, 1947)
The Shop on Main Street (*Obchod na korze*), dir. by Ján Kadár, and Elmer Klos (Ustredni Pujcovna Filmu, 1965)
Naked Among Wolves (Nackt unter Wölfen), dir. by Philipp Kadelbach (UFA Fiction, 2015)
The Cranes Are Flying (*Letiat zhuravli*), dir. by Mikhail Kalazotov (Warner Bros., 1957)
Jakob the Liar, dir. by Peter Kassovitz (Columbia Pictures, 1999)
Chetniks! The Fighting Guerrillas, dir. by Louis King (20th Century Fox, 1943)
Come and See (*Idi i smotri*), dir. by Elem Klimov (Mosfilm and Belarusfilm, 1985)
Resistance, dir. by Todd Komarnicki (Paramount Home Entertainment, 2003)
Winter in Wartime (*Oorlogswinter*), dir. by Martin Koolhoven (Benelux Film Distributors, 2008)
Walter Defends Sarajevo (*Valter brani Sarajevo*), dir. by Hajrudin Krvavac (Bosna Film, 1972)
M (*M - Eine Stadt sucht einen Mörder*), dir. by Fritz Lang (Vereinigte Star-Film GmbH 1931)
Shoah, dir. by Claude Lanzmann (New Yorker Films, 1985)
Sobibor, 14 octobre 1943, 16 heures, dir. by Claude Lanzmann (New Yorker Films, 2001)
Brief Encounter, dir. by David Lean (Eagle-Lion Distributors, 1945)
The Star (*Zvezda*), dir. by Ledevev Nikolay (Mosfilm, 2002)
A Town Called Alice, dir. by Jack Lee (Rank Organisation, 1956)
Mr Klein (*Monsieur Klein*), dir. by Joseph Losey (Titanus, 1976)
In the Fog (*V tumane*), dir. by Sergei Loznitsa (New Wave Films, 2012)
Living Goods (*Lebende Ware*), dir. by Wolfang Luderer (DEFA, 1966)
Captain Corelli's Mandolin, dir. by John Madden (Universal Pictures, 2001)
A Day in October (En Dag I Oktober), dir. by Kenneth Madsen (Astrablu Media, 1991)
Flame and Citron (*Flammen & Citronen*), dir. by Ole Christian Madsen (Sandrew Metronome, 2008)
Marriage in the Shadows (*Ehe im Schatten*), dir. by Kurt Maetzig (Sovexport-Film, 1947)
Lacombe Lucien, dir. by Louis Malle (Cinema International Corporation, 1974)
Au Revoir les Enfants, dir. by Louis Malle (MK2 Diffusion, 1987)
The Heroes of Telemark, dir. by Anthony Mann (Rank and Columbia Pictures, 1966)
The Silence of the Sea (*Le silence de la mer*), dir. by Jean-Pierre Melville (Pierre Braunberger, 1949)

Léon Morin, Priest (*Léon Morin, prêtre*), dir. by Jean-Pierre Melville (Lux Compagnie Cinématographique de France, 1961)
Army of Shadows (*L'Armée de l'Ombre*), dir. by Jean-Pierre Melville (Rialto Pictures, 1969)
Closely Watched Trains (*Ostře sledované vlaky*), dir. by Jiří Menzel (Filmové studio Barrandov, 1966)
The Republic of Užice (*Užička republika*), dir. by Žika Mitrović (Delta Video, 1974)
The Last Lieutenant (*Secondløitnanten*), dir. by Hans Petter Moland (Seventh Art Releasing, 1997)
Into the White (*Cross of Honour*), dir. by Petter Næss (Scanbox Entertainment, 2011)
The Grey Zone, dir. by Tim Blake Nelson (Lionsgate, 2001)
Son of Saul (*Saul fia*), dir. by László Nemes (Mozinet, 2015)
Dunkirk, dir. by Christopher Nolan's (Warner Bros Pictures, 2017)
The Sorrow and the Pity (*Le chagrin et la pitié*), dir. by Marcel Ophuls (Cinema 5 Distributing, 1969)
Liberation (*Osvobozhdenie*), also known as *The Great Battle,* dir. by Yuri Ozerov (DEFA and Mosfilm, 1968-71)
Sophie's Choice, dir. by Alan J. Pakula (Universal Pictures, 1982)
Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom (*Salò o le 120 giornate di Sodoma*, dir. by Pier Paolo Pasolini (United Artists, 1975)
Commando Hot Rabbits (*Le Commando des chauds lapins*), dir. by Guy Pérol (Europrodis, 1975)
The Pianist, dir. by Roman Polanski (Focus Features, 2002)
Kapò, dir. by Gillo Pontecorvo (Cineriz, 1960)
Battle of Algiers (*La battaglia di Algeri*), dir. by Gillo Pontecorvo (Rizzoli and Rialto Pictures, 1966)
Kongens nei (*The King's Choice*), dir. by Erik Poppe (Nordisk Film, 2017)
Ill Met by Moonlight, dir. by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger (The Rank Organisation, 1957)
The Long Journey also known as *Distant Journey* (*Daleká cesta*), dir. by Alfréd Radok (Rozdelovna Filmu Ceskoslovenského Státního Filmu, 1948)
Song of Russia, dir. by Gregory Ratoff, and László Benedek (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1944)
Night and Fog (*Nuit et brouillard*), dir. by Alan Resnais (Argos film, 1955)
Triumph of the Will (*Triumph des Willens*), dir. by Leni Riefenstahl (UFA GmbH, 1935)
Max Manus: Man of War, dir. by Joachim Rønning and Espen Sandberg (Nordisk Film, 2008)
Christ Stopped at Eboli (*Cristo si è fermato a Eboli*), dir. by Francesco Rosi (Cristaldifilm, 1979)

Rome, Open City (*Roma città aperta*), dir. by Roberto Rossellini (Minerva Film SPA and Joseph Burstyn & Arthur Mayer, 1945)
The Dawns Here Are Quiet (*A Zori Zdes Tikhie*), dir. by Stanislav Rostotsky (Nashe Kino, 1972)
Sophie Scholl: The Final Days (*Sophie Scholl: Die letzten Tag*), dir. by Marc Rothemund (X Verleih AG and Warner Home Video, 2005)
Female Agents (*Les femmes de l'ombre*), dir. by Jean-Paul Salomé (TFM Distribution and Revolver Entertainment, 2008)
Mediterraneo, dir. by Gabriele Salvatores (Miramax Films, 1992)
Marathon Man, dir. by John Schlesinger (Paramount Pictures, 1976)
Battle of the V.I, also known as *Missiles from Hell* and *Unseen Heroes*, dir. by Vernon Sewell (Eros Films, 1958)
The Ascent (*Voskhozhdeniye*), dir. by Larisa Shepitko (MosFilm, 1977)
The Garden of the Finzi-contini (*Il giardino dei Finzi-Contini*), dir. by Vitorio de Sicca (Medusa Home Entertainment, 1970)
Detachment (*Otryad*), dir. by Aleksei Simonov (Lietuvos Kinostudija and Lithuanian Film Studio, 1986)
Night Will Fall, dir. by Andre Singer (BFI Video, 2014)
Amistad, dir. by Stephen Spielberg (DreamWorks Pictures, 1997)
E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial, dir. by Stephen Spielberg (Universal Pictures, 1982)
Schindler's List, dir. by Stephen Spielberg (Universal Pictures, 1993)
Saving Private Ryan, dir. by Stephen Spielberg (DreamWorks Pictures and Paramount Pictures, 1998)
Elsa Fraulein SS, dir. by Mark Stern (Cinematografie Internazionali Associate and Wizard Video, 1977)
The Great Escape, dir. by John Sturges (United Artists, 1963)
Inglourious Basterds, dir. by Quentin Tarantino (Weinstein Company and Universal Pictures, 2009)
Ivan's Childhood (*Ivanovo detstvo*; also known as *My Name is Ivan*), dir. by Andrei Tarkovsky (Mosfilm, 1962)
The Fallen, dir. by Ari Taub (Anthem Pictures and Benelux Film Distribution, 2004)
Conspiracy of Hearts, dir. by Ralph Thomas (Rank Film Distributors and Paramount Pictures, 1960)
The Guns of Navarone, dir. by J.Lee Thompson (Columbia Pictures, 1961)
Days of Glory, dir. by Jacques Tourneur (RKO Radio Pictures, 1944)
Cinema Komunisto, dir. by Mila Turajlic (E2 Films, 2010)
Black Book (*Zwartboek*), dir. by Paul Verhoeven (A-Film Distribution and Metro Tartan Distribution, 2008)
Soldier of Orange (*Soldaat von Oranje*), dir. by Paul Verhoeven (Tuschinski Film Distribution and The Rank Organisation, 1977)
A Generation (*Pokolenie*), dir. by Andrzej Wajda (Contemporary Films, 1954)

Canal (*Kanal*), dir. by Andrzej Wajda (P.P. Film Polski, 1957)
Ashes and Diamonds (Popiół i diament), dir. by Andrzej Wajda (KADR, 1958)
Korzcak, dir. by Andrzej Wajda (Artificial Eye and Ovo Films, 1990)
Holy Week (*Wielki tydzień*), dir. by Andrzej Wajda (Les Films du Losange, 1995)
Katyn, dir. by Andrzej Wajda (ITI Cinema, 2009)
Odette, dir. by Herbert Wilcox (British Lion Films and Lopert Pictures, 1950)
Stars (*Sterne*), dir. by Konrad Wolf (Allotria Filmi and DEFA Film Library, 1959)
For Whom the Bell Tolls, dir. by Sam Wood (Paramount Pictures, 1942)
Mrs Miniver, dir. by William Wyler (Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, 1942)
Defiance, dir. by Edward Zwick (Paramount Vantage, 2008)

Index[1]

[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to notes.

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