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SPECIAL ISSUE

The Holocaust in the Bohemian Lands

S:I.M.O.N.

SHOAH:
INTERVENTION.
METHODS.
DOCUMENTATI**ON**.

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S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. DocumentatiON.

Special issue

The Holocaust in the Bohemian Lands

GUEST EDITORS
Daniela Bartáková, Aletta Beck, Michal Frankl, Tereza Štěpková

This special issue was prepared in cooperation with the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences and the Terezín Initiative Institute in Prague. It aspires to continue, and reach beyond the *Terezín Studies and Documents,* a scholarly yearbook focusing on the history of the Holocaust in the Bohemian Lands. Founded by Holocaust survivors Miroslav Kárný and Margita Kárná, it was published in German (as *Theresienstädter Studien und Dokumente)* and Czech *(Terezínské studie a dokumenty)* between 1994 and 2009. The articles in this issue originate from a workshop in 2019 which examined the state-of-the-art of the research on the Holocaust in the Bohemian Lands. The workshop and the preparation of this issue were generously supported by the Foundation for the Holocaust Victims in Czech Republic.

Institut Terezínské iniciativy

MASARYK INSTITUTE AND ARCHIVES OF THE CAS, v.v.i.

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Abstract

This introduction summarises the rationale for this 'national' special issue devoted to the history of the Holocaust in the Bohemian lands. It discusses the legacy of the historian Miroslav Kárný and the historiographic pause and disorientation following his death in 2001. Before summarising the articles, it analyses the recent polarisation of historiographic debates with regard to the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. It tackles disputes around the local, or Czech, entanglement in the persecution of Roma and Sinti and around comparisons with the genocide of Jews. It discusses the attacks on research that critically challenges common assumptions about Czech solidarity with Jews and the one-sided, top-down approach to the history of the Holocaust in the Protectorate.

This special issue of S:I.M.O.N revisits selected aspects of the history of the Holocaust in the Bohemian (or Czech) lands. Triggered by the occasion of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Miroslav Kárný, the towering personality in Czech Holocaust research, it is informed by the perception of a certain gap in research which developed after the first period of interest following the demise of state socialism in Czechoslovakia. It also connects to the discontinued *Theresienstädter Studien und Dokumente*, a journal which served as a forum for the scholarly (re)discovery of the Holocaust in the Bohemian lands.

The life trajectory of Miroslav Kárný illustrates the quest of many survivors not only to understand and to document the Holocaust, but also their impact on our knowledge and the historical narratives of the genocide of Jews. Kárný, who was born in 1919, had just embarked on his studies at the Charles University in Prague when the Czech universities were closed in November 1939 by order of the occupation authorities in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. His education was interrupted by his persecution and deportation to the Theresienstadt (Terezín) Ghetto, Auschwitz, and Dachau-Kaufering, but historical research became a life-long interest.[1] Kárný's coming to terms with and research on the persecution and murder of Bohemian and Moravian Jews intertwined, but also stood in tension, with his political life as a committed communist.[2]

Side-lined as a result of the antisemitic Slánský trial and again after the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968, Kárný – now acting as a pensioner and supported by his wife Margita, also a Holocaust survivor – turned to research on the Second

1 See: Miroslav Kárný, Sieben Monate in Kaufering, in: Theresienstädter Studien und Dokumente 9 (2002), 13-24.

2 Jaroslava Milotová, Miroslav Kárný (1919–2001), Theresienstädter Studien und Dokumente 9 (2002), 25-32; Jan Tesař, Miroslav Kárný. Studie o vlivu ideologie a politické moci na jedince v letech 1919–1974 [Miroslav Kárný. Study of the Influence of Ideology and Political Power on the Individual in the Years 1919–1974] (BA Thesis), Prague 2010.

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World War and the Holocaust. Their apartment in the socialist-era building in Prague's Jižní město (Southern District) developed into an unofficial research centre, full of books and card files, and a substitute for the missing institutional basis for Holocaust research in Czechoslovakia and the later Czech Republic. In 1989, as the Velvet Revolution ended communist rule, Kárný was ready to become the central personality in research on the history of the genocide of Jews in the Protectorate. Publishing his earlier research in book form,[3] Kárný went on to organise conferences and supervise the documentation efforts that eventually resulted in the publication of a series of Terezín Memorial Books commemorating the names and fates of Bohemian and Moravian Jews deported to ghettos and camps as well as Jews from outside of the country who were brought to Theresienstadt.[4]

The *Theresienstädter Studien und Dokumente*, which was first published in 1994 (formally as a yearbook), as well as its Czech-language version (*Terezínské studie a dokumenty*, starting in 1996), developed into a central platform for Holocaust research in the Czech Republic. The journal published by the Institut Terezínské iniciativy (Terezín Initiative Institute), a small, under-financed NGO, compensated for the lack of interest and infrastructure at Czech universities and research institutions at the time. It brought together Czech and international researchers, Holocaust survivors, and younger scholars. Given the language of the publication, it had a particular impact on the Czech-German/Austrian conversations about history. Even though Kárný built and cherished relationships with academics and academic institutions, his initiatives were firmly located in the community of survivors, serving to empower them. "The activity of the Terezín Initiative has an indispensable role for [Holocaust] research", he exclaimed in the introduction to the first volume of the journal.[5]

The *Theresienstädter Studien und Dokumente* resembled other publications of memorial sites and initiatives in that many of its authors researched a history in which they had been active participants, and in that it mixed original studies by historians with reprinted documents such as Theresienstadt diaries and memoires. While not the only journal contributing to research on the 'Final Solution' in the Protectorate (see for instance *Terezínské listy* published by the Terezín Memorial), it exemplified the choices and dilemmas of the agenda of Holocaust research in the period of post-communist transformation. With the goal to surpass and correct H. G. Adler's seminal work on Theresienstadt, Kárný hoped that the yearbooks would result in a new, authoritative monograph.[6] However, such a volume never materialised and Kárný passed away while still working on the impressive *Kalendarium* of the ghetto.[7]

3 Miroslav Kárný, 'Konečné řešení'. Genocida českých židů v německé protektorátní politice [The 'Final Solution'. The Genocide of Czech Jews in German Protectorate Policy], Prague 1991.

4 Miroslav Kárný (ed.), Terezínská pamětní kniha. Židovské oběti nacistických deportací z Čech a Moravy 1941–1945 [The Terezín Memorial Book. Jewish Victims of Nazi Deportations from Bohemia and Moravia 1941–1945], Prague 1995; Theresienstädter Gedenkbuch. Die Opfer der Judentransporte aus Deutschland nach Theresienstadt 1942–1945, Prague/Berlin 2000; Theresienstädter Gedenkbuch. Österreichische Jüdinnen und Juden in Theresienstadt 1942–1945, Prague 2005.

5 Miroslav Kárný/Raimund Kemper/Margita Kárná, Vorwort, in: Theresienstädter Studien und Dokumente 11 (1994), 8.

6 H. G. Adler, Theresienstadt 1941–1945. Das Antlitz einer Zwangsgemeinschaft, Tübingen 1955. See also the English translation of the second German edition (1960): H. G. Adler, Theresienstadt, 1941–1945. The Face of a Coerced Community, New York 2017.

7 See the private e-print prepared by Kárnýs' children: Miroslav Kárný/Margita Kárná, Terezínské kalendárium [The Terezín Calendar], Prague 2019, https://c.holocaust.cz/files/old/pdfs/zdroje/terezinske_kalendarium_verze1092019.pdf (1 June 2021).

The demise of the journal (the last issue appeared in 2008/2009) was the result not only of financial and organisational difficulties, but also a certain exhaustion of the original drive to document and fill in historical gaps. Kárný's view of Second World War history was still grounded in a top-down approach and the study of occupation structured by narratives of oppression of the nation and its resistance. Although Kárný questioned some of the Czech national mythology surrounding the Holocaust, exploring the grey zones of Czech entanglement and possible involvement, he was not particularly interested either in a critical assessment of the Jewish Council of Elders in Theresienstadt or in the divisions and hierarchies within prisoner society. As I have pointed out elsewhere, the continuation of Kárný's legacy involved a double challenge: To adopt on the one hand more flexible models and transnational views of society under occupation and on the other new methods and approaches from, for instance, gender studies, anthropology, migration studies, digital humanities, and more.[8]

* * *

For a long time, only the genocide of Roma and Sinti generated controversy among historians of the Bohemian lands and in public discourse. Especially the categorisation, criminalisation, and control exercised during the interwar First Czechoslovak Republic and the creation and administration of 'Gypsy' camps during the post-Munich Second Republic and in the Protectorate became a sensitive topic that clashed with idealised narratives of national history.[9] Discussions over the involvement of Czech policemen in guarding these camps and their responsibility for the humiliating and unhealthy conditions ignited debate. It took more than two decades for the Czech government to finally buy out the pig farm located on parts of the site of the former camp in Lety and to begin transforming it into a memorial.

The comparison between different forms of exclusion, violence, and genocide turned out to be no less difficult. Over the past three years, tensions over the interpretation of the genocide of Roma and Sinti also extended to the Terezín Initiative Institute, Kárný's creation. As described in Aletta Beck's report in this issue, the institute engaged in the documentation of names and fates of Roma prisoners from the Bohemian lands and developed a number of educational activities concerning this subject. However, this effort and especially the unease over the comparison of the two genocides triggered negative reactions among a part of the leadership of its founding organisation, the Terezín Initiative (the association of Jewish survivors). Its members criticised the usage of the term 'Roma Holocaust' in the www.holocaust.cz portal, with the conflict peaking around the issue of reading both Jewish and Roma names on the Yom ha-Shoah remembrance day, a deliberate expansion of the meaning of an originally Jewish memorial day. As this issue goes to print, the conflict over how far Kárný's legacy can be extended has resulted in the removal of the institute's director.

Yet these tensions also indicate the growing contestation of research in the Holocaust of Jews in the Bohemian lands, which is increasingly turning into a hostage of the polarisation of Czech historiography and the return of national(ist) historical

8 Michal Frankl, Free of Controversy? Recent Research on the Holocaust in the Bohemian Lands, in: Dapim. Studies on the Holocaust 31 (2017) 3, 262-270.

9 See for instance: Ctibor Nečas, The Holocaust of Czech Roma, Prague 1999; Pavel Baloun, "We Beg You Not to Equate the Names of Gypsies and Knife-Grinders with Honest Traders", in: S:I.M.O.N. Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation. 6 (2018) 2, 44-54.

frameworks and categories. The meticulous research by the historian Vojtěch Kyncl, which suggested that a woman from Lidice denounced a hidden Jew, triggered an equally heated public controversy. Lidice, one of the villages annihilated by the Nazis in revenge for the assassination of Reinhard Heydrich in 1942, has a key symbolical value in Czech narratives of Second World War history, as a lieu de mémoire for Czech resistance and suffering. The resulting nationalist campaign led to the director of the Lidice Memorial, who had adopted a balanced approach without outright denouncing this new historical research, being forced to resign.

Similar differences came to light in reactions to Wolf Gruner's history of the Holocaust in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia published in 2016.[10] Applying perspectives that significantly advanced research on the exclusion of Jews, the expropriation of their property, and their deployment for forced labour in Germany and Austria, the accomplished historian aimed to return the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia to the (figurative) map of Holocaust research. However, his analysis of local initiatives and Czech participation in the exclusion of Jews and their exploitation met with incomprehension and criticism. Gruner's book can rightly be subjected to criticism on a number of accounts, for example the lack of inclusion of Czech-language sources and research, the unstable notion of the 'local', the methodologically questionable usage of reports of the Jewish community, and more.[11] Yet the review by Vojtěch Blodig, a historian from the Terezín Memorial, not only discussed Gruner's alleged or real mistakes or omissions, but also exhibited a distinct unease over the reversed perspective in which the actions of the Czech population as well as the Czech authorities become part of an entangled decision-making process concerning the persecution of Jews. Even though Gruner certainly did not intend to diminish German responsibility for the Holocaust, the dissolution of a unidirectional, top-down Nazi responsibility was read as a form of historical revisionism.[12]

Ivo Cerman, a historian of the Enlightenment at the South Bohemian University and a self-styled expert on the history of Jews and antisemitism, searched for an anti-national conspiracy in a new volume on the history of Jews in the Bohemian lands as well as in other publications.[13] (For full disclosure: The author of this introduction contributed to the conceptualisation of the volume in question and co-authored two pre-Holocaust chapters.) Using manipulative methods, Cerman came to the conclusion that Benjamin Frommer (who authored a chapter about the Holocaust) and other contributors selectively focussed on Czech antisemitism and aimed to prove Czech guilt for the Holocaust while ignoring the reality of living in an occupied country with administrative structures in which Czech authorities were subordinated to German authorities.[14] More interesting than deconstructing Cerman's fab-

10 Wolf Gruner, Die Judenverfolgung im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren. Lokale Initiativen, zentrale Entscheidungen, jüdische Antworten 1939–1945, Göttingen 2016; Wolf Gruner, The Holocaust in Bohemia and Moravia. Czech Initiatives, German Policies, Jewish Responses, New York/Oxford 2019.

11 Michal Frankl, Review of Wolf Gruner, Die Judenverfolgung im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren. Lokale Initiativen, zentrale Entscheidungen, jüdische Antworten 1939–1945, in: Bohemia. Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kultur der böhmischen Länder 58 (2019) 2, 405-409.

12 Vojtěch Blodig, Review of Wolf Gruner, Die Judenverfolgung im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren. Lokale Initiativen, zentrale Entscheidungen, jüdische Antworten 1939–1945, in: Judaica Bohemiae 52 (2017) 2, 141-151.

13 Kateřina Čapková/Hillel J. Kieval (ed.), Zwischen Prag und Nikolsburg. Jüdisches Leben in den böhmischen Ländern, Göttingen 2020.

14 Ivo Cerman, O české vině za holokaust [On Czech Guilt for the Holocaust], in: Aktuálně.cz, 3 February 2020, http://blog.aktualne.cz/blogy/ivo-cerman.php?itemid=35774 (14 July 2021); Ivo Cerman, Nad knihou o Židech a českém nacionalismu [A book about Jews and Czech Nationalism], in: Český časopis historický 118 (2020) 3, 725-750; see also a fabricated attack on Jan Láníček: Ivo Cerman, Nevíte, co se stalo 10. června 1942 [Don't You Know What Happened on 10 June 1942], in: Blog iDNES.cz, 20 June 2020, https://ivocerman.blog.idnes.cz/blog.aspx?c=753302 (14 July 2021).

rications is his general image of a national history under attack by a group of Western scholars and their local lackeys. By casting them as 'revisionists', he could link them to historical attempts to revise the results and interpretations of both world wars. Other reviews by a small and interconnected group also used similar arguments and focussed on what these critics understood as a primarily politicised, anti-Czech approach to modern history.[15]

Leaving aside the possible arguments about what a short synthetic work intended for an international readership should and should not include, the different focus and language is striking. Whereas Frommer did not package his argument in the language of nation and is rather more interested in the behaviour of Jews and others under occupation and persecution, his critical reviewers posit national histories as the building blocks of historical narrative and expect national responsibilities and 'guilt' to be clearly attributed. Expecting that others would read the text through the same lens, the different accentuation transformed the volume into what they perceive as anti-national, political, or possibly revisionist. Hence, the hitherto mostly uneventful Czech coming to terms with the Holocaust is increasingly structured around similar fault lines as it is in Poland and Hungary.

* * *

The articles published here developed out of a workshop organised by the Terezín Initiative Institute and the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Prague in September 2019, which assessed the current state of the field and mapped the developments in research since Kárný's death in 2001.[16] Even though, as a result of Covid-related constraints, not all papers could be turned into articles, this issue aims to fill some voids and explore new methodological approaches. Examining the persecution and mass murder of Jews and Roma, the authors discuss the reactions and entanglements in an occupied country, probe testimonies, and, significantly, explore data-driven approaches. The issue also hopes to be in line with other promising research, such as the freshly published and long anticipated book by Anna Hájková, which provides a new critical perspective on society in the Theresienstadt Ghetto[17] and the research by Benjamin Frommer examining the persecution of Jews in the Protectorate before their deportation.[18]

Jan Láníček's article enriches the difficult debate about Czech participation in the persecution of Jews. Examining eyewitness testimonies and post-war retribution files, he provides a nuanced picture of how the members of the Czech gendarmerie (police) unit, under SS control, interacted with Jewish prisoners in the Theresienstadt Ghetto. While Kárný pioneered this research and questioned the myth that many policemen were executed for helping prisoners, Láníček notes the general lack of in-

15 Iveta Cermanová/Alexandr Putík/Daniel Baránek, Židé mezi Prahou a Mikulovem. Pokus o souhrnné zpracování dějin Židů v českých zemích [Jews between Prague and Nikolsburg. An Attempt at a Summary of the History of Jews in the Bohemian Lands], in: Roš chodeš 82 (2020) 4, 18-19.

16 The workshop and the preparation of this issue were kindly supported by the Czech Foundation for Holocaust Victims.

17 Anna Hájková, The Last Ghetto. An Everyday History of Theresienstadt, New York 2020.

18 Benjamin Frommer, Verfolgung durch die Presse. Wie Prager Bürokraten und die tschechische Polizei halfen, die Juden des Protektorats zu isolieren, in: Andrea Löw/Doris L. Bergen/Anna Hájková (ed.), Alltag im Holocaust. Jüdisches Leben im Großdeutschen Reich 1941–1945 (= Schriftenreihe der Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte, 106), Munich 2013, 137–150; Benjamin Frommer, Privileged Victims. Intermarriage between Jews, Czechs, and Germans in the Nazi Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, in: Adrienne Edgar/Benjamin Frommer (ed.), Intermarriage from Central Europe to Central Asia. Mixed Families in the Age of Extremes, Lincoln 2020, 47-82.

terest by historians in this topic, which is "all the more surprising when considering that this was the only instance that a large group of Czech nationals directly witnessed the Holocaust of European Jews". Building on research about other regions, Láníček draws more complex conclusions: While a few gendarmes (such as the commander Theodor Janeček/Janetschek) clearly identified with the worldview and behavioural patterns of the SS and terrorised prisoners, only a small number were arrested and sentenced during their service in the ghetto. Disentangling their motives and actions remains difficult, but it transpires that most were investigated for providing assistance, which involved financial, material, or sexual rewards. Most gendarmes, Láníček concludes, operated in a grey zone, which is difficult to describe and conceptualise through the monolithic and politicised terms of resistance and collaboration.

Lisa Peschel's article offers a thoughtful and reflective assessment of the reliability of survivor testimony. Taking Christopher Browning's critical reading of testimony and his discussion of possible correctives as a point of departure, Peschel analyses an interview with a survivor who participated in cultural life in Theresienstadt. Her article self-documents an experiment which did not follow a straightforward path. Testing her initial hypothesis that newspaper narratives prevalent at the time of the interview would have influenced the narrator's views, she compared the testimony with the coverage of three very different Czech newspapers in 2005/2006. While her previous research covering early post-war testimonies identified related "objects of feelings", she concluded that the more recent interview "no longer reveals pressures that significantly influenced the […] testimony". Instead, comparing the survivor's four testimonies given over the span of sixty years, she discovered remarkable consistency in how the narrator discussed cultural life in the ghetto, including the sensitive subject of German culture. Rather than a universal interpretation or methodology to be simply copied, Peschel's article is an impetus for critical thinking and searching for new approaches to testimony.

Two articles and two project reports attest to how data drives new research questions and contributes to interdisciplinarity. Štěpán Jurajda and Tomáš Jelínek mobilise the database of Holocaust victims of the Terezín Initiative Institute, one of the most extensive and best developed person-related datasets, for a quantitative study of survival chances and social ties in the Theresienstadt Ghetto and during the deportations to Auschwitz. They provide a completely new view of the database, which was originally developed for the purposes of remembrance and resulted in the series of Terezín Memorial Books. In contrast to assumptions about the significance of ethnicity and/or country of origins for survival in the ghetto, they show that once controlled for all external factors, the country from which the victims were deported did not play a major role in determining their death risks. In another section of their article, they enrich the data in order to assess the significance of social networks, arguing that such connections increased the chances of survival of those who were deported from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz. Their article contributes to a promising trend of statistical and econometric approaches in current Holocaust studies and illustrates the significance of the shift from data collected for remembrance and education purposes to research data.[19] Their conclusions by themselves do not dramati-

19 See for instance: Pierre Mercklé/Claire Zalc, Trajectories of the Persecuted during the Second World War. Contribution to a Microhistory of the Holocaust, in: Philippe Blanchard/Felix Bühlmann/Jacques-Antoine Gauthier (ed.), Advances in Sequence Analysis. Theory, Method, Applications, Vol. 2, Cham 2014, 171-190; Johannes Buggle et al., The Refugee's Dilemma. Evidence from Jewish Migration out of Nazi Germany, in: CEPR Discussion Paper, no. DP15533 (2020), https://people.unil.ch/mathiasthoenig/files/2020/12/CEPR-DP15533.pdf (14 July 2021).

cally change our knowledge or interpretation of the fates of prisoners in Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, but show how qualitative and quantitative research can mutually reinforce each other.

By contrast, Michal Schuster's work on the documentation of the names and fates of Roma Holocaust victims led him to a highly interesting and unexpected local perspective which reaches beyond a black-and-white image characteristic of public discussion on this issue. Rather than quantitative, his approach is micro-historical: He focusses on one Roma family in the Southern Moravian village Hrušky. His meticulous ethnographic and archival research made it possible to unearth details and complexities of local 'citizenship' of Roma families in the village. His interviews revealed an ambiguous picture which confirmed anti-Roma stereotypes by categorising the Dycha family as a positive exception. The peaceful and durable social and economic relations made it possible to negotiate residence rights in the village, which was no small feat for a marginalised Roma family. Even more significantly, it likely saved them from deportation temporarily, possibly as a result of an intervention by village authorities. Thus, Schuster concludes, "focussing on a specific place, community or family through written and oral history sources from the local level can change perspectives and enrich research based on documents of central authorities and institutions."

The new section of S:I.M.O.N acknowledges the significance of "Data and Documentation" as the bedrock of research and an opportunity for the development of new digital humanities approaches. The two contributions share the urge to think critically about and beyond data and its use and to understand that choices made in data collection are not only technical, but refer to conceptual framings and research designs and impact the findings. In her report, Aletta Beck outlines the creation of the database of Roma and Sinti prisoners prepared by the Terezín Initiative Institute and partially published online in 2020. Referring to inspiration from Kárný, she discusses how the expertise – archival, conceptual, as well as technical – gathered in the process of documenting the names and fates of Jewish deportees was used to collect details of Roma and Sinti victims. However, there were distinctions as well: The different forms and timelines of categorisation of Roma and Sinti in comparison to Jews substantiated a different methodology, while the high level of anti-Roma stereotypes in Czech society called for an even more sensitive approach to personal data.

Magdalena Sedlická reports on the activities of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure (EHRI) in the Czech Republic, showing how documentation on the 'national' level can empower transnational approaches as well as new digital methodologies. In fact, all three projects described here were designed to reach beyond national constraints. For instance, the Terezín Research Guide was developed as an experiment in breaking archival borders, across countries, languages, cataloguing systems, and encoding standards. Sedlická's report can be extend with information on the Czech node of EHRI, currently under construction as part of the process of making EHRI a permanent structure. Organisations with diverse expertise joined forces in the Czech consortium: The Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences as a research organisation, the Terezín Memorial as a Holocaust museum and a specialised archive, the National Archives as the most important archival organisation, and the Terezín Initiative Institute devoted to documentation, digitisation, and public history. This national node applied for evaluation and funding as part of a larger cluster, namely the digital humanities research infrastructure LINDAT/CLARIAH-CZ. If evaluated positively and approved by the Czech government, the Czech node of EHRI will start operating in 2023.

Finally, the contributions hopefully provide an answer to the hypothetical question of why publish a 'national' special issue at all. Indeed, the contributors agree that Holocaust research should be driven by transnational approaches and allow for comparison rather than being focussed on the nation or constrained by state borders. Writing the history of the Holocaust without taking into account transnational histories of ideas and people is almost impossible. However, as the recent tensions and unease also show, the grip of 'national' conceptual frameworks opens up questions about the integration of critical histories of the Holocaust within institutional frameworks as well as narratives of national history. It is precisely the ambition to research locally, to probe the national, and to think beyond this context that has informed the current issue on the Holocaust in the Bohemian lands.

Michal Frankl is a senior researcher at the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences. His research focuses on the history of modern antisemitism and the Holocaust and on the history of refugees and refugee policies. He is the principal investigator of the ERC Consolidator grant Unlikely refuge? Refugees and citizens in East-Central Europe in the 20th century.
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Jan Láníček

Between Resistance and Collaboration

The Ambiguity of the Protectorate Gendarmes' Service in the Theresienstadt Ghetto (1941–1945)

Abstract

The article analyses the role members of the Czech Protectorate gendarmerie played in the persecution of the Jews during the Second World War. A Special gendarmerie unit guarded Theresienstadt, the only major Jewish ghetto created during the war in the occupied Bohemian lands. Whilst some of the gendarmes supported Jewish prisoners and tried to alleviate their plight, others collaborated with the SS unit – in charge of the ghetto, behaved brutally or denounced prisoners for any transgressions of the ghetto laws. Most of the gendarmerie unit vacillated between both extremes and remained passive observers to the events. The article centres on both extremes of support and betrayal, and asks what they can reveal about the wartime service of the gendarmes in the ghetto and their role in the persecution of the Protectorate Jews, as well as those deported to the ghetto from Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and other territories.

"I walk through the world with the gendarme behind me, from the cradle to the grave! Until my cremation – either in Terezín or Auschwitz […]."[1]
"The SS raged at the transport assembly point, the Protectorate police raged on the march to the Bubny station, the Schutzpolizei raged on the train, the Protectorate gendarmerie raged at the train station in Bohušovice and on the march to the ghetto, the SS and the gendarmes raged in the ghetto, the Schutzpolizei again raged on the transport to the Auschwitz hell, then came the SS combined with the infamous Canada, then gas, cremation, and the end of the pilgrimage."[2]
František R. Kraus (1946)

Otto Beck spent the war incarcerated first as a Gestapo political prisoner in Prague and later as a Jew in the Theresienstadt (Terezín) Ghetto. He worked in a squad that was regularly sent on work assignments to the nearby Bohušovice train station. One day, he was unable to collect his documents from the guard upon their return to Theresienstadt. The guard immediately informed the Protectorate gendarmerie station in the ghetto. In March 1946, Beck described his arrest and interrogation as follows:

> "I noted that the guard duty was carried out by the so-called Protectorate gendarmerie and that the report was also made by the so-called Protectorate gendarmerie. […] Captain Janeček and the staff warden Hašek were present. I reported in Czech, but Captain Janeček began to interrogate me in German as though he did not speak Czech at all, and although I again

1 František R. Kraus, A přiveď zpět naše roztroušené … [And Bring Back Our Scattered …], Prague 1946, 53-54.
2 Ibid, 145.

ARTICLE https://doi.org/10.23777/SN.0221 | www.vwi.ac.at

> answered in Czech, he spoke to me only in German. I would like to point out that I knew that Janeček and the staff warden Hašek spoke the Czech language well. During the interrogation, the staff warden Hašek stood unnoticed next to me, before suddenly beginning to punch me in the face with his fists, alternating using his left and right hands, as if I were some punching bag. Of course, blood immediately started pouring from my mouth and nose, but the staff warden Hašek ignored the fact that I was covered with blood and sadistically pounded me until he knocked out two of my teeth."[3]

Captain Theodor Janeček or Janetschek, the commandant of the special gendarmerie unit, kept Beck in custody for a fortnight. In his post-war testimony, Beck repeatedly stressed that it had been more painful for him to be treated in this manner by people whom he considered to be in the same boat during the painful years of the German occupation.[4] After the war, Hašek was sentenced by the Prague Extraordinary People's Court to eight years in prison, whilst Janeček died in prison awaiting trial for collaboration.[5]

This story raises the intriguing question of how the special unit of the Czech Protectorate gendarmerie contributed to the persecution of the Jews in Theresienstadt. Some of the survivors vocally condemned the policemen. For František R. Kraus, a survivor of Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, the gendarmes were an integral part of the machinery of destruction that started in Prague and ended in the gas chambers of Auschwitz. Other survivors passed a more lenient judgement, stressing the material help and mental support that some of the gendarmes provided to the ghetto prisoners. The post-war police and judicial authorities investigated only a few of the gendarmes as traitors or collaborators. At the same time, the number of those publicly praised for their support of the Jewish prisoners was low. Only one gendarme, František Makovský, has been recognized by Yad Vashem as a Righteous among the Nations, but the available archival evidence raises questions about his conduct during the war.[6] By focussing on the police, one of the essential cogs in the Protectorate administration, this article aims to stimulate discussion about responses in Protectorate society to the Nazi persecution of the Jews. If the gendarmes were neither villains nor heroes, how should we conceive of their role during the Holocaust?

Let Us Not Talk About It: The State of the Field

The police, as a part of the state bureaucracy, play a key role in every society, namely as those who protect citizens and enforce the law. As professionals, they have the capacity to adapt very quickly to radical political changes, as is proven by the career of Emil Kheil, who was in his early twenties during the war. After the collapse of Czecho-Slovakia in March 1939, Kheil, as a Czech, was expelled from Transcarpathian Ukraine and subsequently moved to Prague. He later served as a guard in the

3 Státní oblastní archiv v Praze [State Regional Archives in Prague] (SOA), MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, deposition by Otto Beck, 16 March 1946.

4 See also: Mirko Tůma, Ghetto našich dnů [The Ghetto of Our Days], Prague 1946, 18; Židovské muzeum v Praze [Jewish Museum Prague] (ŽMP), testimony no. 077, J. T.

5 SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, judgement against Emil Hašek and František Drahoňovský, 11 April 1946.

6 Yad Vashem Archives, M.31.2/7166; Archiv bezpečnostních složek [Security Services Archive] (ABS), 2M/10303, statement by Jaroslav Trojan, 3 February 1948; see also: ABS, 305-96-3. Other survivors, for example, also mention Přibyl brothers as gendarmes who supported prisoners.

Lety u Písku camp, where the Protectorate authorities concentrated those considered workshy, those accused of leading an anti-social way of life, and later Romani and Sinti from Bohemia before they were deported to Auschwitz. In 1944, he was sent for three months as a guard to Theresienstadt. His service did not end there. After the liberation, he served as a policeman in the town of Vrchlabí, where he oversaw the "orderly and humane"[7] transfer of ethnic Germans out of Czechoslovakia.[8] Antonín Zachař is another example of a policemen serving in highly exposed positions under diverse regimes. He first served in Theresienstadt, later being accused by survivors of acts of brutality against the inmates.[9] After the war, he became the commandant of an internment camp for ethnic Germans near the town of Opava in Silesia.[10] Kheil, Zachař, and others only followed orders. In most cases there is no indication that they crossed the line of conduct expected from those in service. Yet they were willing to fulfil orders from authorities representing diametrically opposed political systems and, in the process, they contributed to the persecution of minority communities.

The wartime service of the local police under German occupation, which was characterized by one historian as a conflict between professional and national loyalties,[11] has presented a point of contention in national historiographies. In his historiographical survey, Robby van Eetvelde concluded that all over Europe, Nazi Germany was "able to identify and employ […] necessary collaborators" in the ranks of local police units. From the perspective of police involvement, "the Holocaust was a European project".[12] During the war, all over occupied Europe, ordinary policemen continued to serve in their positions and enforce the law. Local German administrations could rely on the cooperation of long-established or newly formed auxiliary police units. The German troops were spread thin over the vast swathes of the 'Third Reich' and thus the enforcement of anti-Jewish policies would have been impossible without the local police, who were often ten times the size of the local German order police units (*Ordnungspolizei*). The involvement of the local police in the persecution of the Jews depended on the local context. In France and the Netherlands, police units played a dominant role in the arrest and deportation of the Jews.[13] Further East, at the actual killing sites, the local police and auxiliaries (such as the *Omakaitse* or Home Guard in Estonia and the *Schutzmannschaften* in Ukraine) became deeply involved in the mass murder.[14] The most recent research on the so-called Blue Police (*Policja granatowa*) in the General Government has demonstrated that apart from

7 This phrase was used in the Potsdam Agreement, which sanctioned the population transfer.

8 On Kheil, see: Markus Pape, A nikdo vám nebude věřit. Dokument o koncentračním táboře Lety u Písku [And No One Will Believe You. Documentary about the Lety u Písku Concentration Camp], Prague 1997, 139.

9 ABS, personnel file of Antonín Zachař.

10 Ibid.

11 Niklas Perzi, "Auch er stand Posten für die Freiheit und Unabhängigkeit Großdeutschlands". Die heimischen (tschechischen) Sicherheitskräfte im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren im Widerstreit der Loyalitäten, in: Miroslav Kunštát et al. (ed.), Krise, Krieg und Neuanfang. Österreich und die Tschechoslowakei in den Jahren 1933–1938, Vienna 2017, 95-118.

12 Robby van Eetvelde, Police forces and the Holocaust, in: Cathie Carmichael/Richard C. Maguire (ed.), The Routledge History of Genocide, New York 2019, 303.

13 Simon Kitson, From Enthusiasm to Disenchantment. The French Police and the Vichy Regime, 1940–1944, in: Contemporary European History 11 (2002) 3, 371-390.

14 Ruth Bettina Birn, Collaboration with Nazi Germany in Eastern Europe. The Case of the Estonian Security Police, in: Contemporary European History 10 (2001) 2, 181-198; Eric Haberer, The German Police and Genocide in Belorussia, 1941–1944. Part I: Police Deployment and Nazi Genocidal Directives, in: Journal of Genocide Research 3 (2001) 1, 3-19; Idem, The German Police and Genocide in Belorussia, 1941–1944. Part II: The "Second Sweep". Gendarmerie Killings of Jews and Gypsies on January 29, 1942, in: Journal of Genocide Research 3 (2001) 2, 207-218.

guarding the perimeter of the major ghettos and participating in expulsions and deportations, Polish policemen also actively contributed to the murder of the Jews during what was called the hunt for the Jews (*Judenjagd*).[15]

The Protectorate, as a territory, did not witness the actual mass murder of the Jews, with the involvement of the police reflecting Nazi policies. As early as the spring of 1939, the Germans deployed Czech gendarmes and uniformed police in the first crackdown against any potential resistance activities, especially among German émigrés, communist functionaries, and in particular the Jews. Even the Gestapo was surprised by the excessive willingness with which the Czech police partook in the first arrests.[16] For the rest of the occupation, the police – after the reform in July 1942 fully under the organisational control of the German authorities – vacillated between resistance and collaboration.[17]

The wartime contribution of the Czech police to the "Final Solution" has to date stood at the margins of historical research.[18] Only recently have authors published first studies on Czech policemen's role in the segregation of the Jews and Roma. Benjamin Frommer and Helena Petrův have demonstrated the large-scale involvement of the police in the enforcement of the anti-Jewish laws in the Protectorate. As part of their daily routine of maintaining order, the policemen also contributed to a 'social death' of the Jews, which was a necessary stepping stone towards the Nazi genocide.[19] Projects undertaken by researchers in Prague[20] have revealed numerous cases in which policemen apprehended Jews for visiting parts of cities forbidden to them or for not wearing or covering up the 'Jewish star' that visibly identified them as 'non-Aryans'. For example, in September 1941, Hugo Eger was walking on the Švehla embankment in Prague and stopped for a while to watch a tennis game. He was apprehended by police officer Jan Galia because Jews were not allowed to enter embankments. He was given a choice between paying a fine of 3,000 Crowns or spending eight days in prison. The policemen thus deepened the misery of the destitute Jews, already fully restricted in their economic opportunities and often dependent on social support from the Jewish community.[21] Furthermore, Jews arrested for

15 Klaus-Peter Friedrich, Collaboration in a "Land without a Quisling". Patterns of Cooperation with the Nazi German Occupation Regime in Poland during World War II, in: Slavic Review 64 (2005) 4, 723–724; Jan Grabowski, Na posterunku. Udział polskiej policji granatowej i kryminalnej w Zagładzie Żydów [At the Post. The Participation of the Polish Blue Police and Polish Criminal Police in the Extermination of Jews], Warsaw 2020; Tomasz Frydel, Ordinary Men? The Polish Police and the Holocaust in the Subcarpathian Region, in: Peter Black et al. (ed.), Collaboration in Eastern Europe during the Second World War and the Holocaust, Vienna 2019, 69-126.

16 Jan Vajskebr, Protektorátní uniformovaná policie mezi odbojem a kolaborací [Protectorate Uniformed Police between Resistance and Collaboration], in: Marek Syrný et al. (ed.), Kolaborácia a odboj na Slovensku a v krajinách nemeckej sféry vplyvu v roku 1939–1945 [Collaboration and Resistance in Slovakia and the Countries in the German Sphere of Influence 1939–1945], Banská Bystrica 2009, 117-122.

17 Ibid, Perzi, "Auch er stand …". From July 1942 they fell under the General Commander of the Uniformed Protectorate police (in the case of the gendarmerie or municipal police) and the General Commander of the Non-Uniformed Protectorate police (in the case of the criminal police and other similar units). Commanders of both branches came from the top ranks of the SS.

18 For more background, see: Pavel Macek/Lubomír Uhlíř, Dějiny policie a četnictva III. Protektorát Čechy a Morava a Slovenský štát (1939–1945) [History of the Police and the Gendarmerie III. The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and the Slovak State], Prague 2001.

19 Marion Kaplan, Between Dignity and Despair. Jewish Life in Nazi Germany, Oxford 1998.

20 The documents were selected and digitised as a part of the "Terezín Album" project of the Terezín Initiative Institute and a project to create a mobile application making data on Holocaust victims from Prague available to the public (funded by the Technological Agency of the Czech Republic). I would like to thank Dr Magdalena Sedlická for this information.

21 On Eger, see: https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-obeti/obet/142104-hugo-eger/ (16 November 2020).

breaking the anti-Jewish laws could face an earlier deportation, though we cannot really identify a clear pattern in this respect.[22]

Later, between October 1941 and the spring of 1943, Czech Protectorate police units supervised the deportation of the Jews from the whole territory of the Protectorate to the Theresienstadt Ghetto or directly to the East.[23] The Protectorate criminal police then helped with the hunt for Jews who tried to avoid deportation.[24] Other scholars have written extensively on the wartime involvement of the Protectorate bureaucracy and guards in the Lety and Hodonín camps. The guards came from the ranks of the Protectorate gendarmerie – often from the reactivated older generation – who supervised the camps where over 500 Roma prisoners succumbed to the inhumane conditions, before almost 1,400 were deported to their deaths in Auschwitz-Birkenau.[25] We know much less about the wartime service of the Protectorate gendarmerie in Theresienstadt and other internment camps.[26] Key works on Theresienstadt present the gendarmes as heroic helpers and martyrs who suffered as a consequence of their support for prisoners, though they also add that a few rotten apples collaborated with the Germans.[27] Only in the 1980s did the historian Miroslav Kárný question the established belief that a large number of the gendarmes had been executed by the SS for helping the Jews.[28] Another major contribution to the topic came only decades later from two German-speaking historians who offered a more global perspective on the Protectorate police during the war.[29] The lack of interest among Czech historians in the special unit is all the more surprising when considering that this was the only instance that a large group of Czech nationals directly witnessed the Holocaust of European Jews. The Lety debate has confirmed that even minor attempts to address the topic of Czech involvement in the Holocaust triggers exasperated reactions amongst Czech nationalist historians, politicians, and the public.[30] The notion of victimhood is deeply embedded in the Czech historical narrative of the war, but the story of the Theresienstadt gendarmes reveals how complex the behaviour of the policemen was during the Holocaust.

22 Benjamin Frommer, Verfolgung durch die Presse. Wie Prager Büroberater und die tschechische Polizei die Juden des Protektorats Böhmen und Mähren isolieren halfen, in: Doris Bergen/Andrea Löw/Anna Hájková (ed.), Leben und Sterben im Schatten der Deportation. Der Alltag der jüdischen Bevölkerung im Großdeutschen Reich 1941–1945, Munich 2013, 137-150; Václav Buben, Šest let okupace Prahy [Six Years of Occupation in Prague], Prague 1946, 122-125.

23 Jan Láníček, Czechoslovakia and the Allied Declaration of December 17, 1942, in: Dina Porat/Dan Michman (ed.), The End of 1942. A Turning Point in World War II and in the Comprehension of the Final Solution? Jerusalem 2017, 248–249.

24 SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 3710/46.

25 Ctibor Nečas, Holocaust českých Romů [The Holocaust of Czech Roma], Brno 1999; Pape, A nikdo vám; Petr Klínovský, Lety u Písku. Neznámý příběh dozorců [Lety u Písku. The Unknown Story of the Guards], in: Paměť a dějiny. Revue pro studium totalitních režimů, 10 (2016) 2, 3-16; Idem, Velitelé tzv. Cikánského tábora v Letech u Písku [Chief Commanders of the So-Called Gypsy Camp in Lety u Písku], in: Paměť a dějiny. Revue pro studium totalitních režimů, 13 (2019) 1, 26-35; Jiří Smlsal, Holokaust Romů v retribučním soudnictví [The Roma Holocaust in Retributive Justice], in: Romano Džaniben, 1 (2018), 93-122.

26 Alfons Adam, Die tschechische Protektoratspolizei. Ihre Rolle bei der Verfolgung von Juden, Roma und Tschechen, in: Peter Black/Bela Rásky/Marianne Windsperger (ed.), Collaboration in Eastern Europe during World War II and the Holocaust, Vienna 2019, 127-146.

27 Rudolf Iltis, The Unsung Heroes, in: Terezín, Prague 1965, 292-96; Zdeněk Lederer, Ghetto Theresienstadt, London 1953, 78; Karel Lagus/Josef Polák, Město za mřížemi [City behind Bars], Prague 2006, 113.

28 Miroslav Kárný, Die Gendarmerie-Sonderabteilung und die Theresienstädter Häftlinge. Zur Methodologie der kritischen Interpretation von Erinnerungen, in: Theresienstädter Studien und Dokumente 1996, 136-152. After the war, Kárný was involved in the effort to prosecute the most brutal among the gendarmes. SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, Kárný to Velitelství Sboru národní bezpečnosti, 28 July 1946.

29 Perzi, "Auch er stand …" and Adam, Die tschechische.

30 Regarding Estonia, Ruth Bettina Birn wrote about an "emotional and acrimonious" debate, Birn, Collaboration, 182. See also the short article by Jiří Weigl, https://www.klaus.cz/clanky/1385 (16 November 2020).

This study offers conclusions about the nature of the gendarmes' service based on official German and Protectorate documents from the National Archives (accessed through microfilm copies at the USHMM) and the Archives of the Security Forces. I also worked extensively with files from post-war investigations of the gendarmes who were accused of collaboration with the Germans (State Regional Archives). I then complemented this documentary material with information from published memoirs and oral testimonies (the Jewish Museum in Prague and the Visual History Archives of the USC Shoah Foundation). Most of the key sources originated in the context of post-war prosecution. Because of the articles in the retribution law and the heightened anti-German sentiments in society, witnesses and investigators focused on putative collaborators among the gendarmes and especially their 'pro-German behaviour', which went against 'national honour'. Conversely, the gendarmes tried to supply evidence about their rescue and resistance activities, proving that they had remained loyal patriots, or, alternatively, attempted to accuse prisoners of collaboration with the Germans, thus justifying their strict enforcement of their guarding duties. Certain myths originated during and early after the war, which then further developed in the following decades. In these early post-war files we learn learn far less about life in the ghetto and daily encounters between the gendarmes and prisoners, full of economic and trade activities, but also, as it seems, private contacts, including sexual relations. The aim of this article is to move beyond the myths associated with both extremes of collaboration and resistance, to focus on the gendarmes' involvement in the daily life of this major Jewish ghetto in the Protectorate.

The Special Gendarmerie Unit in the Theresienstadt Ghetto

Throughout the entire existence of the Theresienstadt Ghetto, the Protectorate Gendarmerie was in charge of guarding duties. At the secret meeting in Prague that took place on 10 October 1941, the Acting *Reichsprotektor* in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, SS-Obersturmbannführer Reinhard Heydrich, announced the establishment of a ghetto in Bohemia and Moravia. He suggested that approximately 600 Czech policemen, in three shifts, would serve as guards "under the supervision of the [German] security police".[31]

The first 25 Protectorate gendarmes, including their commandant, Lieutenant Theodor (Bohdan) Janeček (Janetschek), already arrived in Theresienstadt on 17 and 18 November 1941, almost a week before the first transport of 342 Jewish prisoners.[32] The policemen formed the core of the special unit, which soon reached a size of between 125 and 150 gendarmes deployed there from stations all over Bohemia, only later, to a much smaller degree, and only temporarily, from Moravia as well.[33] This was a sizeable unit in comparison with the SS troops stationed in the ghetto (28 in total during the existence of the ghetto, which means that less than 15 to 20 could have been present at any one time).[34] In September and October 1944, when the last extensive deportations from the ghetto to Auschwitz were taking place, the SS increased the size of the gendarmerie unit. Thus, 75 new gendarmes arrived on 25 Sep-

31 Hans Günther Adler, Theresienstadt 1941–1945. The Face of a Coerced Community, Cambridge 2015, 646.
32 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum (USHMM), RG-48.016M, reel 247, register of gendarmes in the Special unit (*Sonderabteilung*).
33 Ibid. Only in September 1943 did twenty gendarmes arrive from Moravia.
34 Tomáš Fedorovič, Nové poznatky o příslušnících SS v terezínském ghettu [New Findings on the SS Officers Serving in the Theresienstadt Ghetto], in: Terezínské listy 33, Prague 2005, 50-59.

tember, three days before the beginning of the liquidation transports, with the unit reaching a size of around 225 men.[35] Adam suggested that in total 1,665 gendarmes served in the ghetto during the war, but my estimate is lower, as it is likely that those who served in the unit on two separate occasions were included twice in the register of the gendarmes assigned to Theresienstadt.[36] Although serving in Protectorate uniforms, the special unit was excluded from the jurisdiction of the Protectorate authorities and was subordinated instead to the SS Office (*SS-Kommandantur; SS-Dienststelle*). The SS and Gestapo investigated the gendarmes who were accused of breaking the code of conduct, and from May 1943 they faced the judicial authority of the SS and Police Court in Prague (*SS- und Polizei Gericht Prag VIII*).[37] The commandant was directly appointed by the Land Gendarmerie Headquarters (*Zemské četnické velitelství*) and the rest of the unit by respective district (*okresní*) headquarters. In the beginning, most of the gendarmes served in the ghetto on long-term assignments, sometimes even exceeding one year, though the length of their service differed significantly and depended also on their personal preferences. It is unclear how local stations selected those assigned to the ghetto, but several gendarmes implied that their superiors saw it as a good opportunity to get rid of unpopular and troublesome colleagues, or those recently assigned to their stations from other localities.[38]

The SS Office was divided in their view of how long individual gendarmes should serve in the ghetto. One part preferred to have an experienced unit on longer assignments, but others wanted to prevent the establishment of closer ties between the gendarmes and prisoners that could occur if the policemen stayed for too long. In late 1942, the SS Office agreed to limit the time gendarmes served in the ghetto to three months in the case of married men and six months for bachelors, but the commandant, SS-Obersturmführer Siegfried Seidl, rejected another proposal that half of the unit be replaced every month.[39] Furthermore, the gendarmes kept receiving extra payment during their service in the ghetto as a way to deter them from looking for extra income by establishing contacts with prisoners.[40] A major change was implemented only in the late summer of 1943 after SS-Obersturmführer Anton Burger replaced Seidl and, according to post-war testimonies, after it was endorsed or even initiated by the new commandant of the gendarmerie unit Lieutenant Miroslav Hasenkopf. Henceforth, one third of the unit was replaced every month, and gendarmes who were "weak and soft [and thus] very easily susceptible and subject to the seduction of the Jews" were released from the unit.[41] The fact that in the summer and

35 ABS, 2M/10254, statement by Václav Zoufal, 25 March 1947; statement by Karel Koláček, 28 March 1947; USHMM, RG-48.016M, reel 247, register of gendarmes in the Special unit (*Sonderabteilung*).

36 Adam, Die tschechische, 132.

37 ABS, Kanice, personnel file of Adalbert Klimeš, Abschrift, Feld-Urteil, SS und Polizeigericht VIII Prag, Klimeš, Koutecký, Adámek, Zelníček, 6 June 1944. The first cases of gendarmes caught helping the Jews in 1942 were tried by the internal commission of the Land Gendarmerie headquarters in Prague. The convicted gendarmes were sent to concentration camps, which implies that the Nazi authorities decided the punishment.

38 ABS, 2M/10303, statement by Jaroslav Trojan, 3 February 1948; SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Lsp 136/47, judgement against Jan Sýkora, 27 March 1947.

39 USHMM, RG-48.016M, reel 247, image 168, Vermerk über Änderungen bei der Gend.-Sonderabteilung Theresienstadt, 21445/42.

40 Miroslav Kárný, Zvláštní četnický oddíl v Terezíně a terezínští vězňové [The Special Gendarmerie Unit in Theresienstadt and the Prisoners], in: Vlastivědný sborník Litoměřicko 21-22 (1985/86), 38.

41 USHMM, RG-48.016M, reel 247, image 171; Hasenkopf to Gendarmerie-Landeskommando Böhmen, 8 November 1943. SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Ls 86/48, judgement against Miroslav Hasenkopf, 14 September 1948. Hasenkopf became the commandant in August 1943, after Janeček was sent on leave because of health problems and mental breakdown. USHMM, RG-48.016M, reel 247, image 221, Zouna to the Gendarmerie-Landeskommando, 30 July 1943.

autumn of 1943 the Gestapo revealed several smuggling networks between gendarmes and prisoners seemed to play a role in this decision. Even then, however, the rule was not always strictly enforced. At least four gendarmes served in the ghetto during the entire existence of the unit, until May 1945. Burger also enforced the rule that only those who had not served in the unit previously could be transferred to Theresienstadt, while each gendarme had to prove that he had "no Jewish relations" (*jüdisch versippt*).[42] The rules changed again shortly before the end of the war, under the last commandant, SS-Obersturmführer Karl Rahm, when several gendarmes served their second term in the ghetto, though those assigned to the unit before 1 September 1943 were officially not eligible.[43]

The gendarmerie unit executed a whole range of duties in the ghetto and its environs. After the war, the gendarmes claimed that they had mostly fulfilled only a guarding and supervisory role and had not contributed to the investigation and punishment of prisoners who broke any of the imposed laws.[44] Other testimonies, however, prove that both unit commandants and their close associates brutally interrogated prisoners, usually together with the SS but occasionally even on their own initiative.[45] The guarding duties also kept developing. In the beginning, when the 'Aryan' population still lived in Theresienstadt (they were evacuated by 30 June 1942), the gendarmes served inside the ghetto and guarded the barracks containing Jewish prisoners. In July 1942, they moved outside the walls and patrolled at the gates. Until 1943, when the rail extension to the ghetto was completed, they also escorted the newly arrived prisoners from the railway station in Bohušovice nad Ohří, three kilometres outside of the ghetto, to Theresienstadt, and supervised the inspection of their luggage. In the daily life of the ghetto, the gendarmes escorted prisoners on work assignments, conducted searches of the barracks together with two German female wardens (called 'berušky' in Czech, literary meaning 'ladybugs', though the word 'beruška' is derived from the Czech verb 'brát' – to take or steal). They also controlled the incoming post, checked that the Jews who left Theresienstadt on work assignments did not try to smuggle food and other contraband, and also supervised work in the crematorium, including the search for gold among the ashes.[46]

Only Protectorate citizens served in the unit and they were almost exclusively of Czech nationality. The major exception were the two commandants, Janeček and Hasenkopf, who, although they had been Czech before the war, declared German nationality after the invasion. It seems that the SS insisted that the commandant be 'German'. Both had German spouses and Janetschek had lived in Vienna and other parts of the Habsburg Empire before 1918. The last commandant of the unit, the Czech Lieutenant Bohumil Bambas, was appointed only after the liberation in May 1945.[47] The SS Office repeatedly complained about the poor knowledge of German among the gendarmes and insisted that the assigned gendarmes should be healthy, energetic, reliable, and have a good command of the German language.[48] Eventually,

42 The rule was enforced after one gendarme (Emil Zelníček), imprisoned for contacts with prisoners, was found to be related to a Jewish person. USHMM, RG-48.016M, reel 247, Hasenkopf to Gendarmerie-Landeskommando Böhmen, 8 November 1943. The order was issued by Burger.

43 USHMM, RG-48.016M, reel 247, image 160, Auszug aus dem GLK. Befehles Zl.II-1606/1945, 1 February 1945.

44 SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Ls 84/48, written statement by Hasenkopf, 6 September 1948.

45 SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, protocol with Theodor Janeček, 9 August 1945.

46 Adler, Theresienstadt, 64 f; Yad Vashem Archives, O.7cz/239, protocol with Rudolf Klein (1945).

47 USHMM, RG-48.016M, reel 247, image 207, a handwritten note, undated (most probably early May 1945).

48 USHMM, RG-48.016M, reel 247, Hasenkopf to the Gendarmerie-Landeskommando, 17 April 1945; USHMM, RG-48.016M, reel 247, order of the Gendarmerie Land Headquarters, 1 February 1945; Gendarmerie-Landeskommando Böhmen to Gendarmerie Abteilungskommando, 17 June 1944; Hasenkopf to Gendarmerie-Landeskommando Böhmen, 9 September 1943.

in late 1943 they ordered that at least a few non-commissioned officers of German nationality were sent to the ghetto.[49]

Witness statements and oral testimonies suggest that the majority of the gendarmes behaved decently toward the Jews and often tried to alleviate their plight, either by looking the other way when the prisoners smuggled food to the ghetto or by facilitating contact with the outside world. They also offered words of encouragement to the prisoners or shared news about the development of the war.[50] Other prisoners were more critical of the gendarmes' conduct or remembered that it was always important to figure out the gendarme's personality or check who was on duty before they tried to smuggle items into the ghetto.[51] Yet this narrative is mostly based on the experiences of Czech-Jewish prisoners, including deportees who lived in mixed marriages and arrived in Theresienstadt only in the last months of the war. There were frequent cases of encounters between prisoners and gendarmes who came from the same city or village and had previously known each other. Such encounters helped to establish close contacts in the ghetto.[52] Much less is known about the experiences of German and Austrian-Jewish prisoners (and others), who tended to be more critical or to simply be neutral in their judgement of the guards' behaviour. There was in fact no effort to collect witness testimonies from non-Czech Jews in the immediate post-war period. Former prisoners remembered that the gendarmes behaved in a friendlier manner toward Czech-speaking prisoners and were willing to help some of them by smuggling letters to their relatives or by giving them extra food.[53] Other testimonies suggest that the gendarmes were also friendlier to younger prisoners, in particular women. The *Sicherheitsdienst* (SD) criticised this behaviour during the war.[54] The prisoners soon learnt to use this friendliness to their benefit and sent young women to distract the gendarmes when columns of prisoners marched outside of the ghetto.[55] After the war, survivors and some of the gendarmes reported cases of romantic or sexual relations between the gendarmes and young female prisoners.[56] Some of these relationships lasted beyond the war, though not very long.[57]

Other available sources, however, suggest that the gendarmes often did not offer acts of support for free, and non-Jewish relatives or prisoners paid a high price for their services. At times, gendarmes demanded a fifty per cent cut of the transaction.[58]

49 USHMM, RG-48.016M, reel 247, image 171, II – 13.261/43. Their names imply that the gendarmes were Czech, but registered as Germans during the war.

50 University of Southern California Visual History Archive (USC VHA), Karel (Honza Winter), testimony no. 17525; Josef Švehla, testimony no. 8717; Jarmila Schicková, testimony no. 19272; ŽMP, testimony no. 691, M.H.

51 USC VHA, Helen Seidner, testimony no. 54289; Eric Sonner, testimony no. 16847; Arnošt Lanzen, testimony no. 19371.

52 ŽMP, testimony no. 165, H.G.; USC VHA, Petr Traub, testimony no. 39219; Helen Seidner, testimomy no. 54289; Jan Černoch; Markéta Herzová, testimony no. 31080; Marie Gardová.

53 USC VHA, Henry Adler, testimony no. 27684; Nora Bock, testimony no. 2542; Harry Rowe, testimony no. 9551; Lucie Steinhagen, testimony no. 11864; Adler, Theresienstadt, 230.

54 Národní archiv [National Archives] (NA Praha), 109-8/28, Walter Jacobi to K.H. Frank, 13 April 1942.

55 USC VHA, Hanne Pick, testimony no. 10005; Vera Solarová, testimony no. 7940; Nina Summers, testimony no. 19476.

56 ŽMP, testimony no. 069, A.K. The survivor remembered that the gendarme Karel Salaba had several mistresses among the prisoners. Commandant Seidl was allegedly aware of Salaba's antics. See also: SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, judgement against Emil Hašek and František Drahoňovský, 11 April 1946.

57 USC VHA, Doris Grozdaničová, testimony no. 24083.

58 Testimony by Valter Kesler and Irena Rieselová, in ŽMP, Miroslav Kárný, Zvláštní četnický oddíl v Terezíně a terezínští vězňové [The Special Gendarmerie Unit in Theresienstadt and the Prisoners], unpublished manuscript, 1982; USHMM, RG-48.016M, microfilm 256, image 43, Anonymous letter sent to the Gestapo in Hradec Králové (June/July 1943); USC VHA, Joe Seidner, testimony no. 54320; Helen Seidner, testimony no. 54289; ŽMP, testimony no. 77, J.T.

Others asserted that the gendarmes stole items from the newly arrived deportees or profited from the black market, selling food for gold or cigarettes for watches.[59] After the war, survivors reported cases of gendarmes who had earned "fortunes" in the ghetto. In some cases, Jewish orderlies in the gendarmerie barracks were directly approached by gendarmes to sell food to prisoners on their behalf.[60] Other survivors praised the gendarmes for "saving their lives", though they only later revealed that they had to give them a diamond ring for a pair of shoes.[61]

Financial profit for rescuers is a sensitive issue in Holocaust historiography.[62] The public likes to hear redemptive stories about altruistic people, but the reality was not that simple. Accepting reward in exchange for offering help was not exceptional, though it is impossible to draw a clear line between a payment that compensated for the danger and an immoral profiteering from the desperate situation of the Jews. The power structure in Theresienstadt was similar to that of other ghettos or camps. The asymmetry created by the Nazi administration offered opportunities for those among the gendarmes who were seeking personal benefit or to rise in the ranks of the unit. They held what Sofsky called a delegated "absolute power".[63] Gendarmes who caught or reported prisoners breaking the ghetto laws could receive extra days of leave or a monetary reward. Those who systematically collaborated with the SS Office held the promise of a quick promotion,[64] whilst those who were willing to take a risk could profit enormously from the booming black market. The SS had to accept that there were areas outside of their direct control – an unavoidable result of their reliance on non-German police forces.

Most of the gendarmes who served in the ghetto remained passive observers. They did not engage in any overt, brutal collaboration with the SS, but at the same time did not develop any extensive effort to help prisoners. After the war, some gendarmes claimed to have engaged in resistance activities. Karel Salaba allegedly managed to smuggle a radio receiver into the ghetto, which allowed prisoners to listen to foreign broadcasts. He also secretly took photos in the ghetto, including during the executions in early 1942, and allegedly send them to Switzerland.[65] The rest of the gendarmes possibly helped individuals or groups of individuals – sometimes for a monetary or other rewards – sharing their lunches or a snack and leaving newspapers lying where the prisoners could read them.[66] However, their presence in the ghetto needs to be seen as an example of the Czech contribution to the Holocaust. Kárný concluded that the presence of the gendarmes relieved a significant German military manpower needed elsewhere.[67] The SS were evidently aware that the gendarmes were not enthusiastic or entirely reliable guards, but they served their purpose. The fact that the SS, concerned about possible resistance in the ghetto, further increased the size of the unit during the liquidation transports in the autumn of

59 USC VHA, Josef Klenka, testimony no. 16573; Lothar Strauss, testimony no. 42185; Hedy Schick, testimony no. 2986.
60 ŽMP, testimony no. 069, A.K..
61 USC VHA, interview 8165, L.B., segment, 14-15.
62 Jan Grabowski, Rescue for Money. Paid Helpers in Poland, 1939–1945, Jerusalem 2008.
63 Wolfgang Sofsky, The Order of Terror. The Concentration Camp, Princeton 1999, 114.
64 ABS, personnel file personal file of Felix Ulman (born 21 May 1911). František Makovský to Military Court in Prague, 12 May 1947; Oberst der Schutzpolizei to Generalkommandant der Gendarmerie, 28 May 1942; testimony by Max Ruchenberg cited in Kárný, 1982.
65 This story is often cited by historians. I have not been able to find out the Swiss newspaper that published the photos. Some of the post-war interior ministry reports on Salaba moreover contain mixed information about his service in the ghetto. ABS, personnel file of Karel Salaba (3 November 1910).
66 ŽMP, testimony no. 069, A.K.
67 Kárný, Zvláštní.

1944 confirms that they were satisfied with the gendarmes' service. But what about the extremes of collaboration and help – what can they reveal about the wartime service of the Czech gendarmes in the ghetto?

Perpetrators?

Věra Kalinová was a sixteen-year-old orphan when she was deported to Theresienstadt. She worked with a group of girls in the garden outside of the ghetto walls. As she was starving, Kalinová one day decided to hide small pieces of lettuce in her clothes, but she was caught by Commandant Janeček, who immediately found the contraband. He ordered Kalinová to be taken into custody, where, according to survivors, she was humiliated and had her head shaved. After several months she received the feared *Weisung* and was put on a train to Auschwitz, where she perished.[68]

Several months earlier, in the autumn of 1942, Theresienstadt experienced frantic deportations of thousands of elderly prisoners to the East. The transports left at regular intervals, taking unfortunate deportees to Treblinka and other camps. Horrific scenes accompanied the loading of the trains in Bohušovice. On 22 October 1942, one of the prisoners getting on the train was ninety-year-old Žofie Londonová. After the war, another prisoner, Zdeňka Langerová, described how the furious Janeček approached the elderly Londonová, who was moving too slowly, and "using all his strength, kicked her in the stomach". She died a few minutes later.[69]

These stories are representative of the activities of the first commandant of the unit and show the two main ways in which the gendarmes could harm the inmates: By reporting them to the SS for breaking ghetto rules and by inflicting physical violence on them. From the perspective of post-war justice, survivors and gendarmes also accused other policemen, such as Felix Ulman, of fraternisation with the SS, speaking German in public (which was after the war seen as an act of national treason and collaboration) and assuming the manners of the SS. Others verbally abused the Jews, enforced all the rules that many gendarmes tended to ignore (such as that the Jewish prisoners had to greet them in the street), and beat Jews with a stick when deportees were loaded onto the trains to the East.[70] Only a small part of the unit behaved in this way.

Janeček was an exceptional character among the gendarmes. He became a symbol of Czech collaboration, but he was also an outlier. The activities of other gendarmes paled in comparison to the long list of crimes committed by Janeček and he thus inadvertently helped to exculpate the other members of the unit. This was also the case with the second commandant, Lieutenant Hasenkopf, who was accused of a long list of crimes against the Jews and subordinate gendarmes. Survivors and former gendarmes kept stressing that Janeček and Hasenkopf had behaved like 'Germans'. They portrayed them as active collaborators, who in their activism went well

68 SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, witness testimony by Hana Pámová, 26 March 1946; Ibid, undated letter to the public prosecutor by Aleš Kraus (March 1946); https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-obeti/obet/97036-vera-kalinova/ (18 November 2020). It is often difficult to verify with certainty whether a person went to the transport as a direct punishment or by chance.

69 SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, undated letter by Zdenka Langerová to the Extraordinary People's Court in Prague (received 2 April 1946).

70 SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46; ABS, personnel file of Felix Ulman (21 May 1911). Testimonies by Alžběta Kussá, 28 July 1945 and 23 October 1945; Makovský to the Prague Military court, 12 March 1947; ABS, 52-88-3.

beyond the German orders.[71] The witnesses especially condemned the zeal with which they dispatched their duties. Hasenkopf himself admitted that upon his suggestion, the SS decided to periodically replace the gendarmes who served in Theresienstadt. His intention was to prevent gendarmes from establishing close contacts with the inmates.[72] They both kept infusing the gendarmes with hatred against the Jews and were also involved in the beating of prisoners. Janeček wanted to be respected by the SS, who often mocked him in public.[73] At the same time, the survivors never forgot to emphasise that they were 'Czech' and that they wore the uniform of the Protectorate gendarmerie (though Janeček altered it to resemble the German uniforms, including the officer hat). They were also hated among the gendarmes because they kept 'educating' them about the danger of the Jewish menace, supervised their daily duties, and punished all transgression against the rules of conduct.[74]

Janeček and Hasenkopf were not the only gendarmes accused of brutality. Karel Kubizňák was an experienced policeman who served in the ghetto for over a year, being primarily responsible for supervising the guarding duties.[75] One of his tasks was to supervise the patrol that accompanied the Jews between Bohušovice and the ghetto. According to several survivors, the prisoners feared Kubizňák for his temperament. Other gendarmes even warned them about him. Three former female prisoners, who worked in the Jewish commando in Bohušovice, described two incidents when Kubizňák, angry at their slow pace, brutally beat and kicked two Jewish prisoners, Josef Guth and an unknown fifty-year-old man. Guth had to be taken to the hospital, and according to the testimonies died several months later as a result of the injuries he sustained.[76]

Individuals' behaviour during the war was rarely one-dimensional, however. Gendarmes who were accused of brutality against some prisoners could at the same time provide evidence of the support they gave to others or of their involvement in anti-German resistance activities. Staff warden Emil Hašek, who was mentioned at the beginning of this article, was the most extreme example of this complex behaviour. According to some gendarmes, as the person in charge of the gendarmerie office, Hašek was the real commandant of the unit under Janeček, who spent most of the time drunk, beating about in the ghetto, looking for Jews who breached the ghetto laws and gendarmes who did not follow orders. As a protégé of the SS, Hašek used to ride horses around the ghetto together with the commandant Seidl and took part in brutal interrogations of inmates. Witnesses accused Hašek of murdering, or at least contributing to the murder, of Evžen Weiss, who was caught smuggling large amounts of money into the ghetto by another gendarme. He was allegedly beaten to death by Hašek, Janeček, and the SS Inspector of the ghetto, Karl Bergel.[77] On anoth-

71 SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46; see also: Kraus, 1946; Tůma, 1946, 22.

72 SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Ls 86/48, judgement against Miroslav Hasenkopf, 14 September 1948.

73 Ibid, testimony by Jindřich and Bedřich Stern, 21 June 1945.

74 Ibid, Statement (udání) prepared by the SNB station in Mělník, 22 August 1945.

75 NA Praha, ZČV, box 1146, Kubizňák, Karel (born 1890), personnel file; ABS, personal card, Karel Kubizňák (who served in the ghetto from 12 December 1941 until 15 December 1942). SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Lsp 237/47, protocol from the main hearing with Kubizňák, 16 April 1947.

76 SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Lsp 273/47, case against Karel Kubizňák. Guth died on 10 August 1943, eight months after Kubizňák left the ghetto https://www.holocaust.cz/databaze-dokumentu/dokument/97869-guth-josef-oznameni-o-umrti-ghetto-terezin/ (19 November 2020). After the war, Kubizňák was acquitted by the Litoměřice court. The judges believed the incidents happened, but could not prove that Kubizňák was the guilty gendarme.

77 See for example: SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, statement by Stanislav Smrtka, 30 October 1945; Ibid, Ota Hekš, 9 March 1946; Josef Frišman, 13 March 1946; Karel Berner, statement received on 16 March 1946; Leo Fink, 24 July 1945, and many more.

er occasion, Hašek threatened to kill Eva Mändel (later Roubíčková), a young woman from Žatec who worked in the gardens, aiming his pistol at her because she did not want to reveal who had given her the pieces of vegetables she had tried to smuggle into the ghetto.[78]

The most extreme accusation against Hašek was submitted by Marta Černá, and endorsed by others, including the gendarme František Makovský. At the end of October 1942, the gendarmes caught a non-Jewish woman near Bohušovice who was trying to smuggle items in for the prisoners. In her possession, they found the name and ghetto address of Šarlota Žížalová. A mother in her thirties, Žížalová was interrogated and beaten by Hašek. She spent two months in prison, on Hašek's orders, and as a punishment was put on the next transport to the East. In January 1943, Žížalová, together with her four-year-old son Mirek, were deported to Auschwitz, where they both perished.[79]

In the summer of 1943, after a conflict with Burger, the new commandant, Hašek was transferred back to his home station, but he left behind a long record of brutal behaviour.[80] Makovský – a vocal critic of the other gendarmes – described Hašek as a gifted and skilful person, but also as a careerist whose skills were unfortunately placed at the disposal of the SS. Consequently, Hašek "ceased to be a Czech and perhaps even a human being". This comment is characteristic of the immediate post-war discourses, which defined proper behaviour during the war in ethnic terms. He became an "absolute ruler and a feared person" and a person with almost "dictatorial powers", Makovský concluded.[81] He was also accused during the war of stealing money and personal belongings from the Jews or from non-Jews who tried to smuggle items into the ghetto.[82]

The post-war investigation, however, also confirmed that Hašek had been one of the bravest Czech fighters during the May 1945 Prague uprising.[83] He fought the German troops with the same fervour with which he had previously beaten Jewish prisoners in the ghetto. His story demonstrates the ambiguity of categories such as collaboration and resistance during the war. Indeed, Hašek was not an exception. Other gendarmes who were accused of a very strict enforcement of the ghetto rules and of brutality could also provide evidence of having supported other prisoners.[84]

The other way in which the gendarmes could harm individual prisoners stemmed from their role as a law-enforcing agency.[85] The Jews caught breaking any of the countless regulations faced severe punishment and the imminent danger of being sent to the East. It seems that the gendarmes at least initially considered their service to be just another regular police assignment and not a guarding duty in a ghetto or camp. However, the defining moment for the unit came shortly after the arrival of the first prisoners. Over the following weeks, the gendarmes apprehended several inmates who had attempted to establish contact with the outside world or tried to buy extra food in 'Aryan' shops, where they were caught not wearing the 'Jewish star'.

78 SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, Eva Roubíčková, 11 March 1946; see also the testimony of Doris Schimmerlingová, 20 July 1945.
79 SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, Marta Černá to the Extraordinary People's Court in Prague, 10 April 1946. Co-signed by František Makovský and Hana Fischlová.
80 ABS, personnel file of Emil Hašek (born 25 May 1942), undated statement by Hašek (1945?).
81 SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, testimonies by František Makovský, 21 February 1946 and 11 April 1946.
82 USHMM, RG-48.016, reel 255, images 577-583.
83 SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, judgement against Emil Hašek and František Drahoňovský, 11 April 1946. It is very likely that his involvement in the Prague Uprising saved Hašek's life during the prosecution trial.
84 Ibid. František Drahoňovský was sentenced to ten years in prison in April 1946.
85 See also: ŽMP, testimony no. 077, J. T.

According to post-war testimonies, Janeček and another gendarme, František Drahoňovský, were involved in at least some of these cases. Nine of the prisoners were publicly executed in January and another seven in February 1942. At this stage, the gendarmes could not have anticipated that the denounced prisoners would be executed or sent to the East. The gendarme Karel Salaba believed that the execution was unavoidable – implying that the SS wanted to deter the prisoners from any future defiance.[86] The execution also served as an initiation for the gendarmes and as a way to make them accomplices in the Nazi persecution. However, after the public execution, during which the gendarmes stood guard at the gallows, none of them could have any illusion about the fate that awaited the prisoners reported to the SS.[87]

We will never be able to establish how many prisoners suffered because the gendarmes reported them, but some policemen gained notoriety for actively pursuing inmates. In his mid-forties, Jan Sýkora belonged to the older generation of the gendarmes. He spent more than eighteen months in the ghetto before he was transferred back to his home station in Sušice. In Theresienstadt, he went beyond the orders and actively looked for inmates who tried to smuggle contraband into the ghetto. He also supervised two Sudeten German women, who searched the prisoners' rooms for hidden items, and enforced a thorough search. Other post-war witnesses reported cases of Sýkora's violence against prisoners. The most serious accusation, however, was that Sýkora's zeal had led to the deaths of several inmates either in the ghetto or following their deportation to the East. He even received a monetary reward for reporting the Jews. After the war, Sýkora was sentenced to death, but in June 1948, the newly elected communist president Klement Gottwald commuted his sentence to 25 years in prison.[88]

Were the gendarmes volitional or situational perpetrators?[89] Shortly after his dismissal from the position of commandant in late July 1943, Janeček reported to his superiors in Prague that about 35,000 Jews had died or "rather had been killed and executed" in the ghetto. He allegedly stated that he would rather commit suicide if there was a change in the political regime.[90] This demonstrates that the gendarmes were aware of their role in the Nazi persecution of the Jews. Survivors, too, remembered that some of the gendarmes made comments about the fate of the deportees to the East.[91] Did the gendarmes' behaviour manifest antisemitic feelings? Some of the statements the gendarmes made after the war clearly contained antisemitic sentiments, which confirms the observation put forward by Helena Krejčová.[92] We also should not ignore the constant propaganda in the ghetto spread by their superiors

86 SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, statement by Karel Salaba, 1 October 1945.

87 The execution is mentioned in all works on Theresienstadt. It also played an important role in the judicial proceedings against Janeček and Drahoňovský. SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46.

88 SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Ls 136/47; ABS, OK249/46; Archiv kanceláře prezidenta republiky [The Archive of the President's Office], fond KPR, inventory no. 2035, kart. 463, sign. 207088/48, A proposal for clemency, minister Čepička to Gottwald, 15 June 1948.

89 On historiography see: Peter Hayes, Why? Explaining the Holocaust, New York 2017, 137-160.

90 This was an exaggeration. SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, Pplk. Sameš to Závodní rada (vyšetřující komise) zemského velitelství SNB [Company Council (Investigating Committee) of the Provincial Police Headquarters], 4 July 1946.

91 Yad Vashem Archives, O.93/9835, testimony by Jaroslav Kraus; SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, Kárný to Velitelství Sboru národní bezpečnosti [Headquarters of the National Security Corps (police)], 28 July 1946.

92 Helena Krejčová, Karl Rahm. Otázky (ne)nastolené a (ne)zodpovězené [Karl Rahm. Questions Neither Posed Nor Answered], in: Poválečná justice a národní podoby antisemitismu. Postih provinění vůči Židům před soudy a komisemi ONV v českých zemích v letech 1945–1948 a v některých zemích střední Evropy [Post-war Justice and National Forms of Antisemitism. Punishment of Offenses against Jews before ONV Courts and Commissions in the Czech Lands 1945–1948 and in Other Central European Countries], Opava 2002, 180-203; ABS, OK249/46, protocol with Jan Sýkora, 24 June 1946.

and the gendarmes' fear of serious consequences if the SS found out they had been negligent in their service. Furthermore, in every society there are individuals who abuse their power, especially under such extreme conditions, with impunity for their actions and benefits stemming from collaboration. In fact, under the specific conditions prevailing in Theresienstadt, the gendarmes harmed the prisoners simply by their presence and by performing their duties, even if after the war they could provide evidence of having helped individuals. Wolfgang Sofsky's comments on privileged prisoners in concentration camps also apply to the gendarmes: "[…] assistance was impossible without first becoming an accessory".[93]

If we consider other factors, the small core of the unit around the two commandants (especially Janeček, Hasenkopf, Hašek, and Ulman) were influenced by their proximity to the SS, and these situational factors shaped their behaviour, as they began to mimic their SS supervisors. The influence on the rest of the unit differed. They held the delegated 'absolute power' over prisoners, but their behaviour, as Sofsky argued with regard to concentration camps guards, was also influenced by their feeling of being imprisoned in military style units.[94] The gendarmes had been removed from their hometowns and villages, as well as from their families. They lived in communal rooms, with other policemen, inside an overcrowded ghetto. Subjected to military style discipline, they were supervised by the SS, who could target them at a whim as well. Some of them tried to apply for release on medical grounds, leading the gendarmerie headquarters to announce that they would have to return to the unit once their health improved.[95] Such conditions frequently led to feelings of humiliation and frustration, which could easily be vented against the prisoners, with deadly consequences.[96] This does not mean that the gendarmes necessarily harmed prisoners, but they could conduct a stricter search, go beyond received orders, or zealously inform on prisoners who broke the ghetto rules. The fact that the gendarmes did not decide the fate of the prisoners they caught allowed them to distance themselves from the consequences of their actions. They could persuade themselves that as policemen, they just ensured that prisoners followed the law. The fact that the whole town had been turned into a ghetto with a Jewish self-administration and that the inmates did not have to wear uniforms may have supported their feeling of normalcy. At the same time, the space created by the delegated 'absolute power' and the lacunae outside of the easy reach of the SS[97] allowed the gendarmes to appease their conscience by supporting individual prisoners. Such small acts of help played an important psychological role, especially with the changing tides of the war – the gendarmes, aware of their role in the persecution, could feel they were also engaging in anti-German activities and behaving as patriots. Not surprisingly, after the war such gendarmes contacted former prisoners and requested statements in support of their 'impeccable' behaviour. Survivors often complied.

These conclusions position the gendarmes outside of the standard perpetrator historiography. The gendarmes were not typical perpetrators who pulled the trigger.[98] The isolation of the ghetto from any densely populated areas also made it more difficult to apply conclusions reached by historians of police collaboration in other

93 Sofsky, The Order, 20.
94 Ibid, 114.
95 USHMM, RG-48.016M, reel 247, image 167, order by Colonel Jan Voženílek, 6181/42 (undated).
96 Sofsky, The Order, 114-115.
97 Ibid, 19-20.
98 Frydel, Ordinary Men, 69-126. Hayes, Why?

European territories.[99] In the following, we will turn to the image of the Theresienstadt gendarmes that emerged after the end of the war and what it can tell us about their wartime service.

The Tale of Fourteen Gendarmes

The trial of Karl Hermann Frank, one of the masterminds behind German rule in the Protectorate, was a highlight of the post-war judicial reckoning in Czechoslovakia.[100] Nobody doubted Frank's guilt, and the trial rather offered an opportunity to present the official narrative of the brutal German occupation. Even though the evidence in some cases was patchy, nobody bothered about small inaccuracies in this major trial that ended with the former state minister being sent to the gallows.[101] One story in the indictment during this highly publicised trial influenced the discussions about the Theresienstadt gendarmes that followed. Two weeks into the trial, the witness stand was taken by Antonín Macht, a business school professor from Prague, who had been imprisoned by the Gestapo in the Small Fortress of Theresienstadt in 1943.[102] There he worked in the SS Office in close proximity to the commandant SS-Hauptsturmführer Heinrich Jöckel. *Rudé právo* (Red Justice), the communist daily, relayed the following story from Macht's testimony:

> "One day, probably in October 1943, fourteen Czech gendarmes from the ghetto were brought to Theresienstadt [to the Small Fortress]; three were in civilian clothes. They had been picked up for helping the Jews, providing them with supplies or passing letters. Commander Jöckel then made an urgent phone call to Prague, to Secretary of State Frank, which the witness heard with his own ears, as he was in the room. […, When we returned] there were men's shirts, suits, and uniforms in a pile in the corner."[103]

The gendarmes were executed. Macht repeated the testimony during the subsequent trial of Jöckel in October 1946. Both Jöckel and Frank denied any knowledge of the execution, which could either have been an attempt to reject responsibility for the crime or a genuine difficulty to remember one particular murder.[104] Yet the story took on a life of its own in the following months, during the trials of former gendarmes who had served in Theresienstadt, and later in the historical memory of their service in the ghetto. It helped create an image of Czech gendarmes who were murdered by the SS in high numbers for supporting prisoners. The gendarmes who had spent the war guarding Jewish prisoners became martyrs.

An even more sinister image emerged during the post-war investigation, when the notion of the deadly assignment in the ghetto merged with the image of omnipresent Jewish informers in the ghetto, who collaborated with the SS and betrayed the brave gendarmes. Although neither the witnesses nor the defendants during these trials of former gendarmes presented any concrete example of such behaviour,

99 Frydel, Ordinary Men.

100 Benjamin Frommer, National Cleansing. Retribution against Nazi Collaborators in Postwar Czechoslovakia, Cambridge 2005, 233-237.

101 Český národ soudí K.H. Franka [The Czech Nation Judges K.H. Frank], Prague 1947.

102 Rudé právo, 5 April 1946, 1; SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Ls 1200/46, Macht's testimony against Heinrich Jöckl, 25 June 1946.

103 Rudé právo, 5 April 1946, 1. The story was also relayed by Svobodné slovo, the newspaper of the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party, on 5 April 1946.

104 SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Ls 1200/46, indictment of Jöckl, 20 September 1946; Ibid, Vol. X, protocol of the main hearing, testimony by Macht, 21 October 1946.

the judges used this notion as an exonerating factor.[105] Soon, gendarmes accused of collaboration began to emphasise the existence of Jewish informers as a justification for why they had to follow SS orders.[106] For gendarmes, the alleged threat of Jewish informers evidently also fulfilled an important psychological role as an easy personal justification for the enforcement of the ghetto rules.[107] The first such mention appears in the testimony of the gendarme Karel Salaba. He – as a witness – suggested to the Extraordinary People's court in Prague that there had been "hundreds" of Jewish informers in the ghetto, who "acted fawningly toward the gendarmes, but for even the smallest willingness to help displayed by a gendarme toward the prisoners, they turned him in".[108] Not only were the prisoners said to have betrayed the gendarmes, they also actively provoked them. Some gendarmes in their memoirs further spread stories about the "many gendarmes" who had ostensibly been imprisoned in the Small Fortress for small favours offered to the Jews.[109] On other occasions, gendarmes claimed that the main group of Jewish informers, mostly from Austria, had worked for SS-Scharführer Rudolf Heindl. Such gendarmes blamed more specifically "German" or "Viennese" Jews, emphasising their ethnicity.[110] The roles were reversed, the guards becoming victims and the prisoners collaborators of the Germans. Although in some cases, we can easily refute these allegations,[111] even some contemporary historians uncritically accept these stories in their scholarly work.[112]

It is true that there were cases of Jewish informers in the ghetto, who cooperated with the SS as a means to save their lives, and it is possible that the gendarmes were indeed afraid that they could be betrayed by prisoners. The SS intentionally created this atmosphere of distrust. Of course, there were also cases of gendarmes who reported their peers or betrayed them during interrogation.[113] How did the situation in Theresienstadt differ from other gendarmes' assignments outside of the ghetto? Even there, they had to be afraid that a failure to report acts considered illegal by the Germans could be reported by informers among the population of the Protectorate. After the war, however, the gendarmes painted an image suggesting that it was a specifically Jewish characteristic to betray their helpers or, more importantly, actively incite the gendarmes into helping with the intention of reporting them to the SS. This image was disseminated with the help of former gendarmes, people's judges, and press reports on trials, and helped to reaffirm the notion that the Jews were weak,

105 SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, judgement against Emil Hašek and František Drahoňovský, 11 April 1946.

106 ABS, personnel file of Karel Šindler, protocol of 18 June 1945. Šindler stated that Jewish informers were guilty basically in all the cases that gendarmes were imprisoned.

107 ABS, personnel file of Antonín Zachař, protocol of 20 August 1946.

108 SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 428/46, judgement against Emil Hašek and František Drahoňovský, 11 April 1946.

109 ŽMP, Terezín Collection, inventory no. 343, František Fara, "Smrt za cigaretu" ["Death for a Cigarette"]; Josef Písařík, Memoirs of a Former Czechoslovak Gendarme, Later a Refugee from the Year 1948, private print. Písařík's memoirs are not a reliable source. They are also full of antisemitic remarks.

110 SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Ls 147/48, witness statement by Stanislav Hlaváč, 23 April 1948, among others.

111 SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Ls 147/48, witness statement by Jan Novák, 30 June 1948. Novák alleged that the gendarme František Kubín was betrayed by a Jewish informer and died in Mauthausen. In reality, Kubín was betrayed by a Czech person in Prague and later died in Auschwitz.

112 Anna Hájková, Prisoner Society in the Terezín Ghetto, 1941–1945, (PhD Thesis), University of Toronto 2013, 86; Tomáš Fedorovič Konfidenti v ghettu Terezín [Nazi Informers in the Theresienstadt Ghetto], Terezínské listy 37, Prague 2009, 134-140.

113 USHMM, RG-48.016M, reel 256, image 43, anonymous letter sent to the Gestapo in Hradec Králové, accusing two gendarmes of profiting from the black market in Theresienstadt (June/July 1943).

deceitful and unpatriotic.[114] This representation was in line with other post-war discussions that nationalised and ethnicised the question of wartime behaviour and of loyalty to the state and the Czechoslovak republic.

The reality was more complicated. The historian Miroslav Kárný already pointed out that Macht completely misrepresented a story that had no relation to the ghetto. The case was either related to a group of gendarmes, not from Theresienstadt, who were executed for listening to enemy broadcasts, or possibly such mass execution of gendarmes in the Small Fortress did not even take place.[115] There is no documented case of fourteen gendarmes having been executed for helping the Jews. There is also a lack of concrete or convincing evidence that those gendarmes imprisoned by the SS were directly betrayed by Jewish prisoners.

The SS, Gestapo, and Protectorate authorities investigated altogether 28 gendarmes in relation to their service in the ghetto from the most likely well over 1,000 who served in Theresienstadt. At least six of these men were investigated for acts that had no connection to prisoners.[116] A case involving seven gendarmes apprehended in early January 1944, the largest group arrested by the Nazis, was more complicated. Other historians already pieced together the story.[117] The Gestapo apprehended them for stealing items (tobacco, razors, and cologne) from suitcases of Jews who had arrived in the ghetto that day. The gendarmes were sentenced by the Prague SS and Police Court to between four and six months in prison. All of them resumed service after their release, though they were prohibited from returning to the special unit.[118] The commandant of the unit, Hasenkopf, later kept suggesting that Jewish informers had betrayed the gendarmes, which was also a way for him to reject any responsibility for their imprisonment.[119] None of the seven submitted court testimony after the war. Some of their personnel files contain statements in which they denied the allegations of stealing the prisoners' possessions. One of the reasons for such statements could be that being persecuted for theft in service did not qualify as a reason for receiving withheld monetary benefits or the status of a political prisoner. Their superiors, however, rejected the claims, stating that there was no evidence that the SS had fabricated the case.[120] It is likely that they had intended to sell the stolen items on the black market. Furthermore, as Kárný asserted, had they been caught for helping the Jews the punishment would have been more severe.[121]

Consequently, we are left with fifteen cases of gendarmes who, according to the available documents, were imprisoned by the SS for supporting prisoners. They were apprehended in eight separate incidents. One of them, Eduard Škoda, was released after less than a month, and another, Makovský, after several months in the Small Fortress, without being sentenced by the SS court. Both were readmitted to the gendarmerie, though not in Theresienstadt, and Makovský even became the commandant of a small station. After the war, some of his former colleagues questioned his

114 Jan Orlický, Terezínští četníci [Theresienstadt Gendarmes], Hlas revoluce, 20 (1946), 2. Orlický was one of the peoples' judges during the trial against Hašek and Drahoňovský. In this short article, he depicted a brave gendarme who helped an elderly Jewish prisoner, who in turn reported him to the SS.

115 Kárný, Zvláštní, and Die Gendarmerie-Sonderabteilung.

116 Some other gendarmes also claimed they had been interrogated by the Gestapo, but I have not been able to find any supporting documentation.

117 Kárný, Zvláštní, and Die Gendarmerie-Sonderabteilung.

118 USHMM, RG-48.016, reel 256, images 198-258.

119 SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Ls 86/48, the main proceedings against Hasenkopf, 14 September 1948.

120 ABS, personnel file of Ignác Černý, the interior ministry file Č. IV 4.210/1947. Undated comment on Černý's request (sent 25 February 1947).

121 Kárný, Die Gendarmerie-Sonderabteilung, 141.

wartime behaviour and alleged that he had good contacts with the Germans.[122] It is unclear why the SS apprehended Makovský and Škoda. Karl Löwenstein, a prominent German-Jewish prisoner, suggested that the Jewish Elder Paul Eppstein reported them to the SS for asking him to remove certain prisoners from the September 1943 transport to Auschwitz. Löwenstein's bias against Eppstein is well known and Makovský did not make such allegations in any of his post-war depositions.[123]

None of the remaining thirteen were sentenced to death for helping the Jews, though three of them succumbed to the conditions in the concentration camps and prisons: František Kubín in Auschwitz in September 1942 and Jiří Anton Černý and Vilém Vach in the Small Fortress of Theresienstadt in April and May 1945. Another eight gendarmes remained in the camps until the end of the war. One of them, Imrich Biró, spent almost three years in various camps, including Auschwitz.[124]

Myths about the fate of the imprisoned gendarmes and about executions already circulated during the war. Kárný offered the useful hypothesis that they had been intentionally spread by the SS with the help of the gendarmerie commandants, intended to discourage gendarmes from helping prisoners even if offered large sums of money.[125] After the war, the gendarmes testified that the SS Office, especially Heindl, frequently warned them about possible consequences if caught being lenient to the prisoners.[126] Furthermore, the Gestapo at least initially tried to make an example of the caught gendarmes. In May 1942, František Kubín was the first gendarme apprehended for helping the Jews. The head of the Gestapo in Kladno, which investigated the case, almost immediately asked the Land Gendarmerie Headquarters in Bohemia to publicise Kubín's case as a warning.[127] They complied, stressing the unfortunate fate of the young Czech gendarme, whose existence was destroyed because of his "lack of sense of duty and low greed".[128] The warning concluded that Kubín had been sent to a concentration camp. It also seems that in 1944 the SS changed their approach and left imprisoned gendarmes at the nearby Small Fortress as a constant reminder to their peers. Soon the notion spread amongst the gendarmes that *every small act* of support for the Jews could lead to the gendarme being sent to the Small Fortress, also because of the activities of "hundreds" of Jewish informers.[129]

The available evidence paints a different image. All three gendarmes apprehended in 1942 were involved in smuggling activities between the prisoners and their relatives or friends outside of the ghetto. Kubín received a key from Vilém Bondy, a member of the *Ghettowache* (Jewish ghetto guard), who asked him to collect items from his Prague apartment. In Prague, Kubín also received a large sum of money (including 1,000 Crowns for himself) and parcels to bring back to the ghetto. He was betrayed in Prague by a Czech person (she gave her name as Jelínková) and appre-

122 USHMM, RG-48.016, reel 256, image 37-43 (Škoda case) and images 44-49 (Makovský case); ABS, 2M/10303, statement by Jaroslav Trojan, 3 February 1948; see also: ABS, 305-96-3.

123 Kárný rejected such allegations, Die Gendarmerie-Sonderabteilung, 146-147. Škoda was denounced by another gendarme for black market activities in the ghetto. USHMM, RG-48.016M, reel 256, image 43, anonymous letter sent to the Gestapo in Hradec Králové (June/July 1943).

124 ABS, personnel file of Imrich Biró.

125 SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Lsp 1711/46, case against Josef Plešák. The judgement, on 17 April 1947.

126 SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Ls 147/48, protocol with František Stehlík, 30 June 1948; Ibid, statement by Josef Bercha, undated; protocol with Jindřich Švarc, 28 June 1948.

127 USHMM, RG-48.016, reel 253, image 353, pplk Vít to the Land Gendarmerie Headquarters in Prague, 14 May 1942.

128 USHMM, RG-48.016, reel 244, Gendarmerie-Landeskommando Brünn, Tagesbefehl Nr. 37, 19 June 1942. The warning was published on 2 June 1942.

129 SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Ls 147/48, protocol with Stanislav Pravda, 27 June 1948.

hended after his arrival in Bohušovice.[130] Imrich Biró was involved in smuggling letters, food, money and cigarettes for prisoners. The wartime report stated that he earned 25,000 Crowns over a period of four weeks from prisoners and their relatives. After the war, Biró denied having received any money, claiming that the SS had fabricated the allegations, which in this case lacks any logic. It is more likely that Biró, who wanted to receive recognition as a political prisoner, realised that help for profit would not be recognised as an act of resistance.[131] The third gendarme, Josef Menoušek, also received gifts from prisoners in exchange for smuggling.[132]

The remaining gendarmes were apprehended in three separate major actions that took place in the space of one year. The evidence in the first case is scarce. The prisoners Julius Taussig and his brother Hanuš were allowed to travel between the ghetto and nearby Bohušovice with a cart to collect mail for the gendarmes. They mended the cart and created a false bottom to smuggle items back into the ghetto. During their frequent journeys, they established contact with the gendarmes supervising them, and eventually approached one of them with the request to take a letter out of the ghetto. They also attached a large sum of money as a payment. After the war, Taussig asserted that the gendarme got drunk and was caught with the letter. During the interrogation, he immediately revealed the identity of the Jewish prisoners and the Taussigs were jailed.[133] In total, the SS imprisoned four gendarmes, including František Vokroj, who had left the ghetto almost six months previously, and was captured by the Gestapo in Budweis (České Budějovice).[134]

The SS tortured the gendarmes and the Taussigs for six weeks to reveal other involved gendarmes and contacts among the prisoners. Julius Taussig accused the drunk gendarme of divulging the identity of his colleagues who had been involved with the prisoners, and also of some Jews. By contrast, he, despite the violent beatings, did not reveal anything, though he could have named people in Bohušovice who were involved in smuggling.[135] The evidence suggests that the Taussigs were part of a network of smugglers, including members of the gendarmerie unit. After the war, Julius Taussig remembered that at the time of the interrogation, members of the gendarmerie, concerned about their fate, kept bringing food to the prisoners. They stopped visiting him once the interrogation had finished.[136] The Jewish prisoners were sent to the Small Fortress, while the gendarmes faced the SS court in Prague. All the gendarmes returned after the war from various concentration camps – Buchenwald, Mauthausen, and Flossenbürg. Taussig miraculously survived more than twenty months as a Jewish prisoner in the Small Fortress and other labour camps. His brother perished shortly before the end of the war.[137]

130 USHMM, RG-48.016, reel 253, image 348-355, investigation of the Kubín case. Egon Redlich also noted the affair, which led to the disbanding of the Ghettowache, in his diary. Egon Redlich, Zítra jedeme, synu, pojedeme transportem. Deník Egona Redlicha z Terezína 1. 1. 1942–22. 10. 1944. [Tomorrow We Will Go, Son, We Will Go on Transport: The Diary of Egon Redlich from Theresienstadt, January 1, 1942–October 22, 1944] Brno, 1995, p. 119 (entry for May 14, 1942).

131 USHMM, RG-48.016, reel 253, image 50, Der Generalkommandant der Uniformierten Protektoratspolizei to the Gendarmerie – Landeskommando Prague, 25 September 1942; ABS, personnel file of Imrich Biró, Biró to Sbor národní bezpečnosti, Prague, 28 April 1946.

132 USHMM, RG-48.016, reel 253, image 37, Land Commandant of the Gendarmerie, Prague to Jaroslavus Rückl's deputy, 16 July 1942.

133 ŽMP, testimony no. 77, J.T.; Ibid, testimony no. 973, A.Š. Taussig identified the gendarme as František Vokroj, but Vokroj had already left the ghetto in February 1943. In the records originating from the SS investigation, it was stated that Karel Čípa was smuggling letters from the ghetto for 1,000 Crowns a piece.

134 USHMM, RG-48.016, reel 255, images 627-644.

135 ŽMP, testimony no. 77, J.T.

136 ŽMP, testimony no. 973, A.Š.

137 ŽMP, testimony no. 77, J.T.; USHMM, RG-48.016, reel 255, images 627-644.

In the autumn of 1943, the SS imprisoned four gendarmes who were sentenced in June 1944 by the Prague SS and Police Court to between two and six years in prison for receiving bribes and for "military disobedience".[138] The case of Emil Zelníček was the simplest. The court sentenced him to two years for smuggling some vegetables for the prisoner Teresa Podlahová, whom he had previously known.[139] The SS also found out that Zelníček had Jews among his family relations.[140] He was released from the Small Fortress several weeks before the end of the war. His colleague Josef Koutecký played the main role in the rest of the affair. He was sent to Theresienstadt in the summer of 1943 for the second time. The SS later alleged that during his first term there, he had smuggled at least five parcels from prisoners' relatives into Theresienstadt and taken letters back to Prague. He re-established these contacts in 1943 and received a payment of 200 cigarettes (an expensive item on the black market) and around 5,000 to 7,000 Crowns. Furthermore, he repeatedly had sexual intercourse with a young Jewish prisoner, B. B., and was also involved in the sale of cigarettes at exorbitant prices (30 Crowns a piece). He received the cigarettes from another gendarme accused in this case, Adalbert Adámek, who was sentenced to thirty months, also for other black market activities.[141] The last gendarme facing the SS court in June 1944 was Vojtěch (Adalbert) Klimeš, who received a raincoat for bringing cigarettes and food to a prisoner from the gravedigger who lived near the ghetto. Furthermore, shortly before he was apprehended, Klimeš agreed to bring a letter from B.B. to Koutecký, who had already been sent back to his home station. B.B. and Klimeš also kissed, according to the court protocol. Koutecký, who was accused of a whole range of transgressions against SS rule, received six years in prison. Klimeš was sentenced to four years. They both survived and returned after the war from concentration camps in the Reich.[142] The main evidence in this case comes from SS court files, which are obviously a highly problematic source. There is a lack of other documents, though one member of the Gestapo after the war remembered a brutal interrogation of a gendarme and a gravedigger from Theresienstadt in the Pankrác prison. Both were involved in a smuggling network which seems to have been related to this affair.[143]

The final case, which also had the harshest consequences for the gendarmes and the Jews involved, was revealed in mid-1944. Most of the evidence was supplied by survivors and other witnesses, though their statements often contradicted each other. The gendarmes Jiří Anton Černý and Vilém Vach were taken into custody on 18 and 19 July, respectively, together with some members of the *Ghettowache*.[144] After six weeks of interrogation, the SS sent both gendarmes and the members of the *Ghet-*

138 ABS, Kanice, personnel file of Adalbert Klimeš, Abschrift, Feld-Urteil, SS und Polizeigericht VIII Prag, Klimeš, Koutecký, Adámek, Zelníček, 6 June 1944; see also their files in USHMM, RG-48.016, reel 256.

139 Ibid.

140 USHMM, RG-48.016, reel 247, Hasenkopf to the Gendarmerie Land Headquarters (GLK) in Bohemia, 8 November 1943.

141 ABS, personnel file of Adalbert Klimeš, Abschrift, Feld-Urteil, SS und Polizeigericht VIII Prag, Klimeš, Koutecký, Adámek, Zelníček, 6 June 1944; USHMM, RG-48.016, reel 256, image 109, note II-16.188/1944. Adámek was released in July 1944 for health reasons and did not return to the prison for the rest of the war.

142 USHMM, RG-48.016, reel 256, image 96, Velitel stanice SNB Hostouň u Prahy Sboru národní bezpečnosti, Zemské velitelství [Commander of the National Security Corps Hostouň near Prague to the Provincial Headquarter of the National Security Corps], 22 September 1945; image 67, note by Zemský četnický velitel [Provincial Gendarmerie Commander], 7 June 1945.

143 SOA Praha, MLS Praha, Ls 32/45, František Jenne, 17 July 1945. The gravedigger Antonín Šelicha died in Flossenbürg in January 1945.

144 ABS, 2M/10254, statement by František Hejtmánek, 25 March 1947; statement by Václav Průcha, 26 March 1947; statement by Bedřich Solar, 3 February 1947. Olga Schmiedová remembered that she had received her husband's clothes soaked in blood.

towache together with their family members (eleven Jewish prisoners) to the Small Fortress. All the investigated members of the *Ghettowache* perished, though some of their family members survived. The Prague SS and Police Court sentenced both gendarmes to four years in prison due to "illegal contacts and smuggling with Jews". They served their prison terms in the Small Fortress but succumbed to the conditions during the last weeks of the war or shortly after the liberation.[145]

The exact reason for their imprisonment is unclear. One day before their arrest, the SS had apprehended a group of Jewish painters who were accused of spreading atrocity propaganda by smuggling out paintings depicting the real conditions in the ghetto. However, this was almost certainly an unrelated event.[146] Some witnesses after the war suggested that the Gestapo imprisoned Vach and Černý for throwing a small piece of vegetable to the prisoners or because they had allowed members of the *Ghettowache* to smuggle vegetables into the ghetto.[147] Others suggested that there was a network between the gendarmes and the *Ghettowache* through which prisoners smuggled letters and newspapers, or cigarettes and tobacco.[148] There was indeed an underground economic cooperation between the *Ghettowache* and the gendarmes almost since the ghetto was first established.[149] After the war, Hasenkopf claimed that the gendarmes had been betrayed by Jewish informers, though other gendarmes admired the heroism of the members of the *Ghettowache*, who despite the brutal interrogation did not betray anybody.[150] Benjamin Murmelstein, the last Jewish Elder in the ghetto, also accused an infamous Jewish informer, who had been deported to the ghetto from Berlin, of betraying the members of the *Ghettowache*.[151] After the war, the last SS Commandant, Rahm, claimed that the order to investigate the case came directly from the Prague Gestapo, who reported that gendarmes were facilitating a connection between Prague and Theresienstadt.[152] This could have been an attempt by Rahm to deflect responsibility, though the official records state that both gendarmes were apprehended by the Prague Gestapo, and Rahm on other occasions admitted his personal initiative.[153] In any case, the length of the sentence, if we compare it to the other cases, suggests that this must have been a case of a more extensive cooperation between the gendarmes and prisoners, and not a simple case of the gendarmes offering small favours to a few individuals.

The theme of victimisation was part of a larger narrative in Czech society during the war. The gendarmes were in a difficult position. They constantly lived in the space between the Nazi authorities and the people in the Protectorate and faced the quandary of whether to report acts of resistance or risk that the Germans would eventually catch those guilty and the gendarmes would be punished as well. This delicate position also informed their main line of defence after the war.[154] Post-war memoirs

145 USHMM, RG-48.016, reel 256, images 453-460.
146 On the painters affair, see: Norbert Troller, Theresienstadt. Hitler's Gift to the Jews, Chapel Hill 2004; Leo Haas, The Affair of the Painters of Terezin, in: Terezín, Prague 1965, 157-161.
147 SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Lsp 441/47, Josef Rindl, 24 April 1947. František Hejtmánek, 25 March 1947.
148 Ibid, Indictment against Karl Rahm, 15 April 1947; testimony of Josef Polák, ABS, 2M/10254, Olga Schmiedová, 12 March 1947; statement by Josef Štědrý, 2 March 1947; statement by Karel Fiala, 28 March 1947; statement by Josef Klaber, 28 March 1947.
149 Adler, Theresienstadt, 23.
150 SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Ls 86/48, protocol with Hasenkopf, 19 December 1947.
151 The alleged informer was deported to Auschwitz on the last transport on 28 October 1944 and most likely perished there. ABS, 305-633-1, Murmelstein, 11 February 1946.
152 ABS, 2M/10254, interrogation of Rahm, 28 March 1947.
153 SOA Litoměřice, MLS Litoměřice, Lsp 441/47, the main proceedings against Karl Rahm, 23 April 1947.
154 ABS, VOK IV – 438/47, protocol with Josef Hejduk, 24 May 1946.

focused almost exclusively on the victims and members of resistance among the gendarmes. The first commemorative studies, published after 1945, included lists of gendarmes murdered during the war, but also stressed the unwavering patriotic feeling of the corps.[155] The memory of the policemen's service merged with the established master narratives of the war, stressing the martyrdom and resistance of the Czech nation.[156]

This was the case also in relation to their service in the ghetto, as the gendarmes tried to create a heroic image of policemen who, despite their dangerous assignment, altruistically helped prisoners. The fact that large sums of money were often involved in these smuggling networks was tacitly overlooked. Yet the evidence shows that the gendarmes played an important part in the ghetto economy and on the black market. They could travel outside of the ghetto and could bring in items highly sought after by the prisoners. The scarce evidence also shows that they became part of the "sexual barter economy",[157] as some of them established sexual contacts with young female prisoners and supported them with extra food or served as couriers for messages to their contacts in the Protectorate. Living for months in military barracks, away from their families and girlfriends and with easy access to extra food, the gendarmes were evidently sought out by female prisoners, though the available sources hint only indirectly at the extent of these arrangements.[158]

The punishment the gendarmes received for helping prisoners was in fact significantly milder than for other acts of resistance. They were sentenced by the SS court to at most four to six years in prison, which implies that the German authorities did not consider the cases – at the time of total war – as meriting too much attention and rather used them as a warning to the rest of the unit. Some of the post-war witnesses even noted that the SS tolerated the small favours the gendarmes offered to the Jews, or that they themselves were earning money from the smuggling activities. The available evidence also suggests that the SS were moved to action only in cases of organised networks or after a certain period of time to remind the gendarmes about the dangers associated with any contacts with the Jews.[159] Such sentences were delivered at a time when thousands of Czechs were being executed or sent to Auschwitz for small offenses against German law. For example, black marketeering or listening to enemy radio broadcasts – widespread activities among the Czech population, including gendarmes – could lead to the death penalty. The gendarmes who served prison terms were allowed to rejoin the police force and continued to work until the end of the war, some even in relatively prominent positions. This of course does not mean we should relativise the suffering of the gendarmes sent to Auschwitz, Flossenbürg, Buchenwald, Mauthausen, or the Small Fortress.

155 Šest let okupace Prahy, 211-223.

156 Michal Frankl, The Sheep of Lidice. The Holocaust and the Construction of Czech National History, in: John-Paul Himka/Joanna Beata Michlic (ed.), Bringing the Dark Past to Light. The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe, Lincoln/London 2013, 166-194; Peter Hallama, Nationale Helden und jüdische Opfer. Tschechische Repräsentationen des Holocaust, Göttingen 2015.

157 Anna Hájková, Sexual Barter in Times of Genocide. Negotiating the Sexual Economy of the Theresienstadt Ghetto, Signs 38 (2013) 3, 503-533. Hájková did not discuss the role gendarmes played in the ghetto's "sexual barter economy".

158 See for example: ŽMP, testimony no. 462, J.Ž.

159 See for example: Adler, Theresienstadt, 119.

Conclusions: Where Do We Go from Here?

Of the more than one thousand gendarmes who served in the ghetto, approximately fifteen were investigated by the SS for allegedly helping the Jews, and slightly less were investigated by the post-war Czechoslovak police and judiciary as collaborators. Most of the other gendarmes, as an arm of the Protectorate administration, remained in the ambiguous grey zone between the two extremes. The administrative system of the Protectorate continued to function during the war. Policemen who did not belong to persecuted groups (Legionnaires, Jews, or the resistance) continued to earn a living under the changed conditions. Post-war prosecutions did not find an extensive number of policemen who could be accused of what became labelled 'zealous' behaviour. As long as they remained within the boundaries of a 'normal' engagement with their duties and did not develop initiative, their wartime service was beyond reproach, at least from the judicial point of view. This stemmed from the inevitable decision – based on the sentiments prevailing in society – that it was impossible to reject the whole political system of the Protectorate as a collaborationist entity.[160]

However, as the post-war investigations showed, Protectorate structures were involved in all stages of the 'Final Solution' as it developed in Bohemia and Moravia. Czech public servants continued to work in their professions, running the agendas they received from their superiors, who were either Germans or Czechs. Their agendas also expanded. Alongside their regular work of maintaining order in Czech cities, towns, and villages, Czech policemen continued to enforce the law, including the ever-growing list of anti-Jewish regulations. In Theresienstadt, Czechs in the Protectorate gendarmerie uniform guarded Jewish inmates before they were loaded under the supervision of the same policemen onto trains that took them on their final journeys to Treblinka, Auschwitz, and other places.

Even recently, some political commentators and historians suggested that if we imply that parts of Czech society shared in the guilt of the Judeocide or Roma Holocaust, it helps exculpate the German perpetrators.[161] However, that is a very simplified and narrow-minded view. Nobody questions the ultimate guilt of Nazi Germany and of the German officials at all levels in the Protectorate administration. We know enough about what the Germans did. At the same time, it is fundamental to point to the fact that in the framework of their ordinary duties, the Czech bureaucracy contributed to the isolation, dispossession, deportation, and incarceration of the Jews and Roma. The Germans relied on hundreds of Czech officials and gendarmes, who played their role in the whole process, even if most of them personally did not harm anybody.

160 Frommer, National Cleansing, 280-293.

161 Vojtěch Blodig, Review of Wolf Gruner, Die Judenverfolgung im Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren, in: Terezínské listy 46, Prague 2018, 90-97.

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Survivor Testimony about Theatre in the Terezín Ghetto

A Longitudinal Case Study

Abstract

Scholars in various areas of Holocaust studies have long debated whether and how to use survivor testimony as evidence regarding past events. The debate becomes even more fraught when we ask whether testimony can serve as evidence of past subjective attitudes and emotional states. In this case study, I examine four narratives by a single survivor of the Terezín/Theresienstadt Ghetto, František Miška, narratives that may help answer the question: Why did prisoners choose to engage in theatrical performances in the ghetto? I will begin by examining Miška's 2006 testimony in the context of contemporary public discourses, and then by comparing his testimonies from 2006, 1997, 1963, and 1948. Ultimately, I will conclude that, in a longitudinal study, the most appropriate method for testing reliability may vary depending on the period being examined. A careful reconstruction of contemporary discourse is indispensable in using testimonies from the 1940s and 1960s as evidence. This study, however, reveals that the reliability of later testimonies is more effectively established by comparing narratives by the same survivor across time.

Introduction

Eyewitness testimony is one of the most complex types of evidence that historians use. Christopher Browning summarised the problems succinctly when he wrote: "How may a historian of the Holocaust use a variety of different, often conflicting and contradictory, in some cases clearly mistaken, memories and testimonies of individual survivors as evidence to construct a history that otherwise for lack of evidence would not exist?"[1] Yet, in his book *Ordinary Men. Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland,* he employed methods to engage with the memories of both perpetrators and victims. Working with perpetrator testimony, by his own admission, he faced not only the problems of forgetfulness and an unconscious or conscious tendency to reinvent the past, but "a strong motivation intentionally to lie, mislead, minimize, obfuscate, and feign amnesia".[2] Yet Browning successfully used this testimony to obtain information that could be derived from no other source, namely the different attitudes within the battalion and how the men were changed over time by what they did. In using victim testimony to establish the chronology of the battalion's brutal attacks on Jewish communities in the autumn of 1942, he considered "tendencies and recurring patterns" – especially the survivors' tendency to remember acts of betrayal by their neighbours more vividly than acts committed by the Germans – when interpreting their narratives.[3] This led him to very different

1 Christopher R. Browning, Collected Memories. Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony, Madison 2003, 39.
2 Browning, Collected Memories, 39.
3 Browning, Collected Memories, 43.

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conclusions than those reached in the book *Neighbours* by fellow historian Jan Gross, whose default position was to trust the testimony.[4] As Browning concluded: "[…] uncorroborated survivor testimony must always be seen in this light [of possible tendencies] as a possible corrective."[5]

In another study, *Remembering Survival*, Browning's history of Jewish slave labour camps in Starachowice, he also relied upon survivor testimony to reconstruct a history for which there were virtually no other sources. In comparing 173 testimonies collected over a span of six decades by survivors who had settled mainly in Israel, Toronto, Boston, and New York, he was surprised to find that, in spite of contradictions in chronology, dates, persons, and events, the testimony revealed "a firm core of shared memory".[6] Ultimately, he reached the same conclusions as Henry Greenspan, whose longitudinal studies of testimony revealed extraordinary consistency, finding that "[i]n short, survivor memories proved to be more stable and less malleable than I had anticipated".[7]

In my own research, I analyse testimonies by Czech Jewish survivors who created theatrical performances in the Terezín Ghetto.[8] This study, like Browning's study of Battalion 101, focusses on complex questions regarding attitudes. I want to know not only what the Terezín theatre artists performed, but why they did so and how they felt about it, in order to answer the question: What functions did theatrical performance serve for them? In this article, however, I will address a more fundamental question: What is the most appropriate way to test the reliability of survivor testimony concerning subjective past attitudes and emotional experiences? As I will demonstrate, with this particular group of survivors, all of whom remained in Czechoslovakia after the war, the appropriate methodology may vary depending on the period of testimony being examined. In brief, to interpret pre-1989 testimony, contemporary social and political pressures must be considered to balance out the type of "tendencies and recurring patterns" that Browning mentioned. In post-1989 testimony, however, such pressures appear to have exerted less influence. Instead, a remarkable degree of stability across time becomes the most powerful indicator of reliability.

I use the term "reliable testimony" to mean testimony that is acceptable as historical evidence, having been subjected to appropriate critical analysis and rules of evidence, as other sources are. In this article, I will mainly demonstrate the consistency of testimony – the stability across time of post-war narratives about survivors' subjective experience of the past. Why should this post-war testimony, however, regardless of its consistency, be accepted as reliable evidence regarding their attitudes and feelings in Terezín? If these survivors had written diaries in the ghetto, the connection between wartime attitudes and post-war testimony would be easier to establish. Since, unfortunately, none of them did, I establish the connection in two other ways. First, I compare their post-war testimony with diaries and documents written by prisoners in the ghetto itself.[9] The attitudes and feelings toward cultural

4 Browning, Collected Memories, 42.
5 Browning, Collected Memories, 43.
6 Browning, Collected Memories, 46.
7 Browning, Collected Memories, 47. Greenspan described and analysed his longitudinal studies in Henry Greenspan, On Listening to Holocaust Survivors. Recounting and Life History, Westport 1998.
8 Since I am working mainly with Czech-language testimony, I will here use the Czech name, Terezín, rather than the German Theresienstadt.
9 Such documents include, for example, published diaries, such as: Philipp Manes/Ben Barkow/Klaus Leist, Als ob's ein Leben wär. Tatsachenbericht Theresienstadt 1942–1944, Berlin 2005, and Eva Roubíčková/Zaia Alexander, We're Alive and Life Goes On. A Theresienstadt Diary, New York 2015; and reports on cultural activities such as Arno Neumann's essay published in Lisa Peschel (ed.), Performing Captivity, Performing Escape. Cabarets and Plays from the Terezín/Theresienstadt Ghetto, Calcutta 2014, 236-239.

activities in the ghetto that these wartime authors describe closely resemble those expressed by my group of survivors. Second, I compare factual elements of the survivors' testimony, including statements about what plays they performed and with whom, with sources from the ghetto. These sources, which include preserved records of the prisoner-run *Freizeitgestaltung* (the office that oversaw cultural activities) and the Heřman collection, a remarkable set of documents on cultural activities in Terezín that includes souvenir posters, programmes, and set designs, confirm the survivors' memories in the vast majority of cases. Therefore, I argue that their post-war memories of attitudes and feelings can be accepted as reliable evidence as well.

Of course, as Browning himself acknowledged, even questioning the reliability of Holocaust survivor testimony is controversial in some quarters.[10] Moreover, in many areas of scholarship that engage with such testimony, reliability testing is simply unnecessary. Martin Kusch, building upon Browning's own classification, identified ten types of research projects that have emerged around testimony.[11] Only two – legal discourse and historical-factual discourse – are concerned with the link between the testimony and events of the past. Others, for example, psychoanalytic discourse and life history discourse, have other goals, such as to capture manifestations of trauma in survivors' narratives, or to analyse survivors' struggles to convey their experiences.[12] As Thomas Trezise pointed out, in such discourses "the objective truth or falsehood of what is discovered through storytelling can be relegated to a secondary status or even bracketed altogether".[13]

Some of these discourses, in spite of having different and, for the most part, equally legitimate goals, adopt what Kusch called a "dismissive attitude" towards other discourses.[14] For example, as Aleida Assmann wrote with a nod to well-known arguments by Dori Laub: "The survivors as witnesses do not, as a rule, add to our knowledge of factual history; their testimonies, in fact, have often proved inaccurate. […] Their point is less to tell us what happened than what it felt like to be in the center of those events […]".[15] My point is that the terms Assmann treated as oppositional are not mutually exclusive: How the survivors felt is part of factual history. Those feelings help us explain phenomena that are otherwise very difficult to understand – for example, why Terezín prisoners sacrificed scarce resources such as food and sleep to participate in cultural activities.

In my own study, testing evidence for reliability is especially important for two reasons. First, many of the testimonies about cultural activities in the ghetto are so positive that they have generated doubts since the beginning of my research, usually manifested as questions about the survivors' ability to remember their subjective experiences accurately at their advanced age. Second, my study directly counters one of the discourses Kusch described: The "incomprehensibility discourse", as represented

10 Browning, Collected Memories, 38.

11 Martin Kusch, Analysing Holocaust Survivor Testimony. Certainties, Scepticism, Relativism, in: Sybille Krämer/Siegried Weigel (ed.), Testimony/Bearing Witness. Epistemology, Ethics, History and Culture, London/Lanham, 2017, 137-165, here 144.

12 Kusch, Analysing Holocaust Survivor Testimony, 144.

13 Thomas Trezise, Witnessing Witnessing. On the Reception of Holocaust Survivor Testimony, New York 2013, 23.

14 Kusch, Analysing Holocaust Survivor Testimony, 145.

15 Aleida Assmann, History, Memory, and the Genre of Testimony, in: Poetics Today 27 (2006) 2, 261-273, here 263. The best-known presentation of Laub's arguments is found in Shoshana Felman/Dori Laub, Testimony. Crises of Witnessing in Literature, Psychoanalysis, and History, New York 1991.

perhaps most prominently by Lawrence Langer.[16] As Kusch wrote, such scholars "oppose all attempts to find a positive message in the narratives of the survivors. Instead they highlight both the survivors' and our inability to come to intellectual terms with the Holocaust world".[17] My research has revealed not only positive messages in post-war survivor narratives, but a remarkably positive role played by the arts in enabling prisoners to cope with potentially traumatising experiences in Terezín. In order for the prisoners' achievements to be recognised and understood, I wish to remove as many barriers as possible to accepting the survivors' testimony.

Reliability testing played a key role in my analysis of the testimony given by a core group of survivors in the 1940s and 1960s.[18] In selecting this group, I chose survivors who had remained in Czechoslovakia after the war to eliminate variations due to different countries of post-war emigration.[19] To enable a comparison of individual narratives across time, I selected those who were young enough to be interviewed by myself between 2004 and 2008, yet old enough to have participated as adults in cultural activities in the ghetto. Thus, for most of my study, I limited the group to six survivors from one generation: Those born between 1910 and 1922.[20] In addition to comparing their testimonies across time and with each other, I searched for the type of tendencies that Browning warned of, namely trends that could skew the interpretation of the testimony. By reconstructing contemporary discourse using a small collection of periodicals, I found pressures specific to each decade that influenced how the survivors narrated their past in that particular present moment. For example, as the periodicals revealed, anti-German sentiment in immediate post-war Czechoslovakia was intense. Czech Jewish survivors involved in German-language cultural activities in the ghetto therefore either did not mention it, or linked it with praise of Czech-language culture.[21] Two decades later, in writings from the early 1960s, survivors prominently conflated antisemitism with racism. Periodicals revealed a key feature of contemporary public discourse: An emphasis on the lack of racism in socialist countries and a critique of the West for racism, motivated by efforts to win the allegiance of the African states newly emerging from colonialism. However, what was motivating the survivors to engage with this discourse? Jewish testimony on the Second World War had been suppressed during a long period of state-sponsored antisemitism in the 1950s. As censorship began to ease, however, Terezín survivors linked the discourse on racism to Nazi antisemitism in order to introduce their own narratives of the war into the public sphere, including testimonies about their cultural activities in the ghetto.[22]

16 See for example: Lawrence L. Langer, Holocaust Testimonies. The Ruins of Memory, New Haven 1991, or perhaps even more tellingly his chapter on Roberto Benigni's film, entitled Life is not Beautiful, in Lawrence L. Langer, Using and Abusing the Holocaust, Bloomington 2006, 30-47.

17 Kusch, Analysing Holocaust Survivor Testimony, 144.

18 Lisa Peschel, The Prosthetic Life. Theatrical Performance, Survivor Testimony and the Terezín Ghetto, 1941–1963 (PhD Thesis), Minneapolis 2009. Individual chapters of this dissertation have been published as "A Joyful Act of Worship". Survivor Testimony on Czech Culture in the Terezín Ghetto and Postwar Reintegration in Czechoslovakia, 1945–48, in: Holocaust and Genocide Studies 26 (2012) 2, 209-228; "Structures of Feeling" as Methodology and the Re-Emergence of Holocaust Survivor Testimony in 1960s Czechoslovakia, in: Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism 26 (2012) 2, 161-172, and The Cultural Life of the Terezín Ghetto in 1960s Survivor Testimony. Theatre, Trauma and Resilience, in: Patrick Duggan/Lisa Peschel (ed.), Performing (for) Survival. Theatre, Crisis and Extremity, London 2016, 59-77.

19 For an innovative study on the effects of post-war environments upon survivor narratives, see: Hannah Pollin-Galay, Ecologies of Witnessing. Language, Place, and Holocaust Testimony, New Haven 2018.

20 In: Peschel, "A Joyful Act", I explored an exception to this group: Testimonies from the 1940s of three survivors over the age of 60.

21 See for example: Anna Auředníčková's testimony in: Peschel, "A Joyful Act", 215.

22 See: Peschel, The Prosthetic Life, 192-203.

I then proceeded to analyse testimonies provided by the same core group of survivors after the fall of the communist regime in 1989. The preliminary findings of this study, which is focussed on a collection of testimony dating from the mid-1990s and my own interviews conducted between 2004 and 2008, reveal that there no longer seems to be a need to reconstruct contemporary discourse through meticulous analysis of periodicals. More specifically, for a variety of reasons, a search for tendencies in contemporary public discourse after 1989 no longer reveals pressures that significantly influenced the survivors' testimony about cultural activities in the ghetto. It appears that correctives like those I applied to the 1940s and 1960s testimony are no longer necessary. Conversely, an examination of the testimony across time, using the much more detailed interviews from the post-1989 period, yields strong evidence of reliability.

I will here demonstrate these findings with a case study focussed on the testimony of a single survivor: František Miška. His testimony is similar in tone and content to the testimonies of the other members of my core group. Yet Miška is the only survivor for whom I have testimony spanning all four post-war periods. He was also the only one still working professionally at the time of our interview and thus perhaps the one most likely to be influenced by public discourse. In the following section of this article, I will examine Miška's 2006 testimony in the context of contemporary public discourse in an attempt to detect tendencies that might have influenced his testimony. I will then compare his narratives from 2006, 1997, 1963, and the 1940s to see which elements remained stable and which changed over time.

From his testimony and his autobiography, which was published in 2002, it is possible to construct a brief biography.[23] Miška was born in Prague in 1919. He was interested in theatre from an early age and performed with various groups as a teenager. He was deported to the Terezín Ghetto on one of the first transports in December 1941 and was fortunate to secure a job in food service. He performed in several plays in the ghetto before his deportation to Auschwitz in September 1944. There, he was selected for labour and sent to Birkenau. As the end of the war neared, he was deported to Gross-Rosen, then Bolkenheim, and was finally liberated at Buchenwald in April 1945. He was the only person from his family to survive the Holocaust. He returned to Prague and pursued a career as an actor in theatre and film. In the spring of 1964, he was invited to direct a performance at the municipal theatre in Pilsen, and subsequently embarked on a career as a professional director in Czechoslovakia and elsewhere in Europe. At the time of our interview, he was still working professionally as a director. He passed away in 2017 in Prague.

Miška's 2006 Testimony in the Context of Contemporary Public Discourse

In an attempt to detect tendencies in contemporary discourse that might have influenced Miška's testimony on cultural activities in the ghetto, I examined our 2006 interview using the same methodology I applied to his testimonies from the 1940s and 1960s. I searched his text alongside texts published in selected contemporary periodicals for what Sara Ahmed called "objects of feeling": Topics that elicit a particularly strong emotional reaction. Pursuing the argument that emotion is "not what comes from the individual body, but what holds or binds the social body to-

23 František Miška, Když se pláč směje. Pouť divadelního režiséra [Can't Cry for Laughing. The Journey of a Theatre Director], Prague 2002.

gether", Ahmed analysed how emotions represented in texts that circulate in the public domain "create the very effect of the surfaces and boundaries that allow us to distinguish an inside and an outside in the first place".[24] We can observe the creation of such boundaries by emotions in periodicals from the 1940s and 1960s, as well as the survivors' reactions to those boundaries in their own texts. For example, in immediate post-war public discourse, as I mentioned above, German-language culture was an extraordinarily negative object of feeling. The Terezín survivors, in order to position themselves within the community of 'patriotic Czechs', did not engage positively with this object in their testimony. In the 1960s, racism appeared prominently in Czech public discourse as a negative object of feeling. Again, the survivors aligned themselves with the collective by condemning racism, and in the process created a space to discuss Terezín's cultural activities by framing their performances as anti-racist.

To contextualise Miška's 2006 testimony, I drew upon periodicals from 2005, the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War, when objects of feeling relating to the ghetto were likely to be circulating in public discourse. For the 1940s and 1960s, I examined *Rudé právo* (Red Justice), the newspaper of the Communist Party, *Hlas osvobozených* (Voice of the Liberated), the newsletter of surviving political prisoners, which was founded in 1945 and renamed *Hlas revoluce* (Voice of the Revolution), after the communist rise to power in 1948, and *Věstník* (Bulletin), the newsletter of the Jewish community. To reconstruct the discourses from 2005, I examined the post-1989 successors to each of those periodicals.

I interviewed Miška in June 2006, approximately halfway through the four-year period during which I was collecting testimonies from dozens of survivors, mainly in the Czech Republic but also in the United States, Germany, and Israel. My interviews, most of which were conducted in Czech, were focussed on cultural activities in the ghetto, although we also discussed other topics that the survivors brought up, such as daily life in Terezín, the camps to which they had been deported after Terezín, and their post-war lives. The interviews were intentionally unstructured, to allow the survivor to direct the conversation as much as possible. I often began with questions about the survivor's earlier testimony, or about archival documents from the ghetto, then let them take the lead.

My interview with Miška covered a wide range of topics. Here, I will focus on just a few of the most powerful objects of feeling in his testimony, namely Czech national identity and leftist politics, and their relationship to Czech culture. Our discussion of Czech national identity emerged from a question inspired by his autobiography: His description of a fellow prisoner, a young Czech theatre director named Gustav Schorsch, who is universally acknowledged among the survivors as producing some of the finest work in the ghetto.

> "LP: And here you write about Schorsch as a person with truly human, artistic, and national feelings. How was it, I am curious, what do you mean with this 'national'?
> […]
> FM: Today it is pejorative, today it is simply idle talk […]. I remember, when I was a little boy, I was once with my mother and when they played the anthem my mother cried. That meant something to those people. Today, people do not at all have the feeling that it means something to be Czech, not at all. Only when they play hockey. […] When Masaryk was president, I still

24 Sara Ahmed, The Cultural Politics of Emotion, New York 2004, 10.

> remember well, that meant something. […] It was a certain kind of heroism, to be a member of that nation, that was something, today it is simply a joke, no one thinks about it. Not at all. Among those politicians […], what Czech culture means to them, what Czech theatre means to them, what Czech music means to them […], for them, those are only things which are good for their career at a certain moment."[25]

Czech national identity, as symbolised by Thomas Garrigue Masaryk, the first president of the Czechoslovak Republic, clearly remained an object of strong feeling for Miška. His testimony also reveals that, for him, this identity should be performed through an affiliation with "Czech culture […], Czech theatre […] Czech music". In 2006, however, his feelings of pride and sense of "heroism" in belonging to the Czech nation were mixed with a new feeling, namely disappointment in contemporary Czechs and especially in politicians for their failure to share in his high regard for the nation or to demonstrate that regard as he saw fit.

The topic of leftist politics also emerged in a discussion of theatre. I asked whether he thought any new forms of theatre had emerged in the ghetto, or whether the prisoners' performances continued the influence of the theatre of the First Republic, and especially of theatre artists Jiří Voskovec and Jan Werich. As my previous research had revealed, it is impossible to overstate the enduring popularity of Voskovec and Werich – often abbreviated as V+W – among Miška's generation. Voskovec and Werich, along with their composer, Jaroslav Ježek, created wildly popular comic musical revues at Prague's Liberated Theatre. After 1933, when Hitler came to power in Germany, their shows became even more beloved: V+W were committed antifascists, and their satirical revues manifested Czech solidarity and the will to resist,[26] as Miška described.

> "FM: Well certainly, that was so powerful, that experience of the Liberated Theatre was so powerful, that it would have been impossible not to carry it over [into the ghetto].
> […]
> LP: Could you describe to me how it was to be there in the audience, especially at the end of the 1930s?
> FM: On the one hand they were leftists, you know, they were strongly to the left, a bit they flirted with that, a bit, a little bit […] that was a completely different atmosphere. I was also a communist. Who was not? Every decent person was a communist.
> LP: And that is something which is very hard to explain today, especially in America, what it meant at that time to be a communist.
> FM: Let me suggest how to explain it to them.
> LP: Please do.
> FM: During a single afternoon, eighteen beggars came to our flat. Eighteen beggars who wanted soup, got bread, got 10 hellers, and left. They were poor. So there was […] a fight for social justice, and […] each person, who had a sense of fairness, of equality, it was because of that – later, the face of it, what was happening in the Soviet Union, we did not know at all what was happening there. We had no idea, we thought, now there will come a new world, people are equal with one another and so on. […] And on top of that they [Voskovec and Werich] made enormous fun of those right wingers. It was

25 František Miška, interview with Lisa Peschel, 19 June 2006. All translations are my own.
26 Jarka Burian, Modern Czech Theatre. Reflector and Conscience of a Nation, Iowa City, 2000, 51.

intellectually outstanding, the texts were excellent, clever, again it was something new."[27]

A leftist political stance remained an object of feeling and was still associated with artistic excellence, but again, the feeling had become more complex. Miška clearly felt the need to explain and defend his own youthful idealism and to express regret that his generation, and the artists they had idolised at the time, had once believed in an ideology that then led to totalitarian domination of much of Europe in the post-war period.

Even before examining the periodicals, it is possible to detect trends in this testimony based on already known influences – most obviously the end of the communist regime. As we have seen, the current political context changed the way he felt and spoke about Czech national identity and about leftist politics: They were still objects of feeling, but the feelings were different. These changes, however, would not necessarily raise questions regarding the reliability of the testimony and would therefore not require the kind of "corrective" that Browning described, because Miška so clearly distinguished between how he felt in the 1940s and how he felt in 2006. For example, rather than claiming he had never believed in communism, he talked of his misguided youthful idealism. His 2006 testimony does not obscure the fact that in the 1940s, performing his affiliation with the left would have been a tremendously positive object of feeling. To detect more subtle influences upon Miška's testimony, I proceeded to examine the selected periodicals for objects of feeling, looking for intersections with those important to Miška, namely Czech national identity, leftist politics, and Czech culture.

Právo

Právo (Justice) is a daily newspaper which drew upon the subscriber base of *Rudé právo.* It ceased being affiliated with the Communist Party in 1991, but has maintained a left-wing stance. In 2005, it had the second-highest circulation in the Czech Republic among the major (non-tabloid) dailies, and was the only one not owned by a foreign company.[28] I analysed articles in this daily from a single month, namely January 2005, when, due to the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, objects of feeling relating to the ghetto might have been in higher circulation. The main objects of feeling to emerge in this periodical in this month intersected to some extent with Miska's objects of feeling: Czech political culture, the European Union, history and commemoration, and Czech-language culture.

As might be expected from a major daily, Czech national politics emerge as a primary object of feeling, especially regarding the conflicts between the two leading political parties, ODS (Občanská demokratická strana, the Civic Democratic Party, with a liberal-conservative stance) and ČSSD (Česká strana sociálně demokratická, the Czech Social Democratic Party). Early 2005 was a turbulent period. The idealistic leadership of Václav Havel, who had finished his term as president in February 2003, was a thing of the past. He had been succeeded by Václav Klaus, a former economist and the first democratically elected premiere of Czechoslovakia, whose political career had weathered various scandals. Klaus's new year speech, which *Právo* headlined with the quotation "Our public discourse has become more vulgar and increas-

27 František Miška, interview with Lisa Peschel, 19 June 2006.

28 With a circulation of almost 170,000, Právo was second only to Mladá fronta DNES (Young Front TODAY), an independent, Western-style daily aimed at a general readership with a circulation of 303,400. BBC News, The Press in the Czech Republic, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/4068647.stm (27 July 2020).

ingly superficial", provided a snapshot of the state of affairs.[29] In the speech, he characterised the pace of economic change as "solid" but not fast enough to catch up to Western Europe, and lamented the lack of order in state finances, the apathy of voters (none of the elections in 2004 had drawn more than thirty per cent of Czech voters), and "the ever greater number of attempts at personal discrediting of political rivals".[30] The latter was a reference to members of Klaus's own party, ODS, who were vigorously engaged in discrediting the current premiere and leader of ČSSD, Stanislav Gross, a state of affairs which one *Právo* commentator called "government crisis as farce".[31] Through the lens of contemporary Czech politics, Czech national identity appeared to be associated not with heroism and pride, but with frustration and even embarrassment.

Czech national identity also manifested itself through another object of feeling: The European Union. Although the Czech Republic had become a member state in May 2004, Klaus himself was an avowed Eurosceptic. In early 2005, the ODS and ČSSD were sparring about whether and how to ratify the EU's proposed European Constitution. In an editorial called "Czech European Constitution Schizophrenia", author Jan Rovenský described Klaus's scepticism and his fears of a loss of Czech autonomy as part of a "European superstate".[32] He also referred to a survey from late 2004 that revealed that 86 per cent of Czechs were "completely uninterested" in the European Constitution. He did not speculate, however, as to whether the cause was true apathy or, perhaps, weariness of endless political battles.

History and commemoration were also objects of feeling in this period, but, with rare exceptions, attention was focussed on one key event: The sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Long articles described the participation of dignitaries in a commemoration ceremony held on the grounds of the former camp and the range of prisoners who perished there.[33] Although ten months later, in November 2005, the UN officially designated 27 January as International Holocaust Remembrance Day, focussing specifically on the Jewish genocide, *Právo* articles in January 2005 mentioned both Jewish and non-Jewish victims. The word "Holocaust", however, appeared in several articles, and a front-page article on 28 January acknowledged that in Auschwitz the Nazis, "according to most recent estimates of historians, took the lives of about 1.1 million people, above all Jews from many countries".[34]

Czech-language culture also emerged as an object of feeling in *Právo.* Articles in the "Culture" pages engaged with new projects, such as Czech films soon to be released and new Czech plays and musicals premiering in the second half of the theatre season.[35] They also engaged with cultural icons of the past. For example, an article on 10 January entitled "Contemporaries Remember V+W" described the filming of a programme for Czech television in honour of Voskovec and Werich on the occasion

29 Václav Klaus, Naše veřejná diskuse zhrubla a je stále více povrchní [Our Public Discourse has Become More Vulgar and Increasingly Superficial], in: Právo, 3 January 2005, 4.

30 Ibid.

31 Jiří Pehe, Vládní krize jako fraška [Government Crisis as Farce], in: Právo, 21 February 2005, 7. Gross stepped down as premiere in April 2005 due to the ongoing scandal.

32 Jan Rovenský, Česká euroústavní schizofrenie [Czech European Constitution Schizophrenia], in: Právo, 28 January 2005, 13.

33 Osvobození Osvětimi slaví zástupci 50 států [Liberation of Auschwitz Marked by Representatives of Fifty Countries], in: Právo, 27 January 2005, 8; Svět: Osvětim se už nesmí opakovat [World: Auschwitz Must Not Be Repeated], in: Právo, 28 January 2005, 1, 7.

34 Svět: Osvětim se už nesmí opakovat, 1.

35 Natáčené filmy – na co bychom se měli těšit? [Films Being Made – What Should We Look Forward To?], in: Právo, 10 January 2005, 15; Divadlo sází na komedie i původní muzikály [Theatre Relies on Comedies and Original Musicals], in: Právo, 17 January 2005, 11.

of the hundredth anniversary of Werich's birth.[36] A few weeks later, another article described more programmes honouring the pair, including a show designed by TV Nova to appeal to youth and "pass humour from generation to generation".[37]

Národní osvobození

Národní osvobození (National Liberation) is the post-1989 manifestation of the surviving political prisoners' newsletter, which provides the perspective of a group whose pre-war and wartime experiences resembled those of the Terezín survivors in many ways. After 1989 officially labelled the "biweekly paper of the Czech Union of Fighters for Freedom and the Czechoslovak Community of Legionnaires", it assumed the title of the legionnaires' periodical during the interwar period to acknowledge resistance going back to the First World War.[38] I examined the biweekly issues of *Národní osvobození* from January through May 2005 for commentary on the anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

In early 2005, the members of the Czech Union of Fighters for Freedom (hereafter the Union) shared few of the objects of feeling expressed in the pages of *Právo.* For example, they did not engage with contemporary political scandals and the acrimonious debates taking place between the major political parties. They also expressed little interest in the EU during this period, perhaps accepting it as a fait accompli, although articles in previous years had expressed an uneasiness that membership would lead to a loss of Czech national identity.[39] Czech-language culture, whether theatrical or otherwise, did not figure prominently in its pages. Not even beloved artists from the period of their own youth were featured. The objects of feeling that emerged most prominently in this period were history and commemoration, youth, and the Sudeten Germans.

The Union's focus on history and commemoration was made clear in the first issue of the year, in an address to members by their chair Anděla Dvořáková entitled "Anniversary Year".[40] Dvořáková emphasised the "legacy of resistance" and her meetings with public figures, which were held with a single goal: To encourage them "not to forget about resistance and especially the resistance fighters, to ensure for them a peaceful and dignified old age". She described the anniversary as "an opportunity for us to let the world know about us, in spite of our advanced age", and exhorted members to pass on their memories to younger generations.[41] Other articles in the same issue looked forward to commemorative events, including a planned meeting with the president on the International Day of Political Prisoners in April and a parade scheduled to take place in Prague in May to commemorate the end of the war.[42] Articles in the 19 May issue reported enthusiastically on the parade in Prague and commemorative events elsewhere in the country but expressed thinly veiled criticism of the public figures who attended only on 'round' anniversaries.[43]

36 Pamětníci vzpomínají na V+W [Contemporaries Remember V+W], in: Právo, 10 January 2005, 15.
37 Wericha připomenou televize i rozhlas [Werich Remembered on Television and Radio], in: Právo, 24 January 2005, 16.
38 The Czech Union of Fighters for Freedom (Český svaz bojovníků za svobodu) has existed under various names since 1945. The legionnaires were Czech and Slovak volunteers fighting on the side of the Entente during the First World War to gain support for their independence from Austria-Hungary.
39 See for example: Neustálé podkopávání české státnosti [Constant Undermining of Czech Statehood], in: Národní osvobození, 30 January 2003, 1.
40 Anděla Dvořáková, Jubilejní rok [Anniversary Year], in: Národní osvobození, 3 January 2005, 1.
41 Ibid.
42 Přípravy začaly [Preparations Have Started], in: Národní osvobození, 3 January 2005, 1; Chybějí národu hrdinové? [Is the Nation Lacking Heroes?], in: Národní osvobození, 3 January 2005, 3.
43 Majové dny 2005 [May Days 2005], in: Národní osvobození, 19 May 2005, 1.

Although their primary historical focus was on the Second World War, their engagement with other periods revealed their own relationship with Czech national identity. They invoked the name Masaryk frequently as a symbol of the First Republic, the significance of that period being made clear in an article on 13 January.[44] The article focussed on perceived historiographical attacks on "our awakeners" – key figures in the Czech National Revival in the nineteenth century – which were motivated, according to the author, by the forces of "globalisation and neoliberalism" that were working to "separate the nation from its own history and traditions". One sentence in particular summed up their feelings about this tradition: "The ideas and ideals of the National Revival stood at the birth of our First Republic and gave it a democratic spirit, freedom of thought, and self-assured pride, underscored by honourable work and […] justified cultural and economic ambition."[45]

Thus, Czech national identity, as symbolised by the First Republic, was still an object of positive feeling for the Union and an ideal worth defending.

Another object of feeling – youth, as the desired heirs to their legacy – appeared in articles describing the efforts to reach them. For example, they wrote about their new website: "Times change, and if we want to preserve the legacy of our forefathers and pass it on, we must choose paths which are dear to the younger generations."[46] A further article informed the readers that the editorial board had acquired a computer for the same purpose: "With modernisation, we follow only one goal: to increase the ranks of our readers above all in the young generation, to whom we want to hand over the legacy of resistance."[47] There were, however, no reports regarding the success of these particular efforts.[48]

Another intensely emotional object of feeling in the Union's newsletter was Germany, and more specifically the ongoing demands of the surviving Sudeten Germans. These ethnic Germans had been expelled from the border regions of Czechoslovakia after the Second World War. The *Landsmannschaften*, their organisations which were based mainly in Germany, continued to press for reparations, apologies from the Czech government, and other concessions. Heated articles on this topic appeared almost every month. For example, in January, in an article entitled "Let's Demand Post-war Reparations from Germany!", the author suggested pursuing this outstanding debt which, in 2002, was estimated by the Czech foreign minister to amount to 19 million US dollars, in order to counter demands from the expelled Germans.[49] In April, a further article reviewed the history of Sudeten German support for Hitler and ended with a reminder of Nazi plans to enslave the Slavic peoples after the war – plans that should, the author insisted, be taken into account by members of the *Landsmannschaften* before presenting their grievances.[50]

44 Bez zakladatelů nejsou pokračovatelé [Without Founders There Are No Continuers], in: Národní osvobození, 13 January 2005, 1.

45 Ibid.

46 To je naše další adresa [This Is Our Additional Address], in: Národní osvobození, 24 February 2005.

47 Vážení čtenáři! [Dear Readers!], in: Národní osvobození, 21 April 2005, 1.

48 Jewish members of the Union appeared to have been more successful in integrating commemoration with youth outreach. For information on a project about the fates of the children who had signed an autograph book owned by survivor Helga Weissová-Hošková in Terezín, see: Petr Žák, Kamarádi Helgy, ozvěte se! [Friends of Helga, Get in Touch!], in: Národní osvobození, 3 January 2005, 3, and Památníček paní Helgy Weissové pootevřen … [The Autograph Book of Mrs. Helga Weissová Open …], in: Národní osvobození, 13 January 2005, 1.

49 Jiří Havlíček, Požadujme od Německa poválečné reparace! [Let's Demand Post-war Reparations from Germany!], in: Národní osvobození, 13 January 2005, 1.

50 Miloslav Šikula, My nic, to všechno Hitler [We Did Nothing, Hitler Did Everything], in: Národní osvobození, 7 April 2005, 3.

Terezínská iniciativa

Rather than examining the Jewish community's post-1989 newsletter, *Roš chodeš*, I decided to analyse the periodical of the Terezín survivors' own organisation, *Terezínská iniciativa* (Terezín Initiative, hereafter TI), established in 1990. The first issue of the TI's eponymous periodical was published in the spring of 1991 and described the organisation's main goal as follows: "[…] to fix the undignified and insulting way that the memory of our victims has been treated".[51] The issue also revealed that the TI actually began its existence as a subgroup of the Union.[52] By 2005, the organisation was no longer formally affiliated with the Union, although many survivors were still members of both, and the periodical was issued approximately quarterly. I examined all three 2005 issues, which were published in February, May, and October. The main objects of feeling that emerged were similar to those of the Union – history and commemoration, youth and pedagogy, Czech culture in Terezín, and Germany – but the feelings associated with these objects were often quite different. Instead of fearing irrelevance, the members of the TI reported on their thorough integration into a network of organisations, both Czech and international, actively working towards shared and achievable goals of commemoration and education.

By 2005, many of the organisation's early goals had been achieved, as described in an article by chair Dagmar Lieblová:

> "We will probably not forget everything that the TI has achieved during these fifteen years of existence. We made an effort to build and open the ghetto museum [in Terezín], to host further exhibitions in the Magdeburg barracks, to arrange the meeting centre, to publish the Terezín memorial books, and to help the former prisoners get humanitarian aid. […] Much has changed in our activities, historical research and publications have been taken over by the Terezín Initiative Institute, and our main efforts in the current period are social and health support for our members and to exert an influence on the younger generation."[53]

As Lieblová also noted in her report, the TI had established a separate institution for historical research in 1993. By 2005, the Terezín Initiative Institute was, for example, organising and participating in conferences all over the world and publishing a successful academic yearbook in Czech and German. Terezín survivors themselves were engaged in commemoration and, in this sixtieth anniversary year, they were very much in demand. A report in the February issue described a 27 January event in the senate of the Czech Republic for "the day of victims of the Holocaust" featuring speeches by politicians in the presence of "former prisoners from Auschwitz and Terezín".[54] Terezín survivors had also been invited, along with members of the Union, to meet with President Václav Klaus in Prague Castle in April.[55] Further articles described several lesser-known but still deeply felt anniversaries that were marked over the course of the year.

51 Kolik nás ještě je? [How Many of Us Remain?], in: Terezínská iniciativa, Spring 1991, 3. According to this article, the organisers had identified most of their potential members – 1,300 survivors – by checking the membership card file of the Union. Only five per cent of the former ghetto prisoners they eventually located were identified through other means.

52 Hanuš Schimmerling, Památka obětí musí zůstat živá [The Memory of the Victims Must Remain Alive], in: Terezínská iniciativa, Spring 1991, 1.

53 Dagmar Lieblová, Zpráva o práci předsednictva Terezínské iniciativy v roce 2004 [News about the Work of the Board of the Terezín Initiative in 2004], in: Terezínská iniciativa, May 2005, 3.

54 Doris Grozdanovičová, Ze senátu [From the Senate], in: Terezínská iniciativa, February 2005, 10.

55 L.A., Pozvání na Pražský hrad [Invitation to Prague Castle], in: Terezínská iniciativa, May 2005, 16.

Their focus on the younger generation as an object of feeling was revealed in articles about their work with students, as survivors were just as much in demand for educational purposes. The TI organised and funded a number of pedagogical activities, including trips for Czech schools to the Terezín Memorial.[56] The TI also reported on survivors' participation in events organised by others. The May issue described a wide variety of such events taking place in several different countries, ranging from discussions in schools to Terezín-related performances, exhibitions, book launches, and productions of documentary films.[57] In an article about an event in Leipzig, the writer provided a succinct description of both the content and the positive reaction of the young audience: "We spoke not only about the hardship we experienced, but also the strength of culture and friendship in Terezín. Most of the listeners were young people – middle school students, who displayed a deep interest in these past events."[58]

Czech-language cultural activities related to Terezín itself were also powerful objects of feeling. The May issue described a CD recorded in Israel of songs by Terezín cabaret artist Karel Švenk, performed by survivors, and an October article reported on a concert in Rostock, Germany, of works by Terezín composer Karel Reiner.[59] The most vivid emotion, however, was expressed regarding the Czech children's opera *Brundibár*, which had been performed in the ghetto 55 times.[60] An article in the February issue described the first post-1989 performances of *Brundibár*, initiated by survivor Jiří Vrba, who had seen the performance in the ghetto as a young child.[61] He managed to interest Prague's Disman Radio Children's Choir in the project. The successful and emotional premiere, held in Terezín itself with many survivors present, led to the recording of a CD by the Disman Choir and performances in Berlin, Antwerp, and the USA. The October issue reported on still more performances of *Brundibár* by other choirs around the world, including in Germany, France, and Canada.[62]

Although, as Holocaust survivors, the members of the TI might be expected to share the Union's anxiety regarding Germany and the *Landsmannschaften*, the pages of their periodical reveal no such fears. Instead, the authors wrote enthusiastically of productive collaborations with German individuals and organisations. Thus, rather than viewing Germany as a negative object of feeling, the survivors integrated Germany into a thoroughly positive object of feeling: Their international educational and commemorative projects.

All in all, the TI's periodical provides a surprisingly cheerful picture of the circumstances of its members in 2005. In spite of their advanced age, many of them were actively engaged in activities that they perceived as profoundly meaningful.

56 After a protracted battle, the Czech Ministry of Education was persuaded to support these trips financially. See: Michaela Vidláková, Nová naděje pro školní zájezdy do Terezína [New Hope for School Trips to Terezín], in: Terezínská iniciativa, October 2005, 5.

57 See for example: Michaela Vidláková/Artur Radvanský, Přehled mezinárodní aktivity v 1. pololetí 2005 [Overview of International Activity in the First Half of 2005], in: Terezínská iniciativa, October 2005, 8.

58 Anna Hanusová, Vzdělávací programy o holocaustu v Lipsku a Salcburku [Educational Programme in Leipzig and Salzburg], in: Terezínská iniciativa, October 2005, 4.

59 Eva Herrmannová, Zajímavé cédéčko Karla Švenka [Interesting CD of Karel Švenk], in: Terezínská iniciativa, May 2005, 11; Lisa Miková, Karel Reiner in memoriam 1910–1979, in: Terezínská iniciativa, October 2005, 4.

60 Joza Karas, Music in Terezín 1941–1945, New York 1985, 98.

61 Zdena Fleglová/Václav Flegl, Brundibár a Dismanův soubor [Brundibár and the Disman Choir], in: Terezínská iniciativa, February 2005, 15-16.

62 Petr Liebl, Brundibár nejen v Evropě, ale i za "velkou louží" [Brundibár Not Only in Europe, But Also across the "Big Pond"], in: Terezínská iniciativa, October 2008, 6-7; Michaela Vidláková, Brundibár ve Francii [Brundibár in France], in: Terezínská iniciativa, October 2008, 7; Eva Herrmannová, Brundibár v Lipském Gewandhausu [Brundibár in the Leipzig Gewandhaus), in: Terezínská iniciativa, October 2008, 8.

Miska's Testimony in the Context of the Periodicals

Returning to Miška's testimony, I investigated how the tendencies in the various public discourses that I identified in these three periodicals may have influenced his narrative. Certain objects of feeling were clearly shared. For example, Czech national identity appears to have held a similar meaning, and a similar emotional valence, for Miška as it did for the readers of *Národní osvobození*. With *Právo* he shared the desire to acknowledge the contributions of Voskovec and Werich to Czech culture, although *Právo* noticeably failed to mention their leftist political leanings. The fact that Miška agreed to give his testimony and did so on several occasions in the past indicates a desire to commemorate this period that was shared by the readers of *Národní osvobození* and *Terezínská iniciativa*. Other objects, however, that emerged as vitally important in the periodicals do not appear in his testimony: The EU, Sudeten Germans, and the desire to convey a legacy to youth. Whether they were simply unimportant to him, or whether he did not discuss them because I did not ask about them, is a question that cannot now be answered, but I find it unlikely that these particular topics would have influenced his testimony about cultural activities in the ghetto. Even after a detailed examination of the objects of feeling circulating in the discourse of these various periodicals in 2005, I could thus detect no tendencies that would require the type of "corrective" that Browning described.

Why, when public discourses in the 1940s and 1960s were so influential upon testimony, was there such a lack of influence after 1989? Clearly, the government had less coercive power after 1989 than it did, for example, in the 1940s, when failure to align oneself with the community of 'patriotic Czechs' could result in deportation, so the survivors' need to position themselves within the boundaries created by key discourses was much less urgent after 1989.[63] Most of the survivors, Miška excepted, were also retired by this point, so there was little reason to be concerned about public standing or employment. In addition, these post-1989 testimonies were collected with the understanding that they would not circulate in the public sphere, so there was simply little risk attached to expressing different objects of feeling, or different feelings about the same objects. In sum, there are several possible reasons for the lack of influence, but my conclusion remains the same: These public discourses did not generate the kinds of tendencies in Miška's testimony that Browning described as requiring a corrective.

Miška's Testimony across Four Decades

A further methodological approach that potentially demonstrates reliability, rather than simply a lack of unreliability, is the examination of the consistency of testimony across time. In this section, I will track Miška's testimony backwards chronologically regarding two additional objects of feeling: Gustav Schorsch, as the inspiration for some of his most emotional testimony, and German-language culture in the ghetto, as the object of feeling perhaps most likely to be unstable due to the influence of contemporary public discourses. In brief, what I have found is extraordinary stability in his engagement with these objects.

In my 2006 interview with Miška, I did not ask him about German-language culture in the ghetto, so unfortunately I can provide no information about this possible

63 See: Peschel, "A Joyful Act", 210.

object of feeling. I did, however, ask additional questions about Schorsch. Miška spoke about him at length, describing his refusal to engage in Terezín's theatrical activities at first and his absolute commitment to the work later on:

> "But that Schorsch, his way of planning, that was his artistic credo, he did not know how to do things any other way. He was not a person who was capable of doing anything for the moment. He did not want to do anything [theatrical when he arrived in Terezín], because he had the impression, that he would not be able to do what he wanted. And I talked him into it […]. He was also the only professional, we were complete laypeople, right. And when he did something, he did it absolutely, which is the only way to do it […]. I learned that from him."[64]

He also spoke of Schorsch's extraordinary sense of moral responsibility and described him as "a person who felt responsible, to an almost unnatural degree, for what he did, for each step he took". When I asked him about the seminars Schorsch organised for his actors, he replied,

> "You know, we were all amateurs. And he was the only professional, and had contact with people who were at the peak of Czech theatrical culture. […] And we stared at him like crazy people, for us it was simply something amazing, what he lectured. We were idiots, who did not know anything about theatre, and suddenly along came a person who showed us how it was done."[65]

These themes – Schorsch's arrival, his commitment, the seminars, and his sense of responsibility – arose in his October 1997 testimony as well, collected as part of an initiative by the Jewish Museum in Prague.[66] All the interviews in this collection were conducted by Terezín survivors Anna Lorencová and Anna Hyndráková, who had been young teens during their internment in the ghetto, and the interviews are dotted with references to memories they shared with fellow survivors. Lorencová and Hyndráková structured their interviews with a list of questions that were organised chronologically, but both were quite flexible in allowing the interviewee to move among periods and topics as their narratives unfolded.

When Lorencová asked Miška specifically about theatre in Terezín, his first reference was to Schorsch as "one of the greatest losses to Czech culture". Although he did not describe the seminars specifically, he spoke of Schorsch as an educator:

> "AL: Were you active in all those things that Schorsch did?
> FM: Yes, in all.
> AL: You took part as an actor.
> FM: Yes. I didn't have any idea about directing, I didn't even know how one plays theatre. He taught us everything, Schorsch initiated us into it."[67]

After discussing some of Miška's pre-war theatrical activities, they returned to the topic of Schorsch. Miška described him in terms very similar to those he used in his 2006 testimony, focussing on his sense of responsibility and his hesitation to engage with cultural activities in Terezín when he first arrived:

> "[H]e was the first person I ever met who took things upon himself. Who felt absolutely responsible for every word he said and every deed he did. Liter-

64 František Miška, interview with Lisa Peschel, 19 June 2006.
65 Ibid.
66 For a report on this collection, see: Anna Lorencová/Anna Hyndráková, Česká společnost a židé podle vzpomínek pamětníků [Czech Society and Jews in the Memory of Survivors], in: Miroslav Kárný/Eva Lorencová (ed.), Terezínské studie a dokumenty 1999, Prague 1999, 97-118.
67 František Miška, interview with Anna Lorencová, 17 October 1997, Jewish Museum Prague, no. 686, 7.

> ally. That was a revelation. And also in art. […] He originally didn't want to do anything, because he thought that the connection with some kind of ideal that he had in his head was unrealisable. There, he found a band of cursed amateurs who didn't know anything. So he thought it wouldn't work. Then we somehow pulled him into it."[68]

In 1997, in addition to discussing Schorsch, he brought up the other object of feeling I will examine: German-language theatre in the ghetto. He described his own involvement briefly in the following excerpt (the unbracketed ellipsis in the transcript indicate German-language names that the transcriptionist apparently did not recognise):

> "Then the Germans [German Jewish theatre artists] wanted to do something with me as an actor, because there weren't many people, there was Kurt … and another well-known German director, I don't remember now what his name was. […] We started to do … and I didn't finish it."[69]

The information is somewhat vague due to Miška's own faulty memory and the transcriptionist's omission both of Kurt's surname and the name of the play. He revealed, however, no sense of a need to conceal or downplay his involvement in a German-language performance. His claim that he did not finish the play is most likely a simple statement of fact. There is no archival record of this German-language performance, even though, for almost all of the other plays he mentions, there is a corresponding poster in the Heřman collection. This lack of documentation reinforces his claim that the show never got beyond the rehearsal stage.

Miška's 1963 testimony was collected by Eva Sormová, a 19-year old student of theatre history at Charles University in Prague, who later became one of the leading scholars at Prague's Theatre Institute and an early supporter of my research. In 1963, when her tutor Jan Kopecký, who had worked with Gustav Schorsch before the war, suggested she write her seminar paper on the topic of theatre in the Terezín Ghetto, she interviewed 23 survivors. As Šormová described her methodology to me in 2004, she had asked survivors a few basic questions regarding fellow theatre artists or specific performances and then simply "let them speak".[70] Upon my request in 2007, she typed up her handwritten notes from ten of these interviews. These extremely mediated texts hint at, rather than perfectly capture, the survivors' own feelings and turns of phrase, but provide an astonishing wealth of information on the theatrical life of the ghetto from various individual points of view.

Šormová interviewed Miška twice, on 18 and 23 April 1963. Her notes of their conversations consist mainly of an extensive list of play titles and notes on their performance, and almost all are confirmed by archival documents from the ghetto. Fortunately, Šormová recognised the name of the German-language play the transcriptionist missed in 1997, and Miška remembered the name of the director: "*Woyzeck* – rehearsals took place, but it was prepared in German, K. Meinhard directed it."[71] Although this reference is too telegraphic to discern any attitude towards the performance, it is indistinguishable in tone and length from Šormová's notes on the thirteen Czech-language plays he mentioned in the first interview.

68 Ibid, 10.

69 Ibid, 8. Kurt is likely Kurt Gerron, a well-known German Jewish actor and director who was a prisoner in the ghetto.

70 Eva Šormová, interview with Lisa Peschel, 3 December 2004.

71 František Miška, interview with Eva Šormová, 18 April 1963. The play *Woyzeck*, by German dramatist Georg Büchner, was written in 1837. Theatre and film director Carl Meinhard, who was educated in Prague but spent most of his career in Berlin, was deported to Terezín in October 1942.

Even in this fragmentary form of evidence, Schorsch holds a prominent place. Miška mentioned him from the beginning, as the second note of the first interview reads: "Schorsch was a philosophical idealist with a sense for social themes."[72] It was not until the second interview, however, that Miška talked about Schorsch at greater length, describing his artistic perfectionism: "Schorsch was very anxious to ensure that the performance was of high artistic quality and that, from the social point of view, it had some meaning. There were many plays which were considered, but the selection was very strict."[73]

He also described the seminars and the feeling of responsibility behind them in more detail:

> "Schorsch, before he began to do theatre, organised seminars, with which he wanted to bring all participants – future interpreters – to the same common spiritual basis, to reach a point where there was an affiliation among them in their approach to the work, to the text. Maximal feeling of responsibility. If someone leads such a seminar, it has enormous meaning, he will achieve much more, than if he quickly did one performance after another."[74]

In his 1960s testimony, however, Miška did one surprising thing that appears in only this period: He spoke critically of Schorsch.

> "Schorsch, when he rehearses, he plays it out [for the actors]. His playing out, related to his recitation [of poetry], it was usually somewhat in conflict with what he demanded from the actors. A character should have rhythm […] but in his recitation, playing was somewhat forced."[75]

Elsewhere in these 1963 interviews, he was even more critical of some of his fellow actors in the ghetto.[76] I have argued that testimony is, for the most part, extraordinarily consistent across time, unless there is some specific pressure upon it. In this case, the pressure was likely internal, generated by an impending life change: In 1964, Miška made a professional transition from acting to directing.[77] Perhaps, at this point in his career, he felt entitled to criticise not only his fellow actors, but his mentor, too.

Miška's 1940s testimony appeared in a memorial volume dedicated to Gustav Schorsch.[78] The volume was edited by Jan Kopecký (later Eva Šormová's tutor) and published in Prague in 1948. The volume included Schorsch's own letters and writings, testimonials by his pre-war theatrical associates, and essays by several Terezín survivors.

In this period, given the intense pressure on survivors to display their affiliation to Czech national identity and Czech-language culture, it is not surprising that Miška did not mention his own involvement in German-language performance. He did, apparently, feel the need to establish Schorsch's own national credentials for the reader, perhaps because of his German name. He described an incident that does not appear in any of his later testimony:

> "He [Schorsch] behaved in all situations simply uncompromisingly, strictly according to his conscience. In the camp at Fürstengrube [where he was de-

72 Ibid.
73 František Miška, interview with Eva Šormová, 23 April 1963.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid.
76 Peschel, The Cultural Life, 72.
77 Miška, Když se pláč směje, 82.
78 František Miška, untitled essay, in: Jan Kopecký (ed.), Nevyúčtován zůstává život. Sborník prací Gustava Schorsche a vzpomínek jeho přátel [A Life Remains Unreckoned. A Collection of Works by Gustav Schorsch and the Memories of his Friends], Prague 1948, 135-138.

> ported after Terezín and Auschwitz], some SS men wanted him to recite to them in German. He told them that he didn't know how. Maybe it would have saved his life."[79]

Miška's phrasing, "he told them that he didn't know how" *(Řekl jim, že neumí)*, is somewhat ambiguous. It could mean that Schorsch genuinely did not know German, or that he lied to the SS officers, telling them either that he did not know German or that he did not know how to recite. Evidence regarding whether Schorsch actually did speak German is contradictory, but the point Miška was making is clear: Schorsch refused to perform for the SS officers in their language, perhaps at the cost of his life.

Miška devoted most of his essay to describing Schorsch's exemplary personality and theatrical practice, touching on themes and topics that recurred consistently in his later testimony. For example, he explained why Schorsch initially did not want to engage with the theatrical life already underway in Terezín:

> "When he [Schorsch] arrived, we were performing a play by Zdeněk Jelínek, *Comedy about a Trap.* It is, in a word, a play about how the SS and big capital will finally get it on the head. […] But Gustav didn't like that kind of theatre. […] He didn't want theatre to influence people politically unless it would also make them morally conscious […]. He carried over his sense of personal responsibility from outside the stage into the theatre."[80]

Later in the essay, he described how Schorsch finally did become involved:

> "Probably a month after his arrival in Terezín, he began to do theatre with us. To get to know people and to initiate them a bit into his method of working and his point of view, he started a theatre seminar. It was in the period when transport after transport was leaving for Auschwitz. He simply ignored all of the exterior circumstances. He worked as if he lived in deep peace, and he planned the seminars to last for two to three years. This was typical of his attitude toward things. […] He never improvised. […] He tried all possibilities and the diligence which he devoted to everything was exemplary."[81]

What becomes apparent in this examination of testimony across several decades is the consistency of Miška's accounts. Regarding Schorsch as an object of feeling, the same themes that emerged in my interview with him in 2006 can be traced all the way back to his first testimony in the 1940s: Schorsch's refusal at first to engage with theatre in the ghetto and then, subsequently, his total commitment to his art, his sense of responsibility, and his lectures and seminars. The emotions associated with Schorsch also remain the same: Admiration, devotion, and deep appreciation of the work they did together in the ghetto. Even with the object of feeling perhaps most likely to change over time, German-language culture, his descriptions of the rehearsals for *Woyzeck* were consistent in 1963 and 1997, once the intense anti-German pressure of the 1940s had eased and he could broach the topic.

79 Ibid, 136. Miška himself was not deported to Fürstengrube and did not explain how he knew of this incident.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid.

Conclusion

After a thorough examination of Miška's testimony across four decades, my findings are the same as Browning's and Greenspan's: Although Miška is sometimes inconsistent with dates and forgetful about names, the key features of his testimony remain stable from the 1940s through 2006. A preliminary analysis indicates that this is also true of the testimony of the other five survivors in my core group. Their narratives are also consistent with those of dozens more survivors I have interviewed in the Czech Republic, Germany, Israel, and the United States since this project began, and of the many others whose testimony I have only been able to read. Conversely, my examination of Miška's 2006 testimony in the context of periodicals from 2005 reveals no trends caused by the influence of contemporary discourse that would require any kind of corrective. Therefore, the way forward in my further analysis of the post-1989 testimony is clear: Rather than continuing my in-depth analysis of periodicals to create an even more detailed reconstruction of public discourses from the mid-1990s and from 2004 to 2008, I will examine the consistency of the testimonies across time and across my core group of survivors. Considering the correspondence between descriptions of feelings written in the ghetto versus those described after the war, and the accuracy of testimony on cultural activities as verified by archival documents from the ghetto, I will accept the consistency of the post-war testimonies across time as sufficient evidence to confirm their reliability.

Yet the question arises: Why go through the labour-intensive and time-consuming process of analysing the 2005 periodicals if my conclusion, ultimately, is that such an analysis does not reveal anything significant? Since I am working within what Kutsch called "historical-factual discourse", I see no reason to exempt testimony from methodological processes that could raise doubts about its accuracy before demonstrating, as I have done in this article, that that process is unnecessary. Many works about survivor testimony that I respect greatly have been written by scholars working within other discourses, focusing on something other than historical truth. I believe, however, that we do the survivors a great injustice if we take the default position that historical truth, as a rule, cannot be found in their testimonies. The "firm core of shared memory" in the Terezín survivors' narratives has something quite remarkable to tell us, not just about how they narrated their experiences, or about how they came to terms with them after the war, but about the role that cultural activities in the ghetto played in their survival.

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Štěpán Jurajda and Tomáš Jelínek

Statistical Analyses of Theresienstadt Prisoners

Examples and Future Possibilities[1]

Abstract

This article uses a near-complete database of prisoners in the Theresienstadt Ghetto to provide statistical comparisons of death risks according to country of residence and gender, conditional on age, social status proxies, and the timing of the prisoners' arrival in the ghetto. We also estimate conditional Holocaust survival differences for Theresienstadt prisoners on transports to Auschwitz. Our aim is to complement the existing historical research on Theresienstadt and to illustrate the possibilities of statistical analysis of the Holocaust in the present-day Czech Republic. To this end, we also discuss other available data.

Introduction

The statistical study of historical data provides a natural complement to traditional historical analysis based on qualitative research and on the descriptive use of quantitative information. At their best, statistical models adopted from the social sciences and applied to individual-level historical databases can measure the causal effects of policies or of individual characteristics on outcomes, such as survival of the Holocaust. At a minimum, there is a broad scope for multivariate conditional comparisons to help illuminate and assess historical narratives.

The possibility of enriching existing knowledge by using statistical modelling is relevant for the large body of literature examining the Holocaust.[2] First, the use of quantitative (often perpetrator-generated) data in the literature is typically limited to aggregate and univariate descriptions, while multivariate comparisons can be tailored to test historical narratives. Second, where research relies primarily on survivor testimonies, it is not possible to interpret these as applicable to victim popula-

1 This research has been supported by a grant from the Czech Science Foundation (GAČR, no. 19-05523S). The authors would like to thank Michal Frankl, Tomáš Fedorovič, Benjamin Frommer, Tatjana Lichtenstein, and Anna Hájková for their comments, Tereza Štěpková and Aneta Plzáková for their support and assistance, Alena Jindrová for sharing the data on prisoners at the Lípa camp, Jana Vobecká for sharing the demographic data on Czech Jews, and the Theresienstadt Initiative Institute for providing access to its database.
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2 Elmer Luchterhand, Prisoner Behavior and Social System in the Nazi Concentration Camps, in: International Journal of Social Psychiatry, 13 (1967) 4, 245-264; Joel E. Dimsdale, The Coping Behavior of Nazi Concentration Camp Survivors, in: American Journal of Psychiatry 131 (1974) 7, 792-797; Sofsky Wolfgang, The Order of Terror. The Concentration Camp, Princeton 1999.

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tions,[3] but statistical methods can help deal with survival biases. Third, to the extent that diaries, letters, and other accounts are available from those who did not survive the Holocaust, these rarely provide systematic coverage, so that statistical data may again help underpin the generalisability of such accounts.

In this paper, we provide two simple illustrations of the use of multivariate statistical analysis to complement the historical literature devoted to the Theresienstadt Ghetto.[4] Theresienstadt (Terezín) was a transit ghetto established by the SS during the Second World War in the garrison city of the same name in German-occupied Czechoslovakia. Below, we examine the survival chances faced by the almost 140,000 prisoners of the ghetto. Our analysis is based on the near-complete database of individual persecution histories (including the ultimate Holocaust survival indicator) of the Theresienstadt prisoners. Over 33,000 of them died in the ghetto, almost all of whom were elderly, while over 88,000 were sent from Theresienstadt mainly to extermination camps in occupied Poland. The survival rates of those on transports to the East grew towards the end of the war from near-zero levels prevailing in 1942/1943. The survival chances of Theresienstadt prisoners was thus based on 1) avoiding death through starvation and disease in the ghetto, 2) avoiding or at least postponing deportation out of the ghetto, and, for those on transports to the East, on 3) attempting to survive incarceration in labour or extermination camps.

This article analyses the death rates associated with strategies 1) and 3) and relates them to the observable characteristics of the prisoners. We refer to death rates conditional on several prisoner characteristics and contextual variables as death risks. While analysing these death risks, we statistically assess some of the historical narratives presented in the literature on Theresienstadt.[5] By analysing a specific setting of the Holocaust from the territory of the present-day Czech Republic, we extend the growing body of statistical and econometric research based on individual-level data from the Holocaust, which presently covers mostly Western European countries.[6] We will conclude by discussing data sources available in the Czech Republic and future potential statistical research of the Holocaust that could be conducted in this context.

3 See e.g.: Michael Pollak, L'expérience concentrationnaire. Essai sur le Maintien de l'identité sociale [The Concentration Camp Experience. Essay on Maintaining Social Identity], Paris 1990. For example, the small minority of surviving prisoners of a concentration camp may highlight in their post-war testimonies the importance of a particular strategy or practice that helped them survive. However, it may be that the majority of prisoners who did not survive incarceration made use of the same practice, which therefore in fact had little effect on the chances of survival.

4 See e.g.: Hans Günther Adler/Jeremy Adler, Theresienstadt 1941–1945. The Face of a Coerced Community, Cambridge 2017; Miroslav Kárný, Terezínská zpráva Otto Zukera [The Theresienstadt Report of Otto Zuker], in: Terezínské studie a dokumenty, Prague 2000, 97-102; Karel Lagus/Josef Polák, Město za mřížemi [City behind Bars], Prague 2006.

5 We are not the first to use administrative data from Theresienstadt or to present survival comparisons. See e.g.: Tomáš Fedorovič, Židovské evidenční karty. Opomíjený pramen k historii perzekuce židovského obyvatelstva [Jewish Record Cards. A Neglected Source on the History of the Persecution of the Jewish Population], in: Terezínské listy 36, Prague 2008, 140-162; Anna Hájková, Poor Devils of the Camps. Dutch Jews in the Terezín Ghetto, 1943–1945, in: Yad Vashem Studies 43 (2015) 1, 77-111. We do appear, however, to be the first to use a multivariate statistical analysis on the complete database of prisoners.

6 Two simple analyses are closely related to ours: Andreas Kranebitter, Zahlen als Zeugen. Soziologische Analysen zur Häftlingsgesellschaft des KZ Mauthausen, in: Mauthausen-Studien, Vol. 9, Vienna 2014; Peter Tammes, Surviving the Holocaust. Socio-Demographic Differences among Amsterdam Jews, in: European Journal of Population 33 (2017) 3, 293-318. Kranebitter relied on data from the Mauthausen concentration camp to quantify how survival depended on the prisoners' nationality and reason for imprisonment. Tammes measured the socio-demographic differences in the survival of Amsterdam Jews during the Holocaust. For a general discussion of applying social science identification strategies to historical data, see: Davide Cantoni/Noam Yuchtman, Historical Natural Experiments. Bridging Economics and Economic History, in: NBER Working Paper, No. 26754, 2020.

The Theresienstadt Ghetto and the Data

The ghetto in the garrison city (Great Fortress) of Theresienstadt was established in November 1941 as a concentration and transit camp[7] for Czech Jews who had been deported from their homes in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. From June 1942, the SS also started sending mainly elderly Jews from Germany and Austria to the ghetto. Czechs, Germans, and Austrians were the largest country-of-residence groups in the ghetto, but there were also small groups of Dutch, Danish, Slovak, Hungarian, and Polish prisoners arriving from April 1943. The ghetto was run by its SS headquarters, but Adolf Eichmann's department in the Reich Security Main Office in Berlin was responsible for setting up the demographic categories for selection on all transports out of Theresienstadt. The ghetto also had its self-administration, represented by an Elder of the Jews (*Judenältester*) and a Council of Elders (*Judenrat*). The self-administration implemented directives of the SS, but it could carry out its own agenda within the constraints outlined by the SS and, as a result, was able to lower the death rate in the ghetto.[8] Unlike other ghettos such as the one in Łódź, Theresienstadt was not primarily a labour ghetto, as almost all of the labour conducted in Theresienstadt served to maintain the town's infrastructure.[9] The individual-level data we used in this paper correspond to the database of Theresienstadt prisoners compiled by the Terezín Initiative Institute (TII), a non-profit organisation founded by an international association of surviving prisoners of the ghetto. The database was created from records kept by the Nazi administration, primarily transport lists and lists of the deceased in the camp, as well as lists of those who survived in the ghetto. The TII extended these records by coding a Holocaust survival indicator and various other life history indicators for almost all the victims. The data covers the names, gender, age, academic titles,[10] and 'prominent' status of prisoners.[11] Unlike German and Austrian prisoners, Czech (and Dutch) prisoners typically arrived in family units and so it is important that the data allows us to approximate family linkages.[12] The data also covers information on the arrival in and deportation from Theresienstadt of each prisoner, including their transport numbers as well as their pre-deportation country of residence, based approximated on the city of deportation. (We therefore do not have direct information on citizenship or nationality.) The data also includes information on the date of death of those prisoners who died in Theresienstadt. We compared the monthly transports into Theresienstadt in the TII

7 Theresienstadt shares some features with other Nazi ghettos (such as its 'self-administration' under Nazi control) as well as with other Nazi concentration camps. See: Peter Klein, Terezín. Ghetto, nebo koncentrační tábor? [Theresienstadt. A Ghetto or a Concentration Camp?], in: Terezínské studie a dokumenty, Prague 2005, 100-111. We here use the terms interchangeably as this issue is outside of the scope of our analysis.

8 Kárný, Terezínská zpráva. Finkel also discussed how Judenräte in ghettos generally tried to help the communities they led. Evgeny Finkel, Ordinary Jews, Princeton 2017, 70.

9 Miroslav Kárný, 'Pracovní´' či 'zaopatřovací´' Terezín? Iluze a reality tzv. produktivního ghetta ['Labour' or 'Supplying' Theresienstadt? Illusions and Realities of the So-Called Productive Ghetto.], in: Litoměřicko 25 (1989), 95-107.

10 The prisoners of the ghetto were typically middle-class urban Jews. Although the ghetto's infrastructure was built and maintained by the prisoners themselves, there was a relative shortage of crafts and an abundance of white-collar prisoners. In total, three per cent of the prisoners in Theresienstadt held an academic title. There were about 1,000 engineers, 1,000 doctors of medicine, 400 lawyers, and 46 professors. The rest of the 5,000 prisoners with an academic title held the generic "Dr" title in the data.

11 The TII data identifies 223 prisoners (mainly scientists and politicians) who were given the status of 'prominent' prisoners, lived under better conditions, and were generally protected from transports.

12 Family members typically came on the same transport, where they were assigned consecutive transport IDs. Having identified as members of the same family those sharing the same surname and holding consecutive transport numbers, we estimated that 82,000 prisoners arrived with family members, making up about 28,000 (mostly Czech) families.

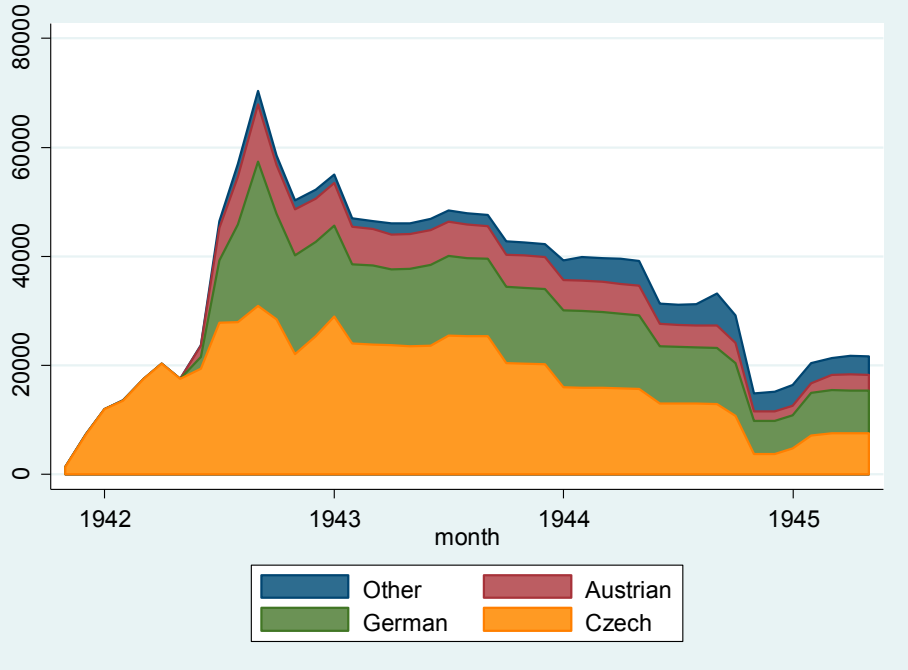

Figure 1: Theresienstadt Ghetto population by country of residence.

data to those reported by Lagus and Polák[13] and they were nearly identical, confirming that the database indeed corresponds to historical records and covers essentially all prisoners arriving on organised transports.

The data allows us to show the evolution of the country-of-residence structure of the camp's population (Figure 1) and of the (monthly) death rates and deportation-from-Theresienstadt (i.e., out-transport) rates by country-of-residence groups (Figure 2). We denote as 'Czech' those prisoners who arrived on transports from cities located in today's Czech Republic; the same goes for 'German' and 'Austrian' prisoners. Based on the TII data, over half of the prisoners arrived on transports originating in Czech cities (25 per cent of all the prisoners arrived from Prague), 28 per cent came from Germany, and twelve per cent came from Austria. Monthly inflows into Theresienstadt grew from roughly 5,000 in the initial, mostly Czech-populated period to about 20,000 a month between June and September 1942, when most of the elderly and most of the German prisoners arrived. Subsequently, inflows dropped back down to about 5,000 a month and generally stayed below 2,000 after January 1943. The population peaked in September 1942, followed by a steady decline. Two large drops in the ghetto population, each amounting to about 20,000 prisoners, occurred from September to November 1942 and September to November 1944, due primarily to a series of large transports out of the ghetto. The 1944 drop occurred when the camp's population was at about half the 1942 size and thus exposed prisoners at that time to a higher (percentage) risk of being deported out of the ghetto. Figure 2 visualises these risks.

In Figure 2, both the monthly death rates and monthly deportation rates are expressed in terms of the total number of prisoners *at risk* of dying or being transferred to the east *in a given month*. There are dramatic spikes in the deportation risks that prisoners faced, with particularly high chances of being placed on a transport out of Theresienstadt in early and late 1942 as well as in late 1944. Monthly death rates

13 Lagus/Polák, Město za mřížemi.

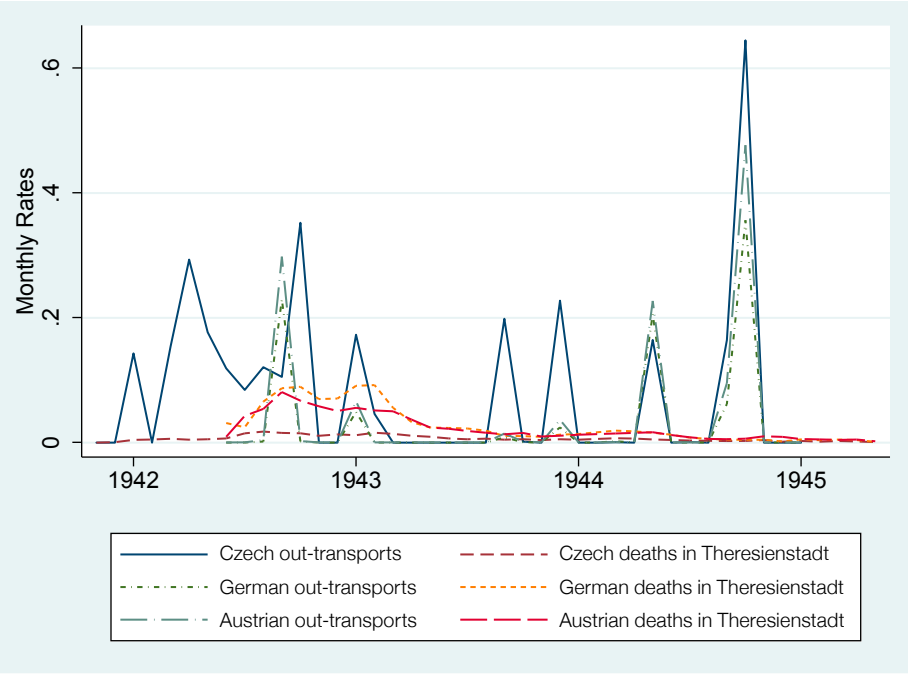

Figure 2: Death and out-of-Theresienstadt deportation rates by country of residence.

peaked in the second half of 1942 at about five per cent. The death rates were substantially higher for German and Austrian prisoners than for Czech prisoners during the most deadly period from late 1942 to early 1943. On the other hand, the deportation risks were much higher for Czechs during 1943. (This was also the case among prisoners aged over 65.) Czechs faced high deportation risks in 1942 in part because large portions of the more than thirty incoming transports originating in Czech cities were dispatched almost immediately (within a few days) onto out-going transports. For example, 73 per cent of prisoners arriving on the transport 'Ao' in April 1942 were put on a transport leaving Theresienstadt that same month. Overall, 28,000 Czech prisoners, but almost no German and no Austrian prisoners, faced chances above one-third that they would be assigned to an outgoing transport within a few days of arriving in Theresienstadt.

Czechs formed the majority of the camp's population until mid-1942 and represented close to half the camp's population until the end of 1943. However, they accounted for only a quarter of the population from the end of 1944. This decline was driven by the higher deportation rates for Czechs, of whom 82 per cent ended up on transports out of Theresienstadt, compared to less than half of the German and Austrian prisoners. On the other hand, about 40 per cent of German and Austrian prisoners died in the camp, compared to less than ten per cent of Czech prisoners. This is mainly due to the age structure of each group, but the historical literature hypothesised that Czech prisoners had a survival advantage due to power structures within the camp (Czechs being the majority) and to the variable availability of family support.[14] We will return to this issue in the next section.

Theresienstadt was by far the most frequent initial imprisonment destination for Czech and Moravian Jews. One can assess the degree to which different demographic groups were deported to Theresienstadt by comparing the pre-war demographic

14 Anna Hájková, Prisoner Society in the Theresienstadt Ghetto, 1941–1945, Toronto 2013.

structure of Czech Jews to that of the Czech prisoners.[15] When we compared the population structure of Czechs entering Theresienstadt to that of Czech Jewry in 1939 (based on the Nazi registry according to the Nuremberg Laws[16]), we found that about 60 per cent of both men and women under 18 who were in the registry entered Theresienstadt. The share was similar for women aged 18 to 44 and for men aged 45 to 59 and was lower (at below 50 per cent) for men aged 18 to 44. This might correspond to the ability of men in their prime age to avoid deportation to Theresienstadt by emigrating or escaping. By contrast, the share of registered Czech Jews entering the ghetto was over 70 per cent for women aged 45 to 59 and men over 60 and it was even higher for women over 60. Figure 3 shows these statistics.[17]

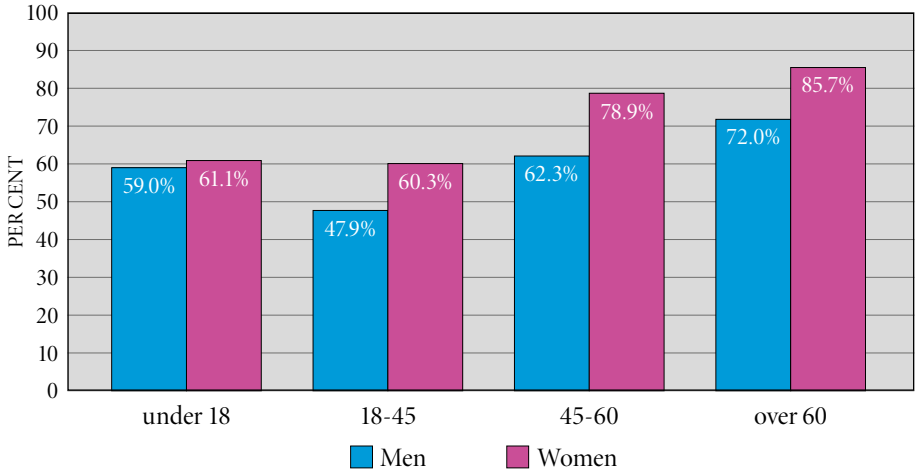

Figure 3: Share of the 1939 Czech Jewish population entering Theresienstadt.

Death Risks in Theresienstadt

Since 95 per cent of the prisoners who died in Theresienstadt were aged over 55, we focussed our analysis of death risks in the ghetto on this group of older prisoners. We studied differences in death rates across country of residence and gender whilst conditioning on the timing of the prisoners' arrival in Theresienstadt (by conditioning in our regression analysis on in-transport-month indicators). Prisoners arriving in the ghetto in different months faced different group-level survival conditions (related, for example, to the weather, epidemic situation or ghetto overpopulation) irrespective of their individual characteristics. Our analysis removed these group-level differences from the comparisons concerning gender and country of residence. For example, if survival conditions were better for prisoners of any type arriving in a

15 Mariot and Zalc performed a similar analysis for a cohort of 1,000 Jews from the Lens area in France. Nicolas Mariot/Claire Zalc, Reconstructing Trajectories of Persecution, in: Claire Zalc/Tal Bruttmann (ed.), Microhistories of the Holocaust, New York 2017.

16 The data, which was compiled gradually, is available in Věstník Židovské obce náboženské v Praze [Newsletter of the Prague Jewish Religious Community], 9 (14 November 1947) 23, 330. See also: Miroslav Kárný, Konečné řešení. Genocida českých židu v německé protektorátní politice [Final Solution. The Genocide of Czech Jews in the Politics of the German Protectorate], Prague 1991.

17 We were able to conduct a similar comparison based on the 1930 census, albeit based only on population counts corresponding to Bohemia (thus not covering Moravia). We obtained a very similar pattern of results with the share of Jewish men at prime age entering Theresienstadt being the lowest out of all the compared demographic categories.

given month, and if the prisoners arriving in that month were disproportionately arriving from Czech cities, then our analysis would not assign higher probabilities of survival to prisoners deported from Czech cities because they happened to arrive in the ghetto at a relatively less dangerous moment. Our analysis compared the death risks faced by prisoners of different characteristics within groups defined by month of arrival in the ghetto. We measured death-risk differences corresponding to the inner functioning of the ghetto and thus removed the influence of external factors, such as the prisoners' time of arrival.

If two prisoners arrived in Theresienstadt on the same transport and one was shortly assigned to an outbound transport while the other was never assigned to an outbound transport, then the first prisoner faced a much lower exposure to the risk of dying in Theresienstadt. In order to avoid such variation in the at-risk exposure, we focused our death-in-Theresienstadt analysis on a specific group of prisoners who faced no outbound transport risks during an extended time period and we only studied their death rates during this period when they could not have been on transports. Specifically, prisoners arriving from February to August 1943 were at zero risk of being deported until September 1943 and so during this period they were only exposed to the risk of dying in Theresienstadt. There were 8,291 Czech, German, or Austrian prisoners arriving in Theresienstadt from February to August 1943, of whom 2,643 were 55 or older and none of whom left Theresienstadt on a transport before September 1943. Almost 18 per cent of these older prisoners died between February and August 1943. In Table 1 (see page 66), we used the statistical method of least squares to regress an indicator of their death between February and August 1943 on their characteristics whilst conditioning on the month in which they arrived, which accounts for their length of exposure to the risk of dying in the ghetto as well as for ghetto-wide living conditions upon arrival. The estimated regression equation simultaneously quantifies the explanatory power of several prisoner characteristics for their survival during this period.

Adler and Hájková argued that ethnicity of Theresienstadt prisoners was a key factor in the structure of the prisoner society as well as in the prisoners' strategy for adaptation to life in the ghetto.[18] Furthermore, unconditional age-specific death rates were higher for Germans and Austrians than for Czechs.[19] In Column 1 of Table 1, we find that older Austrian and German prisoners were not more likely to die in the ghetto from February to August 1943 than Czech prisoners, conditional on the timing of their arrival, their age, gender, and social status as captured by their academic titles and by their prominent-prisoner status.[20] Our simple analysis of a specific group of prisoners suggests that there were no country-of-residence-related differences in age-specific death rates during this seven-month period when the ghetto's self-administration was headed by Paul Eppstein from Germany (starting in January 1943), when average death rates were still high (Figure 2) and when overpopulation was still significant, with Theresienstadt holding under 50,000 prisoners (Figure 1). In future work, we plan to model the deportation and death risks simultaneously (by estimating a survival model and censoring the death hazard at the time of deportation) in order to cover the entire duration of the ghetto and to ask whether

18 Adler/Adler, Theresienstadt; Hájková, Prisoner Society; Hájková, Poor Devils.

19 See: Hájková, Prisoner Society.

20 The country-of-residence coefficients are not sensitive to alternatively controlling for age using a 3rd degree polynomial in age, to additionally controlling for the presence of family members, and to estimating the same specification using the Logit model.

country-of-residence gaps in death risks varied with the nationality[21] of the head of the ghetto's self-administration.[22]

The estimates presented in Column 1 of Table 1 further imply that prominent prisoners and engineers were less likely to die.[23] In Columns 2, 3, and 4 of Table 1 we re-estimated the same specification for the sub-set of Czech, German, and Austrian prisoners respectively, where we found similar coefficient estimates, suggesting a similar survival structure within country-of-residence groups. This is again in line with country of residence not playing a major role in determining death risks.[24]

Death Risks of Theresienstadt Prisoners on Transports to Auschwitz

Next, we examined the death risks of the almost 45,000 Theresienstadt prisoners who were deported to Auschwitz (64 per cent of whom were Czech). The other most frequent destinations of transports from Theresienstadt were Treblinka and Maly Trostinec, with 18,000 and 5,000 prisoners respectively.[25] The group of prisoners on transports to Auschwitz is sufficiently large to allow for a precise measurement of the association between the personal characteristics of the prisoners and their survival of the Holocaust in an important setting. Furthermore, while the transport-wide probability of survival was below 0.3 per cent on all transports to Treblinka and Maly Trostinec, most of the transports to Auschwitz faced non-zero survival chances, which allows for an examination of whether prisoner characteristics were related to survival. There was in fact tremendous variation in the survival rates faced by Theresienstadt prisoners on transports to Auschwitz, with survival chances improving towards the end of the war. Of the 27 transports from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz, two small transports had zero survival rates (Dn/a and Dx) and five large transports had survival rates of under two per cent (Cq, Cr, Dl, Dm in 1943, and Ea in 1944), meaning that almost all prisoners deported on these transports perished. At the other extreme, three transports (Ds in 1943 and Ek and Em in 1944) had survival rates of about 20 per cent.

We studied the nearly 41,000 Czech, German, and Austrian prisoners on the 27 transports from Theresienstadt to Auschwitz (we thus omitted the small groups of

21 Unlike with most prisoners, where we can only ascertain their city of deportation, the nationalities of the heads of the self-administration are well known.

22 Hájková pointed out that women achieved some degree of representation only during the tenure of the third self-administration headed by Benjamin Murmelstein. See: Anna Hájková, Women as Citizens in the Theresienstadt Prisoner Community, in: Online Encyclopaedia of Mass Violence (27 June 2016), https://www.sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance/en/document/women-citizens-theresienstadt-prisoner-community.html (20 October 2020). In future work, we plan to investigate whether this representation corresponded to any change in the gender gaps in transport and death risks (conditional on all other observed determinants of both risks).

23 The large negative coefficient for professors is based on only five cases and so should be interpreted with caution.

24 In related research, Frankl suggested that elderly Jews from Germany and Austria often died shortly after arrival. Michal Frankl, Östereichische Jüdinnen und Juden in der Theresienstädter 'Zwangsgemeinschaft'. Statistik, Demographie, Schicksale, in: Theresienstädter Gedenkbuch, Prague 2005, 71-86. We partially confirm this pattern in our analysis: 14 per cent of deaths in Theresienstadt occurred within three weeks of arrival. Focussing on the 60,796 Czech, German, and Austrian prisoners aged over 55 as of 1941 who were not on outbound transports within three weeks of arrival, and conditioning on the month of their arrival as well as on all personal characteristics used in Table 1, we find a statistically significant two-per cent higher probability of dying in the ghetto within three weeks of arrival for prisoners arriving from Germany relative to comparable Czech prisoners, but no such gap for Austrian prisoners.

25 There were under 3,000 Theresienstadt prisoners on transports to other destinations.

Table 1: Death risks in Theresienstadt during February–August 1943 for prisoners aged over 55 arriving during February–August 1943 (who are at no risk of out-transports)

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Nationality	All	Czech	German	Austrian
Average death rate	0.18	0.12	0.17	0.3
German (relative to Czech)	-0.044			
	(0.031)			
Austrian (relative to Czech)	0.018			
	(0.047)			
Male (relative to female)	0.004	-0.014	0.014	-0.055
	(0.018)	(0.034)	(0.017)	(0.081)
Age 60-69 (relative to 55-59)	**0.050**	0.025	**0.053**	0.062
	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.015)	(0.058)
Age over 70 (relative to 55-59)	**0.269**	**0.315**	**0.252**	**0.299**
	(0.038)	(0.072)	(0.034)	(0.068)
Prominent prisoner status in Theresienstadt	**-0.136**	-0.039	**-0.112**	-0.074
	(0.034)	(0.087)	(0.034)	(0.038)
Dr. title	0.051	**0.120**	0.026	0.014
	(0.049)	(0.049)	(0.078)	(0.135)
Engineer (Ing.)	**-0.134**	-0.062	**-0.069**	-0.181
	(0.047)	(0.042)	(0.030)	(0.103)
Doctor (MUDr.)	0.078	0.026	0.408	
	(0.014)	(0.166)	(0.298)	
Lawyer (JUDr.)	-0.033	-0.006	-0.009	
	(0.064)	(0.065)	(0.064)	
Professor (Prof.)	**0.401**	0.424	0.283	
	(0.183)	(0.328)	(0.298)	
N	2,643	492	1,875	276

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Bolded coefficients are statistically significant at the five per cent level based on clustering at the in-transport level. All specifications control for month-of-arrival fixed effects. The table shows linear probability model coefficients, i.e., marginal effects. Probability derivatives (marginal effects) based on the Logit model and based on the GLM Binomial Complementary Log-Log model were almost identical.

Dutch and Polish prisoners).[26] Since we did not attempt to explain why specific transports to Auschwitz faced a relatively high or low death rate, we conditioned our regression analysis on transport indicators. In other words, we compared the individual probabilities of survival to the average probability of survival on a given transport. All of our conclusions are thus based on within-transport comparisons across individual prisoners, not on comparing prisoners across transports.

Table 2 (see page 68) investigates whether the survival chances of the 40,881 Czech, German, and Austrian prisoners on transports to Auschwitz can be predicted on the basis of their characteristics, conditional on the overall survival rates of their trans-

26 Since individual characteristics could not have had any effect on survival when the entire transport perished, the results reported in Table 2 essentially correspond to regressions performed on the 19 transports with nearly 30,000 Czech, German, and Austrian prisoners, where the transport-level survival rate was at least two per cent. These results are available upon request.

ports. Compared to the Czech prisoners, German and Austrian prisoners were less likely to survive by a three to six-per cent difference, conditional on their age, gender, and other characteristics controlled for in the first column of Table 2.[27] This is a large effect considering the average survival chances of the entire group was about eight per cent. Prisoners aged 10 to 30 had survival chances about 20 per cent higher than prisoners aged under 10 (the comparison group) or over 50 (a group whose survival did not differ from that of the under 10 comparison group). The status of a prominent Theresienstadt prisoner was not associated with any difference in survival chances, similar to the status of holding an academic title, with the exception of medical doctors, who had about a four-per cent survival advantage over other prisoners.

In Column 2, we repeated the regression from Column 1 for the subset of Czech prisoners on these transports. The coefficients are similar to those estimated in Column 1.[28] The prominent prisoner status had a large positive survival effect here, but it is very imprecisely estimated. In Column 3, we re-estimated the same specification for the subset of 8,000 German prisoners in Theresienstadt who were deported on transports to Auschwitz and who overall faced a low survival probability of two per cent. We uncovered somewhat smaller survival gaps across age groups compared to Czech prisoners and a large, ten-per cent negative effect on survival of being a prominent Theresienstadt prisoners. There were no medical doctors in this group, but professors had a three-per cent survival advantage conditional on their age, gender, and transport.[29] Within the smaller group of Austrian prisoners, males faced a statistically significant survival disadvantage of about three per cent in Column 4. Age gaps in the survival rates were similar to those of the Czech prisoners, as was the effect of having a medical degree.

Overall, we found that German and Austrian prisoners were more likely to perish after entering Auschwitz. It is possible that they were generally in poorer health or that social linkages, which were less abundant for the smaller groups of German and Austrian prisoners compared to Czech prisoners, were important in determining survival. Future work can explore these hypotheses. We also found that gender was not a major determinant of survival for the Theresienstadt prisoners arriving in Auschwitz, while age was the main explanatory factor. Holding a medical degree was valuable in Auschwitz. In unreported specifications, we found the survival advantage associated with medical degrees to be stronger within transports that faced higher overall survival chances.

Discussion and Future Research Possibilities

In this study, we provided several new multivariate statistical comparisons to complement the existing historical work on the Theresienstadt Ghetto. We pointed out that the higher deportation risk faced by the Czech prisoners corresponded in significant measure to a higher risk of being deported within a few days of arrival in the ghetto. We contrasted the demographic structure of Czech Jewry with that of the

27 Hájková compared the survival rates of young male Czech, Dutch, and German prisoners in the autumn of 1944. See: Hájková, Poor Devils.

28 The survival advantage associated with medical degrees was twice as high, namely eight per cent for female Czech prisoners (a statistically significant point) compared to a four-per cent advantage for male Czech prisoners.

29 Testimonies from concentration camps suggest that prisoners treated older professors with deference. See: Maja Suderland, Inside Concentration Camps, Cambridge 2013.

Czech prisoners in the ghetto to highlight the lower probability of deportation to Theresienstadt for younger males. Based on age and the timing of arrival in the ghetto, we found no country-of-residence-related differences in death rates faced by a group of older prisoners during 1943. Gender appears to have been unrelated to survival both in Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, where holding a medical degree (MUDr.)

Table 2: Survival probability in Auschwitz of Theresienstadt prisoners

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Nationality	All	Czech	German	Austrian
Average survival rate	0.082	0.103	0.022	0.061
German (relative to Czech)	**-0.062**			
	(0.012)			
Austrian (relative to Czech)	**-0.033**			
	(0.0100)			
Male (relative to female)	-0.022	-0.026	-0.005	**-0.0290**
	(0.013)	(0.0160)	(0.0070)	(0.0090)
Age 10-19 (relative to under 10)	**0.238**	**0.246**	**0.165**	**0.289**
	(0.038)	(0.044)	(0.023)	(0.015)
Age 20-29 (relative to under 10)	**0.209**	**0.220**	**0.126**	**0.216**
	(0.032)	(0.035)	(0.031)	(0.041)
Age 30-39 (relative to under 10)	**0.110**	**0.123**	**0.052**	**0.065**
	(0.019)	(0.023)	(0.010)	(0.016)
Age 40-49 (relative to under 10)	**0.040**	**0.051**	**0.012**	-0.002
	(0.011)	(0.015)	(0.004)	(0.012)
Age 50-59 (relative to under 10)	**0.022**	0.028	0.005	-0.027
	(0.011)	(0.015)	(0.005)	(0.017)
Age 60-69 (relative to under 10)	-0.010	-0.011	-0.001	**-0.039**
	(0.016)	(0.024)	(0.005)	(0.019)
Age over 70 (relative to under 10)	-0.035	-0.032	-0.003	-0.051
	(0.023)	(0.031)	(0.006)	(0.024)
Prominent prisoner status in Theresienstadt	0.010	0.104	**-0.103**	-0.011
	(0.086)	(0.136)	(0.016)	(0.012)
Dr. title	0.020	0.018	0.022	0.016
	(0.022)	(0.031)	(0.018)	(0.019)
Engineer (Ing.)	-0.009	-0.012	-0.002	0.035
	(0.016)	(0.017)	(0.006)	(0.023)
Doctor (MUDr.)	**0.038**	**0.036**		**0.038**
	(0.013)	(0.014)		(0.007)
Lawyer (JUDr.)	0.046	0.044	-0.008	
	(0.045)	(0.046)	(0.008)	
Professor (Prof.)	-0.080	-0.075	**0.032**	**-0.166**
	(0.064)	(0.086)	(0.008)	(0.076)
N	40,881	28,343	8,229	4,310

Note: Standard errors in parentheses. Bolded coefficients are statistically significant at the five per cent level based on clustering at the transport-to-Auschwitz level. All specifications control for transport fixed effects. The table shows linear probability model coefficients, i.e., marginal effects. Probability derivatives based on the Logit model and based on the GLM Binomial Complementary Log-Log model were almost identical.

entailed a significant survival advantage. In future work, we will study the death risks jointly with deportation risks using a duration statistical model that closely reflects the nature of the data.

This paper aimed to provide examples of the use of individual-level data from the Holocaust, using the case of the Theresienstadt Ghetto, for the purposes of statistical analysis. While there clearly is a solid foundation of descriptive statistical evidence in Czech Holocaust research,[30] the case for a more intensive use of Holocaust databases from the Czech Republic was recently made by Jelínek.[31] We will conclude the paper by further discussing the rationale for statistical analyses of the Holocaust and by suggesting potential data sources to be employed in future analyses of the Holocaust in the Czech Republic.

Statistical analyses are helpful for historical research in two basic ways: First, one can in some cases use data to illuminate or assess historical narratives originating in testimonies. For example, one can provide quantitative evidence for the hypothesis that German prisoners were discriminated against in Theresienstadt, which caused their higher death rate. Similarly, one can statistically explore the conventional wisdom of many Holocaust survivors that survival was a matter of chance. If the data suggested systematic regularities in survival, or if survival turned out to be predictable based on characteristics available in databases, then such statistical understandings of the Holocaust, which were not available to any one victim, constitute potentially important evidence that complements individual experiences. Second, one can use data to uncover new, previously unrecognised patterns and relationships that can be further examined using standard tools of historical analysis. For example, one can enquire whether restitution of Jewish property after the war was easier for Jews who survived concentration camps than for those who returned from emigration.

Most statistical analyses presented in Czech Holocaust research constitute simple comparisons of means and other basic descriptive statistics. Yet the contemporary social sciences offer historians a rich set of statistical and econometric models that allow historians to inquire into the (potentially causal) relationships between characteristics of Holocaust victims and their outcomes, whilst controlling for several factors simultaneously. At a basic level, it is perhaps useful to stress that while statistical tendencies uncovered in data-driven research can always be 'contradicted' by a historian with a specific counterexample, this, in fact, may not imply a contradiction. In much social science research based on individual-level data, regression-type analyses uncover significant regularities, typical relationships in the data without explaining all of the outcome variation. When we inquire into the impact of particular factors observed in the data on survival, we are aware that there were many independent processes essential for survival, about which the data offer no information. This can nevertheless still allow us to use data to perform the two roles outlined above. Finally, relying primarily on testimonies provided by the small minority of Holocaust survivors may result in a non-representative view of the Holocaust. Statistical comparisons can provide a perspective that accounts for all experiences; they provide a limited but powerful representation of the experiences and the fates of those who perished. Ideal research strategies, in our view, recognise the limitations of

30 See as a prime example: Lagus/Polák, Město. See also: Michal Frankl, Free of Controversy? Recent Research on the Holocaust in the Bohemian Lands, in: Dapim. Studies on the Holocaust 31 (2017) 3, 262-270 for a discussion.

31 See: Tomáš Jelínek, Bílá místa ve výzkumu holokaustu [Blind Spots in Holocaust Research], in: Tomáš Jelínek/Blanka Soukupová (ed.), Bílá místa ve výzkumu holokaustu, Prague 2014, 11-20.

quantitative databases in terms of the available information while recognising the generalisable validity of the comparisons they offer. Both quantitative and qualitative research have specific advantages that together may provide a fuller, deeper picture of history.

Other than the TII database, what under-utilised data sources could be employed in statistical analyses of the Holocaust in the Czech Republic? Several databases were compiled during the 1990s within the (international as well as Czech-based) movement for compensation of Nazi prisoners and their heirs that contain information on the pre-war property and economic conditions of Czech Jews.[32] For example, the Czech Endowment Fund for Holocaust Victims accepted hundreds of applications that provide detailed information about owners and their property.[33] Information on small and medium-sized Jewish property can also be obtained from the database compiled by Jančík and Kubů[34] of "loans for Aryanisation" issued by the Kreditanstalt der Deutschen during the war. Furthermore, the Czech Ministry of Culture, acting under the government's Decree No. 773 from November 1998, established a database of artworks owned by the state that used to belong or might have belonged to Holocaust victims.[35] On the international front, the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims identified over 10,000 insurance policies of more than 5,000 Czech Holocaust victims and survivors. This dataset also provides information on Jews who managed to emigrate or escape from the Protectorate.[36] One could combine these types of data[37] on the pre-war economic status of Czech Jews with the existing TII database of about 176,000 individuals that covers not only Theresienstadt prisoners, but also Czech Jews on transports to other destinations during the Holocaust.[38] Instead of only presenting simple descriptive summaries of the property data, one could then enquire, for example, into the statistical relationship between the pre-war economic status of individuals and their experiences of and survival during the Holocaust.

In our paper "Surviving Auschwitz with Pre-Existing Social Ties", we provided another example of data combination: We merged the complete list of prisoners of the low-security Nazi agricultural labour camp in Lípa located in the Czech Republic with the database of Theresienstadt prisoners.[39] Based on survival testimonies, prior incarceration in the Lípa camp served as a proxy for pre-existing social ties among Theresienstadt prisoners. We then studied the survival chances of Lípa pris-

32 The Swiss Banks Settlement (1998) as well as the work of the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims (1998) and of the Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (2000) all covered victims from the Czech Republic. Within the Czech Republic, the work of the Czech-German Future Fund (1998), the Endowment Fund for Holocaust Victims (2000), and the Czech Committee for Nazi Victims (2000) also generated valuable data.

33 For more information, see: http://www.fondholocaust.cz (9 September 2020).

34 Drahomír Jančík/Eduard Kubů, 'Arizace' a arizátoři. Drobný a střední židovský majetek v úvěrech Kreditanstalt der Deutschen (1939–1945) ['Aryanisation' and Aryanisers. Small and Medium-Size Jewish Property in the Loans of the Kreditanstalt der Deutschen], Prague 2005.

35 The Documentation Centre for Property Transfers of the Cultural Assets of WW II Victims has information on individual assets and in some cases also on their original owners. See: http://www.cdmp.cz (9 September 2020).

36 See e.g.: Frank Draschke/Tomáš Jelínek, Arizované životní pojistky v protektorátu Čechy a Morava [The Aryanisation of Life Insurance in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia], in: Jelínek/Soukupová (ed.), Bílá místa ve výzkumu holokaustu, 66; Tomáš Jelínek, Pojišťovny ve službách hákového kříže [Insurance Companies in the Service of the Swastika], Prague 2015.

37 In statistical analyses of such data, it is important to deal with the potentially selective nature of these samples.

38 In order to merge data sources and conduct statistical analyses, databases such as the TII typically first have to be transformed into statistical data formats.

39 Štěpán Jurajda/Tomáš Jelínek, Surviving Auschwitz with Pre-Existing Social Ties, CERGE-EI Working Paper 646, 2019.

oners entering Auschwitz on transports from Theresienstadt. Specifically, we enquired whether their chances of surviving the Holocaust depended on how many of their former co-labourers from the agricultural camp were present on their transports to Auschwitz, which included another 9,000 Czech male prisoners. We uncovered a large, ten-per cent survival advantage among those who arrived in Auschwitz with at least fifty former co-labourers from the agricultural labour camp, which is consistent with the importance of the availability of social ties including friendships for survival.

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Michal Schuster

The Dycha Family from the Village of Hrušky

Microhistory of the Nazi Genocide of the Roma and Sinti in the Czech Republic

Abstract

This article presents one of the concrete outcomes of the project "Database of Victims of the National Socialist Persecution of 'Gypsies'" conducted by the Terezín Initiative Institute in Prague. The case study explored here shows the potential of this detailed, systematic, and local research of individual victims, which documents the genocide of the Roma and Sinti population on the territory of today's Czech Republic. The Dycha family lived in the agricultural village of Hrušky in South Moravia, where they had a small house, work, and conflict-free relationships with the majority population. After 1939, the 'anti-Gypsy' politics of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia struck them. The entire family, including all eight children, were finally transported to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp in early May 1943. The only survivor was Damián Danihel, the illegitimate son of Estera Dychová. According to documents and testimonies, he was rescued thanks to his Slovak citizenship and the intervention of two local men – the former village mayor and his successor.

This case study of the tragic fate of the Roma[1] from the village of Hrušky in the Břeclav district is one of the specific outcomes of the project "Database of Victims of the National Socialist Persecution of 'Gypsies'" [Databáze obětí nacistického pronásledování 'cikánů'], which was conducted by the Terezín Initiative Institute in Prague.[2] This case study aims to contribute to the historical research of the life of Roma and Sinti in the territory of today's Czech Republic during the first half of the twentieth century, with an emphasis on the period 1939 to 1945. Focussing on a specific place or family through detailed, systematic, and local research can help to change perspectives and enrich research based on documents created by authorities and state institutions. The aim of my research was also to find out how the local inclusion and recognition of the Roma affected and mitigated, at least for some time, their exclusion, categorisation, and perhaps – temporarily – their deportation to a concentration camp.

The Nazi genocide of Roma and Sinti during the Second World War has sometimes been referred to as the 'unknown' or 'forgotten holocaust'. Despite the visible development of research, education, and commemoration of this historical event

1 In this article, I use the terms Roma and Sinti when I speak of these ethnic communities in general, while using the term 'Gypsy/ies' to express the contemporary context or contemporary designation.

2 For more information on the project, see the report by Aletta Beck in this issue as well as Michal Schuster, Projekt Databáze romských obětí holocaustu v České republice [Database of the Roma Victims of the Holocaust in the Czech Republic], in: Romani Džaniben 1 (2018), 187-192, and http://www.terezinstudies.cz/projects/roma-database.html (13 August 2021).

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after 1989, the topic unfortunately has still not become an integrated part of the current historical narrative in the Czech Republic, nor, considering the current state of affairs, gained the necessary awareness among non-Roma society.[3]

It should be noted, however, that Czech historiography has progressed significantly over the past three decades with regard to research on the Nazi genocide of Roma and Sinti and its post-war aftermath. In addition to historians who began their research before 1989,[4] other researchers have come up with new questions and answers, methodological approaches, and trends. A number of new aspects appear in this newer research, which relate, among other things, to the period of the First Czechoslovak Republic and its political and social approach to Roma and Sinti; Czech participation in their marginalisation and later concentration; Czech responsibility or complicity in their genocide; the role of the protectorate 'Gypsy camps' in Lety u Písku and Hodonín u Kunštátu; post-war remembrance of this tragic history; and more.[5]

3 Ctibor Nečas, Druhý aneb Neznámý holocaust [The Second or Unknown Holocaust], in: Spisy Právnické fakulty v Brně (řada teoretická) 160 (1995), 47-51; Fenomén holocaust. The Holocaust Phenomenon, Prague 2000; Jana Horváthová (ed.), Le romengro murdaripen andro dujto baro mariben. Genocida Romů v době druhé světové války [Genocide of the Roma during the Second World War], Prague 2003; Helena Sadílková/Michal Schuster/Milada Závodská, Holocaust Romů jako "neznámý" nebo "zapomenutý" [The Holocaust of Roma as "Unknown" or "Forgotten"], in: Dějiny a současnost 9 (2015), 30-34. On terms referring to the Nazi genocide of the Roma and Sinti, see: Renáta Berkyová, Obětujeme Romy ve prospěch vědy? Kritická reflexe pojmů "porajmos" a "holokaust" v diskurzu (nejen) romistické historiografie [Are We Sacrificing the Roma for Scholarship? Critical Reflection of the Terms "Porajmos" and "Holocaust" in the Discourse of (Not Only) Romistic Historiography], in: Bulletin Muzea romské kultury 26 (2017), 38-57.

4 See for example: Ctibor Nečas, Nad osudem českých a slovenských Cikánů v letech 1939–1945 [On the Fate of the Czech and Slovak Gypsies in 1939–1945], Brno 1981; Idem, Andr' oda taboris. Věžňové protektorátních cikánských táborů 1942–1943 [In the Camp. Prisoners of the Protectorate Gypsy Camps, 1942–1943], Brno 1987; Idem, Českoslovenští Romové v letech 1938–1945 [Czechoslovak Roma in 1938–1945], Brno 1994; Idem, Andr' oda taboris. Tragédie cikánských táborů v Letech a v Hodoníně [In the Camp. The Tragedy of the Protectorate Gypsy Camps in Lety and Hodonín], Brno 1995; Idem, Holocaust českých Romů [The Holocaust of the Czech Roma], Prague 1999; Vlasta Kladivová, Konečná stanice Auschwitz-Birkenau [The Final Station Auschwitz-Birkenau], Olomouc 1994; Milena Hübschmannová, "Po Židoch cigáni". Svědectví Romů ze Slovenska 1939–1945. I. díl, (1939 – srpen 1944) ["Gypsies after Jews". Testimonies of Roma from Slovakia 1939–1945], Prague 2005.

5 See for example: Markus Pape, A nikdo vám nebude věřit. Dokument o koncentračním táboře Lety u Písku [And Nobody Will Believe You. Documentary about the Concentration Camp Lety u Písku], Prague 1997; Petr Lhotka, Snaha Romů o získání protektorátní státní příslušnosti [Roma Efforts to Acquire Protectorate Citizenship], in: Bulletin Muzea romské kultury 6 (1997), 39-40; Jana Horváthová, Výzkum pamětníků – seniorů z historických skupin českých a moravských Romů a německých Sintů [Research of Witnesses. Seniors from the Historical Groups of Czech and Moravian Roma and German Sinti], in: Bulletin Muzea romské kultury 13 (2004), 27-30; Michal Schuster, Proces s Blažejem Dydym na základě materiálů Mimořádného lidového soudu v Brně roku 1947 [The Trial of Blažej Dydy on the Basis of Materials from the Extraordinary People's Court in Brno in 1947], in: Romano Džaniben 1 (2013), 73-101; Milada Závodská/Lada Viková, Dokumentace genocidy Romů za 2. světové války v Československu – nálezová zpráva: diskontinuita a kontinuita odhalování historie Romů po roce 1946 [Documentation of the Genocide of the Roma during the Second World War in Czechoslovakia. Findings Report: Discontinuity and Continuity in Revealing the History of the Roma after 1946], in: Romano Džaniben 23 (2016), 107-124; Jiří Smlsal, Holokaust Romů v retribučním soudnictví [Holocaust of the Roma in Retributive Justice], in: Romano Džaniben 1 (2018), 93-120; Pavel Baloun, "Cikáni, metla venkova!" Tvorba a uplatňování proticikánských opatření v meziválečném Československu, za druhé republiky a v počáteční fázi Protektorátu Čechy a Morava (1918–1941) ["The Gypsy Scourge!" Creation and Implementation of Anti-Gypsy Measures in Interwar Czechoslovakia, in the Second Republic, and in the Initial Phase of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia (1918–1941)], (PhD Thesis) Prague 2020; Renata Berkyová, Přeživší tzv. cikánského tábora v Letech u Písku v kontextu žádostí o odškodnění dle zákona 255/1946 [Survivors from the So-Called Gypsy Camp in Lety u Písku in the Context of Compensation Claims According to the Czechoslovak Law no. 255/1946], (MA Thesis) Prague 2020.

Sources, Literature, and Methodology

When I started my research in the State District Archive of Břeclav in Mikulov in 2018, my main aim was to obtain biographical data on Roma and Sinti from the region of South Moravia, which was divided between Germany and Czechoslovakia in the autumn of 1938. As a result of the Munich Agreement, this region belonged partly to Germany and partly to the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia during the Second World War. During my systematic research of the archival collections of the local gendarmerie stations, I discovered fragmentary information about the Dycha family from the village of Hrušky.

It was mainly the historian Ctibor Nečas who documented the Nazi persecution of Roma and Sinti in the territory of today's Czech Republic from the early 1970s onwards. His monographs and articles, based on extensive heuristics, are fundamental and unsurpassed works for an understanding of this topic and thus provide an opportunity to develop further research. Along with publishing lists of prisoners of the 'Gypsy camps' in Lety u Písku, Hodonín u Kunštátu, and Auschwitz-Birkenau,[6] he researched the fates of particular individuals, families, and local communities, especially from Moravia.[7] Other Czech researchers also dealt with the documentation of Roma victims after 1989.[8]

This previous research was based mainly on classical historical methods, meaning the analysis of written materials of official provenance collected through archival research. It used sources from the regional and central level of state administration and thus described the persecution and genocide of Roma and Sinti mainly on the basis of measures taken by various bodies and institutions. My case study builds on

6 See for example: Nečas, Vězňové; Idem, Pamětní seznam – 1: jména a údaje o nebožácích, kteří byli násilně koncentrováni v tzv. cikánském táboře I (Lety, 1942–1943) [Commemorative List – 1. Names and Data of the Miserable Ones Who Were Forcibly Concentrated in the So-Called Gypsy Camp I (Lety, 1942–1943)], Nymburk 2012; Idem, Pamětní seznam. II, Hodonín [Commemorative List. II, Hodonín], Prague 2014; Idem, Aušvicate hi kher báro. Čeští vězňové cikánského tábora v Osvětimi II-Brzezince [Czech Prisoners of the Gypsy Concentration Camp in Auschwitz II-Birkenau], Brno 1992; Idem, Z Brna do Auschwitz-Birkenau. První transport moravských Romů do koncentračního tábora Auschwitz-Birkenau [From Brno to Auschwitz-Birkenau. The First Transport of Moravian Roma to the Auschwitz-Birkenau Camp], Brno 2000.

7 See for example: Ctibor Nečas, Cikáni jihovýchodní Moravy v letech 1939–1945 [The Gypsies of Southeast Moravia in the Years 1939–1945], in: Osvobození a nové osídlení jižní Moravy 1945 (1975), 159-166; Idem, Cikáni politického okresu Zlín (1939–1945) [The Gypsies of the Zlín Political District (1939–1945)], in: Zprávy Oblastního muzea v Gottwaldově 3-4 (1975), 17-23; Idem, Cikáni na Uherskohradišťsku v období nacistické okupace [Gypsies in the Uherské Hradiště Region during the Nazi Occupation], in: Slovácko 16-17 (1974–1975), 42-50; Idem, Z minulosti luhačovických Cikánů [From the Past of the Gypsies of Luhačovice], in: Slovácko 18-19 (1976–1977), 75-96; Idem, Cikáni na Hodonínsku [Gypsies in the Hodonín Region], in: Malovaný kraj 13 (1977), 14-15; Idem, Usedlí strážničtí Cikáni [The Settled Gypsies in Strážnice], in: Jižní Morava 19 (1983), 63-78; Idem, Genealogie jednoho cikánského rodu [Genealogy of a Gypsy Family], in: Brno v minulosti a dnes 10 (1989), 131-135; Idem, Původní cikánská populace Brna a její vyhlazení v letech 1939–1945 [The Original Gypsy Population of Brno and its Extermination in the Years 1939–1945], in: Forum Brunense 2 (1989), 99-108; Dušan Holý/Ctibor Nečas, Žalující píseň. O osudu Romů v nacistických koncentračních táborech [Lament. On the Fate of the Roma in Nazi Concentration Camps], Strážnice/Brno 1993; Ctibor Nečas, Chmurný epilog životního příběhu Ludvíka Murky [The Gloomy Epilogue of Ludvík Murka's Life Story], in: Bulletin Muzea romské kultury 14 (2005), 91-92.

8 Jiří Pavelčík, "Cikánská" osada Okluček v Uherském Brodě-Havřicích [The "Gypsy" Settlement Okluček in Uherský Brod-Havřice], in: Bulletin Muzea romské kultury 10 (2001), 55-59; David Valůšek, Jaroslav Herák. Tragický osud luhačovického Roma [Jaroslav Herák. The Tragic Fate of the Roma of Luhačovice], in: Tomáš Dvořák/Radomír Vlček/Libor Vykoupil, Milý Bore … profesoru Ctiboru Nečasovi k jeho sedmdesátým narozeninám věnují přátelé, kolegové a žáci [Dear Bor … Dedicated to Professor Ctibor Nečas on his Seventieth Birthday by Friends, Colleagues, and Students] 2003, 391-396; Jana Horváthová, Tři ženy – tři osudy [Three Women – Three Fates], in: Bulletin Muzea romské kultury 15 (2006), 154-157; Jan Dúbravčík, Osud členů rodiny moravských Romů Heráků z obce Žeranovice za 2. světové války [The Fate of the Members of the Moravian Roma Family Herák from the Municipality of Žeranovice during the Second World War], in: Holešovsko 11 (2010), 10-11.

these works, but in my methodological approach I tried to combine this classical historical research with methods of oral history, meaning the use of witness narratives as additional source material.

The Roma of Hrušky before the Second World War

The small village Hrušky, located in the Břeclav district in the south of Moravia,[9] was a predominantly agricultural village, consisting of 268 houses and 1,505 mostly Czech inhabitants in 1900.[10] The first Roma appeared in the village sometime in the second half of the nineteenth century. These were individuals who came to the Břeclav manor from the nearby Hodonín and Strážnice manors. They made their living as blacksmiths, workers, and day labourers on the manor farm in Hrušky, where they also lived. In 1878, the "hut on the lawn" was referred to as the dwelling of local 'Gypsies'.[11] Further information is provided in a list of 'Gypsies' in the district of Hodonín from 1909, which formed part of the overview of 'Gypsies' living in Moravia created by the gendarmerie for their provincial headquarters in Brno. Three people were recorded in Hrušky: the widow and day labourer Julia Kýrová née Danihelová (born 1852 in Čáry, Slovakia, died 1928), her deaf-mute brother, the blacksmith Marek Malík (born 1858 in Hrušky, died 1928), and her son, the blacksmith Martin Kýr (born 1879 in Hrušky, died 1916). Both men also worked as day labourers.[12]

The local chronicler Jan Mráz documented the fate of these three people in the manuscript for his village chronicle, which he apparently wrote between 1959 and 1965, but which is unfortunately unpreserved. On three pages, he described the fate of the local Roma in a very interesting way. At the beginning of his text he wrote:

> "Our village was the only village in which the Gypsies lived and enjoyed civil rights, because they were not nomadic; they lived here from time immemorial and earned their living honestly. Although the inhabitants of our community were often mocked by citizens from other municipalities because of this Gypsy family, we were used to it and we liked it because they were doing the hardest work for local peasants."[13]

This example is typical of Mráz's narrative about the Roma from Hrušky. On the one hand, he emphasises a relatively harmonious coexistence in his text, while on the other describing this positive aspect as an exception that did not correspond to common majority images and stereotypes about Roma during those times.

The chronicler Mráz also described the dwelling of the Roma family at the turn of the twentieth century: "The Gypsies lived on the outskirts of the village at today's railway station in a clay hut built like a dugout."[14] The original simple hut with a chimney was captured in a unique photograph, which was taken in 1897 and depicts

9 Hrušky. Občané své obci [Hrušky. Citizens of Their Village], Podivín 1998, 32.

10 Ibid.; Miroslav Blažej/Svatava Bradávková/Bohuslav Čapka et al., 650 let obce Hrušky [650 Years of the Village of Hrušky], Brno 2018, 25.

11 Moravský zemský archiv [Moravian Provincial Archive] (MZA), Sbírka matrik [Collection of Registry Records], Matrika oddaných Moravská Nová Ves, obec Hrušky (1848–1928) [Marriage Registry of Moravská Nová Ves, Village of Hrušky (1848–1928)], signature (sig.) 3025, folio (fol.) 86; Diecézní archiv Biskupství brněnského [Diocesan Archives of the Bishopric of Brno] (DABB), Rajhrad, Farní úřad Moravská Nová Ves [Parish Office Moravská Nová Ves] (FÚMNV), inv. n. 12, book 12, 49.

12 MZA, B 14, Moravské místodržitelství [Moravian Governorate], ml., file 7908, sig. 124, fol. 407.

13 Vlastivědný kroužek v Hruškách [Hrušky Local Historical Club] (VKH), Jan Mráz, Zápisky ke kronice obce Hrušky [Notes for a Chronicle of the Village of Hrušky].

14 VKH, Mráz, Zápisky ke kronice obce Hrušky.

A group of people in front of the house of the Dycha family in Hrušky (Vlastivědný kroužek Hrušky [Hrušky Local Historical Club]).

Hrušky from the railway embankment.[15] The location of the dwelling was not accidental – the Roma collected coal that fell on the rails from passing locomotives and used it for their blacksmith work, which was their main livelihood alongside their day labour work.[16] Later, Martin Kýr built a brick house on the same location, which was assigned the number 290 and described as a house "for which no cottager or small farmer would be ashamed of".[17]

Another relative from the Kýr family, Josef Dycha (born 1877 in Tvarožná Lhota, Hodonín district),[18] later also settled in Hrušky and in 1910 obtained the right of residence there, which, according to archival documents, was no simple matter. The right of residence or home affiliation was a legal institution of "affiliation to the municipality", which was in place in the Bohemian Lands until 1949. It meant the right to settle in the municipality as well as access to poor relief or other social services. Municipalities often only granted this right to the Roma population with reluctance and concern.[19] Unfortunately, the sources only indicate the negotiations between Dycha and the municipal representatives on the right of residence (for example, in January 1910 the municipal committee rejected his request because it considered him a "nomadic Gypsy"). According to Mráz, the municipal councillors even "chased" him, but Dycha did not give up and, "thanks to his good approach to work, he gained favour after some time and stayed permanently in Hrušky". The process of acquiring the right of residence implies that Dycha was perceived as a proper citizen,

15 VKH, digital copy of the photograph.

16 In 1841, the track section of the railway line on the routes Břeclav-Přerov and Vienna-Břeclav-Olomouc, which led through the Hrušky area, was put into operation. See e.g.: 160 let Severní dráhy císaře Ferdinanda (1841–2001) [160 Years of the Northern Railway of Emperor Ferdinand (1841–2001)], Ostrava 2001.

17 VKH, Mráz, Zápisky ke kronice obce Hrušky.

18 MZA, Sbírka matrik [Collection of Registry Records], Matrika oddaných Kněždub, obec Tvarožná Lhota (1867–1936) [Marriage Registry of Kněždub, Village of Tvarožná Lhota], sig. 5430, fol. 36.

19 See e.g:. Ctibor Nečas, Spor o svatobořické Cikány [The Dispute over the Gypsies of Svatobořice], in: Jižní Morava 10 (1974), 88-93; Idem, Romská osada v Luhačovicích [The Roma Settlement in Luhačovice], in: Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty brněnské univerzity. C, 44 (1997), 186-187.

which could help him and later his family to gain a better position in the municipal community.[20]

Martin Kýr and Josef Dycha had to enlist during the First World War. While Dycha returned from the front, Kýr was wounded and died in 1916 in Jaroslav, Galicia, today Poland, where he is also buried.[21] His name is among those of the sixty soldiers from Hrušky killed in action that are commemorated on a war memorial in front of the local school, which was erected in 1925.[22] It is significant that while Kýr was thus commemorated on a memorial erected in the village seven years after the end of the First World War, the rest of the Dycha family are still not publicly remembered as victims of the Second World War in the village. Despite its seriousness, the topic of the Nazi genocide of Roma and Sinti was not reflected upon by the majority society for several decades after the end of the Second World War. Remembrance, education, and research on the genocide of the Roma and Sinti was very limited until 1989. Even today, this topic is not a natural and accepted part of the majority consciousness and historical narrative.[23]

After the war, Kýr's widow Anna sold the house no. 290, where Josef Dycha had also lived until then, and moved to Strážnice, where she married again.[24] Dycha then built a new house in Na Zahájce behind the wine cellars, again near the railway line. He obtained land for the house free of charge from the municipality on the basis of his application, which again testifies to his civic position.[25]

In 1929, Dycha married Estera Danihelová, who was born in 1902 in the nearby Slovak village of Čáry.[26] Between 1927 and 1942, the two had three sons (Jaroslav, born 1927, Josef, born 1934, and Jan, born 1939) and five daughters (Rozálie, born 1929, Anna, born 1930, Josefa, born 1932, Marie, born 1936, and Helena, born 1942).[27] They also raised Damián Danihel, known in the village as Damián Malík (born 1921 in Čáry), the illegitimate son of Estera.[28]

In the interwar period, the Dycha family were the only Roma inhabitants of the village. Witnesses from the ranks of peers and classmates of the Dycha children recall how exemplary, hardworking and, despite their poverty, how involved in local social life they were. Local memories of the Roma family in Hrušky would require more systematic research and more detailed analysis. However, some conclusions can be drawn from six interviews with witnesses (classmates and friends of Dycha's

20 MZA, Statistický zemský úřad markrabství moravského [Statistical Regional Office of the Margraviate of Moravia], inv. n. 3, box 21, fol. 24r; VKH, Jan Mráz, Zápisky ke kronice obce Hrušky; Státní okresní archiv Břeclav se sídlem v Mikulově [State District Archives of Břeclav in Mikulov] (SOkABM), Archiv obce Hrušky [Archives of the Village of Hrušky] (AOH), Protokolární kniha obecního výboru [Protocol Book of the Municipal Committee] (1892–1910), protokol ze 4. 1. 1910 [Protocol from 4 January 1910]; SOkABM, AOH, Matrika nových příslušníků [Register of New Members] (1902–1940), no. 43.

21 Vojenský ústřední archiv v Praze [Military Central Archives in Prague], Kmenový list [Military Service Record], Martin Kýr (born 6 February 1879 in Hrušky); Ibid., Kmenový list [Military Service Record], Josef Dycha (born 31 March 1877 in Tvarožná Lhota).

22 Hrušky. Občané své obci, 46; Jana Šumberová/Jaroslava Rajchmanová/Petr Tichý, Padlí z pomníku [The Fallen from the Monument], Břeclav 2018, 59.

23 Sadílková/Schuster/Závodská, Holocaust Romů jako "neznámý" nebo "zapomenutý", 30-34.

24 DABB, FÚMNV, inv. n. 16, book 16, Kniha ohlášek snoubenců [Book of Fiancées' Announcements] (1921–1925), 52; VKH, Jan Mráz, Zápisky ke kronice obce Hrušky.

25 SOkABM, AOH, Protokolární kniha finanční komise [Protocol of the Financial Commission] (1933–1954), Protokol schůze 19. 6. 1934 [Protocol of the Meeting of 19 June 1934], 185; Ibid., Protokolární kniha obecního zastupitelstva [Protocol Book of the Municipal Council] (1922–1938), 190.

26 DABB, FÚMNV, inv. n. 17, book 17, Kniha ohlášek snoubenců [Book of Fiancées' Announcements] (21 May 1925 to 25 December 1933), 106.

27 VKH, Mráz, Zápisky ke kronice obce Hrušky; Úřad městyse Moravská Nová Ves, Matrika narozených obce Hrušky [City office of Moravská Nová Ves, Birth Register of the Village of Hrušky].

28 Mestský úrad Šaštín-Stráže [Municipal Office Šaštín-Stráže], Matrika narozených [Birth Register].

children) who were aged six to sixteen at the end of the Second World War. As in Mráz's text, there is a clear positive aspect on the one hand, with the Dychas being assessed as problem-free and 'normal', while on the other hand this positive aspect is formulated as an exception, which seems to confirm the stereotypical perception of the Roma as a whole. The language in which the Dychas are described is also a confrontation with this general stereotypical discourse. The narrators emphasise in various ways that the Dychas worked, were honest, and a 'solid' family, wore 'normal' clothes, that the children went to school regularly, and so on. This can be interpreted as a form of translating social reality into the context of a stereotypical discourse in which Roma are expected to be a problem. This is also a conscious contrast to the discourse of Roma criminality, which was and still is dominant in Czech society.[29]

Josef Dycha worked as a blacksmith and, like his wife Estera and her son Damián, as day labourers for local peasants, including the farmer Vojtěch Hřebačka, who was the mayor of the village until 1938. In addition, Dycha performed minor work for the municipality.[30] Sometime at the beginning of the Second World War, Estera Dychová began working as a janitor at the local elementary school.[31] Mráz wrote: "During the Second World War, because of the lack of labour, Estera was given the job of the school janitor, which she performed in an exemplary way with the help of her still small school-attending daughters."[32]

The interwar period brought a fundamental change in the legislative regulation of the 'Gypsy question' in Czechoslovakia. In 1927, the law No. 117/1927 Coll. on 'wandering Gypsies' was passed, which defined 'Gypsies' on the basis of lifestyle. This vague definition sparked significant discrimination against the Roma population as a whole.[33] Although the archival documents do not show that the Roma from Hrušky were considered 'wandering Gypsies' due to their settled life, the law and the resulting measures restricting the movement of 'Gypsies' could fundamentally affect their social ties and contacts with relatives in Moravia and Slovakia.

The Dycha Family as Victims of the Genocide of Roma and Sinti in the Protectorate

After the establishment of the Protectorate, all 'anti-Gypsy' regulations that had been implemented in Nazi Germany during the 1930s, such as the Regulation on the Prevention of Crime and most importantly the Regulation on Combatting the

29 Interviews held on 5 November 2018 in Hrušky with L. S., J. M., A. L., M. B., J. J., and V. N.

30 SOkABM, AOH, Pokladní deník [Cash Register Book] (1919–1938), 249, 287, 330, 561; VKH, Jan Mráz, Zápisky ke kronice obce Hrušky.

31 SOkABM, Národní škola Hrušky [National School Hrušky], (NŠH), inv. n. 409, Jednací protokol [Protocol of Procedure] (1936–1944), reference no. 326/1942.

32 VKH, Mráz, Zápisky ke kronice obce Hrušky.

33 For more context on the life of Roma and Sinti in interwar Czechoslovakia, see e.g.: Ctibor Nečas, První opatření na Moravě a ve Slezsku podle zákona č. 117/1927 Sbzn. Zákaz vstupu tzv. potulných cikánů do některých regionů a obcí [The First Measures in Moravia and Silesia Pursuant to Act No. 117/1927 Coll. Prohibition of So-Called Wandering Gypsies on Entering Certain Regions and Municipalities], in: Acta Facultatis Philosophicae Universitatis Ostraviensis, Historica 9 (2002), 17-26; Jana Horváthová, Meziválečné zastavení mezi Romy v českých zemích (aneb tušení souvislostí) [Visiting Roma in the Czech Lands during the Interwar Period (or Anticipating Connections)], in: Romano Džaniben 1 (2005), 63-84; Pavel Baloun, Von der 'Landplage' zur 'fremden Rasse'. Die Repräsentation der Zigeuner in der tschechoslowakischen Kriminalistik (1918–1939), in: Bohemia 59 (2019) 1, 50-76; Idem, "We Beg You Not To Equate the Names of Gypsies and Knife-Grinders with Honest Traders". Itinerant Trade and the Racialisation of 'Gypsies' in the Czech Lands between 1918 and 1938, in: S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation. 6 (2019) 2, 44-55.

Gypsy plague,[34] were gradually applied there, too.[35] In Nazi Germany, the terms 'Gypsy' and 'Gypsy half-breed' were already racially defined as "alien race" ("artfremd") in the in connection with the Reich Citizenship Law from 1935. In the Protectorate legislation, the socially-based definition codified in the law from 1927 continued to be broadly applied until 1942. According to archival documents, the Dycha family from the village of Hrušky were not considered to be 'wandering Gypsies' on the basis of the older legislation.[36] However, along with other individuals and families identified racially as 'Gypsies' or 'Gypsy half-breeds', the Dychas became subject to the 'solution to the Gypsy question' in the Protectorate.

On 28 March 1939, only two weeks after the occupation of the remainder of Bohemia and Moravia, the commander of a gendarmerie investigation station in Uherské Hradiště sent a message to all gendarmerie stations in the district about the forced admission of 'Gypsies' to the newly established disciplinary labour camps. These facilities were to be established in accordance with an order of the Czech-Slovak government of 2 March 1939 and were to serve for the three-month deployment each of 'antisocial' men without a properly secured livelihood. Disciplinary labour camps were finally opened in August 1940 in Lety u Písku and Hodonín u Kunštátu.[37] On 29 March 1939, the commander of the gendarmerie station in Hrušky reported that only one 'Gypsy' family resided in the gendarmerie district. He wrote: "This family and its members do not wander and are employed occasionally by local peasants, so they are not eligible for admission to the disciplinary labour camps. There are no other wandering Gypsies in the district […]."[38] The gendarmerie in Hrušky sent similar reports about 'Gypsies' to superior authorities several more times.[39] Between 1940 and 1942, the school in Hrušky had to report regularly to the District School Committee in Hodonín on the smooth and regular attendance of five "school-attending Gypsy children".[40] Although we do not know the real motivations and intentions of these local authorities, their positive or neutral reports and evaluations may in the first four years of occupation have protected the Roma from Hrušky from possible persecution (imprisonment in a disciplinary labour camp for adult male family members, later in a detention camp, and then in the 'Gypsy camp').

Meanwhile, a major shift in addressing the 'Gypsy question' in the Protectorate was taking place. From mid-1942, an openly racial 'anti-Gypsy' policy was carried out, following the rules of the 'Third Reich'. The culmination of these measures was the adoption of the decree on Combatting the Gypsy Plague on 10 July 1942. On the grounds of this decree, the Protectorate authorities, following the instructions of the German Criminal Police in the Protectorate, conducted a census of all 'Gypsies, Gypsy half-breeds, and people living in the Gypsy manner' on 2 August

34 Guenter Lewy, The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies, New York/Oxford 2000, 52-55.

35 For more information on the persecution of the Roma and Sinti population in the Czech lands in the years 1939–1945, see e.g.: Kladivová, Konečná stanice; Nečas, Nad osudem; Idem, Vězňové; Idem, Československí Romové; Idem, Tragédie; Idem, Holocaust českých Romů.

36 SOkABM, Četnická stanice Hrušky [Gerdarmerie Station Hrušky] (ČSH), box 1, fol. 317.

37 See e.g.: Ctibor Nečas, Seznam vězňů kárného pracovního (sběrného) tábora v Hodoníně [List of Prisoners of the Disciplinary Labour (Collection) Camp in Hodonín], in: Bulletin Muzea romské kultury 11-12 (2002/03), 91-92; Idem, Kárný pracovní (sběrný) tábor I a internovaní v něm cikáni [Disciplinary Labour (Collection) Camp I and Interned Gypsies], in: Bulletin Muzea romské kultury 18 (2009), 163-166; Idem, Cikáni a "cikáni" v Letech [Gypsies and "Gypsies" in Lety], in: Živá historie, April (2011), 35-37.

38 SOkABM, Četnická stanice Hrušky [Gerdarmerie Station Hrušky] (ČSH), box 1, fol. 317.

39 SOkABM, ČSH, k. 2, reference no. 142/40, 15. 1. 1940; MZA, B 40, Zemský úřad Brno [Provincial Office Brno], III. manipulace, I., (1886) 1936–1945, box 2399, fol. 92, 42, 80.

40 SOkABM, NŠH, inv. n. 409, Jednací protokol [Protocol of Procedure] (1936–1944), reference no. 463/1940, reference no. 104/1942.

1942. Around 6,500 persons included in the registry dating back to 1927 were now described as 'Gypsies or Gypsy half-breeds'. Most of them were put under police surveillance and were thus left with limited mobility but in relative freedom. About a third were immediately interned in the newly established concentration camps for 'Gypsies' in Lety u Písku in Bohemia and in Hodonín u Kunštátu in Moravia.[41]

These camps were an integral part of the Nazi genocide of the Roma and Sinti in Czech territory. In both camps, thousands of men, women, and children of all ages suffered under catastrophic hygienic, accommodation, and working conditions, constant hunger, diseases, and humiliation.[42] In Lety u Písku, a total of about 1,300 people were imprisoned during the existence of the camp (August 1942 to August 1943), about 330 of whom died there while another 500 were further deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau.[43] Approximately 1,400 people were interned in Hodonín u Kunštátu from August 1942 to August 1943, with more than 200 dying as a result of the camp conditions and over 800 being deported to Auschwitz-Birkenau.[44]

Deportations of the European Roma and Sinti population to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp were carried out from 1943 onwards on the grounds of the so-called Auschwitz decree of the Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler of 16 December 1942. The first mass deportation of about 1,000 Roma and Sinti left the Protectorate from Brno on 6 March 1943.[45] It was followed by further transports of Roma and Sinti from various parts of Bohemia and Moravia, as well as from both 'Gypsy camps'. The majority of the Protectorate Roma and Sinti was deported in mass transports on 7 March (over 1,000 persons departing from Brno), 11 March (about 650 persons departing from Prague), and 19 March 1943 (over 1,000 persons departing from Olomouc). Smaller groups were deported during 1944. In total, about 5,500 people were affected.[46]

41 Nečas, Holocaust českých Romů, 15-21; Idem, Romové na Moravě a ve Slezsku (1740–1945) [Roma in Moravia and Silesia (1740–1945)], Brno 2005, 263.

42 For more information on the 'Gypsy camps' in the Protectorate, see e.g.: Nečas, Vězňové; Idem, Tragédie; Idem, Kolik vězňů prošlo internacemi protektorátních cikánských táborů? [How Many Prisoners Were Interned in the Protectorate Gypsy Camps?], in: Časopis matice moravské 114 (1995), 352-364; Idem, Personál protektorátních cikánských táborů [The Staff of the Protectorate Gypsy Camps], in: Vlastivědný věstník moravský 49 (1997), 294-298; Idem, Holocaust českých Romů; Idem, Židovští lékaři v cikánských táborech [Jewish Doctors in the Gypsy Camps], in: Romano Džaniben 7 (2000), 58-61.

43 For more information on the 'Gypsy camp' in Lety u Písku, see e.g.: Petr Lhotka, Lékařská vyšetření Romů určených k transportu do cikánského tábora v Letech u Písku v srpnu 1942 [Medical Examinations of Roma for Transport to the Gypsy Camp in Lety u Písku in August 1942], in: Bulletin Muzea romské kultury 4 (1995), 31-32; Ctibor Nečas, Zpráva o počtu, struktuře a osudech vězňů tzv. cikánského tábora v Letech [Report on the Number, Structure, and Fate of Prisoners in the So-Called Gypsy Camp in Lety], in: Bulletin Muzea romské kultury 16 (2007), 117-122; Idem, Cikánský tábor v Letech (1942–1943) [The Gypsy Camp in Lety (1942–1943)], in: Romano Džaniben 1 (2008), 186-197; Idem, Pamětní seznam – 1; Petr Klinovský, Velitelé "cikánského tábora" v Letech u Písku [The Commanders of the "Gypsy Camp" in Lety u Písku], in: Bulletin Muzea romské kultury 24 (2015), 25-41.

44 For more information on the 'Gypsy camp' in Hodonín u Kunštátu, see e.g.: Ctibor Nečas, Cikáni v Hodoníně u Kunštátu v letech 1940–1943 [The Gypsies of Hodonín u Kunštátu in 1940–1943], in: Vlastivědný věstník moravský 25 (1973), 277-283; Idem, Cikáni v Hodoníně u Kunštátu v letech 1940–1943 (dokončení) [The Gypsies of Hodonín u Kunštátu in 1940–1943 (Conclusion)], in: Vlastivědný věstník moravský 26 (1974), 26-33; Idem, Ma bisteren – nezapomeňme. Historie cikánského tábora v Hodoníně u Kunštátu [Ma bisteren – Do Not Forget. History of the Gypsy Camp in Hodonín u Kunštátu], Prague 1997; Idem, Romové na Moravě, 265-286; Idem, Pamětní seznam. II.

45 For more information on the transport, see e.g.: Nečas, Z Brna do Auschwitz-Birkenau.

46 For more information on the transports of Roma and Sinti from the Protectorate, see e.g.: Ctibor Nečas, Z Protektorátu Čechy a Morava do Auschwitz II-Birkenau. Hromadný transport 7. 5. 1943 [From the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia to Auschwitz II-Birkenau. The Mass Transport of 7 May 1943], in: Sborník prací filozofické fakulty brněnské univerzity, C 42 (1995), 139-145; Idem, Holocaust českých Romů, 34-140; Idem, Z Brna do Auschwitz-Birkenau.

The Dycha family was first included on the mass transport of protectorate 'Gypsies', which was sent to Auschwitz from Olomouc on 19 March 1943 with about 1,000 men, women, and children, mostly Roma and Sinti from Moravia.[47] In the end, however, the Dycha family was not included on this transport – someone in charge decided on their (temporary) release at the assembly point in Strážnice and let them return to their place of residence.[48] Unfortunately, the archival sources do not reveal the details of their (temporary) release. We can only assume that the good social relations of the Dychas within the village played a role and that it could have been an intervention by local authorities, such as the mayor, as was the case with the later rescue of Damián Danihel/Malík. Their (temporary) release is also confirmed by archival documents, such as the municipal accounts of March and May 1943, which mention "tickets for Gypsies", which had to be paid from the municipality's finances.[49]

However, their release in March did not save them. The Dycha family was again summoned for deportation in May 1943 and included on the fourth mass transport of 'Gypsies' from the Protectorate. Mráz wrote about their tragic fate:

> "[…] the year 1943 came, when the concentration of all persons of Gypsy origin was ordered. The petitions of the mayor, Metoděj Hrabě, were all futile. At their departure, a large number of locals came to say goodbye to the Gypsies at the railway station and brought them packages with food and clothes."[50]

The departure of the Dycha family from Hrušky was also documented by the school. For example, the class teacher commented next to Rozálie Dychová's name in the class book of the seventh grade: "On 5 May 1943 she moved to an unknown place."[51] Even today, witnesses, former classmates of Dycha's children, remember the deportation.[52] M. B., who lived with her parents near the Dychas at the time, said: "We liked them as children, they were really decent. I remember that we were horrified when suddenly a car came and took them."[53] L. S. recalled that the Dychas were first taken to Strážnice:

> "In 1943, of course, they simply picked them up here, it was the Protectorate, the Germans, and took them to Strážnice. They were there in Strážnice and then I don't know what happened to them anymore. […] And none of them returned."[54]

Mr. and Mrs. Dycha along with all their eight children were taken to Hodonín, where 'Gypsies' from the region were being gathered for a mass deportation consisting of about 860 men, women, and children, which arrived at the 'Gypsy camp' in Auschwitz-Birkenau on 7 May 1943. Among the deported were further relatives of Josef Dycha, who lived outside of Hrušky.[55]

While previous mass transports of 'Gypsies' from the Protectorate included the Roma and Sinti population so far living in relative freedom, the fourth mass trans-

47 Idem, Usedlí strážničtí Cikáni, 63-78.
48 SOkABM, Četnická stanice Moravská Nová Ves [Gerdarmerie Station Moravská Nová Ves], book 7, inv. n. 7.
49 SOkABM, AOH, Pokladní deník [Cash Register Book] (1943–1946), 4, 5, 7; Ibid., Hlavní účetní kniha [General Ledger] (1943), 18.
50 VKH, Mráz, Zápisky ke kronice obce Hrušky.
51 SOkABM, NŠH, inv. n. 343, 17.
52 Interviews held on 5 November 2018 in Hrušky with L. S., J. M., A. L., M. B., J. J., and V. N.
53 Interview held on 5 November 2018 in Hrušky with M. B.
54 Interview held on 5 November 2018 in Hrušky with L. S.
55 Gedenkbuch. Die Sinti und Roma im Konzentrationslager Auschwitz-Birkenau/Memorial Book. The Gypsies at Auschwitz-Birkenau / Księga Pamięci. Cyganie w obozie koncentracyjnym Auschwitz-Birkenau. Vols. 1 & 2. Munich/London/New York/Paris 1993; http://auschwitz.org/en/museum/auschwitz-prisoners/ (13 August 2021).

port was to contain most of the prisoners of the 'Gypsy camp' of Lety u Písku. Additionally, Moravian Roma and Sinti who had not been deported from Brno or Olomouc in March 1943 or who had been removed from these two Moravian transports and left for a few weeks in temporary freedom, were deported on this transport. The place of dispatch of the Moravian part of the transport was the city of Brno, where the Roma and Sinti population from several Moravian localities was concentrated.[56] One of the large local gathering points for this transport was the Moravian town of Hodonín, to where the Dycha family was brought.[57]

Roma and Sinti from European countries directly controlled by the Nazis (besides the Protectorate including Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, Poland, and others) were imprisoned in a special section in the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, called B-II-e or the 'Gypsy family camp'. As in the 'Terezín family camp', which existed at the same time in Auschwitz, families were here accommodated together. Over 22,000 men, women, and children were gradually interned in 32 wooden barracks in an area measuring 150 x 170 meter. The prisoners suffered under constant humiliation, extreme physical and psychological violence, as well as persistent anxiety, hunger, and disease. Catastrophic accommodation and lack of food, general exhaustion, and numerous diseases caused a high mortality rate in the 'Gypsy family camp', which reached a critical state in the summer of 1943 and then again in the winter of 1943/1944.[58] According to the camp records, some 4,500 of these inmates came from the Protectorate.[59]

The fate of the Dycha family from Hrušky during their imprisonment in Auschwitz-Birkenau can be reconstructed on the basis of preserved materials from the archive of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum. All the family members died there in 1943 and 1944 due to the catastrophic living conditions.[60] The father, Josef Dycha, was assigned the prisoner number Z-7574 and died on 2 July 1943. The mother, Estera Dychová (Z-8266), died on 30 October 1943. One by one, their children also died: Helena (Z-8271) on 26 May 1943, Josef (Z-7576) on 1 July 1943, Jaroslav (Z-7575) on 13 July 1943, Jan (Z-7577) on 2 November 1943, Josefa (Z-8269) on 11 December 1943, Rozálie (Z-8267) on 4 January 1944, Marie (Z-8270) on 9 January 1944, and Anna (Z-8268) on 11 February 1944. None of them were still alive by the time the 'Gypsy family camp' was liquidated and its inmates murdered in the gas chambers of Birkenau in August 1944.[61]

56 Nečas, Romové na Moravě, 299.

57 Státní okresní archiv Hodonín [State District Archive in Hodonín], Archiv města Hodonín [Archives of the Town of Hodonín], inv. n. 298, Kronika města Hodonína (1936–1944) [Chronicle of the Town of Hodonín], 598; Dušan Slačka, "Cikánská otázka" na Hodonínsku v letech 1945–1973 [The "Gypsy Question" in the Hodonín Region in 1945–1973], (MA Thesis) Brno 2015, 46.

58 For more information on the 'Gypsy camp' in Auschwitz-Birkenau, see e.g.: Gedenkbuch. Slawomir Kapralski/Maria Martyniak/Joanna Talewicz-Kwiatkowska, Voices of Memory 7. Roma in Auschwitz, Oświęcim 2011.

59 For more information on the Roma and Sinti prisoners from the territory of today's Czech Republic, see e.g.: Nečas, Aušvicate hi kher báro; Holý/Nečas, Žalující píseň; Ctibor Nečas, Cikánský tábor v Auschwitz-Birkenau a jeho nejmladší vězňové [The Gypsy Camp in Auschwitz-Birkenau and Its Youngest Prisoners], in: Časopis matice moravské 113 (1994), 171-178; Idem, Útěky českých Romů z osvětimského táborového komplexu [Escapes of Czech Roma from the Auschwitz Camp Complex], in: Vlastivědný věstník moravský 47 (1995), 70-73; Idem, Nad rubrikami hlavních knih osvětimského cikánského tábora [On the Main Books of the Auschwitz Gypsy Camp], in: Časopis Matice moravské 126 (2007), 353-366; Idem, Narodili se a zahynuli v osvětimském cikánském táboře [They Were Born and Perished in the Gypsy Camp in Auschwitz], in: Romano Džaniben 14 (2007), 170-185.

60 For enabling my research and sending copies of the relevant documents I thank the staff of the Archives of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, especially the Head of the Archives Wojciech Płosa and Piotr Supiński from the Bureau for Former Prisoners.

61 Archives of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, Oświęcim, Catalogue of Prisoners.

Damián Danihel after 1945
(Vlastivědný kroužek Hrušky [Hrušky Local Historical Club]).

Damián Danihel – The Only Survivor

After liberation in 1945, only about 600 men, women, and children from the original Bohemian and Moravian Roma and Sinti population returned from the concentration camps and other internment or forced labour facilities. Only a tenth of the Roma and Sinti survived the Nazi terror in the Czech lands. In 1945, they returned to a restored Czechoslovakia with broken health and in a rather uncertain and dismal social state. The survivors also had to cope with the loss of their relatives and the fundamental deterioration of their social status.[62]

The only Roma from Hrušky who had not been deported to a concentration camp was Estera Dychová's son Damián Danihel, known in the village under the surname Malík. According to Mráz and some witnesses, his Slovak citizenship saved his life.[63] Damián possessed the right of residence due to his birth in the Slovak village of Čáry and was therefore considered a foreign national in the territory of the Protectorate. Between 1940 and 1942, he repeatedly applied for a residence in Hrušky, but because of his age (he was not yet 21 years old), the council dismissed him.[64] When in May 1941 the District Office in Hodonín dealt with his application for a residence permit, the gendarmerie station in Hrušky was subsequently asked by the District Office to

62 Ctibor Nečas, Matriky moravských Romů, kteří přežili nucenou táborovou koncentraci [Registries of Moravian Roma Who Survived the Forced Concentration in Camps], in: Bulletin Muzea romské kultury 15-16 (2006/07), 124-128, 112-116.

63 VKH, Mráz, Zápisky ke kronice obce Hrušky; Interviews held on 5 November 2018 in Hrušky with L. S., J. M., A. L., M. B., J. J., and V. N.

64 SOkABM, AOH, Protokolární kniha obecního zastupitelstva [Protocol Book of the Municipal Council] (26 August 1938 to 5 May 1947), 80, 92, 103.

register him as a foreigner.[65] According to witnesses, the then mayor Metoděj Hrabě and his predecessor and Danihel's employer, the farmer Vojtěch Hřebačka, also contributed to Danihel's rescue. During the war and for some time after its end, Damián worked for the latter and lived in his house.[66]

According to witnesses, Danihel was an excellent singer of Moravian folk songs and took part in many social events in Hrušky, including traditional feasts. This is also documented by a unique post-war photograph of Danihel, which the local historical club in Hrušky holds in its collections. It depicts him along with one of the inhabitants of Hrušky in a local folk costume. The same photo is also part of an article entitled "Slovak Feast in the Village of Hrušky u Břeclavi", which was published on 15 September 1951 in the magazine *Svět v obrazech* (The World in Pictures), a weekly of the Ministry of Information and Public Education.[67]

Danihel later moved to Slovakia and visited Hrušky only occasionally as a peddler of wicker brooms.[68] In Slovakia, he founded a family (he had four sons and a daughter) and lived in the village of Lakšárska Nová Ves (Senica District), where he is also buried (he died in 1985).[69] His descendants currently live in the Czech Republic and Slovakia and the war story of Danihel and his family from Hrušky is still alive in their families.[70]

Conclusion

The case study presented here contributes to the documentation of the life of Roma and Sinti in the territory of today's Czech Republic in the first half of the twentieth century, with an emphasis on the period 1939–1945. At the same time, it shows how focussing on a specific place, community, or family through written and oral history sources can change perspectives and enrich research based on documents of central authorities and institutions. The story of the Dycha family from Hrušky reveals, on the basis of the available sources, the persecution measures aimed at persons identified as 'Gypsies' and 'Gypsy half-breeds' in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia and thus shows the preparation and implementation of genocide at the local level. This perspective allows us to consider coexistence and persecution at the local level and qualifies the impact of measures undertaken at the state level. This case study is therefore a contribution to the history of local Roma communities, families, and individuals in the context of a centrally controlled and implemented 'solution to the Gypsy question' in the interwar and war period in the territory of the Czech Republic.

My research shows that, in the specific case of the Dycha family, long-term social and economic ties with the neighbouring non-Roma population and community representatives could play an important role. This is obvious, for example, from the

65 SOkABM, ČSH, book 23, Podací protokol obyčejný [Register of Incoming Correspondence] (1940–1941), reference no. 1219/41.

66 VKH, Mráz, Zápisky ke kronice obce Hrušky; Interviews held on 5 November 2018 in Hrušky with L. S., J. M., A. L., M. B., J. J., and V. N.

67 Suovácké hody v obci Hrušky u Břecuavi, in: Svět v obrazech [Slovácko feast in the Community of Hrušky u Břeclavi]. Týdeník Ministerstva informací a osvěty, 15 September 1951, 18-19.

68 VKH, Mráz, Zápisky ke kronice obce Hrušky; Interviews held on 5 November 2018 in Hrušky with L. S., J. M., A. L., M. B., J. J., and V. N.

69 Městský úřad Moravské Budějovice [Municipal Office of Moravské Budějovice], Kniha úmrtí Moravské Budějovice [Death Book of Moravské Budějovice], 1985.

70 Interview with V. D. in Litohoř, 11 March 2019; with A. D. in Kolárovo, 7 August 2019; with J. D. in Malacky, 8 August 2019; and with T. D. in Lakšárska Nová Ves, 8 August 2019.

successful negotiation of acquiring the right of residence, building a new house, or gaining a livelihood and a job. These circumstances were crucial at a time when the family was identified by the authorities as 'racial Gypsies' and was persecuted as such. As follows from the memories of witnesses and archival documents, the inhabitants of the village showed a certain solidarity while village representatives also tried (although unsuccessfully in the end) to save the whole family from deportation to a concentration camp.

The case study raises a number of additional questions and topics that need to be further addressed. Of particular interest are the topics indicated of escorting designated individuals to the mass transports destined for concentration camps and the possibility of excluding some individuals from mass transports on the basis of the intervention of municipal officials. Another interesting topic is the question of whether local people elsewhere tried to save 'their Gypsies', what motivated these efforts, and whether they were successful and why. The presented case study may thus be part of future comparative research of inclusion and exclusion, or also remembrance, at the local level, which could bring new insights into the topic of Nazi genocide of Roma and Sinti.

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Aletta Beck

A Database of "Gypsy" Victims of National Socialist Persecution

Collective Biographic Data from the Territory of the Czech Republic

Abstract

In 1999, Miroslav Kárný, founder of the Institut Terezínske iniciativy (Terezín Initiative Institute, TII), offered the support of the Terezín Initiative Institute for a dignified remembrance of victims of the genocide of Roma and Sinti during the Second World War. Since nobody took up this offer, TII themselves decided to undertake this remembrance. The project Databáze romských obětí holocaustu (Database of the Roma Victims of the Holocaust, DROH), which began four years ago, resulted in May 2020 in the publication of the database online at holocaust.cz. This project report highlights a few of the developments throughout the past four years and the possibilities this new database opens up for further research on the topic.

"I know that a list of victims exists of the Romany genocide, which was a very praiseworthy work by Doctor Nečas, because he did it, so to speak, on his own. I think, though, that it needs to be done in a much more dignified way, and we are offering to help you not only with our experience but also with our technical support, i.e. our computer support where this could be done. [… T]his is […] my offer on behalf of the Terezín Initiative Institute […]."[1]

This is how Miroslav Kárný, founder of the Institut Terezínské iniciativy (Terezín Initiative Institute, TII), explained the need to remember the genocide of Roma and Sinti during the Second World War in Czech Republic at the international conference "The Holocaust Phenomenon", which was held in Prague and Terezín in October 1999. For him, the similarity of experiences justified a similar remembrance of both victims of the Shoah and of the genocide of Roma and Sinti.[2] What he referred to as "technical support" in 1999 had by the year 2008 become a database containing the information on the victims of the Shoah in the so-called Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia drawn from the Terezín Memorial Books. The records of those who did not survive were made publicly available online at holocaust.cz, with further materials on the individual victims added throughout the years. Though interest in the genocide of Roma and Sinti continually grew alongside research on the topic, nobody ever took up the Miroslav Kárný's offer from 1999.

The public debate about the genocide of the Roma and Sinti proves time and again the necessity of reliable data, and not only for a dignified commemoration of the victims. Aside from the general debate conducted in academic circles, the public dis-

1 Miroslav Kárný, Fenomén Holocaust/The Holocaust Phenomenon. Conference Report of the International Scientific Conference, Prague-Terezín, 6th–8th October 1999, Prague 1999, 164-165.

2 Ibid.

DATA & DOCUMENTATION https://doi.org/10.23777/SN.0221 | www.vwi.ac.at

course in the Czech Republic, which mostly focusses on the former 'Gypsy camp' in Lety u Písku, thrives on myths and distortions, fuelled not only with intent but also with an obvious lack of knowledge. Not even the nature of the persecution has been left unchallenged. Whether intentional or not, a dignified remembrance of the victims of the genocide of Roma and Sinti in the Czech Republic was not possible under these circumstances. The memorial books compiled by Ctibor Nečas remained a rather unknown source made use of by only a small number of private individuals.[3]

In 2015, TII decided to take up this task themselves. Funded by Bader Philanthropies, TII started working on the project DROH – Databáze romských obětí holocaustu (Database of the Roma Victims of the Holocaust) in the summer of 2016. The main objective of the project, in accordance with the words of Miroslav Kárný, is to create a database of victims of the genocide of Roma and Sinti whose fate was in any way connected with the territory of today's Czech Republic, and to collect and systematise the data found on the individual victims to make this information available for remembrance, education, and research. Moreover, the project contributes to answering some open questions concerning for example the number of prisoners in the so-called 'Gypsy camps' in the Protectorate, a description of the mechanism of persecution, and the fate of those deported from the Protectorate, mostly to Auschwitz-Birkenau, but also to other concentration camps.

The project partners are the Museum of Roma Culture in Brno and the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance. TII furthermore cooperates with the Central Council of Sinti and Roma in Heidelberg, the Fritz Bauer Institute in Frankfurt am Main, the concentration camp memorials Dachau and Flossenbürg, and the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology at the Pedagogical University of Krakow on this project. After four years, the project ended in May 2020 with the publication of the database on holocaust.cz, which focusses on the victims of the former 'Gypsy camp' in Lety u Písku.

The database contains basic biographical information on the 329 people who died in the Lety camp. These can be searched individually by name, date of birth, and place of birth, and there is a list of all prisoners of the Lety camp accessible in the database by using the "search by camp" function.

Remembrance and Education

In terms of remembrance, this database, like the database of Shoah victims, allows the victims' descendants to discover the fate of their ancestors and enables a dignified tribute to the victims by "returning them their faces", that is, to gather as much biographical information as possible on the individual people and to present

3 Ctibor Nečas, Andr'oda taboris. Vězňové protektorátních cikánských táborů 1942–1943 [Prisoners of the Protectorate Gypsy Camps 1942–1943], Brno 1987; Idem, Aušvicate hi khér báro. Čeští vězňové cikánského tábora v Osvětimi II-Brzezince [Czech Prisoners of the Gypsy Camp in Auschwitz II-Birkenau], Brno 1992; Idem, Z Brna do Auschwitz-Birkenau. První transport moravských Romů do koncentračního tábora Auschwitz-Birkenau [From Brno to Auschwitz-Birkenau. The First Deportation of Moravian Roma to the Concentration Camp Auschwitz-Birkenau], Brno 2000; Idem, Pamětní seznam – 1: jména a údaje o nebožácích, kteří byli násilně koncentrováni v tzv. cikánském táboře I (Lety, 1942–1943) [Memorial List – 1: Names and Personal Data of the Unfortunate Who Were Concentrated by Force in the So-Called Gypsy Camp I (Lety, 1942–1943)], Nymburk 2012; Ibid, Pamětní seznam II – 2: jména a údaje o nebožácích, kteří byli násilně koncentrováni v tzv. cikánském táboře II (Hodonín, 1942–1943) [Memorial List – 2: Names and Personal Data of the Unfortunate Who Were Concentrated by Force in the So-Called Gypsy Camp II (Hodonín, 1942–1943)], Brno 2014.

them as the individual human beings they once were.[4] On a practical level, the database of Shoah victims has been employed as a source of information on individual victims during the public reading of the Holocaust victims' names held each year on Yom HaShoah since 2008, which is organised in the Czech Republic by TII.[5] "Returning faces" might seem like a rather symbolical gesture at first, but the display of the individuality and diversity of victims of the Shoah by means of the database of Holocaust victims has proven a worthy contribution to combatting wrongful assumptions about the Shoah and contemporary antisemitism and discrimination by making obvious the incorrectness of stereotypes. "Returning faces" or "turning numbers back into people" allows an educational approach where people can relate to the victims as individuals, which is not possible if they are thought of as an anonymous mass on which it is easy to project the assumptions and stereotypes that have been assigned to them by the Nazis and others, too.

On these grounds, it is right to assume that the same approach towards another group of victims of National Socialist racial ideology will offer the same possibilities regarding stereotypes about the given group. Consequently, the database of the victims of the genocide of Roma and Sinti will be put to use in the same way that the database of victims of the Shoah has been used for more than ten years in educational programmes. On the one hand, this means using the database as a pool of materials that is easily available for the creation of educational materials of more general importance, which can be distributed and used by a large number of people in different educational contexts. On the other hand, it can be used as a resource for commemoration and remembrance.

Methodology

Against the original assumptions, the lists of victims prepared by Ctibor Nečas and mentioned by Miroslav Kárný did not prove a promising starting point since it was impossible to reconstruct the exact way they had been compiled and the specific sources used.[6] DROH therefore used a twofold approach developed in cooperation with members of the project's advisory board.[7] While entering the lists prepared by Nečas into the database, another list based on a variety of archival documents was compiled, including all the necessary documentation of sources used. The ongoing comparison of the newly compiled list and the works of Nečas provides a reliable foundation for the database as well as for further research.

4 For an example of what this looks like, see: https://www.holocaust.cz/en/database-of-victims/victim/111327-helena-neumannova/ (29 June 2021) or choose any other entry in the database of victims of the Holocaust at www.holocaust.cz.

5 For more information, see: http://www.terezinstudies.cz/events/jom-ha-soa/index.html (29 June 2021).

6 This is not to be read as an expression of disrespect for the work of the late Ctibor Nečas, who also belonged to the advisors of this project and to whom the project owes much. He himself was aware of this and open for discussion. Rather, this is a problem of the scholarly culture in the Czech Republic. There is currently no general consensus among historians concerning the use of references, a situation that has been unresolved for several decades and dates back to pre-1989. See: Jaroslav Ira, Používání a zneužívání poznámek pod čarou [The Use and Abuse of Footnotes], in: Dějiny – teorie - kritika (2016) 2, 285-299, available online at http://www.dejinyteoriekritika.cz/Modules/ViewDocument.aspx?Did=3574 (29 June 2021) and Martin Nodl, Tragický konec české poznámky [The Tragic End of the Czech Footnote], in: Dějiny – teorie – kritika (2019) 1, 89-108, available online at http://www.dejinyteoriekritika.cz/Modules/ViewDocument.aspx?Did=4685 (29 June 2021). Through systematic efforts made mainly at the universities, the situation is continuously improving.

7 For a complete list of the members of the advisory board, see: http://www.terezinstudies.cz/projects/roma-database.html (29 June 2021).

This approach also allows for a certain 'reverse engineering' that helps to clarify uncertainties unanswered by earlier research, for example regarding the prisoners' card file of the Lety camp. Irregularities in this file already became apparent during the time the camp was in operation, after the initial commandant Josef Janovský had been replaced by Štepan Blahynka in early 1943. Mostly, the irregularities concern the fate of prisoners: While some were mistakenly listed as "dead" in the prisoners' card file, others who had indeed died were labelled as alive. On the basis of further documents from the camp administration such as deportation lists and personal documents, first efforts to correct such mistakes were undertaken during the spring of 1943. During the compilation of the list of prisoners based on archival documents, we had to trace double entries as well as carefully connect all information from different sources to individuals, which also enabled us to reconstruct the corrections made during the time the camp was in operation. Furthermore, we compared the information on the fates of prisoners with available information from other sources, for example camp records from Auschwitz-Birkenau, to verify whether someone had been deported there or not. An overview of cases that could not be clarified completely will be made available for further research.

Nečas, who had to work with the same large number of documents as we do today but without the advantages of electronic data processing, left traces of his work in the prisoners' card file, which also caused confusion. On Nečas's request, the archive added altogether eight cards to the file, with the argument that the people concerned had been prisoners in the camp but were not registered in the card file. For seven of them, he later withdrew his claim, which was documented, without stating the reason, on the cards still contained in the card file today. This has led to doubts on the reliability of the card file. The reason for Nečas's later withdrawal was that these individuals were already contained in the original card file[8] and that he had simply overlooked them while processing more than 1,300 cards manually. The final individual who Nečas claimed had been imprisoned in the 'Gypsy camp', whose file he did not retract, can still be found among those registered in the original card file.[9]

The change of approach regarding the lists of victims subsequently caused a second change concerning the database. Unlike the victims of the Shoah, who were deported because they had first been 'identified' as Jews by the Nazis, the inmates of the 'Gypsy camps' in the Protectorate were only classified as 'racial Gypsies or Gypsy half-breeds' or 'racial non-Gypsies' after having been imprisoned at the 'Gypsy camps'. Everyone imprisoned there thus became a victim of the National Socialist persecution of 'Gypsies', without regard to their later racial categorisation. Consequently, the database will not be published under the name initially suggested in the project. Instead, its title will be "Database of the Victims of the National Socialist Persecution of 'Gypsies'". The term 'Gypsies' will be left in quotation marks to make clear that it is not to be equated with 'Roma and Sinti' in this context.

8 See: Státní oblastní archiv Třeboň [State Regional Archives in Třeboň] (SOA), fond CT Lety, inventory no. 144 prisoners' card file 99/97; 461/1650; 1066/1064; 1822/1756; 1922/95; 1999/2119; 2067/2057.

9 See: SOA Třeboň, fond CT Lety, inventory no. 144 (prisoners' card file), 683/681.

Archival Materials

The pool of archival materials collected for the project adds up to a total of 72,331 digitally copied pages. The greater part, comprising 41,661 scans, makes up the complete archival collection "CT Lety" held in the State Regional Archives in Třeboň.[10] The name of the collection translates to "cikánský tabor" (CT) or "Gypsy camp Lety". Its name notwithstanding, this collection also contains the materials from the preceding camps, the Kárný pracovní tábor (disciplinary labour camp, KPT) and the Sběrný tábor (collection camp, ST) that were run by the same personnel in the same place and whose histories are closely linked to that of the 'Gypsy camp'. The greater part of the collection, however, covers the 'Gypsy camp'. Although an exact number has not yet been established, the current estimate is that about a third of all documents from the "CT Lety" collection contain information on individuals imprisoned in the so-called 'Gypsy camp' from August 1942 through to the early summer of 1943. Next to the inmates' card index, there are several prisoners' lists included in the archival records, as well as prisoners' registries, personal documents, and contemporary correspondence between different authorities concerning groups or individuals. The correspondence also includes several documents on contemporary corrections of irregularities in the prisoners' card file.

The documents from the KPT and ST included in the archival record "CT Lety" have been digitised for their relevance to the historical context of the 'Gypsy camp'. Both preceding camps represented forms of repression against marginalised social groups, partly on the grounds of racial ideology, though on different grounds and answering to different authorities. While the KPT Lety was the product of a longer history of decision-making during the First and Second Czechoslovak Republics,[11] both the ST and CT Lety were related to two distinct types of National Socialist persecution on the grounds of racial ideology, the former connected with the persecution of so-called 'asocials', the latter established as a genuine means to persecute 'Gypsies'.

Except for the "CT Lety" records in Třeboň, all the other archival collections systematically researched for this project have only been partially digitised. Altogether 12,699 documents gathered in the Moravian Provincial Archive in Brno concern the mechanisms of persecution as well as individual victims, as do another 7,365 documents from the National Archives in Prague. Minor amounts of documents on individuals were obtained from the City Archives in Brno, the State Regional Archives in Prague, the State District Archives in Třebíč, and the State Regional Archives in Kladno. Another 9,362 documents stem from the Archives of the State Museum in Auschwitz-Birkenau and document the fates of people from the Protectorate who were persecuted as 'Gypsies' after their deportation to Auschwitz-Birkenau. Not all of these documents have been included in the database so far. A detailed description of the contents of the database and its creation can be found on the website holocaust.cz.[12]

10 SOA Třeboň, fond CT Lety. The project team members would like to thank the State Regional Archives in Třeboň for their cooperation, which extended further than we could have expected. As the person who conducted the digitalisation of the archival collection, I would like to especially thank Ms. Plucarová for her pleasant cooperation, as well as for her friendly and supportive manner during the time I spent in Třeboň.

11 See for example: Vít Strobach/Pavel Baloun, Likvidace nezaměstnanosti. Pracovní tábory mezi liberální demokracií a diktatorou [Liquidating Unemployment. Labour Camps between Liberal Democracy and Dictatorship], http://dejinyasoucasnost.cz/archiv/2016/9/likvidace-nezamestnanosti/ (29 June 2021).

12 The Database of Victims of the Nazi Persecution of "Gypsies". Notes on methodology and manual, https://c.holocaust.cz/files/old/pdfs/TheDatabaseofVictimsoftheNaziPersecutionofGypsies.pdf (29 June 2021).

In the Central Military Archives in Prague, we were able to obtain about 200 documents from the collection of personal files of applicants for a certificate of national resistance according to Act 255/1946 Coll. regarding the aftermath of persecution in Czechoslovakia and the later Czech Republic. While in post-war Germany, victims of the National Socialist persecution of 'Gypsies' were subjected to further discrimination on the grounds of the same stereotypes as during the 'Third Reich', in communist Czechoslovakia, former inmates of the 'Gypsy camps' were considered eligible for the benefits provided by the law 255/1946 Sb. Recognition by the state on the grounds of this law was the only access to any kind of compensation until 1989. The benefits connected with this status changed over time, ranging from privileged access to certain workplaces right after the war to actual financial benefits in later years, which last until today.[13] Although detailed research on this topic is still outstanding, societal discrimination seems to have prevented many of the victims from applying.[14]

The total amount of more than 72,000 documents digitised during the project is four times higher than was estimated at the beginning, with a clear imbalance in favour of documents concerning the 'Gypsy camp' in Lety u Písku. Taking into consideration the amount of time left to finish the project, the decision was taken to limit the May 2020 publication of the database to the victims of the Lety camp.

Sensitive Materials

The possibility that at least some of the documents would be abused for the purposes of denial or distortion, considering the current situation of Roma in the Czech Republic, led to a second limitation of the project's outcome that was not intended from the start. In April 2019, a public opinion poll led to results that were in some newspapers celebrated as "the best result in twenty years" concerning public opinion on the co-existence of "ethnic Czechs" and Roma. However, this "best result" still entailed 72 per cent of those polled characterising the relationship between the two groups as "rather bad" or "really bad".[15] According to a poll conducted by the Ministry of the Interior in 2017, 42 per cent believed that Roma were more criminal than other ethnic groups in the Czech Republic.[16] This classic stereotype about 'Gypsies' also keeps appearing in the discussion about the genocide of Roma and Sinti during the Second World War, mostly in connection with denying the function of the 'Gypsy camps' as a means of racial persecution, instead labelling them 'work camps

13 Milada Závodska/Lada Viková, Dokumentace genodicy Romů za 2. světové války v Československu. Nálezová zpráva – diskontinuita a kontinuita odhalování historie Romů po roce 1946 [The Documentation of the Genocide of Roma during the Second World War in Czechoslovakia. Report on Findings in the Archives – Discontinuity and Continuity in Uncovering the History of the Roma after 1946], in: Romani Džaniben 23 (2016) 2, 107-124, here 110-111.

14 Eva Zdařilová, Proces odškodňování obětí romského holocaustu v České republice [The Process of Compensation for the Victims of the Roma Holocaust in the Czech Republic], Prague 2007, 25-27.

15 Centrum pro výzkum veřejného mínění, Sociologický ústav Akademie věd České Republiky [Centre for Public Opinion Research, The Institute of Sociology of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic], Naše společnost [Our Society] 30. 3.–10. 4. 2019, published 17. 5. 2019, https://cvvm.soc.cas.cz/media/com_form2content/documents/c2/a4924/f9/ov190517.pdf (29 June 2021).

16 Ministerstvo vnitra ČR [Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic], Výzkum zaměřený na zjišťování názorů a postojů obyvatel na otázky spojené s problematikou kriminality a její prevencí [Research Aimed at Identifying the Opinions and Attitudes of the Population on Issues Related to Crime and its Prevention], 2017, https://www.mvcr.cz/soubor/nazory-a-postoje-obyvatel-na-otazky-spojene-s-problematikou-kriminality-a-jeji-prevenci-signalni-zprava-mv-cr.aspx (29 June 2021).

for the workshy'.[17] This obvious continuation of stereotypes, which played an important role in the evolution of the National Socialist mass murder, gave us reason to reconsider the initial idea of publishing all documents, and rather to exclude certain documents with an especially high potential for such abuse. Many documents will moreover only be published in direct combination with contextualising information. Furthermore, the educational section of the website holocaust.cz concerning the genocide of the Roma and Sinti in the territory of the Czech Republic, which has initially established at the beginning of the project in the late 1990s, will be further expanded. This decision is the result of a discussion which also engaged descendants of survivors of the genocide of Roma and Sinti in the Protectorate, for whom a minimum level of security is of great personal importance.

This discussion among the project team as well as descendants and survivors also had an impact on other activities of TII. Based on the reflections in the context of this project, other parts of the educational section on the website have been taken offline and will be reconstructed to prevent the abuse of the documents contained therein, for example in sections concerning antisemitism.

Use and Accessibility of the Database

Disregarding the above-mentioned limitations to public and anonymous use of the database without prior registration, survivors and descendants of victims, researchers and students, as well as individuals active in education, remembrance, and the like will not be subject to these limitations. To prevent abuse, TII has decided to grant access to the database only after registration. This registration process resembles the usual procedure in archives. This procedure will not be automatised. To register, interested users are required to contact TII directly.

Registered users will have access to the database and its contents, but not necessarily access to all documents digitised by TII in the course of this project, since the database does not substitute for the archives, whose records were used for its creation. Rather, the database is a resource and a powerful starting point for further research.[18] Additionally, registered users of the database – if interested – will be provided access to the list of archival records available in the Czech Republic containing information connected to the topic of the genocide of Roma and Sinti in the Protectorate, which is also part of the project's outcomes but does not claim to be exhaustive. For remembrance or educational uses, we encourage interested parties not to register as users of the database, but to address inquiries directly to the staff at TII.

17 Among the best known is probably the case of Andrej Babiš, current Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, who in the autumn of 2016 made this argument as part of his election campaign. For a commentary, which takes the election campaign into consideration, see for example: Martin Fendrych, Když prasečák stojí na místě koncentráku pro Romy. Babiš lže, že Lety byl pracovní tábor [When There Is a Pig Farm on the Site of a Concentration Camp for Roma. Babiš's Lies about Lety Having Been a Labour Camp], https://nazory.aktualne.cz/komentare/kdyz-prasecak-stoji-na-miste-koncentraku-pro-romy/r~e3e8ef0470f011e6b597002590604f2e/ (29 June 2021).

18 For an illustration of the scope of possibilities starting from biographies, see Michal Schuster's article on the Dycha family in this issue.

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Quotation: Aletta Beck, A Database of "Gypsy" Victims of National Socialist Persecution. Collective Biographic Data from the Territory of the Czech Republic, in: S:I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation. 8 (2021) 2, 86-93.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.23777/SN.0221/DAD_ABEC01

S:I.M.O.N.– Shoah: Intervention. Methods. DocumentatiON. is the semi-annual open access e-journal of the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) in English and German.

This special issue devoted to research in the history of the Holocaust in Bohemian Lands was prepared in cooperation with the Terezín Initiative Institute in Prague and the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences. It represents the continuation of the "Terezín Studies and Documents", a scholarly yearbook founded by Holocaust survivors Miroslav Kárný and Margita Kárná which significantly contributed to the research in the history of the Holocaust in the Bohemian Lands. The preparation was supported by the Czech Foundation for the Holocaust Victims.

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Magdalena Sedlická

The European Holocaust Research Infrastructure in the Czech Republic

Abstract

This report is dedicated to the activities and results of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure project (EHRI), which are related to the history of Jews from the Bohemian lands and the Holocaust. It illustrates both the strategic goals as well as the challenges of EHRI. The report focusses on four major areas: the EHRI project generally and the EHRI Portal, the Terezín Research Guide, the EHRI digital editions of documents, and the EHRI Document Blog. It demonstrates how the EHRI project strongly supports the Holocaust research community and provides researchers with new opportunities to engage with the wider scholarly community. As a transnational project, EHRI connects archival collections across the borders of states, institutions, and languages.

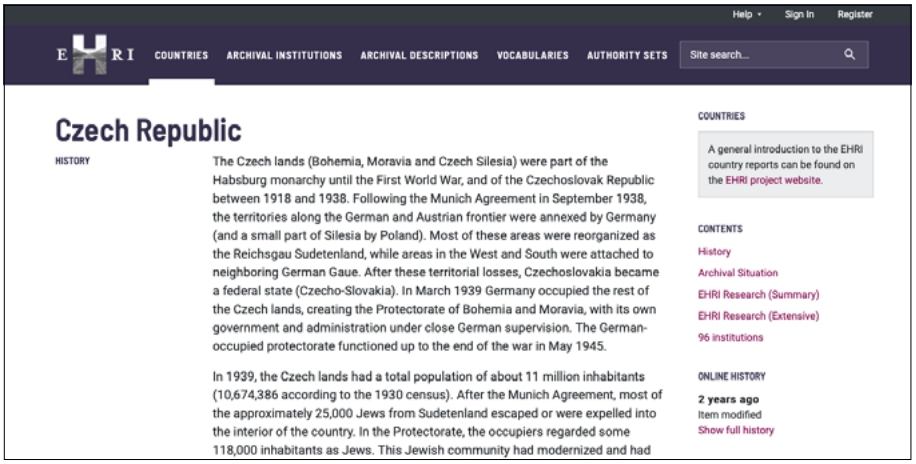
By introducing a number of activities and results of the European Holocaust Research Infrastructure project (EHRI) related to the history of the Holocaust in the Bohemian lands, this report contributes to the ongoing debate on how to best document and make available Holocaust-related sources. It illustrates both the strategic goals as well as the challenges of EHRI. While most resources and organisational structures are available only on the national level, EHRI acts as a transnational project, connecting archival collections across the borders of states, institutions, and languages.

Launched in 2010, EHRI is a European Union-funded consortium of archives and research institutions that aims to improve access to Holocaust-related archival materials. The EHRI team aims to support the Holocaust research community by creating a digital infrastructure and supporting communities of researchers. The project builds upon the innovative use of digital humanities and enables new methodological approaches to Holocaust research. Over twenty institutions from the field of Holocaust studies and digital humanities in Europe as well as in Israel and the United States were and continue to be involved in the project. So far, three institutions in the Czech Republic have participated in the project: the Jewish Museum in Prague, the Terezín Memorial, and the Masaryk Institute and Archives of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

Holocaust-related archival material tends to be fragmented and scattered all over the world, making access complicated, if not impossible, as well as very time-consuming. EHRI's ambition was to overcome part of this problem by providing online access to information on dispersed sources related to the Holocaust through its online portal.[1] This currently displays information on over 2,200 archives in 59 countries that hold Holocaust-related collections and contains more than 325,000 archival descriptions from over 763 institutions. The information in the portal is continuously updated with new collection descriptions.

1 http://portal.ehri-project.eu/ (4 July 2021).

DATA & DOCUMENTATION https://doi.org/10.23777/SN.0221 | www.vwi.ac.at



EHRI Portal, the country report for the Czech Republic.

The portal also includes a number of relevant descriptions and sources related to the Holocaust in the Bohemian lands. Users can use the country report for the Czech Republic as a starting point, which provides a short history of the Holocaust in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, a brief description of the local archival system, and an overview of the EHRI methodology of surveying in the country. Currently, 96 Czech archives holding Holocaust-related materials are listed, including city and state archives as well as non-governmental institutions.[2] To survey collections in regional and district archives, the Czech EHRI partnered with the Yerusha project, which focusses on collections related to Jewish history and shared expertise, contacts, and resources.[3]

However, to support research on the Holocaust in the territory of the Czech Republic, especially within a transnational effort like EHRI, it is not sufficient to stay within the borders of the country and to only traverse its archival structure. Due to the fragmentation of the documentary record and post-war documentation projects as well as the migration of survivors, highly significant sources can also be found in archives in other countries, for instance in Yad Vashem and the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

In the post-war period, some sources relating to the Holocaust in the Bohemian lands were divided and became part of collections safeguarded outside of Czechoslovakia. This is illustrated for example by the materials collected in the framework of the so called Dokumentační akce (Documentation Campaign), an early post-war project in which Holocaust survivors from the Bohemian lands hastily collected documents, testimonies, as well as artworks. Zeev Scheck, the leading figure behind this initiative, emigrated from Czechoslovakia to Palestine in 1946 and brought a portion of the documents and testimonies with him, which he handed over first to the Central Zionist Archives and then to the Jewish Historical Archives (today known as the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People). In 1976, Scheck's sources were transferred to Yad Vashem. Fragments of the material also found their way to the Beit Theresienstadt memorial, museum, and archives in Givat Haim, which Scheck had helped to create. An agreement was reached whereby copies of some materials and documents with a clear relationship to Czechoslovakia remained in the country and were stored in the archives of the Jewish Museum in

2 See: http://portal.ehri-project.eu/countries/cz (4 July 2021).
3 https://yerusha.eu/ (4 July 2021).

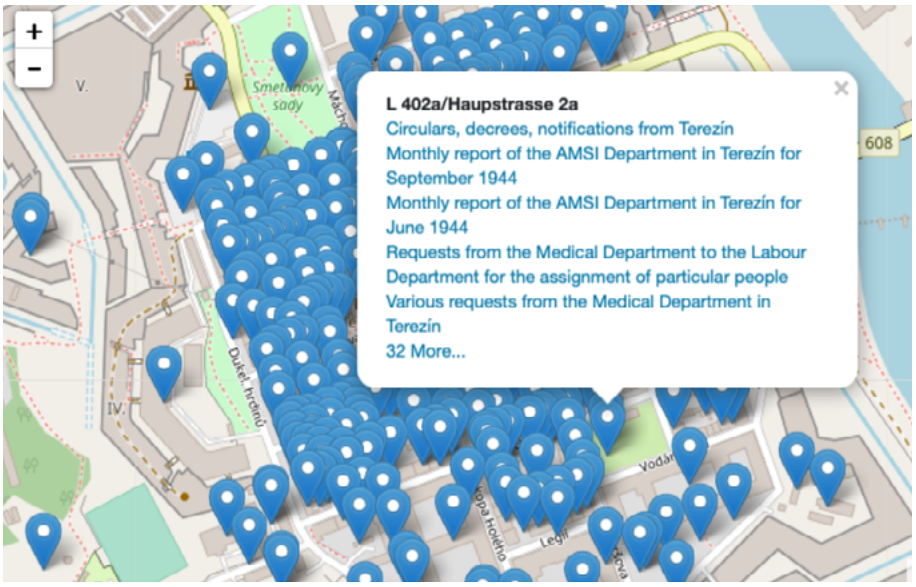
Prague. In such cases, the EHRI Portal is an easily accessible tool that helps to overcome a core problem, namely the fragmented and dispersed nature of the research materials.

Within the EHRI project, the gaps in documentation related to the Holocaust in the Bohemian lands and the fragmentation of this documentation catalysed a number of new and experimental approaches. These will be demonstrated in the following through the examples of the Terezín Research Guide, the EHRI online editions of documents, and the EHRI Document Blog.

Terezín Research Guide

The Terezín Research Guide is one of the early results of the project, which relates to the topic of Holocaust-relevant sources from the Bohemian lands and aims to provide at least a partial answer to the difficult archival situation described above.[4] Its main goal is to create a comprehensive, innovative, and user-friendly guide through the dispersed and fragmented archival material of the Theresienstadt (Terezín) Ghetto and to enable further research on the history of the ghetto.

The EHRI team connected collections spread throughout different archival institutions, resulting in a combination of data from the four main archives containing materials on Theresienstadt: the Yad Vashem Archives, the Terezín Memorial, the Beit Theresienstadt, and the Jewish Museum in Prague. The EHRI research guide demonstrates what a collaborative archival project can achieve and how archivists can redefine their tasks beyond providing physical access and creating finding aids restricted to the local collections. The guide does not aim to make the existing archives irrelevant by placing all the information online, but rather to help researchers identify relevant sources and to connect and compare them to documents in other collections. The partners provided the relevant data, which were linked using controlled vocabularies and authority sets. The data can be approached through full-text searches or faceted browsing, that is, searching by keyword, place, or organisation.



Terezín Research Guide.

4 http://portal.ehri-project.eu/guides/terezin (4 July 2021).

Searching by name is also possible thanks to the implementation of the databases of Terezín prisoners,[5] which is also available online at the holocaust.cz portal and is curated by the Terezín Initiative Institute.

Researchers can also approach the data via a map of Theresienstadt that connects archival material from the different archival institutions and directly links to the archival descriptions in the EHRI database.[6] The thematic guide, an experimental construction of the EHRI team, is closest to traditional archival finding aids. It structures the descriptions according to the main subjects related to Theresienstadt history and allows the users to traverse the hierarchy of most important keywords used to describe the Theresienstadt-related archives. The guide is intended not only for scholars, but also for the wider public interested in this topic. For this reason, further contextualisation is provided by a historical introduction, a timeline, as well as other texts.

During the preparatory phase and due to their constructivist approach to archival data, the EHRI team had to face various challenges. The preparation of the Terezín Research Guide demonstrated that metadata formats as well as ways of capturing these differ heavily between countries and institutions. To overcome these differences, EHRI analysed the information provided and created mappings between the different sets of metadata of the partners, an effort which turned out to be highly labour-intensive.

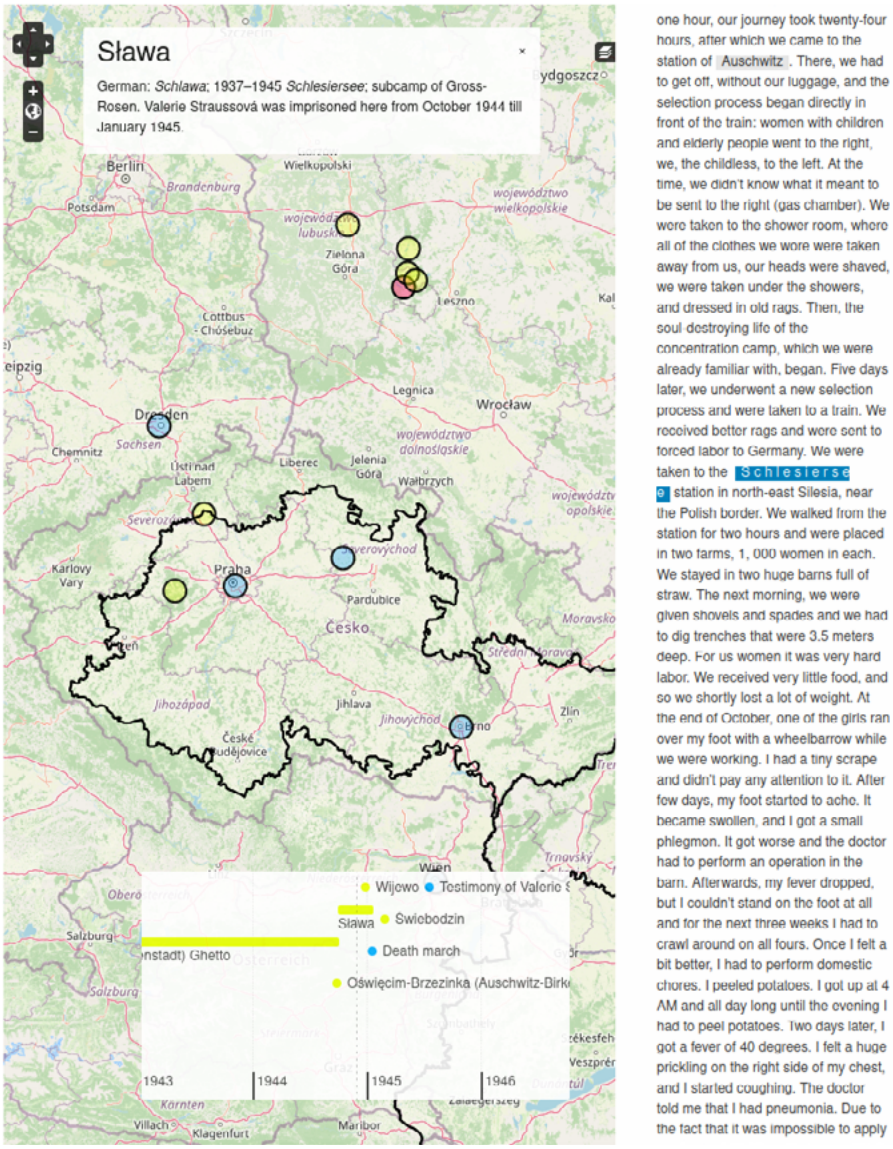
EHRI Online Editions

EHRI has also developed tools and a platform for the publication of online editions, which facilitates the preparation and publication of documentary editions using EHRI data (such as collection descriptions and controlled vocabularies) for annotation and data enrichment. While the first published editions were prepared by the EHRI team, the platform will in future offer an opportunity for other projects and researchers for their own edition publication purposes.

The first edition of documents, entitled *BeGrenzte Flucht. Die österreichischen Flüchtlinge an der Grenze zur Tschechoslowakei im Krisenjahr 1938*, was published on the EHRI platform in 2018.[7] It makes available a set of more than 100 documents relating to the fate and experience of Austrian refugees who attempted to escape to Czechoslovakia after the 'Anschluß' of Austria to Nazi Germany in March 1938. The edition documents the persecution and expulsion of mostly Jewish Austrians and the restrictive Czechoslovak policy which resulted in the border being closed to these refugees. The edition not only fills a gap in the documentation of the flight and exile of Austrians after the 'Anschluß', but also broadens research on refugees and state refugee policies during the Holocaust more generally. It also combines fragmented archival sources from several countries, including the Czech Republic, Austria, the UK and the USA.

The *Early Holocaust Testimony* edition brings together, for the first time, samples of testimonies of Jewish witnesses and survivors taken before the 1960s.[8] It includes over ninety early Holocaust testimonies related to the persecution, fate, and experiences of Jews from various European countries. For decades, these significant

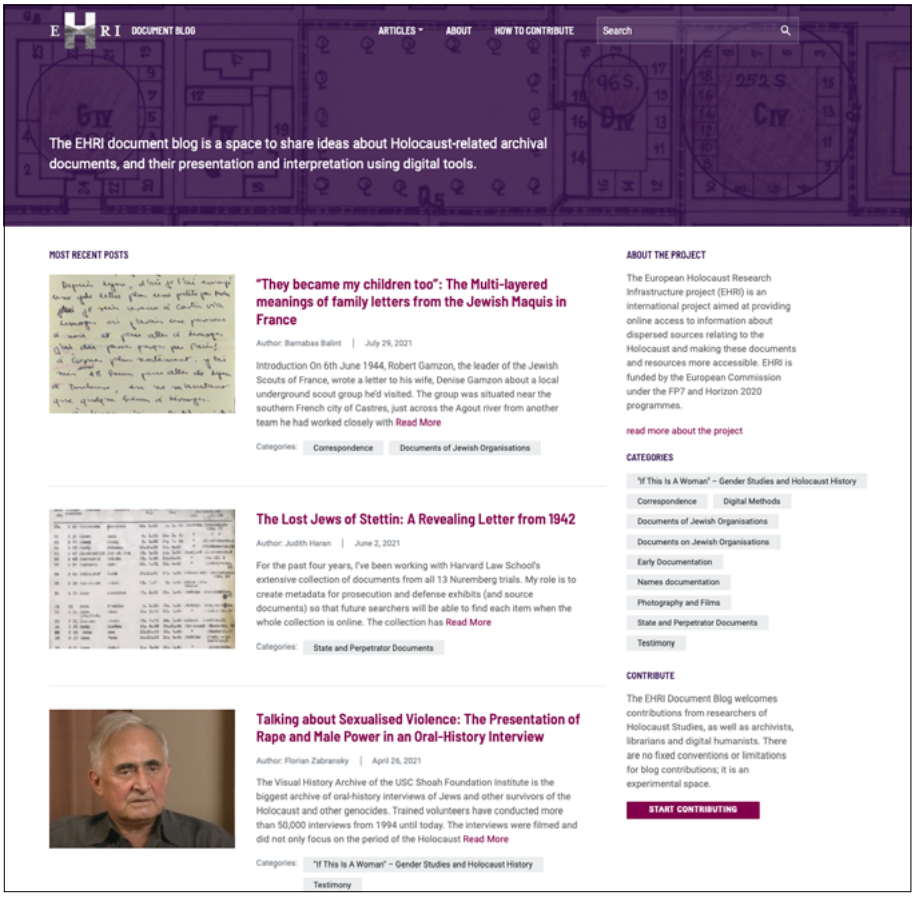
5 http://portal.ehri-project.eu/guides/terezin/prisoner_databases (4 July 2021).
6 http://portal.ehri-project.eu/guides/terezin/geography (4 July 2021).
7 http://begrenzte-flucht.ehri-project.eu/ (4 July 2021).
8 https://early-testimony.ehri-project.eu/ (4 July 2021).



Example of an interactive visualization from the EHRI Edition of Early Holocaust Testimony projecting the text onto a map.

sources were rarely used and neglected. One of the main goals in this project was to make the materials more accessible not only to scholars, but also to students and the wider public. The edition therefore provides an English translation of each testimony alongside transcripts in the original languages, which include Hungarian, Polish, Czech, German, Dutch, and French. This is as an open-ended and ongoing project. At the time of this writing, the editorial team is working on a set of over thirty testimonies in Yiddish, which will later be included in the edition. Twenty testimonies are included from the Czech sources, which were mostly gathered within the so-called Dokumentační akce (Documentation Campaign). The content of these testimonies is usually very brief in character, structured as court testimonies that focus on facts and the identification of perpetrators.

The EHRI approach to digital editions emphasises the linked data pattern, using links to established controlled vocabularies (EHRI for Holocaust-related entities; GeoNames for geographic information). Documents published in the EHRI Digital Edition of early Holocaust testimonies were encoded in the Text Encoding Initiative



EHRI Document Blog.

(TEI) standard, a widely adopted format for digital editions. Despite various existing approaches to the publication of TEI documents online, no available solution fitted the requirements of EHRI digital editions. The team therefore opted to develop its own set of tools as well as a front-end platform based on a simple but powerful existing open source software, Omeka. Where location information is available with geographic coordinates, an automatically generated interactive map is displayed, created through the Omeka Neatline plugin. The full-screen version, which users can access through a link, provides text from the documents alongside the map, allowing for the narrative of the document to be followed in space.

EHRI Document Blog

The EHRI Document Blog was launched in 2016, with sixty blog posts having been published to date.[9] This is a space in which authors, including early career scholars, can showcase their research focussing on Holocaust-related documents, share their ideas, and experiment with new types of presentations and interpretations using digital tools. This platform supports the sharing of new methods of storytelling and of different types of digitally supported visualisations.[10]

9 Judith Haran, The Lost Jews of Stettin. A Revealing Letter from 1942, available online: https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2021/06/02/the-lost-jews-of-stettin/ (4 July 2021).

10 Michal Frankl, Blogging as a Research Method? The EHRI Document Blog, in: Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History 13 (2018), 24-51.

The EHRI Document Blog welcomes contributions from researchers of Holocaust studies as well as archivists, librarians, and digital humanities scholars. There are no fixed conventions or limitations for blog contributions. The blog combines narrative descriptions with document metadata and references to relevant collection descriptions within the EHRI Portal. Contributors are assisted by a member of the Document Blog team, who guides them through the entire process of creating a blog contribution. All types of materials, including textual documents, photos, audiovisual materials, and testimonies, can be discussed in the EHRI Document Blog. These typically start with an individual document, a collection, or a type of document, with the contributions then presenting ongoing research and posing questions pertaining to archival history and interpretation.

Articles discussing documents about the Bohemian lands also contributed to the development of the EHRI Document Blog. The film historian Eva Strusková, for instance, uncovered the complex history of film footage from the Theresienstadt Ghetto. Her contribution demonstrates how to analyse fragmented film material through an example in which the identity of a hitherto anonymous girl in the 1942 film shot was uncovered.[11] An article by Wolfgang Schellenbacher focusses on examples of correspondence from and to Hans Frank, a young Czech Jewish man who fled from the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia to Denmark. Between 1940 and 1943, the letters and postcards were sent from or to his family in Prague and later to the Łódź Ghetto as well as to fellow refugees in Denmark or to friends who fled to other countries. The correspondence gives insights into the daily life of a young person in exile and shows the growing contrast between the life of Jews in occupied countries and in the free world. Neatline map presentations enables the concurrent spatial reading and understanding of the published archival sources.[12]

Conclusion

Historian Wolf Gruner noted that the history of the Holocaust in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia is only marginally reflected in histories of the Holocaust.[13] However, within the EHRI project, Czech partner organisations as well as materials about the multilingual Bohemian lands provided a new impetus for transnational and digital archival documentation. The EHRI Document Blog became a dynamic, research-driven online environment where scholars as well as the wider public can share their research ideas and experiment with new digital tools and various visualisation methods. The Terezín Research Guide bridges the fragmented and dispersed archival materials of the Theresienstadt Ghetto. It combines data from four archival institutions in the Czech Republic and Israel. EHRI digital editions such as *BeGrenzte Flucht* connect historical documents to EHRI's structured data sources such as collection descriptions and controlled vocabularies. In so doing, as the *Early Holocaust Testimony* edition demonstrated, they leverage the knowledge gathered by EHRI to connect dispersed and fragmented multilingual archival collections.

11 Eva Strusková, Lotte Porges. The Story Behind the Photograph, available online: http://blog.ehri-project.eu/2018/05/08/lotte-porges/ (4 July 2021).

12 Wolfgang Schellenbacher, Hans Frank. Letters from Exile, available online: https://blog.ehri-project.eu/2016/04/04/hans-frank-letters-from-exile/ (4 July 2021).

13 Wolf Gruner, The Holocaust in Bohemia and Moravia. Czech Initiatives, German Policies, Jewish Responses. Translated by Alex Skinner. New York/Oxford 2019, 1-8.

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