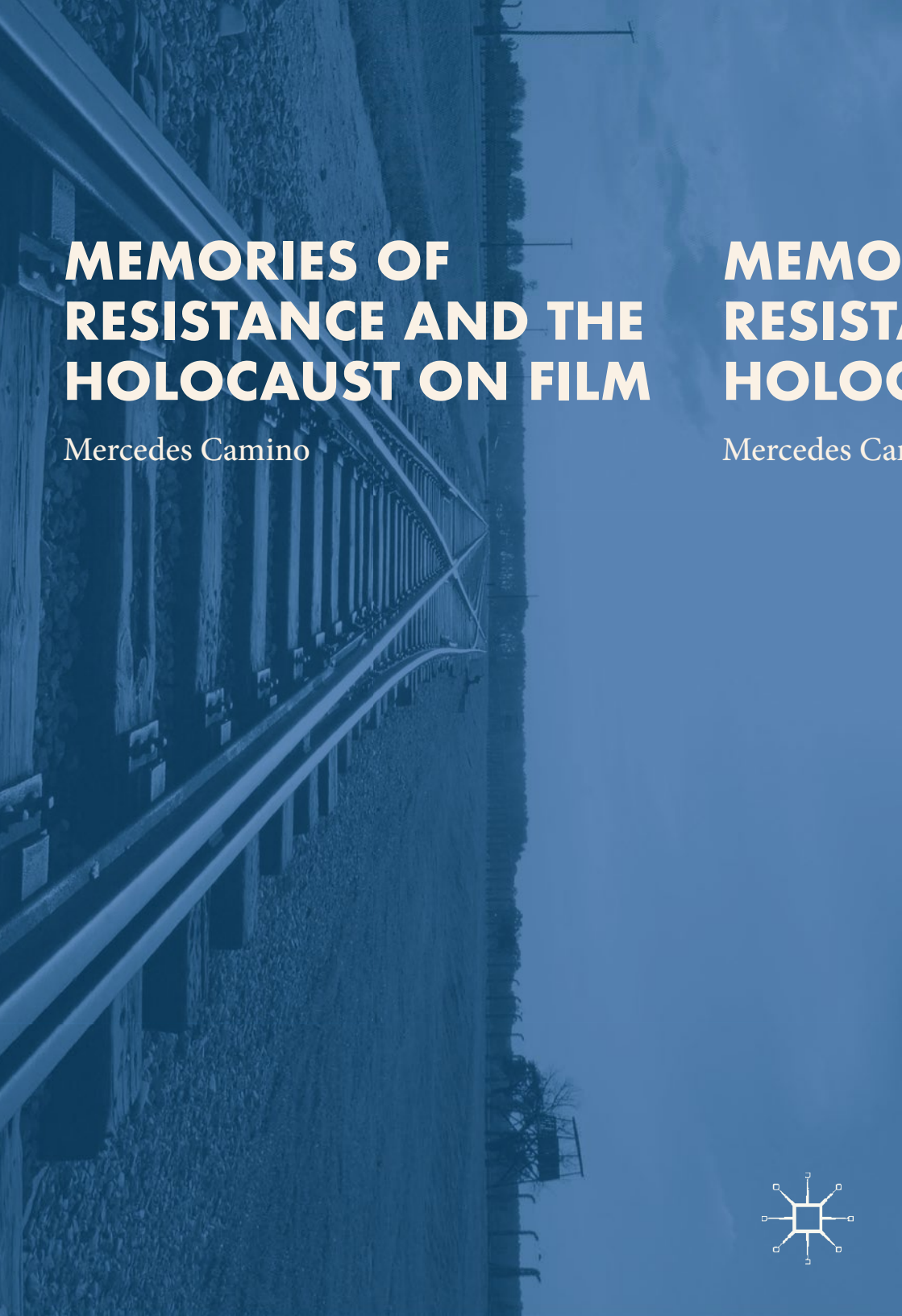

MEMORIES OF RESISTANCE AND THE HOLOCAUST ON FILM

Mercedes Camino

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ISBN 978-1-137-49968-4 ISBN 978-1-137-49969-1 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-49969-1

Library of Congress Control Number: 2018936328

Cover illustration: Image by Lee Christensen / Alamy
Cover design - Ran Shauli

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Macmillan Publishers Ltd. part of Springer Nature.
The registered company address is: The Campus, 4 Crinan Street, London, N1 9XW, United Kingdom

Acknowledgments

It is always a pleasure to be able to thank people and institutions that have made this work possible. In this particular case, my most important debt is to my students, in particular those taking my Special Subject. Many of the films and the ideas presented here have been discussed with them, and this work has benefited from debates about them. My greatest debt is to Faye Devlin, Natalie Faulkner, Hannah Jenkinson, Patrick Sweeney, Lois Toole, Sam Winter, Dario Napodano, Siva Suja and, especially, Matt Walker.

My institution, Lancaster University, has provided a suitable home for my research, which has been facilitated by a sabbatical year. The workshops organized by the research cluster, Dynamics of Memory, especially those dealing with Holocaust memorialization, have been a constant inspiration. I would like to thank Ruth Wodak, David Sugarman, David Seymour and Naomi Tadmor for sharing ideas and feelings. The History Department and the Faculty of Arts have been good homes for this investigation, and I would like to thank Michael Hughes for his support.

Readers and listeners at workshops or conferences have provided constructive criticism, which I hope to have taken on board. Likewise, the reviewers of an article based on Chap. 2 of this book, 'Citizen Ivanov versus Comrade Tito: Partisans in Soviet and Yugoslav Cinema of the Second Word War (1960-1985)', provided a good number of insights that enabled me to consolidate or further some ideas. That material has been published in *Quarterly of Film and Video*. I am also grateful to Emanuel Saunders, from the Yad Vashem Photo Archive, for replying promptly to my queries and for providing some photographic material at short notice. Yad Vashem is the source of the photographs of Alexander Pechersky's and

Mordechai Anielewitz used in Chap. 7, and I wish to thank them for allowing me to use them.

Staff at Palgrave have dealt with my queries and requests kindly and efficiently. I am very grateful to the anonymous readers for their useful suggestions, as well as first Chris Penfold, Karina Jakupsdottir, Ellie Freedman and Shruthi Krishna for making the publication process as smooth as it could be.

As always, I owe a great debt to colleagues past and present, including Christine Arkinstall. Robert Rosenstone and, especially, Ruth Wodak have also helped with their thoughtful comments. Friends and family, including Carmen, Geoff, Fiona and Dave, always need to be thanked.

Lastly, this book would not have been possible without the efforts of those making films or writing about resistance in World War II and the Holocaust. Among them, I would like to acknowledge those who wrote early testimonies or scripts and those who directed films when the events were still raw. Among them, my greatest recognition is to Wanda Jakubowska and, above all, to Primo Levi, whose words and ideas underscore this study from beginning to end. This book is dedicated to the memory of those who resisted the Nazi destruction whichever way they could, those forced to suffer its consequences and those who struggled to bear witness to it.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

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

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

M. Camino, *Memories of Resistance and the Holocaust on Film*,
https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-49969-1_1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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