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# Contested Commemoration:
# The Relationship Between Politics and the Memorialization of the Second World War in Polish Literature, Cinema, and Museums (1945-Present)

by

Alexandria M. Joyner

Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements of Senior Independent Study

Supervised by
Dr. Greg Shaya
Department of History

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## Abstract

This study examines the relationship between politics and the memory of the Second World War in Polish literature, cinema, and museums from 1945-Present. I argue that the memory of the Second World War has changed radically over the last seventy-five years as the Polish government, in both the communist and post-communist periods, pursued a politics of memory. I build this argument first by identifying three political turning points that caused the communist government to confront and reevaluate the narrative they promoted about the war: 1945, 1956, and 1967. I include a fourth turning point, 1989, to show how post-communist Polish leaders adapted, but did not wholly challenge, the communist government's narrative. I discuss Polish literature, cinema, and museums in four narrative chapters that align with the four political turning points. The chapter that spans 1945-1956 shows how Polish authors contended with the communist government's narrative immediately after the war. The two chapters that span 1956-1967 and 1967-1989 focus on Polish films that responded to the government's changing narrative by placing two groups in contestation with one another: Holocaust survivors and Home Army veterans. The final chapter, which spans 1989-Present, focuses on Polish museums and how the post-communist government adapted the communist government's narrative about the war to pursue their own politics of memory. This study demonstrates how politics have the power to shape memory, determining the stories that are told and the ones that are suppressed. Poland's memory struggle is not over and remains, even today, a site of political contestation.

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## Introduction

On the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day 2018, Poland's parliament passed a bill that made it a criminal offense to publicly say Poles participated in the Holocaust. The only exceptions were for individuals committing "such an act as part of artistic or scientific activities."[1] Polish President and head of the right-wing Law and Justice Party (PiS), Andrzej Duda, signed the bill into law shortly thereafter. The United States State Department warned that the law could have repercussions on Poland's "strategic interests and relationships, including with the United States."[2] Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, likewise condemned Poland's actions. The center released a statement one day after the bill's passage saying Yad Vashem "will continue to support research aimed at exposing the complex truth regarding the attitude of the Polish population towards the Jews during the Holocaust."[3] The international criticism the law generated led the Polish government to change claims of Polish complicity during the Holocaust from a criminal to a civil offense, effectively eliminating a potential three-year jail sentence.

Poland's Holocaust Law represents a struggle over memory seven decades in the making. Broadly speaking, this study asks the question: How have government politics affected the memorialization of the Second World War in Poland? Tied to this are the more specific questions: How did government politics affect the way Polish authors and

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[1] Quoted in "Poland U-Turn on Holocaust Law," *BBC News*, June 27, 2018, sec. Europe, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44627129.

[2] See Tara John, "Poland Just Passed a Holocaust Bill That Is Causing Outrage. Here's What You Need to Know," *Time*, accessed December 2, 2019, https://time.com/5128341/poland-holocaust-law/.

[3] "Yad Vashem Response to the Law Passed in Poland Yesterday," *Yad Vashem,* January 27, 2018, 27-january-2018-18-43.html.

filmmakers memorialized the war during the communist period? And: How have these politics affected the memorialization of the war in post-communist Polish museums?

### ***Understanding Poland: A Brief Historical Survey, 1939-Present***

Between 1939-1945, Poland was occupied by both the Nazis and the Soviets. Hitler initially intended to use Poland as a vassal state for the implementation of *Lebensraum* ("living space") and as an "eastern screen" in a potential war against France.[4] The Soviet Union intended to use eastern Poland as a base for Soviet troops. On August 23, 1939, Hitler and Stalin signed a non-aggression pact that led to a new partition of Poland. Hitler invaded Poland on September 1; Soviet troops entered the country on September 17. Poles faced deportation, death, and displacement throughout the war. Concentration camps – which can be understood as forced labor camps – and death camps were established across the country, places both Poles and Polish Jews were sent by the Nazis. Stalin and his People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) sent Poles into forced labor at the Gulag and executed Polish intellectuals in the Katyn forest. When the Soviet Red Army reentered Poland in 1944 to "liberate" the country from the Nazis, the physical damage done to the country and the number of lives lost was incalculable.

Two aspects of the Second World War are of particular importance in Poland's history. The first is the Holocaust, which can be defined as the systematic genocide carried out by the Nazi regime against European Jews and other persecuted groups, including the Roma and non-Jewish Poles. This genocide was implemented to the

[4] Jerzy Lukowski and W. H. Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, Third edition, Cambridge Concise Histories (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 323.

greatest degree on Polish soil through a series of death camps, the largest being Auschwitz-Birkenau.[5] Poles suffered during the Holocaust; many were sent to forced labor camps where they later died, others were publicly executed. Polish casualties numbered between 1.8 to 1.9 million. Poland's Jewish population, in comparison, was reduced by 90 percent; 3 million Polish Jews died. The treatment of the Jews was worse than that of non-Jewish Poles. The Nazis sealed the Jews in ghettos where disease and hunger affected all. They also sent Jews to the death camps of Auschwitz-Birkenau and Treblinka, among others, in greater numbers.[6] The Holocaust had detrimental effects on Poland. As we shall see, the Polish government has since used the Holocaust's effect on Poland to pursue a politics of memory.

The second aspect of the war important to Poland's history is the 1944 Warsaw Uprising led by the Home Army. The Home Army formed from the Polish Underground State, a group of resistance organizations loyal to the Polish government-in-exile that formed after the 1939 Nazi invasion. The Home Army resisted the Nazi occupation and maintained a sense of Polish nationalism. The organization punished Nazi collaborators, gathered intelligence, and organized acts of sabotage against their occupiers.[7] Their greatest act of resistance came in 1944 in Warsaw after the Soviet Red Army crossed into Poland's eastern territory. The Soviets headed for Nazi-occupied Warsaw. Knowing what the arrival of the Soviets spelled for Polish independence, the Home Army launched the Warsaw Uprising. They intended to defeat the Germans and establish an independent administration in Poland before the Soviets arrived in Warsaw. Victory never came for

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[5] Ibid., 334.
[6] Ibid., 334.
[7] Ibid., 339.

the Home Army. The Soviets remained on the outskirts of the city, waiting to make an entrance only after defeat appeared certain for the resistance. When the Red Army "liberated" the war-torn city from Nazi control, 200,000 Warsaw civilians lay dead alongside 17,000 military personnel from both the Nazis and the Home Army.[8] Much like the Holocaust, as we shall see, the Polish government has used the Warsaw Uprising and the Home Army to pursue their politics of memory.

The Soviets remained in Poland after the Warsaw Uprising, placing the country under Soviet military and political control. Communist leaders assumed total control over Poland in the first three years after the war. The new leaders abolished the Senate and, by 1948, the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) purged the government of all other political parties.[9] Tight censorship and continued violence characterized the end of the 1940s and the early 1950s.

Minor changes occurred in 1956 after Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev called for de-Stalinization. The Poznan workers' strikes of 1956 indicated, however, that not enough was being done on the part of the government to improve life in communist Poland.[10] Unrest continued in Poland through the 1960s and 1970s, spiking in 1967 when PZPR leader Wladyslaw Gomulka gave a speech that launched an antisemitic campaign across Poland. This campaign, which expanded to attack university students and Stalinists the following year, weakened public support for the communist government.[11]

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[8] Ibid., 347-349.

[9] Ibid., 367.

[10] For more on Poznan, see Jakub Karpinski, *Countdown, the Polish Upheavals of 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976, 1980* (New York, N.Y: Karz-Cohl, 1982); Peter Raina, *Political Opposition in Poland 1945-1977* (London: Poets and Painters Press, 1978).

[11] Lukowski and Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 2nd ed, 302.

Tensions between the communist government and the Polish people grew in the 1980s. Workers' strikes threatened to break the communist system. Solidarity, a national trade union committed to defending the rights of the people, emerged from strikes in Gdansk in August of 1980. Reflecting on the strikes, former Polish president and Solidarity leader Lech Walesa said: "The aim of the fight was to enable the many to identify with the struggle of the few."[12] Communist authorities did not readily back down, however. On December 12, 1981 the communist government moved forward with plans to impose martial law in Poland. At the time, they also suspended all Polish social organizations. The government lifted martial law in 1983 which resulted in a political stalemate between Solidarity and the communist government that lasted until the end of the decade.

Solidarity strikes continued until 1988, when interior minister General Kiszcak called for a round table discussion between Solidarity and the government. The "round table talks," as they came to be known, gave way to the restoration of the president and the Senate, both of which were abolished following the communist takeover. By December 1989, the former People's Republic gave rise to Poland's Third Republic. Lech Walesa was elected president in the following year and, in 1991, the first free election took place, which opened all seats in parliament to any political party. Open elections and a parliamentary democracy replaced the communist system and Polish cultural life came under western influence.

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[12] Lech Walesa, "From Romanticism to Realism: Our Struggle in the Years 1980-1982," in *From Solidarity to Martial Law,* ed. Andrzej Paczkowski and Malcolm Byrene (Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2007): xv.

Post-communist Polish politics proved equally dynamic as the government teetered between center-right and left-leaning governments during the late 1990s and early 2000s. A rise in right-wing politics occurred in 2005 when Lech Kaczynski of the conservative Law and Justice Party (PiS) captured the presidency. The PiS lost the 2010 election to an opposing right-wing party, Citizens Platform (PO), only to reclaim the presidency in 2015 under Poland's current president, Andrzej Duda. The PiS and Duda run a campaign built on conservative, Catholic values and a strong sense of Polish nationalism. It was under Duda's presidency that Poland passed the 2018 Holocaust Law.

The political situation during the communist period was dynamic, yet it did not stabilize after 1989 either. The political turning points outlined above served as catalysts for the government's changing narrative about the Second World War. This study identifies three major turning points during the communist period that affected this narrative: 1945, 1956, and 1967. A final turning point, 1989, shows how the post-communist government adapted the communist government's war narrative in order to pursue their own politics of memory.

The first change occurred in 1945 when the Soviet Red Army "liberated" Poland from Nazi occupation and established communist rule. The newly appointed communist government created a singular narrative about the war that treated its end as a victory over fascism. Victory came, however, because of the Soviet's liberation of Poland. This narrative changed after the second turning point in 1956 when Nikita Khrushchev called for de-Stalinization across the Eastern bloc countries. Poland experienced a cultural liberalization, which opened the memorialization of the Second World War to new modes of understanding. The government changed the narrative to include more than just Red

Army soldiers in an effort to promote unity among all Poles who had suffered or fought during the war. The effects of 1956, however, were complicated by the final turning point: 1967. In 1967, communist leader Wladyslaw Gomulka issued a speech in response to the Arab-Israeli War that launched an antisemitic campaign across Poland. The effects of the antisemitic campaign created an irreversible narrative about the Holocaust in Polish collective memory. Poles became the greatest victims of the war, while the voices of Jewish victims and survivors were lost. After 1989, the post-communist government continued to promote a narrative of collective Polish victimhood.

### *A Note About the Historiography*

The scholarly work done on the memorialization of the Second World War in Poland is both sparse and a recent phenomenon. Joanna Wawrzyniak's *Veterans, Victims, and Memory*: *The Politics of the Second World War in Communist Poland* (2015) is the most comprehensive monograph about the intersection between politics and memory in communist Poland.[13] Wawrzyniak employs a three-era framework for understanding the government's changing narrative about the Second World War that spans from 1949-1969. I situate Wawrzyniak's work alongside three bodies of historiography about collective memory, Polish historiography of the Holocaust, and Polish historiography of the Home Army in Chapter One. These general works of scholarship further show the relationship between politics and memory.

My study uses a modified four-era framework to connect the government's narrative about the war with the literature and films produced during the communist

[13] Joanna Wawrzyniak, *Veterans, Victims, and Memory: The Politics of the Second World War in Communist Poland* (Warsaw: Peter Lang AG, 2015).

period and the museums that opened in the post-communist period. Wawrzyniak's work focuses on government institutions, such as veterans' organizations, to explain the memory struggle. My work goes beyond this by looking at forms of Polish culture affected by the government's changing narrative about the war. I am interested in going beyond how the government's narrative affected veterans' post-war experiences, looking instead at how the changing narrative affected Polish literature, film, and museums as well. In doing so, I attempt to offer a new perspective on the relationship between politics and memory in Poland.

***Primary Source Discussion***

The secondary scholarship helps frame the struggle over memory in Polish literature and films that emerged after political turning points in the communist period. Chapters Two, Three, Four, and Five assess how literature, films, and museums undertook the challenge of memorializing the Second World War in both communist and post-communist Poland.

Chapter Two, which looks at 1945-1956, centers on Polish literature produced in the war's immediate aftermath. I examine two novels: Zofia Nalkowska's *Medallions* (1946) and Jerzy Andrzejewski's *Ashes and Diamonds* (1948). Nalkowska writes on the Holocaust through a series of short stories. The stories are a microcosm for the types of relationships humans had with one another during the Holocaust, typically relationships between Jews and non-Jews. I contrast *Medallions* with *Ashes and Diamonds*, a novel that attests to the ambiguities in personal identities non-Jews felt at the end of the war. I use the novels to show how the literature produced in the immediate aftermath of the war varied in its understanding of the war. In concluding, I note that, while neither work

speaks for the entire Polish experience, *Medallions* and *Ashes and Diamonds* represent a struggle over memory that emerged in the war's immediate aftermath.

Chapter Three spans 1956-1967 and looks at Polish films that responded to the government's changing narrative about the war. The films center on two themes: The Holocaust and the Home Army. I use Andrzej Wajda's *Kanal* (1956) and *Ashes and Diamonds* (1958) to show how the attitude toward the Home Army in Polish society changed after 1956. Wajda's films contain subtle imagery of Polish nationalism that resisted the government's narrative about the war. Stanislaw Rozewicz's *A Drop of Blood* (1961) provides an example of Polish cinema that adhered to the government's changing narrative about the Holocaust. The film relies on the image of the Polish martyr to tell a story that places Poles at the center of the Holocaust. The three films show how Polish filmmakers both worked with and resisted the government's changing war narrative.

Chapter Four also looks at films, covering production from 1967-1989. During this period, the narrative of the Holocaust moved away from inherently Jewish stories after Gomulka's 1967 speech. The narrative of the Home Army, however, grew stronger as the government used the organization to show collective Polish victimhood during the war. The two films used in this chapter, Jan Lomnicki's *Operation Arsenal* (1978) and Stanislaw Rozewicz's *The Lynx* (1982) model the government's changing narrative. *Operation Arsenal* follows the true story of a group of Home Army affiliates who develop and execute a plot to free their leader from a Nazi prison. *The Lynx* uses the backdrop of the Holocaust to tell a story about the Polish martyr. Different from Chapter Three, this chapter shows how Polish filmmakers produced films that worked more closely with the government's new narrative.

The final chapter looks at Polish museums that opened after 1989 to show how the communist government's narrative about the war affected memorialization in the post-communist era. I treat three museums in particular as primary sources. The first, the Home Army Museum, opened in Krakow in 2000. The museum operates through local government and displays ephemera from the Home Army. The second museum, the Warsaw Rising Museum, opened in Warsaw in 2004. Considered the brainchild of former president Lech Kaczynski, the museum is a nationalist display of the Home Army and the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. The final museum, The Museum of the Second World War, opened in Gdansk in 2008. The museum attempts to tell a complete history of the war from beginning to end, while also giving attention to Poland's contributions. Together, the museums show how post-communist Poland adapted, but did not wholly challenge, the communist government's narrative about the Second World War.

***The Intersection of Politics and Memory***

My research seeks to understand the relationship between politics and the memorialization of the Second World War in Poland across seventy-five years of history. I ask the question: How have government politics affected the memorialization of the Second World War in Poland? I argue that the memory of the Second World War has changed radically over the last seventy-five years as the Polish government, in both the communist and post-communist periods, pursued a politics of memory. This struggle over memory is evidenced in literature and cinema from the communist period, and in museums from the post-communist period. The struggle is political. The communist government politicized the memory of the war when political turning points forced the

official discourse about the war to change. After 1989, the post-communist government adapted the previous government's narrative to pursue their own politics of memory.

Poland's memory struggle is indicative of the complexities that emerge when history is politicized. This study helps bring understanding to the intersection between politics and memory. I do so first through a discussion of relevant historiography, then through a series of chapters outlined above. The conclusion points to the work left to be done in understanding this memory struggle, offering avenues for further research.

## Chapter One:
## Historiography

Poland's contested memorialization of the Second World War can be situated among a larger scholarly debate about the intersection of politics and memory. The following chapter relies on three bodies of scholarship to show this intersection: collective memory, Polish historiography of the Holocaust, and Polish historiography of the Home Army. Maurice Halbwachs engages with the relationship between historical writing, politics, and memory in his foundational text for collective memory scholarship. A relationship between politics and memory is also present in Polish historiography of the Second World War. Politics affected how Polish historians wrote about the Holocaust and the Home Army just as politics affected Polish literature, cinema, and museums. Taken together, the three bodies of scholarship show how politics and memory intersect across time and place.

### *Collective Memory*

The study of collective memory constitutes a small, but growing, field of scholarship useful in understanding the intersection between politics and memory. The term emerged as a systematic concept in the work of twentieth-century sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who argued that individuals acquire memories through society.[1] Collective memory studies now extend beyond sociology to include disciplines such as psychology and history. The interdisciplinary nature of collective memory studies lends

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[1] See Amos Funkenstein, "Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness," *History and Memory* 1, no. 1 (1989), 9; Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser, The Heritage of Sociology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 38.

itself to a diverse body of scholarship. [2] Psychologists Alan J. Lambert, Laura Nesse Scherer, Chad Rogers, and Larry Jacoby agree that, across disciplines, collective memory constitutes "a remarkable capacity to create a sense of unity or 'oneness' among people who would not otherwise see a meaningful sense of kinship."[3] As a whole, the scholarship on collective memory shows a critical examination of the past as a way to reexamine the present.

Maurice Halbwachs' systematic conception of collective memory resulted from interdisciplinary exchanges during his time as an academic. Born to a family of Catholic-Alsatian origin, Halbwachs spent his academic life in Paris and soon found himself in the company of young professors. These professors, according to sociologist Lewis A. Coser, "were much more open than their teachers had been to cross-fertilization between the disciplines and collaboration across departmental lines."[4] The intellectual exchanges Halbwachs partook in with other disciplines guided his work. Coser sites Strasbourg historians Marc Bloch and Lucien Febvre, who called for a critical reevaluation of French historiography, as the greatest influences.[5]

Halbwachs' *On Collective Memory*, published posthumously in 1950, engages with the intersection of historical writing and memory by distinguishing between two types of memory: historical and autobiographical. Historical memory requires

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[2] See Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch, eds., *Memory in Mind and Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Anna Katharina Maerker, Simon Sleight, and Adam Sutcliffe, eds., *History, Memory and Public Life: The Past in the Present* (London; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018); Anne Whitehead, *Memory*, 1st ed, The New Critical Idiom (London; New York: Routledge, 2009).

[3] Alan J. Lambert, Laura Nesse Scherer, Chad Rogers, and Larry Jacoby, "How Does Collective Memory Create a Sense of the Collective?" in *Memory in Mind and Culture,* ed. Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 194-5.

[4] Lewis A. Coser, "Introduction" in *On Collective Memory*, The Heritage of Sociology (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 5.

[5] Ibid., 11.

stimulation, such as attending a Fourth of July parade, in order to collectively remember an event. Autobiographical memory occurs through direct remembrance, where an individual must be present at the event in order to remember it. Halbwachs uses these two types of memory to argue that the construction of the past is influenced by the perception of the present.

Humans have a longing for the past brought on by a dissatisfaction with the present, something Halbwachs refers to as "nostalgia for the past."[6] He goes on to argue that the perception of the past is a product of society, writing: "Society from time to time obligates people not just to reproduce in thought previous events of their lives, but also to touch them up, to shorten them, or to complete them so that, however convinced we are that our memories are exact, we give them a prestige that reality did not possess."[7] Society reconstructs memory according to certain values and ideas, which affects and individual's understanding of the present.

Halbwachs also argues that an individual's memories of the past are characterized, in part, by group memories that have been shaped by society. He writes that "the framework of collective memory confines and binds our most intimate remembrances to each other."[8] Group memory forms by imagining oneself in the position of others. In order for this to happen, a group must walk "the same path that others would have followed had they been in [the group's] position."[9] The interconnectedness of a society able to imagine itself as a past society is, according to Halbwachs, what allows collective memory to form.

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[6] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser, 49.
[7] Ibid., 51.
[8] Ibid., 53.
[9] Ibid., 53.

In his article "Collective Memory and the Historical Consciousness" (1989), historian Amos Funkenstein expands upon the interconnectedness of society and memory. Funkenstein argues that "even the most personal memory cannot be removed from the social context."[10] He writes in the context of historical scholarship, examining the relationship between collective memory and historical writings. Through his work, Funkenstein concludes that the historian, like Halbwachs' individual, is tied to the time and place in which they live. The historian, however, produces collective memory through the distribution of "textbooks, speeches, lectures, and symbols."[11] Funkenstein's work reveals the role of the historian in shaping collective memory.

Jay Winter gets back at Halbwachs' idea of individual and group memory in his *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* (1995). Winter looks at the memorialization of the First World War in Germany, Britain, and France by analyzing different types of culture, including artwork and poetry, produced in the aftermath of the war. In particular, Winter looks at works that deal with mourning in order to challenge the argument that the end of the First World War led to a cultural upheaval. He argues that traditional themes, which he defines as an "eclectic set of classical, romantic, or religious images and ideas," emerged in German, British, and French commemorative acts after the war. He uses the biblical, romantic, and classical imagery to show "the universality of bereavement in the Europe of the Great War and its aftermath."[12] The use of biblical symbols in art, for example, drew on European artistic motifs that dominated the nineteenth century.

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[10] Funkenstein, "Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness," 6.

[11] Ibid., 20-22.

[12] J. M. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*, Canto Classics edition, Canto Classics (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 5; hereafter cited as *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning.*

The traditionalist approach to commemorating the First World War did not extend to the commemoration of the Second World War. Winter argues that "older forms of the language of the sacred faded, and so had the optimism, the faith in human nature on which it rested."[13] He identifies the Second World War as a moment that changed everything. Winter finds that, after 1945, "the rhetoric of 'limitlessness and the future,' resting so securely on a belief in human decency and progress" felt out of place in commemorative acts.[14] The sense of human compassion expressed in art, poetry, or monuments commemorating the First World War felt out of place. Finding humanity in the Holocaust and Hiroshima proved an impossible feat.[15]

Poland's memorialization of the Second World War contends with Winter's argument about commemoration in the post-1945 world. Joanna Wawrzyniak's *Veterans, Victims, and Memory* (2015) reveals how the communist government reevaluated their official narrative about the Second World War at various moments from 1949-1969. Part of this official narrative was the presentation of Poles as the hallmark of human decency during the war. Wawrzyniak provides the most comprehensive study done on Poland's memorialization of the Second World War and connects collective memory studies to Polish historiography on both the Holocaust and the Home Army. She is included here as a foundational text in Polish memory studies and as a contextual text for the Polish historiography discussed below.

Wawrzyniak looks chronologically at the changes in the communist government's narrative about the Second World War from the immediate post-war years through the

[13] Ibid., 228.
[14] Ibid., 229.
[15] Ibid., 228.

end of the 1960s. She understands the changes in narrative through a three-era framework: the victory over fascism (1949-1955), the myth of unity (1956-1959), and the myth of innocence (1960-1969). Wawrzyniak describes the victory over fascism as a founding myth the communist government used to legitimize its control over Poland. The narrative glorified the military victories of the Red Army and the Polish Armed Forces in the East – who fought under Soviet command – while villainizing other military groups, including the Home Army. The myth of unity emerged after 1956 when the government counted other wartime resistance groups, including the previously villainized Home Army, as liberators in the fight against the Nazi occupation. The myth of innocence worked with the unity myth. Poles died fighting the Nazi occupation and were, therefore innocent victims of Nazism. The myth of innocence lends itself to the image of the Polish martyr.

Through her three-era framework, Wawrzyniak builds the argument that "In the half century of communist rule in Poland, public memory of the Second World War played a substantial role in the transmission and legitimization of power."[16] The government shaped public memory in order to assert itself over Polish society. Until 1956, this meant reminding Poles that the Soviet Red Army and its affiliated Polish Armed Forces in the East liberated the country from Nazi occupation. After 1956, this meant promoting Polish unity and innocence in the fight against fascism. *Veterans, Victims, and Memory* suggests a more fluid understanding of post-1945 memorialization than Winter's model suggests. As we shall see, Wawrzyniak's work is not only an

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[16] Wawrzyniak, *Veterans, Victims, and Memory*, 13.

important text in memory studies, but also provides important context for the evolving nature of Polish historiography about the Second World War.

### *Polish Holocaust Historiography*

Politics affected how Polish historians wrote their country's history. As Wawrzyniak notes, the government confronted and reevaluated its narrative about the Second World War in order to legitimize communist rule. Polish historiography about the Second World War shifted in response to the government's changing narrative. Contention between politics and scholarship first emerged in the 1980s when Polish historians began to confront the government's established narrative about the Holocaust. Home Army scholarship, however, remained unchanged. The contention between the government's narrative and historical scholarship about the Holocaust opened new debates about how to treat this moment in Poland's history. This section follows the changes in Holocaust historiography, while the final section shows the static nature of Home Army historiography.

One of the first Polish monographs about the Holocaust emerged after 1956 when the communist government used a unity myth to legitimize its authority. The work, Tatiana Berenstein and Adam Rutkowski's *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939-1945* (1963), reflected the government's attempts to display unity between different groups, specifically Poles and Jews. Berenstein and Rutkowski recount specific cases of Poles providing assistance to their Jewish neighbors from the beginning of German occupation through the Red Army's "liberation" of Poland. Berenstein and Rutkowski's goal was "to rescue from obscurity the sacrifice of those Poles who, despite the raging terror and their

own tragedies and misfortunes, risked their lives to bring relief to the most stricken members of the community – the Jews."[17]

The characterization of Jews as passive developed into a trope used in Polish historiography. This trope was juxtaposed with that of the Polish martyr. Berenstein and Rutkowski use these two tropes to describe Nazi terror and how Poles combatted it. For example, Berenstein and Rutkowski use a testimony from the beginning of the occupation that embodies the image of the Polish martyr. They write: "when some Wehrmacht bully-boy gave the order '*Juden raus!'* in a tram, an elderly Pole stood up and announced: 'If the Jews get out, so do I.' All the other Poles followed suit."[18] Through the selective use of testimonies, the authors emphasize Polish heroism and view cases of Poles acting against Jews as incomparable in size to cases of Poles providing assistance. Berenstein and Rutkowski discuss Polish antisemitism only within the context of the Nazi occupation and treat pre-war antisemitism as a right-wing movement unrepresentative of the Polish population.[19]

The characterization of Jews as hapless victims and Poles as their saviors in Polish historiography changed after the events of 1967. The anti-Zionist campaign led to what historian Darius Stola calls a "universalistic" approach to historiography.[20] This meant previously identified Jewish victims became a symbol for the suffering of all human beings. The editors of the Polish *Great Universal Encyclopedia*, for example, were accused of "downplaying wartime Polish suffering and disproportionate focus on

[17] Tatiana Berenstein and Adam Rutkowski, *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939-1945,* trans. Edward Rothert, (Warsaw: Polonia Publishing House, 1963), 10.
[18] Ibid., 23.
[19] Ibid., 16.
[20] Dariusz Stola, "New Research on the Holocaust in Poland," in *Lessons and Legacies VI*, ed. Jeffry M. Diefendorf, New Currents in Holocaust Research (Northwestern University Press, 2004), 262.

the fate of Jews."[21] The universalistic campaign led to openly antisemitic publications that marginalized Jews and created a push for publications about the fate of the Polish nation during the Holocaust.

Norman Davies, a British-Polish historian, critiques the universalistic approach to Holocaust historiography and makes way for his own study of the Holocaust in *God's Playground* (1982). His work presents a complete history of Poland, though includes a history of Poland's experience in the Second World War. In his writing, Davies is critical of the way the dead were counted in Poland, saying: "Jewish investigators tend to count Jewish victims. Polish investigators tend to count Polish victims. Neither side wishes to stress the fact that the largest single category of victims was both Polish and Jewish. Not everyone, it seems, is content to count human beings."[22] Davies did not, as previous scholars did, seek to undermine Jewish victims in favor of Polish victims. Nor did he treat Jewish victims as a symbol for universal suffering. Instead, Davies argues an individual's ethnic *and* religious identity should not be undermined. The universalistic approach used in Polish historiography after 1967 did not work for Davies. *God's Playground* shows that the term "human beings" includes Polish Jews, a group Davies argues have been separated into categories of "Jewish" or "Polish" by historians.

Where Davies criticizes Polish historiography for undermining Jewish victims, some Polish historians, including Józef Garliński, approach the Holocaust using older historiographical methods. Garliński's *Poland in the Second World War* (1985) reverts back to the narrative used before 1967, drawing on an argument similar to the one used

[21] Dariusz Stola, "Anti-Zionism as a Multipurpose Policy Instrument: The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland, 1967–1968," *Journal of Israeli History* 25, no. 1 (March 2006), 191.

[22] Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 463.

by Berensetin and Rutkowski in *Assistance*. *Poland in the Second World War* centers on the active role Poles and Poland played during the war. In his chapter "The Plight of the Polish Jews," Garliński argues in favor of the active role Poles played in assisting their Jewish neighbors. He writes: "Many Polish families in towns and villages offered shelter, sometimes for money, sometimes out of pure human kindness."[23] He goes on to say that Poles who did not participate in the protest against the treatment of the Jews by the Nazis represented an extreme right-wing political ideology. Garliński places Jews in a passive role, marking them as individuals reliant on Poles for survival.

Jan Blonski's article "The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto" (1987) challenged Garliński's work while also offering a different perspective from Davies' *God's Playground*. Originally published in the Catholic magazine *Tygodnik Powszechy,* "The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto" responds to Czeslaw Milosz's poem "A Poor Christian Looks at the Ghetto" (1943). The poem depicts the burning of a Jewish ghetto and the fear associated with it from both the perspective of someone within the ghetto and someone outside of it. Blonski notes that the fear associated with someone outside the ghetto represented the Poles who felt fear watching the suffering of the Jews. He goes on to say, however, that the same Pole feared being condemned for being a "helper of death."[24]

Blonski argues that Poles "want to be absolutely beyond any accusation, we want to be completely clean. We want to be also—and only—victims."[25] In response, he says: "We must face the question of responsibility in a totally sincere and honest way. Let us

[23] Józef Garliński, *Poland in the Second World War* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1985), 165.
[24] Jan Blonski, "The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto," In *My Brother's Keeper? Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust,* ed. Anthony Polonsky (London: Routledge, 1990), 41.
[25] Ibid., 43.

have no illusions: it is one of the most painful questions which we are likely to be faced with."[26] Blonski built his argument by asking how many Poles stood by and watched the Nazi persecution of the Jews. He assigned shared responsibility for the Holocaust to the Polish nation for its inability to act against the Nazis. About this, Blonski says: "Our responsibility is for holding back, for insufficient effort to resist…It is precisely because resistance was so weak that we now honour those who did have the courage to take this historic risk."[27]

The contention that emerged in Polish scholarship about the Holocaust during the 1980s exploded with the publication of Jan Gross' *Neighbors* (2001). *Neighbors* recounts the Jedwabne pogrom: a massacre in which Poles murdered their Jewish neighbors in the rural town of Jedwabne. Gross states that "the Holocaust of Polish Jews has been bracketed by historians as a distinct, separate subject that only tangentially affects the rest of Polish society."[28] His commentary on the current historiography stemmed from what he referred to as the "centerpiece" of his work: Polish-Jewish relations during the Second World War.[29] *Neighbors* challenged beliefs developed during the communist era about Poland's role during the Holocaust.

Gross challenged Polish historiography of the Holocaust through his discussion of the Jedwabne pogrom. After recounting the massacre, Gross dedicates individual chapters to the aspects of Polish historiography he was challenging, including the historians' approach to sources. He urged survivors' testimonies be taken as fact "*until we find*

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[26] Ibid., 43.
[27] Ibid., 46.
[28] Jan Tomasz Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (New York, N.Y: Penguin Books, 2002), xviii; hereafter cited as *Neighbors*.
[29] Ibid., xviii.

*persuasive arguments to the contrary* [emphasis original]."[30] He argues that testimonies describing atrocities committed against the Jews by the Poles must not be taken as isolated, extraordinary events, as works like *Assistance* and *Poland in the Second World War* suggest. For Gross, greater catastrophes yielded a smaller number of survivors, making it all the more important to validate any testimony from individuals who faced Polish persecution during the Holocaust.

The reception of *Neighbors* varied in Poland. Historian Marek Chodakiewicz's *Between Nazis and Soviets* (2004), for example, built on Gross' work by arguing that not only did previous historiography widely neglect Polish collaboration during the Nazi occupation, it almost exclusively ignored collaboration during the Soviet occupation. Chodakiewicz writes: "The terror against the Polish majority was widespread...the Nazis considered the Poles to be subhuman. However, the terror against the Poles never reached the wholesale exterminationist proportions that it did against the Jews."[31] During the Soviet occupation, Poles suffered under the forced labor system and food quotas, though not to the extent of ethnic minorities.

Chodakiewicz provides evidence to support the claim that, in addition to Poles suffering under both occupations, multiple non-isolated collaborative efforts occurred first between Poles and Nazis, then between Poles and Soviets. He furthers the question raised by Jan Gross in *Neighbors*: "Is it possible to suffer and inflict suffering at the same time?"[32] Chodakiewicz acknowledges the role Poles played in assisting Jews. He finds, however, that instances occurred in which "some peasants agreed to shelter Jews only to

[30] Ibid., 92.

[31] Marek Jan Chodakiewicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets: Occupation Politics in Poland, 1939-1947* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004), 105.

[32] Gross, *Neighbors,* 95-6.

rob them and even kill them later."[33] Chodakiewicz muddles the image of the Polish martyr by further arguing that during the Soviet occupation, Poles welcomed their new occupiers. This support sometimes led to violence against the other ethnic groups targeted by the Soviets, particularly ethnic Germans.

Halik Kochanski further examined the relationship between Poles and the Second World War in *The Eagle Unbowed* (2012). She asks: "So what was the Polish experience of the Second World War?" in a critique of the competing myths and misconceptions surrounding Poland during the Second World War. [34] Kochanski examines both the good and the bad of the Polish war experience. In her chapter about the Holocaust, she includes both negative and positive aspects of Polish-Jewish relations as interrelated events. For instance, about pre-war antisemitism, she writes: "There is little doubt that antisemitism was widespread in Poland before the war, which led to economic boycotts of Jewish shops and a cross-party general agreement on the desirability of encouraging Jewish emigration."[35] Her findings parallel that of *Neighbors*, in which Gross argues that the opportunity to rob Jews of their possessions was the main motivation for the organization of the Jedwabne massacre.

Not all Polish historians, however, accepted Gross' challenge to the existing historiography. American historian Joanna Michlic characterizes the community of scholars unwilling to reevaluate the country's past as "ethnonationalist."[36] Scholars who fall into this line of thought believe only in the image of the heroic Polish martyr who

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[33] Chodakiewwicz, *Between Nazis and Soviets*, 154.

[34] Halik Kochanski, *The Eagle Unbowed: Poland and the Poles in the Second World War*, First Harvard University Press edition (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012), xxix; hereafter cited as *The Eagle Unbowed.*

[35] Ibid., 313.

[36] Joanna B. Michlic, "The Soviet Occupation of Poland, 1939–41, and the Stereotype of the Anti-Polish and Pro-Soviet Jew," *Jewish Social Studies* 13, no. 3 (2007), 136.

acted as a generous host for the ethnic and religious minorities in Poland. Michlic traces the origin of ethnonationalism in Poland to the inter-war years when scholars of the 1930s recognized Poland as the host nation for other ethnic minorities, including Jews. Contemporary ethnonationalist scholars follow this trend while also drawing on the language used in works like *Assistance*.

One such ethnonationalist scholar, Bogdan Musial, reacted vehemently against *Neighbors*. In "The Pogrom in Jedwabne: Critical Remarks About Jan T. Gross's *Neighbors,*" Musial argues that Gross neglected historical context and criticizes his approach to sources. He likewise criticizes Gross for downplaying the role of the Germans in the Jedwabne massacre, saying that, while some Poles took part in the massacre voluntarily, "there are numerous indications that the Germans used coercion, and even violence, to force the Polish inhabitants to participate in the crime."[37] According to Musial, Soviets and the Germans enticed Poles to murder their Jewish neighbors. The Polish martyr would never commit such an atrocity unprompted by external forces.

The rise in Polish historiography about the Holocaust is marked by debates over how to characterize both Polish-Jewish relations and the role Poles played in the Holocaust. The debates point to an intersection between politics and memory, arising at moments when the Polish government was forced to confront and reevaluate its narrative about the Second World War and the Holocaust. The scholarship of the communist period, most notably Berenstein and Rutkowski's *Assistance*, tended to adhere to the

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[37] Bogdan Musial, "The Pogrom in Jedwabne: Critical Remarks About Jan T. Gross's *Neighbors*," in *The Neighbors Respond,* ed. Anthony Polonsky and Joanna B. Michlic (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 336; hereafter cited as "Critical Remarks."

government's narrative. At the end of communist rule and in its aftermath, scholars such as Jan Gross began directly challenging the narrative of the Holocaust put in place by the communist government. The discourse surrounding the Holocaust in contemporary Polish scholarship shows that not every Polish historian is prepared to break with the past and confront their country's history.

### ***Polish Home Army Historiography***

The scholarly debate in Poland about the Holocaust is more pronounced than debates on other aspects of the Second World War, including scholarship about the Home Army. As a result, less contested scholarship exists on the Home Army. By the time scholarly works on the organization emerged, the government had gone from shunning to celebrating the Home Army, a change that occurred after 1956. Celebration of the organization emerged in non-academic writing, however, as early as 1950 when General Tadeusz Bór-Komorowski, who had helped orchestrate the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, published his memoirs. Later scholarship on the Home Army continued to celebrate the organization's contributions to defending Poland from occupation.

Norman Davies dedicates several pages in *God's Playground* to the Home Army, naming them "the largest of European resistance formations."[38] He highlights their achievements in the context of the wider Polish resistance movement. Davies alludes to his opinion of the Home Army in a quote about the entrance of the Soviet Red Army into Poland several weeks before the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. When the Red Army arrived, rumors arose about collaboration between the Red Army and the Home Army.

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[38] Davies, *God's Playground*, 464.

Responding to this, Davies writes: “Absurdly, [members of the Home Army] were being urged by their Western patrons to co-operate with the Soviets, even when the Soviets refused to recognize their existence.”[39] In terms of the actual Uprising, Davies regards it as a failure. He says, though, that the decision to launch the Uprising “was taken for the most honorable motives, by men who had fought selflessly for their country’s independence against all comers from the beginning of the war.”[40] Davies’ pro-Home Army narrative fits into the larger narrative about the organization demonstrated in subsequent chapters.

While Garliński and Davies presented different perspectives on the Holocaust, they held similar opinions on the Home Army. Like Davies, Garliński had a high regard for the Home Army. In fact, the dedication to *Poland in the Second World War* reads: “To my wife, Eileen, a solider of the Home Army.” Garliński spends more than one chapter on underground resistance in Poland. He points out that the Home Army “was made of the help of thousands who were not formally enrolled,” which included both women and men.[41] He stresses the importance of the everyday Pole committed to defending their homeland. About the women in particular, Garliński writes “without their contribution underground Poland could not have existed.”[42] Like Davies, Garliński also treats the Warsaw Uprising as a valiant effort by the Home Army rendered “virtually hopeless” by the “politics of the Western powers.”[43] Garliński does not place blame on

[39] Ibid., 472.
[40] Ibid., 474.
[41] Garliński, *Poland in the Second World War*, 203.
[42] Ibid., 204.
[43] Ibid., 297.

the Home Army for their defeat, but on politics that led them to defend Warsaw in the first place.

A shift in narrative about the Home Army did not occur in Polish historiography after the country transitioned away from a communist country. Halik Kochanski continues to build on the legacy of the Home Army in *The Eagle Unbowed*. Kochanski notes, for example, that the Home Army "took action against the bandits who were preying on the peasants who lived near the forests."[44] The forest was full of individuals displaced by the war, including Soviet soldiers and deserters, who sought to take from the peasants in the surrounding villages. Jews were also among those in the forest but Kochanski notes that, while 76 deaths occurred in August 1943, the Home Army were not given orders to attack Jewish displaced persons.[45] This particular characterization presents the Home Army as the upholders of moral order in defense of the Polish people, including Polish Jews.

The lack of nuance in Home Army scholarship shows an intersection between politics and memory unaffected by the same political turning points as scholarship about the Holocaust. After 1956, the government incorporated the Home Army into their unity myth. The works that emerged during the communist period and in post-communist Poland present the same image of the Home Army. When the Home Army is included in discussions of Polish violence against Jews, such as in Kochanski's *The Eagle Unbowed*, historians frame these moments as isolated incidents. Historians treat cases of violence against Jews committed by Poles not affiliated with the Home Army differently than they do cases of the Home Army committing such acts of violence. This shows an

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[44] Kochanski, *The Eagle Unbowed*, 283.
[45] Ibid., 284.

unwillingness to break with the narrative of the Home Army as a pillar of Polish strength and valor, despite the shift in Holocaust historiography.

### ***Conclusion***

Politics influence memory. The work of memory scholars, from Halbwachs to Wawrzyniak, reveals a link between government politics and historiography. The government shapes society and that society, in turn, helps shape memory. The question becomes then, in the case of Jan Gross' *Neighbors*, whether or not historians accept the dominant narrative. The expanding scholarship on collective memory helps contextualize the way Polish historiography of the Holocaust and the Home Army has either shifted or remained the same across seventy-five years of history. The following chapters build on the foundational work of these historiographies, showing how Polish literature, film, and museums are subjected to the same memory struggle that exists in academic discourse.

## Chapter Two:
## Polish Literary Accounts of the Second World War, 1945-1956

"A new world was slowly emerging and taking shape from the narrow alleys, the ruins, the shattered fragments and chaos of the end of the war" writes Polish author Jerzy Andrzejewski in *Ashes and Diamonds* (1948).[1] His novel deals with the sense of uncertainness felt in Poland at the end of the war. The Poland at the end of the war looked different than the Poland of 1939. In six years, Poland went from a total population of approximately 35 million to under 24 million. Poland's pre-war Jewish population numbered roughly 3.3 million, standing in contrast to the 180,000-240,000 surviving Jews in 1945. Territory loss to the USSR in the East and expansion of former German lands in the North and the West also meant that the landscape of postwar Poland looked different geographically and culturally. The biggest uncertainty, though, came from the change in the country's political system. In 1948, the same year Andrzejewski published *Ashes and Diamonds*, the communist party in Poland suppressed all major political parties. A new world had arrived and the communist government, like Andrzejewski, tried to make sense of the world that had been left behind.

In this chapter, I argue that Polish literary responses to the Second World War produced in the war's immediate aftermath represented a struggle over memory between the communist government and Polish authors. The government established an official narrative of the war that some authors adhered to, but others did not. To demonstrate this argument, I look first at how the communist government solidified the myth of the Second World War as a victory over fascism. I examine the way the Polish public

[1] Jerzy Andrzejewski, *Ashes and Diamonds* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991), 86.

commemorated the war in its immediate aftermath, paying particular attention to the opening of Auschwitz as a museum. Then, I present two novels that focus on different aspects of the war as evidence for narrative discourse. In Zofia Nalkowska's *Medallions* (1946), I examine the Holocaust and the treatment of humans by other humans. Following *Medallions*, I turn to Jerzy Andrzejewski's *Ashes and Diamonds* (1948), a work that attests to the ambiguities in personal identity at the end of the war. To conclude, I show that, while neither *Medallions* nor *Ashes and Diamonds* speaks for the entire postwar experience, they are two examples in the larger memory struggle.

### *The Communist Government's Victory Over Fascism, 1945-1956*

The Second World War ended in 1945, but peace in Europe did not immediately follow the German surrender. Ian Kershaw notes that "Europe in 1945 was a continent living under the shadow of death and devastation."[2] The shadow Kershaw saw did not diminish after VE Day, or even VJ Day. Instances of anti-Jewish violence continued in Poland in the immediate post-1945 years, with the Kielce pogrom serving as just one example. Continued violence has caused historians like Kershaw to expand the story of the Second World War through the end of the decade. Timothy Snyder likewise uses 1947 as a transitional year, marking it as a time when Soviets claimed a political victory over anti-communists in the East, and a military victory over the Germans and their allies.[3] Understanding Polish politics during the transitional years aids in understanding the government's memorialization of the Second World War after 1945.

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[2] Ian Kershaw, *To Hell and Back*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), 470.

[3] Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2012), 333.

The situation in Poland immediately after the war fell somewhere between chaotic and unstable. The communists falsified the results of a referendum to abolish the Senate and a governmental election, first in 1946 and again in 1947. All results went in their favor. [4] The forged results legitimized the formation of the Polish People's Republic and established the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) as the sole governing body by 1948. Amid the reconstruction of political and social institutions, tensions emerged in the immediate postwar era over how the surviving population would remember the war. The effects of the war were everywhere, orphaned children and corpses in need of being attended to lined the streets. Poverty and displacement affected veterans and former political prisoners alike.

The laws that the communist government passed with regard to survivors only furthered the instability of postwar Poland. The most immediate legislation published after the war dealt with providing aid to survivors and their family members. Worth noting, however, is that individuals who had been victims of Soviet war crimes in the early days of the war did not receive compensation. This point would not come under reevaluation until de-Stalinization.[5] In addition to reparations, both large- and small-scale organizations formed to deal with the memory of the war. These organizations ranged from sharing specific experiences, such as the Circle of Former Prisoners of Treblinka, to more general groups, like the Union of Jewish Participants of the Armed Struggle Against Fascism.[6]

[4] For more on the specifications of the referendum and the 1947 election see Wawrzyniak, *Veterans, Victims, and Memory*, 43.
[5] Ibid., 53.
[6] Ibid., 54-5.

The life of Poland's post-war organizations would be short-lived. After the PZPR became the sole political party in Poland, the new government wanted to consolidate all post-war organizations into one. By 1949, the government had established their single organization: The Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy (ZBoWiD). The PZPR, however, incorporated just eleven of the countless post-war organizations into the ZBoWiD. The organizations the communist government deemed as either carrying out "no actual activity, or were founded as fronts for anti-democratic activity" were banned.[7] The government regulated who could and could not join the ZBoWiD, using the organization as a propaganda tool to spread their single narrative about the war. The exclusion of Home Army veterans, for example, was a calculated way for the government to legitimize its authority.

The hostile relationship between the communist government and the Home Army began as early as 1945. Disagreements over where the members of the Home Army who had perished during the Warsaw Uprising would be buried emerged between veterans and the government. Veterans collaborated with the Polish Red Cross in secret to locate the bodies of their fellow resistance fighters. They intended to bury the bodies at the Powzazki Military Cemetery in Warsaw, a burial site that also included the graves of soldiers who had fought in the 1920 Soviet-Polish war and in the 1939 fight against Nazi invasion. The authorities insisted the bodies be buried at Warsaw's Wola Cemetery – a smaller, less prestigious site – without mention of their allegiance to the Home Army on their gravestones.[8] The communist government used Wola Cemetery to show Home Army veterans that their organization would not be tolerated under communist rule.

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[7] Quoted in Wawrzyniak, *Veterans, Victims, and Memory*, 82.
[8] Ibid., 62.

Jewish survivors faced their own obstacles in Poland after the war. Many individuals who had been displaced during the war, or who had been sent to concentration camps, returned to homes that had been ruined or taken over. Many pre-war Jewish communities also no longer existed. The government offered Jews full rehabilitation and equal rights but did nothing to stop rising antisemitic behavior among Poles.[9] The rise in antisemitic behavior reached its tipping point in 1946. In July, Poles killed forty-two Jews in Kielce over accusations of murdering Polish children for a religious ritual. The Kielce pogrom led to the first large-scale exodus of Jews from Poland after the war. Of the Jews that remained in Poland, many formed communities to maintain a sense of Jewish identity.

In addition to government organizations and personal communities, commemorative sites were established in the immediate postwar period. Auschwitz emerged during this period to honor the victims who had perished there during the war. The idea to commemorate Auschwitz came in 1945 from Polish political prisoners who had survived the camp. They brought the idea before the government, who affirmed the necessity to build a memorial to the "international martyrdom of nations."[10] Former prisoners from concentration camps in both Auschwitz and beyond made up the majority of the individuals who began work on the initial museum in 1947. In its early days, Auschwitz as a commemorative site acknowledged the atrocities that occurred there and warned against an event like the Holocaust ever happening again.

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[9] Katarzyna Person, "Holocaust Survivors in Post-War Poland: Conclusion," in *Assimilated Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto, 1940-1943* (Syracuse University Press, 2014), 155.

[10] Teresa Świebocka, "The Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum: From Commemoration to Education," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry Volume 13*, ed. Antony Polonsky, Focusing on the Holocaust and Its Aftermath (Liverpool University Press, 2000), 292.

Commemoration in Poland's immediate postwar years focused on honoring victims and their families. Warsaw's Mausoleum of Struggle and Martyrdom, for example, was conceived in 1946 by the government to honor Polish prisoners tortured by the Gestapo. The Mausoleum opened to the public in 1952 and still resides in the basement of the Ministry of National Education, the former Gestapo Headquarters during the war. Visitors can walk down the row of untouched jail cells that once housed Poles awaiting Nazi torture. While the Mausoleum was meant to honor Poles, the communist government used the site to promote their own narrative about the war.

The reminder that Poles died at the hands of the Nazis allowed the government to legitimize its authority by treating the beginning of communist rule in Poland as a victory over fascism. Joanna Wawrzyniak notes that the government used this narrative to craft a founding myth for the birth of the new (communist) Poland. She writes: "the memory of the bygone war and the fear of another ensuing conflict were integrated into a narrative that propounded the absolute necessity of communist power."[11] The government legitimized its authority by placing the war within a binary of good and evil. The Nazis and their supporters were evil and fascist. The individuals who fought against the Nazis and – as an important caveat – *with* the Soviets were considered heroic.

The government solidified the myth of the victory over fascism at the Unification Congress of 1949, an event the government simultaneously used to garner support for the communist system. Franciszek Jozwiak, a Polish communist politician, delivered an address at the Congress in which he expressed this narrative. He said the survivors were "living on the threshold of two eras in the development of humankind: the epoch of

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[11] Wawrzyniak, *Veterans, Victims, and Memory*, 85.

degenerate capitalism which is suffering ever greater defeats, and the new epoch which is fast emerging, driven by the power of the working people."[12] Those invited to speak at the Congress included survivors of Nazi death camps and war veterans. The speakers attested to German crimes, but also legitimized the authority of the communist government. The Congress stressed the kinship between Soviet and Polish soldiers, and the idea that victory would have been impossible had the Red Army not intervened.[13] A new Poland emerged from the Congress, one built on German defeat at the hands of the Soviets and their allies. As we shall see, however, the literature produced during the immediate postwar era contended with the government's official discourse.

### *Understanding the Holocaust through Zofia Nalkowska's* **Medallions** *(1946)*

Initially, the greatest source of Polish postwar literature came from publishing the diaries of individuals who had lived through the Holocaust. The emergence of fictional works about the Holocaust, however, soon blurred the lines between the objective nature of the diaries and the search for moral understanding present in Polish prose.[14] Michal Glowinski notes that authors of early Holocaust literature used first-person accounts that mimicked diary entries. He goes on to argue, however, that "there is no language, no style, no expression that could be considered appropriate in works dedicated to this event."[15] Writing as witnesses, Polish authors' stories about the Holocaust reflected the

[12] Qtd. in Wawrzyniak, 87.

[13] Ibid., 90.

[14] Rachel Brenner makes the argument that fictional writing is active, whereas diary writing places the reader in a passive role. For more see Rachel Feldhay Brenner, "The Holocaust in Polish Consciousness: Early Literary Representations," in *Polish Literature and the Holocaust*, Eyewitness Testimonies, 1942–1947 (Northwestern University Press, 2019), 3–14; hereafter cited as "The Holocaust in Polish Consciousness."

[15] Qtd. in Brenner, "The Holocaust in Polish Consciousness," 11.

attitudes they held toward their subjects. It is important, then, to make the distinction between the works produced by Polish authors and Polish Jewish authors.

Polish Jews kept their own diaries and published their own prose, but their works tended to only circulate among Jewish readers. As early as the liberation of Lublin by the Red Army in 1944, Polish Jews gathered to create an agenda for collecting testimonies from Jewish survivors.[16] They formed the Central Jewish Historical Commission and documented the fates of Jews in Poland during the Holocaust. In 1947, the Jewish Historical Institute was founded as a supplementary institution. The Commission operated with the intent to "sponsor and carry out research into the history of Polish Jewry under German occupation and to publish materials and historical examinations in order to educate both the Jews and the larger Polish society about the history of German crimes against Polish Jewry."[17] The communist government soon placed a limit on access to materials for the Commission, however, and the Central branch closed in 1949.

The closing of the Commission made it more difficult for Jewish voices to be heard, leaving Poles to tell the story of the Holocaust. The acceptance of Polish prose over Jewish prose also stemmed from the attitudes Poles held toward Jews after the war. Rachel Brenner argues that Polish writers "drew on the shared cultural experience of witnessing the Holocaust to attempt to shift their readers' perceptions of the Jewish victims."[18] Joanna Wawrzyniak furthers Brenner's point by saying Polish authors "focused on the 'Polish' experience, generally remaining indifferent to genocide in the extermination camps." Wawrzyniak argues that the focus on the Polish experience came

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[16] Natalia Aleksiun, "Polish Historiography of the Holocaust—Between Silence and Public Debate," *German History* 22, no. 3 (2004), 412; hereafter cited as "Polish Historiography."
[17] Ibid., 414.
[18] Brenner, "The Holocaust in Polish Consciousness: Early Literary Representations," 6.

from the importance Poles placed on the "heroic death," a concept synonymous with martyrdom.[19] Poles did not regard death in an extermination camp in the same manner as, for example, active resistance in the Warsaw ghetto. The trope of the Polish martyr that emerged in Polish prose was accepted into the government's victory over fascism narrative because the trope clearly marked the Nazis as the aggressors.

While the myth of the Polish martyr dominated Polish prose, several authors offered a different take on the Holocaust. Zofia Nalkowska emerged as the most notable of these authors. After the war, Nalkowska served as president for the Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes in Auschwitz, a position that influenced her prose. In 1946, she published *Medallions*, a work dedicated to remembering the lives of those who perished during the Holocaust.[20] Through a collection of short stories told in forms that range from public testimonials to private conversations, Nalkowska presents the Holocaust in a manner more complex than other Polish authors of her time.

Polish Jewish author Henryk Grynberg describes *Medallions* (1946) as a raw portrayal of those who perished during the Holocaust. He notes that Nalkowska's avoidance of interjecting her opinion stresses that "human language is incapable of expressing what the human mind learns."[21] Nalkowska does not attempt to offer any moral implications for the Holocaust. She instead allows the reader to form their own interpretation, offering her opinion only to warn against the dangers of misrepresenting

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[19] Wawrzyniak, *Veterans, Victims, and Memory*, 64.

[20] Polish author Zofia Nalkowska (1884-1954) wrote on social and moral issues of the time and is regarded as one of Poland's most distinguished feminist scholars. Prior to World War Two, she lived amongst Polish "high culture," always reading books and surrounding herself with academics. For more on Nalkowska, see Diana Kuprel, "Paper Epitaphs of a Holocaust Memorial: Zofia Nałkowska's Medallions," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry Volume 13*, ed. Antony Polonsky, Focusing on the Holocaust and Its Aftermath (Liverpool University Press, 2000), 179–87.

[21] Henryk Grynberg, "The Holocaust in Polish Literature," *Notre Dame English Journal* 11, no. 2 (1979), 120.

and mischaracterizing events and individuals. The eight short stories that comprise *Medallions* are told by eight different narrators, allowing Nalkowska to offer eight different images of the Holocaust.

*Medallions* opens with “Professor Spanner,” a story told in the form of a two-part hearing. In the first part, an unnamed young man testifies before the Commission – most likely the Commission Nalkowska herself served as president for – about the undertakings of the titular character, Professor Spanner. The young man, a Pole who secured a job under Professor Spanner at the Anatomy Institute in Gdansk, paints a harrowing portrait of Spanner’s work. Corpses from mental asylums and labor camps would be taken to the Institute; Professor Spanner would set aside corpses and use their fat to make soap. Nalkowska also notes that Professor Spanner volunteered as a doctor for the Nazi Schutzstaffel (SS). When someone asks the man: “Didn’t anyone ever tell you that making soap from human fat was a crime?” he responds: “No one told me that.”[22] He then reflects on his association with Spanner and his own contributions to the soap production. In ending his testimony, the young man delivers a smile and says: “In Germany, you can say, people know how to make something – from nothing…”[23] Nalkowska leaves the reader to draw their own conclusions about what the man means.

Nalkowska introduces two professors who worked alongside Spanner to testify in the second hearing. Both professors claim their innocence, stating that they had no knowledge of Spanner’s “hidden soap factory.”[24] Both professors also claim, however, to have known Spanner’s allegiance to the Nazi Party. Their answers diverge only when

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[22] Zofia Nalkowska, *Medallions*, trans. Diana Kuprel, Jewish Lives (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 2000), 9.
[23] Ibid., 9.
[24] Ibid., 10.

asked whether or not they believe Spanner to be capable of the illegal soap-making. The first believed Spanner capable, saying: “Yes, I could believe it, if I’d known that he’d received such an order. It was common knowledge that he was an obedient Party member.” The other professor gave a different rationale, saying: “At that time, Germans were experiencing a severe shortage of fat. Given Germany’s economic state, he could have been tempted to do it for the good of the nation.”[25] The story ends here, abruptly coming to an end the same way the young man’s testimony does. Nalkowska presents the facts; she allows her readers to judge.

Diana Kuprel reads the testimonies of the two professors in accordance with the Polish government’s narrative about the victory over fascism. The testimonies, according to Kuprel, show that the professors “could have been co-opted by the fascist genocidal machinery.”[26] The professors appear unfazed by what Spanner does with the corpses, providing seemingly logical explanations for the production of soap from the corpses’ fat. The initial testimony by the young man comes to a similar conclusion. The young man appears more fazed by the fact that making soap from human fat is illegal than by Professor Spanner making the soap in the first place. Nalkowska’s decision to present this story in the form of a hearing provides a sense of justice being administered to those who participated in Nazi crimes during the war. The victory comes from punishing those who inflicted punishment on others during the war.

Nalkowska’s *Medallions* tackles more than just the victory over fascism. “The Cemetery Lady,” for example, opens a conversation about the differences in Jewish and Polish experiences during the war, specifically in Warsaw. The story follows a woman

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[25] Ibid., 10.
[26] Diana Kuprel, “Paper Epitaphs of a Holocaust Memorial: Zofia Nałkowska’s Medallions,” 185.

who tends to the graves in a cemetery situated beside the Warsaw ghetto wall. The dead in the cemetery have names and they died an "ordinary death," having lost their life through either natural causes or by their own hand.[27] They are different from the dead on the other side of the ghetto wall; the cemetery lady does not attend to the ghetto's dead. No one, it seems, does. Not until the destruction within the ghetto expands beyond its walls do Warsaw's Polish residents, represented here by the cemetery lady, confront the blissful ignorance they have been living in. The cemetery lady says: "We all live right by the wall, you see, so we can hear what goes on there. Now we all know. They shoot people in the streets. Burn them in their homes. And at night, such shrieks and cries. No one can eat or sleep. We can't stand it. You think it's pleasant listening to all that?"[28] The cemetery lady only considers how the destruction of the ghetto affects the Poles living on the other side of the wall.

The cemetery lady's ignorance extends to her portrayal of the Jews living on the other side of the wall. In talking about the Jews, she says: "They're human beings after all, so you have to feel sorry for them...But they despise us more than they do the Germans." When pressed further, the cemetery lady goes on to say that "If the Germans lose the war, the Jews will kill us all. You don't believe me? Listen, even the Germans say so...and the radio, it says so too."[29] After listening to what the cemetery lady has to say, Nalkowska interjects her own thoughts about the characterization of Jews as anti-Polish. She speaks not just to the cemetery lady, but to every Pole who holds this belief, saying: "We know of the peaceful death marches of unresisting people. Of the leaps into

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[27] Nalkowska, *Medallions*, 18.
[28] Ibid., 20.
[29] Ibid., 20.

flame, of the leaps into the abyss. But, then, we are on this side of the wall. The cemetery lady knew and heard, too. But, for her, the matter was interjected with so many commentaries that it had lost its reality."[30] Not only are the Poles ignorant of the Jews' suffering, but their ignorance also makes them susceptible to the propaganda aimed at further dividing Poles and Jews. Nalkowska's commentary on Polish-Jewish relations, which she began in 1946, will remain a constant theme in the memory struggle over the war moving into the twenty-first century.

Not all of the stories in Nalkowska's *Medallions* provide the same overt interjections as "The Cemetery Lady." "The Hole," by contrast, ends abruptly and without a clear interpretation. "The Hole" follows a woman who survived a Nazi labor camp. In a conversational tone she describes the injustices inflicted upon her and people like her. The SS violated the bodies of those in their possession, before and after they died. The woman says: "When the women died standing at roll call and would keel over, the SS wouldn't believe it. They'd smirk and kick them, as if they were faking it. They'd kick them, even though they'd been dead well over a quarter-hour."[31] The story ends with the incapability to express verbally the inhumanity of the Holocaust. The woman, after recounting a story of her boxcar being pulled over by the Germans on her way to a camp, says: "You see, madame, you see! Even the German was frightened when he saw us. Why is it so incomprehensible, then, that the women couldn't withstand it?"[32] Here, she refers to the women in the boxcar with her who succumbed to madness while traveling. The story ends there, Nalkowska unable to offer the reader any interpretation.

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[30] Ibid., 21.
[31] Ibid., 14.
[32] Ibid., 16.

Nalkowska's open-ended stories mingle with the complexities of Polish-Jewish relations in "By the Railway Track." What appears to begin as a tale of Polish assistance and Samaritanism quickly turns into an account of Polish passivity. The story follows a woman who manages, alongside several others, to escape the boxcar transporting her to a concentration camp. The escapees, one of whom is the woman's husband, come under fire during their escape. The woman survives, though she is shot in the leg and immobile; her husband dies. The narrator, who witnessed the event, describes the woman as "an animal that had been wounded during a hunt but which the hunters had forgotten to kill her off."[33] Her vulnerability attracts the attention of a young man, and later several others of the nearby village who provide her with milk. Of course, when two police officers approach to investigate, everyone deserts the woman, save the young man who first noticed her. The story does not end there, despite the woman begging the officers to shoot her.

The narrator goes on to describe a shift in the attitudes of the Poles who had been previously helping the boxcar woman. First, the young man who stayed with the woman learns of her marital status. This fact "seemed to have caused him some unpleasantness."[34] Other villagers begin to take note of the woman, though are hesitant to help her. An elderly woman, the one who initially provided the boxcar woman with milk, says the woman can no longer be helped. The woman frankly states: "From the forest she could easily have been taken somewhere. But here, with everyone watching, there's no way."[35] Not wanting to risk their own lives, the villagers leave the woman. When the

[33] Ibid., 25.
[34] Ibid., 26.
[35] Ibid., 26.

police officers return and the woman once again begs to be killed, the young man offers to kill her if the officers will not. While the young man goes through with killing the woman, the narrator and the reader are left wondering what the man's motivations were. Confused, the narrator says: "I couldn't understand it. Maybe he felt sorry for her…"[36] The reader is left pondering whether pity or something less hopeful drove the man to kill the woman.

Diana Kuprel notes that the villagers' refusal to assist the boxcar woman did not necessarily point to inherent antisemitism. At the time, Poles providing assistance to Jews risked punishment from the Nazis if caught.[37] Nalkowska's portrayal of Poles as unwilling to risk their own lives, however, complicates the myth of the Polish martyr developing in Polish prose. The Polish martyr myth strengthened in the years after the publication of *Medallions,* extending to scholarship such as Berenstein and Rutkowski's *Assistance to the Jews in Poland* (1963).[38] It would not be until the post-communist era, after the publication of Jan Gross' *Neighbors* (2001), that this myth would be widely challenged.

"The Cemetery Lady" and "By the Railroad Tracks" offer two stories of Jews relying on Poles for survival. Both stories also present Jewish victims wanting to take their own lives in order to prevent further atrocities committed to them while alive. "Dworja Zielona," however, tells a story of a Jewish woman who wants to stay alive. No matter what has happened to her, the woman commits herself to living on behalf of those who have been killed. Despite the death of her husband, despite losing her eye and

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[36] Ibid., 27.
[37] Diana Kuprel, "Paper Epitaphs of a Holocaust Memorial: Zofia Nałkowska's Medallions," 185.
[38] For more on *Assistance*, see Chapter One: Historiography.

having nothing to eat, she wants to live. "Why?" she asks, "I'll tell you why: to tell everything just like I'm telling you now. To let the world know what they did."[39] The Nazis took everything from her, but so long as she lives, the world will know the truth of the atrocities they inflicted upon the Jews.

"The Man is Strong" likewise grapples with an individual contemplating suicide as a means to free himself from Nazi torment. After seeing the corpses of his wife and two children, the man begs to be shot. Noting his strength, however, the Germans decide to keep the man alive. After speaking with a devout Jew, the man reaffirms his commitment to life and escapes Nazi control. He, like the woman in "Dworja Zielona," lives on behalf of those who have died.

*Medallions* culminates with "The Adults and Children of Auschwitz," a work that is different from the rest in its style and voice. Nalkowska speaks objectively, no longer writing about the Holocaust through fictional vignettes. She writes directly of the sufferings experienced by those sent to death camps and makes the statement that "people dealt this fate to people."[40] Nalkowska regards the knowledge that humans acted on fellow humans with perplexity, unable to comprehend or verbalize the Holocaust. She urges, however, that perpetrators be held accountable, saying "These people are all conscious of their acts and must bear complete responsibility for them."[41] Justice must be administered in order to have a complete victory over fascism.

While not Jewish herself, Nalkowska uses *Medallions* to give a voice to the Jews who perished during the Holocaust. By the end of the decade, however, the growing myth

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[39] Nalkowska, *Medallions,* 32.
[40] Ibid., 45.
[41] Ibid., 49.

of the Polish martyr left no room in Polish prose for stories like Nalkowska's *Medallions*. The limited access to materials likewise led Jewish authors to adapt to an emerging myth about the universality of wartime suffering. Polish historian Andrzej Paczkowski writes that Jews who joined the PZPR "not only broke off all cultural ties with Jewishness, but were also positively anti-Jewish in that they fought against not only the religion, but also other elements of Jewish culture…They were culturally Polonized and ideologically communized."[42] The strengthening of the communist system created a struggle for identity among surviving Jews. As we shall see, a similar search for identity also existed among Poles.

### ***The Struggle for Identity in Jerzy Andrzejewski's* Ashes and Diamonds *(1948)***

The changing politics and the aftermath of the Second World War left Polish authors searching for answers. Jerzy Andrzejewski, the most well-known author of the period, was no exception. During the war, Andrzejewski joined the Home Army and managed a magazine from the Polish Underground. In 1949, however, he joined the PZPR. He remained an active member of the Communist Party until 1956, at which point he rejected communism and eventually joined the Solidarity movement.[43] Andrzejewski's struggle for identity finds its way into his most famous novel, *Ashes and Diamonds* (1948), which examines questions of Polish identity and political ideology in the final days of the war. Andrzejewski originally published *Ashes and Diamonds* in serial form in

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[42] Andrez Paczkowski, "Jews in the Polish Security Apparatus: An Attempt to Test the Stereotype," in *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry Volume 16*, ed. Michael C. Steinlauf and Antony Polonsky, Focusing on Jewish Popular Culture and Its Afterlife (Liverpool University Press, 2003), 459.

[43] Polish author Jerzy Andrzejewski (1909-1983) grappled with moral issues and issues of political identity both in his novels and his daily life. Before the war, he published with a series of right-wing Catholic magazines, many of which were antisemitic and pro-Nazi. For more on Jerzy Andrzejewski see Carl Tighe, "Jerzy Andrzejewski: Life and Times," *Journal of European Studies* 25, no. 4 (December 1995): 341–80.

1947 through a magazine called *Odrodzenie* and republished it in book format in 1948. His work, though widely read, does not encompass the experience of every Pole during the war. The limited scope of Andrzejewski's *Ashes and Diamonds* represents a struggle between personal identity, memory, and the emerging communist state.

*Ashes and Diamonds* is set in May 1945, at a time when the Nazis have surrendered, and the Red Army has entered Poland. The novel opens with Podgorski and Szczuka, members of the Polish Workers' Party (PPR), riding through the ruins of the fictional town Ostrowiec.[44] Andrzejewski takes care to describe in detail everything the characters see. His descriptions allow the reader to place themselves in the position of the Poles who have just survived the war and Nazi occupation. Ostrowiec faced "walls ripped apart by bombs" and "windows nailed over with cardboard and planks," becoming a barren, abandoned wasteland save a "bent little old woman pushing a wheelbarrow full of potatoes."[45] The war has left Ostrowiec, yet its effects remain.

As in the ruined Ostrowiec, residents of the town's affluent counterpart, New Ostrowiec, also experienced displacement and destruction. Nazi occupiers rounded up individuals living in the upscale villas of New Ostrowiec, deporting many to labor camps. When a woman named Mrs. Kossecki returns to her former home – having snuck her way past Soviet guards by using a fake Russian accent – she laments what the Germans have done to the place she once lived in. Mrs. Kossecki's home still stands, but is unrecognizable to her. Here, Andrzejewski inserts a subtle jab at the Germans when he

[44] The Polish Workers' Party (PPR) predates the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR) that assumed control at the culmination of the Second World War. It aligned with the Soviet Union and operated with the permission of Joseph Stalin. They were anti-Nazi, though existed outside of the Polish Underground State and the Home Army.

[45] Andrzejewski, *Ashes and Diamonds*, 7.

writes: "The director of the workcamp...had had the Nazi mania for changing everything and had rearranged the whole house to suit his own needs, which were not very good."[46] As the novel unfolds, Andrzejewski brings his characters to the Ostrowiec-New Ostrowiec region. For some, this is their first time arriving, for others it is a bittersweet homecoming. Ostrowiec-New Ostrowiec sets the stage for a story about Polish strength in a time of destruction.

The plot follows the interactions between characters who differ in class, political ideology, and war experience. Their differences drive the novel's conflict and converge on the experiences of two characters in particular. On the one hand there is Maciek Chelmicki, a man who has just arrived from Warsaw with loyalties to the Polish Underground and the Home Army. On the other is Szczuka, who serves as Secretary of the Party Area Committee and envisions a new Poland built on the Soviet system. Maciek and Szczuka are the nucleus of *Ashes and Diamonds*; the other characters simply operate around their relationships with the two men. For example, Andrew Kossecki, son of the aforementioned Mrs. Kossecki, holds an allegiance to the Underground resistance. Andrew Kossecki also orders Maciek to assassinate Szczuka. Podgorski, on the other hand, shares Szczuka's vision for a communist Poland. Additional characters, including members of a haughty aristocracy and Polish youth engaged in delinquency, round out Andrzejewski's cast.

The greatest convergence of characters and conflict occurs at the Monopole, a hotel with a bar, live entertainment, and a seemingly endless supply of vodka. Not only are class dynamics on display at the Monopole, but political ideologies mix with drink

[46] Ibid., 25.

and dance. In one particular scene, after learning all of the tables at the Monopole's bar are occupied, an aristocrat named Puciatycki announces: "Do you expect us to stand about waiting here for an hour?...I shall never set foot in this establishment again."[47] Eventually he settles down. For the remainder of the evening he and his cohorts laugh and drink, then drink some more. They remain at the Monopole until morning, when they stagger into the streets with a hearty "Long live Poland!" and dance to the tune of Chopin's Polonaise.[48] They care only that the war is over and that their lives may resume their splendor.

On the other side of the Monopole, Szczuka engages in political conversation with an old friend named Kalicki. A former aristocrat himself, Kalicki discovered socialism during his time at school in Warsaw. He denounced his family and his wealth to wander through the gutters of Krakow wearing the "tattered boots most of his new friends wore."[49] Here, Andrzejewski tells the reader that Szczuka once aligned with the socialists until he discovered the Communist Party. Amid conversation, the pair begin discussing the future of Poland. Szczuka asks: "Have you really failed to realize that what is happening in Poland now is what we've been waiting for all our lives?" to which Kalicki admits: "I'm worried about you...I'm worried about where you're taking Poland."[50] Szczuka believes in the liberation of Poland by the Red Army and in the future of Poland as a communist state. Kalicki, on the other hand, shows apprehension.

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[47] Ibid., 124.

[48] Ibid., 174; Nicknamed the "Military Polonaise," Chopin's piece became a symbol of Polish resistance to the Nazi occupation. Poland's national radio *Polskie Radio* played the polonaise daily beginning in September 1939.

[49] Ibid., 114.

[50] Ibid., 119.

Szczuka and Kalicki are not alone in their different understandings of Poland's future. Podgorski and Mr. Kossecki – husband of Mrs. Kossecki and father to Andrew – also argue over the country's fate along political lines. Podgorski says to Mr. Kossecki: "I wasn't a Communist but my wartime experiences taught me both Communism and patriotism." When Kossecki asks "Simultaneously?" Podgorski responds with a smile and says: "How could it be otherwise?"[51] Podrogski admits, though, that his vision of a communist Poland has not yet come to full fruition. The PPR does not yet have the support of the majority of the population. Podgorski believes he is on the right side of the fight, and that those who do not align with the Party don't yet understand its goals and beliefs, or that they don't want to. Ultimately, he concludes, the war will bring out support for the new system as people begin to realize and understand its intentions for Poland.

The theme of Poland's future echoes throughout the novel, no doubt influenced by Andrzejewski's own experiences as a former member of the Underground and as an emerging member of the PZPR. In a later scene, Drozdowski, a young doctor who worked in Warsaw during the uprising, reflects on the country's current state. He announces his departure from Ostrowiec, wanting to try his luck in the Silesia region. There, according to Drozdowski, "Everything's in confusion, the land doesn't belong to anyone. A man can take what he wants."[52] He chooses not to align with any ideology, presenting himself as one of the men Podgorski claims have not yet realized the importance of the communist system. He will go to the countryside and make a new life amid the chaos.

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[51] Ibid., 79.
[52] Ibid., 143.

Szczuka and Kalicki then move from their conversation about political ideology to question of Poland's fate. The conversation begins when Kalicki argues he's been fighting against Russia since his childhood, to which Szczuka reminds him he fought Tsarist Russia, not the current Soviet regime. The two argue over the ability to support a system that has inflicted harm upon them. Szczuka uses his own experience to counter Kalicki's argument, saying: "I was in a Polish [jail] first of all. Does this mean I have to nurse a grievance against Poland to the end of my days without ever considering what Poland really is?"[53] Kalicki ignores Szczuka's point, saying their experiences are dissimilar because a person cannot choose their country. Szczuka, however, furthers the argument by saying that, while a person cannot choose their history, "a man lives in order to shape both his own country and his history."[54] The pair's argument ends when Kalicki announces that the Soviet system will eliminate Polish culture and reshape the country's history. He does not see the Red Army as the great liberators, showing how not all Poles accepted the narrative the government used after the war.

Andrzejewski wrestles with the concept of the victory over fascism in *Ashes and Diamonds.* On one hand, he has characters who loudly declare: "Today is a great victory for re-born Poland. The sacrifices we made in the battle against Fascism have not been in vain. Fascism has capitulated."[55] On the other, a member of the Underground says: "We thought that not only would Germany come out of the war defeated, but Russia too."[56] The struggle for memory present in *Ashes and Diamonds* is indicative of the larger

[53] Ibid., 148.
[54] Ibid., 148.
[55] Ibid., 120.
[56] Ibid., 49.

memory struggle present in post-war Poland, as the communist government came into conflict with the Polish peoples' desire to maintain a strong sense of national identity.

The division between communism and nationalism shows up several times throughout Andrzejewski's novel, the most notable being in the assassination of Szczuka. The rationale for the killing is given by an Underground affiliate who says "In today's set-up we Poles are divided into two categories: those who have betrayed the freedom of Poland and those who do not wish to do so...They want to destroy us, we must destroy them."[57] Unlike Podgorski, who combines patriotism and communism, the Underground sees the two categories as resting on opposite ends of a spectrum. Seen as a threat to the existing order, Szczuka must die.

The Underground tasks Maciek with carrying out the assassination. As the novel progresses, however, Maciek begins to question whether he is doing the right thing. Loyalty wins out in the end, and he murders Szczuka on the same day the Germans surrender. To be sure, Maciek meets his own horrific end. In the final scene of the novel, a group of Soviet soldiers find him and shoot him down when he chooses to flee. Andrzejewski's decision to kill both Szczuka and Maciek, two prominent members of their respective parties, leaves the reader wondering in whose image the new Poland will be fashioned in.

Andrzejewski's *Ashes and Diamonds* received criticism from Polish literary critics after its initial serial publication in 1947. Andrzejewski's diary reveals that criticism came from all sides of the country's political spectrum. According to one entry, a reviewer "simply resents [Andrzejewski's] depiction of the Polish Workers Party as a

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[57] Ibid., 49.

positive character. And the other side resents that the character of Swiecki and the fact that Szczuka is not strong and active enough."[58] The criticism given reflects the struggle for identity featured in *Ashes and Diamonds.* Andrzejewski writes characters who disagree politically and ideologically as a way to show the uncertainty that the end of the war brought to Poland. Critics' responses to these characters only strengthens the overall importance of the work.

When *Ashes and Diamonds* entered the market as a single volume novel in 1948, it won the Polish literary award for *Odrodzenie,* the highest honor given to Polish literature at the time.[59] Despite the honor, the book continued to receive opposing reviews until the end of the decade. The reviews focused on the political issues present in the novel. The controversy surrounding *Ashes and Diamonds* lessened only after Polish authors adopted the genre known as socialist realism in the early 1950s.[60] By the time restrictions on literary publications lessened in the late 1950s, *Ashes and Diamonds* had earned its place in Polish postwar literature and became required reading in Polish schools.

*Ashes and Diamonds* challenged the government's postwar narrative. Andrzejewski wrote of a victory over fascism, but one that included the Polish Underground and the Home Army in the fight. The inclusion of the Underground characters in particular, who believed that total victory was not achieved when the Red Army liberated the country, shows a struggle over memory. The communist government

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[58] Quoted in Jerzy R. Krzyżanowski, "On the History of Ashes and Diamond [sic]," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 15, no. 3 (1971): 325.

[59] In Polish, *Odrodzenie* translates to Renaissance. After the war, the *Odrodzenie* was a literary magazine that focused on socio-cultural works, but adhered to the cultural policies set forth by the communist government. It ran from 1945-50. For more on Andrejewski and the award see Krzyżanowski, "On the History of Ashes and Diamond [sic]," 326.

[60] Ibid., 326.

did not include the Home Army or the Underground in their founding myth. Andrzejewski places Maciek, a former member of the Home Army, at the center of his story and the plot of *Ashes and Diamonds* is driven by Maciek's orders to kill the communist newcomer Szczuka. Szczuka's assassination signifies a rejection of the communist system. Maciek's own death, however, signifies that the days of the Home Army and the Polish Underground are now over. The uncertainty over Poland's fate that Andrzejewski ends *Ashes and Diamonds* with reflected the very real struggle Poles faced after the war.

### *Conclusion*

The literary responses that emerged in the immediate aftermath of the war varied. Polish literature about the Holocaust tended to reflect the attitudes Poles held toward Jews after the war and focused on Polish victims. Nalkowska's *Medallions* (1946) runs counter to this narrative, instead offering a raw portrayal of the Holocaust that focuses on Jews victims. Andrzejewski's *Ashes and Diamonds* (1948) likewise challenges the communist government's founding myth, showing how not every Pole welcomed the Red Army's entrance into Poland. The varied responses to the war stemmed from political discourse. Przemyslaw Czaplinski notes that "the politics of the time…required emphasis be placed on the [communist] system's successes and the national unity of Poles."[61] Nalkowska and Andrzejewski challenged the so-called "politics of the time" through their prose, responding to the political and social changes affecting the country. The

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[61] Przemyslaw Czaplinski "Shifting Sands: History of Polish Prose, 1945-2015," in *Being Poland: A New History of Polish Literature and Culture since 1918*, ed. Tamara Trojanowska, Joanna Nizynska, Przemyslaw Czaplinski, and Agnieszka Polakowska (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2018): 377.

counter-discourse that began with their literary interpretations opened a struggle over memory that persisted in the decades to follow. Chapter Three demonstrates how the memory struggle that began in the immediate aftermath of the war was furthered by the cultural thaw brought about by de-Stalinization in 1956.

## Chapter Three:
## The Polish Filmmaker's Response to the Home Army and the Holocaust, 1956-1967

"And all the poppies on Monte Cassino will be redder from growing in Polish blood" sings a woman in Andrzej Wajda's 1958 film *Ashes and Diamonds*.[1] The song evokes feelings of nationalist nostalgia, a dirge dedicated to the Polish Army soldiers who fought in the Battle of Monte Cassino. A Polish audience watching Wajda's film at the time of its release, however, might have been surprised to hear the familiar words sung on screen. When the communist government assumed control after the war, authorities banned the song from public play. Only in 1956, when Poland entered a period of transition following the death of Joseph Stalin, did government authorities lift the ban.[2] The period of transition, known as de-Stalinization, led to a gradual liberalization of Polish culture. The thaw also led to a reevaluation in Poland of the memory of the Second World War.

In this chapter, I argue that Polish filmmakers presented the Second World War in new ways onscreen in response to the government's changing narrative about the war during the era of de-Stalinization. With censorship laws laxer than in the decade after the war, the film industry rose to prominence after 1956. War films became a way to spread a certain narrative about the war to large audiences. This chapter looks at war films on two subjects, the Home Army and the Holocaust, as a way to demonstrate how the film industry both worked with and resisted the government's changing war narrative. For example, prior to 1956, the Home Army was banned from the screen. I use Andrzej

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[1] *Ashes and Diamonds*, directed by Andrzej Wajda (1958; Warsaw, Poland, KADR), 00:40:50-00:41:00.

[2] Grzegorz Łęcicki, "Censorship in People's Poland," *Science journal (Communication and information)* (2016), 172.

Wajda's *Kanal* (1957) and *Ashes and Diamonds* (1958) to demonstrate the precedent set for films about the Home Army in decades to follow. I then turn to the Holocaust, illustrating how the government used film to promote the myth of the Polish martyr as well as a myth of Polish innocence through depictions of Polish-Jewish relations. I use Stanislaw Rozewicz's *A Drop of Blood* (1961) to demonstrate this point. To conclude, I show that the memorialization of the Second World War changed in Polish cinema as a result of de-Stalinization. I then point to 1967 as the year that this memorialization would change again.

***The Transitional Years, 1956-1967***

Poland underwent political and social changes following Nikita Khrushchev's denouncement of Stalinism in February 1956. The workers' strikes in Poznan four months later exacerbated Poland's need for change. On June 28, Polish workers marched through the city of Poznan demanding "bread and freedom" as they waved political banners and sang religious hymns.[3] The event ended with bloodshed when government troops intervened, and news outlets tallied between 38 to 200 casualties.[4] The strikes in Poznan, coupled with Khrushchev's call for de-Stalinization, gave way to another push for change in Poland. Known as Polish October, this push for change marked the inauguration of a new government headed by PZPR-affiliate Wladyslaw Gomulka in October 1956. With his rise to power, Gomulka brought the promise of a cultural "thaw," an allowance of previously censored topics and themes to be made available for public

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[3] Jerzy Lukowski and W. H. Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, Third edition, Cambridge Concise Histories (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 378.

[4] Jakub Karpinski notes that tallies on casualties vary, depending on the source. PZPR-controlled radio announced 38 casualties at the time of the strike; Western sources estimated closer to 200. The exact tallies are still unknown. For more see Karpinski, *Count-Down*, 50.

access.[5] For the first few years after he assumed control, Gomulka's thaw appeared to take effect.

Poland experienced liberalization as a result of the cultural thaw during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Polish culture, through the expansion of publishing houses and the increase in film production, became accessible to a wider audience. Authors including Witold Gombrowicz, whose existentialist prose deviated from what was considered acceptable by the government prior to 1956, found new life.[6] Polish directors, including Andrzej Wajda, established the Polish School to deviate from the Socialist realist genre that dominated the industry before 1956. Student cabarets opened in celebration of the arts, and academia tolerated a greater pluralism. Now the most liberal of the Soviet satellite states, Poland earned the distinction of "the most cheerful barrack in the camp."[7]

The liberalization of the country extended to the memorialization of the Second World War as well. The government used the increased accessibility of literature and film to circulate a narrative about the war different from that of the decade prior. This narrative, which Joanna Wawrzyniak classifies as the "myth of unity," stressed a collective effort made by all Poles to combat the Nazis during the war.[8] The new narrative was inclusive of the nation-wide resistance movement to combat Nazi fascism. The government used the Ministry of National Defense to promote the unity myth through the publication of state-approved literature. One such example, the *Żółty tygrys* (*Yellow Tiger*) book series, first appeared in 1957. The Ministry aimed these short, action

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[5] David Brodsky, "Witold Gombrowicz and the 'Polish October,'" *Slavic Review* 39, no. 3 (1980): 459.

[6] Ibid., 460-1.

[7] Lukowski and Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, Third edition, 383.

[8] Wawrzyniak, *Veterans, Victims, and Memory*, 135.

stories at children. The stories told heroic tales about the war and the strength of the Polish military.[9] The *Żółty tygrys* publications alluded to changing attitudes toward one group of Polish veterans in particular: Members of the Home Army.

Mistreated after the war by the PZPR, former Home Army fighters began to receive support from the government after an assembly held by the PZPR Central Committee in February 1956. Newspapers published articles about the Home Army, and the 1944 Warsaw Uprising received a semi-official commemoration ceremony.[10] The government-controlled veterans association, the Society of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy (ZBoWiD), took part in commemorating the twelfth anniversary of the Uprising. The ZBoWiD executive board, however, lacked a representative from the Home Army as late as 1959. Home Army veterans were not permitted to join the association until the 1960s. Nevertheless, by the end of the 1950s, newly appointed secretary of the ZBoWiD Wladyslaw Zdunek used the unity myth to bring together Polish communists and the Home Army.[11] The gradual acceptance of Home Army veterans into public life after 1956 marked a turning point in Poland's memorialization of the Second World War.

While the government used the Home Army to promote unity, Jewish survivors pushed against a unified identity in favor of maintaining what Katarzyna Person refers to as "Jewishness."[12] Polish Jewish author Henrik Grynberg, for example, published works in the 1960s that resisted assimilation into the Polish-communist culture at the core of the government's unity myth. Grynberg's *The Jewish War* (1965) grapples with controlling

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[9] Ibid., 193.
[10] Ibid., 137-8.
[11] Ibid., 141, 149.
[12] Person, "Holocaust Survivors in Post-War Poland: Conclusion," 159.

one's fate through critical depictions of the Nazi occupation and the fate of Polish Jews.[13] One character lives by assimilating into a Polish-Catholic culture; the other willingly dies in a death camp in order to hold onto his Jewish identity. *The Jewish War* mixes elements of fiction with what Grynberg intended to be an autobiographical story. His later work, *The Victory* (1968) was not officially published in Poland until 1990 due to the Grynberg's critical depiction of Poland's liberation by the Red Army. Grynberg, a self-exile by 1968, published his novel in the United States.

Despite the communist government granting Jewish survivors equal rights and rehabilitation after the war, political equality did not yield social equality.[14] The myth of unity holds little merit when considering the treatment of Polish Jews after the war. Polish politician Tadeusz Holuj, for example, believed providing Polish Jews with reparations could lead to "an explosion of [antisemitism] amongst non-Jewish former camp inmates." The ZBoWiD issued a similar statement.[15] Through the 1950s and into the 1960s, the government and organizations like the ZBoWiD continued to diminish the role of Jewish victims and survivors in major commemorative events. At the commemoration for the twentieth anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1963, Polish politician Janusz Zarzycki warned against attempts to separate "the Polish people from the Ghetto Uprising, for after all, this was just one fragment of the struggle of the Polish people."[16] Zarzycki's speech, as with the fight over reparations, highlights the diminishing role Jews were given in the memorialization of their own history.

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[13] Henryk Grynberg, *The Jewish War and the Victory*, Jewish Lives (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 2001), vii.

[14] Person, "Holocaust Survivors in Post-War Poland: Conclusion," 155.

[15] Wawrzyniak, *Veterans, Victims, and Memory,* 171.

[16] Qtd. in ibid., 200.

In the 1960s, the government again reevaluated the narrative they wanted to send about the war. Joanna Wawrzyniak marks the transition from the 1950s to the 1960s as a transition from the myth of unity to what she refers to as the "myth of innocence."[17] The two narratives worked together to create what I call the "myth of the Polish martyr." The government stressed collective Polish innocence because they believed "Poles could not possibly have committed crimes comparable to those of the Germans; they had fought and died exclusively in defense of a just cause and moral values."[18] The government used their narrative change as a way to teach the younger generation, who had either not experienced the war or were children during the war, an "official" history. Fictional stories of military strength and adventure abounded; the publication of the *Żółty tygrys* series continued throughout the 1960s.[19]

The political changes in Poland during the 1960s affected the memorialization of the war with regard to both the Home Army and the Holocaust. In 1964, the ZBoWiD permitted Home Army veterans to join their organization. By accepting a previously ostracized group into the state-approved veterans' association, the Polish government committed themselves to a myth about a unified *Polish* innocence. The acceptance of Home Army veterans can be looked at alongside the treatment the Holocaust in official discourse. The emigration of the country's remaining Jewish population after the war, as shown in Chapter Two, left commemorative efforts to Poles who had not experienced the Holocaust in the same way as their Jewish neighbors.[20] The government's assertion that

[17] Ibid., 177.
[18] Ibid., 197.
[19] Ibid., 193.
[20] For more on Jewish emigration after the war see Person, "Holocaust Survivors in Post-War Poland: Conclusion," 157; Wawrzyniak, *Veterans, Victims, and Memory*, 196.

Poles were victims of Nazi terror likewise led to a denunciation of claims of Polish complicity in crimes committed against the Jewish population. By the end of the 1960s, the narrative of the Holocaust moved from an event of mass Jewish suffering to one of Polish martyrdom.

The government's changing narrative about the war during the 1950s and 1960s presented Polish filmmakers with the opportunity to address war-related topics on-screen in a new way. During the immediate postwar years, films were subject to strict censorship laws in order to uphold the government's single narrative about the war.[21] Films about the Home Army-led Warsaw Uprising, for example, were silenced until 1956. Gomulka's thaw led Polish filmmakers to push boundaries and establish their own artistic style. Known as the Polish School, this style of filmmaking called for a confrontation with local history, and brought social and moral problems to the screen.[22] Jewish filmmakers, however, did not experience the same liberalization of production after the thaw, and many emigrated from Poland before the end of the 1960s. The emigration of Jewish filmmakers placed non-Jewish Poles in the role of director for films about the Holocaust. As we shall see, the films produced between 1956 and 1967 about the Home Army and the Holocaust reflected the government's changing narrative about the war.

### ***Wajda and the Image of the Home Army***

The period of liberalization in Polish cinema after Gomulka assumed control of the PZPR gave rise to films about the Home Army. Director Andrzej Wajda championed this new film subject from the start. Wajda pushed the boundaries of Polish cinema when

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[21] Marek Haltof, *Polish Cinema: A History*, Second edition (New York: Berghahn, 2019), 80.

[22] Film critic Aleksander Jackiewicz coined the term "Polish School" as early as 1954. For more see Haltof, *Polish Cinema: A History*, 115.

he became the first individual to depict the 1944 Warsaw Uprising on screen. Wajda himself was a member of the Home Army during the war, and his 1957 film *Kanal* paid tribute to his fellow resistance fighters. Most notable, however, is that *Kanal* premiered seven years prior to the inclusion of Home Army veterans into the ZBoWiD.[23] The film, along with his later work *Ashes and Diamonds* (1958), alluded to the changing attitude toward the Home Army that was brought on by the government's unity myth. Wajda's two films also laid the foundation for future Polish films about the Home Army and presented the myth of the Polish martyr onscreen.

*Kanal* opens with an aerial shot over a ravaged Warsaw on the fifty-sixth day of the Warsaw Uprising. The shot alerts the viewer to the horrors experienced by both civilians and resistance fighters. Buildings collapse, others go up in flames; every shot in the opening credits echoes the narrator's first words: "The Warsaw Uprising nears its tragic end."[24] The narrator introduces the characters as they appear on screen: a group of Home Army affiliates battered and bruised from their unsuccessful fight against the Nazis. Many wear uniforms, but the last man introduced does not. He is known as "the composer," a man who plays the piano and joined the resistance one day before the events of the film take place. Through this opening scene alone, Wajda establishes the Home Army as a group of ordinary individuals fighting for their homeland. "These are the heroes of the tragedy. Watch them closely," the narrator says. "For these are the last hours of their lives."[25] These men and women are destined to die, committing an act of martyrdom in order to defend a free Poland.

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[23] Stuart Liebman, "The Art of Memory: Andrzej Wajda's War Trilogy," *Cinéaste* 32, no. 1 (2006): 45.

[24] *Kanal*, directed by Andrzej Wajda (1957; Warsaw, Poland, KADR), 00:03:09.

[25] Ibid., 00:04:56.

*Kanal* tells the story of the Home Army fighters in a final stand against the Nazi occupation of Warsaw. After realizing the Nazis outnumber them, a member from the Home Army headquarters announces to his fellow fighters that the only way out is through the sewers. The sewers allow the fighters a chance to move undetected by the Germans. Not everyone supports this idea, including Lieutenant Zadra who says: "All that blood shed, and we crawl away like rats?"[26] His company shares a similar sentiment; they worry a retreat means they've been fighting for nothing. Zadra ultimately gives in to the plan, however, and assures his company that once the fighters reach downtown through the sewer system, the fight will continue until the end.

Wajda then cuts to a scene of the Home Army fighters in a more populated area of Warsaw as they prepare to make their descent into the sewers. Women cry out around them for their lost families; the dead line the street while the living grab their belongings and run frantically as the sounds of gunfire and grenades go off around them. As the fighters enter the sewers amid the chaos in the streets, the camera pans across two pieces of graffiti: one of the words "AK," the Polish abbreviation for the Home Army, and another of the Kotwica, the symbol for the Home Army and the Polish Underground. The resistance fighters made this street their territory; they took to the sewers to protect it one final time.

The second half of the film takes place entirely in the sewers, with the characters unintentionally separating into small groups almost at once. Miserable conditions greet the fighters: German gas affects the psyche and every sort of filth covers the body as the resistance fighters trudge through the murky waters in hopes of finding their exit. Above,

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[26] Ibid., 00:34:17.

the Nazis continue the fight, and their proximity means they can hear something as small as a cough coming from the sewers below. Despite the conditions, the resistance continues on with determination. Hope keeps the resistance alive, a hope that lasts until the final minutes of the film. Only when hope is gone does the chain reaction unfold: the composer goes mad; a woman named Halinka commits suicide after learning the man she hoped to build a life with says he has a wife and child; a young couple dies at the gate that leads to the Vistula River, the pair unable to break through the bars toward a grassy freedom. Even those who find the sewer exit lose hope, for the exit places them not in the safety of downtown, but in front of a Nazi firing squadron.

By the end of the film, only three men, including Lieutenant Zadra, continue to wander in the sewers, and when they find an alternate path out, it appears that hope has returned for the depleted Home Army. The path, however, is blocked by grenades. When one man tries to clear the way, he sets off a grenade that kills him. His sacrifice clears the path for Zadra and the other survivor, who climb from the sewer onto a quiet street. Zadra asks where the rest of their company is; his companion says they've been lost. Zadra, whose psyche appears affected by the time spent in the sewer, kills the other. He believes his company still wanders the sewer. In the film's final moments, Zadra, the lone survivor, descends back into the sewer, certain he will find the resistance.

Wajda's *Kanal* stands at a threshold between the negative depictions of the Home Army at the end of the war and the more positive depictions that come as a result of the inclusion of Home Army veterans into the ZBoWiD in 1964. *Kanal* ends in tragedy, but nevertheless pays tribute to the Poles who perished in the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. Wajda uses the Home Army to promote the myth of the Polish martyr. A young fighter, Korab,

says he knows the Home Army will be defeated, but he won't go down without making the Nazis "bleed first."[27] Even the children join the fight, putting on the Home Army uniform to secure a future marked by a free Poland.

*Kanal* presents a myth of unity, but not the unity promoted by the communist government. When the communist government incorporated the Home Army in their victory over fascism narrative, the role of the Red Army remained an integral part of the myth. Wajda's film makes no mention of the Red Army. The film marks a clear divide between good and evil but the "good" side is comprised only of the Home Army and its allies. The Home Army defends Warsaw against the Nazis until death; the Red Army is nowhere to be found. Historically, however, the Red Army was present on the outskirts of Warsaw during the final days of the Uprising. Film critic David Paul points to one moment in the film where Wajda intentionally omitted the Red Army: the final scene between the two characters trapped behind the sewer gate at the edge of the Vistula. He writes:

> The camera focuses beyond them to the opposite bank where nothing but greenery can be seen. Polish audiences of 1957, however, saw something more; they knew that, in reality, the Soviet army had camped there, across the Vistula...and intentionally delayed its assault on the Germans until after the Home Army's collapse.[28]

This subtle moment in the film points to a struggle between the government's politics of memory and Wajda's own memory.

*Kanal* has a nationalistic tone that champions the Home Army as the embodiment of Polish strength. This tone is illustrated most poignantly in the scene between Lieutenant Zadra and another resistance fighter. The fighter says to Zadra that the efforts

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[27] Ibid., 00:18:22.

[28] David Paul, "Andrzej Wajda's War Trilogy," *Cinéaste* 20, no. 4 (1994): 53-4.

of the Home Army will be "hailed by future generations" because the Nazis "won't take [them] alive." Zadra smiles at this and responds: "That's right. The Polish way!"[29] Wajda portrays the fight against the Nazis as necessary to defend the Polish way of life. The only myth of unity utilized in Wajda's film is the union of the Polish nation.

Wajda also fills *Kanal* with overt religious imagery, specifically that of the Roman Catholic Church. In one of the opening scenes, as the resistance fighters assess the damage, a priest appears on-screen to deliver a prayer in the background while a bloodied fighter prays to a cross in the shot's foreground.[30] Crosses likewise line the streets and are placed in the rubble of the war-torn Warsaw as a way to create make-shift graves for the fallen members of the resistance. As the characters descend into the sewers, the composer likens the grim conditions they walk through to Hell. He goes on to recite *Dante's Inferno* throughout his time in the sewer, the lines staying with him even as he finds himself slipping into madness. The connection Wajda makes between the Home Army and the Church alludes to Poland's relationship with its Catholic roots, a relationship that would become apparent when Pope John Paul II, a Pole himself, ascended to the papacy in the 1970s.

*Kanal* emerged during a time of cultural liberalization. The film pointed to the government's changing narrative about the Home Army while not wholly accepting that narrative. Wajda's exclusion of the Red Army in the scene at the Vistula River was a detail subtle enough to pass government censorship. An outright denunciation of the Red Army would have never passed the censors. To the communist government, the film adhered to their new unity myth, showing how the Home Army helped in the fight

[29] Ibid., 00:08:10-14.
[30] Ibid., 00:07:33-40.

against fascism. To Wajda, the film adhered to a different kind of myth, a nationalist myth about the Polish martyr.

*Kanal* earned Wajda international recognition, but it was his later film, *Ashes and Diamonds* (1958), that solidified his place as a director in the Polish School. Loosely based on the 1948 Andrzejewski novel of the same title, *Ashes and Diamonds* follows a group of Poles in the immediate aftermath of the Second World War.[31] Wajda inherited the project from director Jan Rybkowski, who took on the project after both Jerzy Zarzycki and Antoni Bohdziewicz abandoned it in 1949.[32] He collaborated with Andrzejewski on the screenplay, and the two altered elements of the original novel in order to appeal to the changing Polish society.

The new screenplay, for example, changed Szczuka's backstory. In the novel Szczuka is a Pole who survives a Nazi concentration camp; in the film, he is a Pole who arrives alongside the Red Army after spending time in the Soviet Union.[33] Wajda, in an interview held nearly sixty years after the film's initial release, admits that he further changed aspects of Andrzejewski's script during filming. This, he admits, was done to prevent the authorities from censoring the film during pre-production. In Wajda's words: "Due to the lack of political oversight or control, *Ashes and Diamonds* was completed in an atmosphere of freedom."[34] The film is a testament not only to the political

[31] For more on Andrejewski's *Ashes and Diamonds* (1948), see Chapter Two: Polish Literary Accounts of the Second World War, 1945-1956.

[32] For more on previous attempts to bring *Ashes and Diamonds* to the screen see Tadeusz Lubelski, "Three more approaches," *Film Quarterly* no. 6 (1994): 176-187.

[33] Ernie Brill and Lenny Rubenstein, "The Best Are Dead or Numb: A Second Look at Andrzej Wajda's 'Ashes and Diamonds,'" *Cinéaste* 11, no. 3 (1981): 25.

[34] Anna Krakus and Andrzej Wajda, "The Abuses, and Uses, of Film Censorship: An Interview with Andrzej Wajda," *Cinéaste* 39, no. 3 (2014): 6.

uncertainties experienced in 1945 Poland, but also a testament to the changing political attitudes in Poland during de-Stalinization.

*Ashes and Diamonds* opens with a pan-down shot of a church; birds chirp as the camera reveals two men resting on the ground. A third man stands watch. The trio of Maciek, Andrzej, and Drewnowski are former members of the Polish Home Army. They stand by in preparation to launch an assassination against the Secretary of the Polish Workers' Party, Konrad Szczuka. Wajda wastes little time in moving the film's plot along; the serene scene ends within minutes when the trio ambush an approaching car believed to be carrying Szczuka. With the church visible in the background, Maciek and his cohorts kill the men in the car. Believing their job complete, they flee. It is only when the real Szczuka announces himself on screen several minutes later that the viewer learns of the mistake committed by the Home Army men. Szczuka stands among the two corpses, saying to his fellow communists that he knows the attack was meant for him. His statement establishes the conflict of the film as a struggle to assert and maintain a certain political ideology in postwar Poland.

Tensions between the incoming communist leaders, including Szczuka, and Poles affiliated with the Home Army emerge at once. In the same scene where Szczuka reveals the failed assassination plot, a group of weary-looking Poles approach him and the rest of his men. The Poles ask Szczuka how long the fight will go on and how many more Poles will be forced to die before their country is free. Szczuka responds: "The end of the war isn't the end of our fight. The fight for Poland and what kind of country it's to become has only just begun."[35] His vision of Poland, however, differs from the men with

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[35] *Ashes and Diamonds*, directed by Andrzej Wajda, 00:08:15-18.

memories of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising, an event mentioned throughout the film. In the film, Szczuka spends the war watching from the Soviet Union; he arrives in Poland only at its liberation by the Red Army. Wajda, in this regard, treats Szczuka as an outsider, as someone less Polish than the Poles who risked their lives defending Warsaw.

Wajda juxtaposes Szczuka with Maciek, the Home Army veteran tasked with carrying out Szczuka's assassination. Where Szczuka appears distant and gruff, Maciek appears modish and dashing. He flirts shamelessly with Krystyna, a barmaid at the Monopole Hotel, yet he can also, as critics Ernie Brill and Lenny Rubenstien note, "line up a bunch of shot glasses, and light them to hold an impromptu service for slain partisans."[36] The scene Brill and Rubenstein reference does not occur in the Andrzejewski novel, nor was it written into the original screenplay. Wajda admits that the service happened over herring salad, not shot glasses, in the original Andrzejewski screenplay.[37] Wajda's inclusion of such a scene aids in his overall characterization of Maciek. The former Home Army fighter announces early on how he "despises" men who have loyalties outside of the resistance.[38] At the beginning of the film, Maciek believes the remnants of the Home Army must continue to fight against communism, seeing the communists as disrupting the Polish way of life. In this regard, he serves as the perfect foil to Szczuka: both men see Poland in black and white, though they differ on whose ideology is black and whose is white.

Other characters in the film operate along a similar binary as the one set by Maciek and Szczuka. Major Waga, who tasked Maciek with Szczuka's assassination,

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[36] Brill and Rubenstein, "The Best Are Dead or Numb," 23.

[37] Anna Krakus and Andrzej Wajda, "The Abuses, and Uses, of Film Censorship: An Interview with Andrzej Wajda," 6.

[38] *Ashes and Diamonds*, directed by Andrzej Wajda, 00:09:58.

explains: “It’s a very complicated situation, but the war years have taught us that we must approach these complicated situations unequivocally. No compromises one way or the other.”[39] Loyalty to one’s cause, according to Waga, is more important than reevaluating the cause one serves. Waga believes that, unless the fight against the communists continues, the only opportunities presented to members of the Home Army will come from a prison cell.

Youth affiliates of the Home Army follow Waga’s argument. A group of teenagers loyal to the Home Army find themselves in trouble with the incoming Red Army because of their commitment to building a non-communist Poland. One such teen is Szczuka’s son, who had been raised by a woman referred to as Madame Colonel Staniewicz following the death of Szczuka’s wife. The son’s encounter with the police, however, does not occur in the novel, and presents another instance of Wajda altering the script during production. The son shows little respect for the guards, offering a snide “one hundred” and then “one hundred and one” when asked his age.[40] The police slap the boy, yet he holds firm, refusing to answer questions from an authority he does not serve. Szczuka does not know of his son’s affiliation; when he asks Waga’s wife what kind of child she raised, she responds, “A good Pole, I can assure you.”[41] The resistance fronted by the Polish youth in the film hints at the real postwar generation’s struggle to accept the legitimacy of communist rule.

In addition to the youth, those who experienced the war from the ground appear less willing to adapt to communist rule. The barmaid Krystyna, for example, reveals to

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[39] Ibid., 00:27:28-37.

[40] Wajda discusses his inclusion of this scene in Anna Krakus and Andrzej Wajda, “The Abuses, and Uses, of Film Censorship: An Interview with Andrzej Wajda,” 6.

[41] *Ashes and Diamonds*, directed by Andrzej Wajda, 00:32:49.

Maciek that she moved to Warsaw during the war. Her father was taken and killed by Nazis almost immediately; her mother died in the Uprising. She carries with her a dose of cynicism. The desk attendant at the Monopole likewise lived through the Warsaw Uprising. In one scene, he says to Maciek "You know, without our old Warsaw, things just aren't the same. It's like losing an arm."[42] At the end of the film, he expresses a similar sentiment. As the wealthy stumble drunkenly from the Monopole, the attendant says: "If we could only celebrate a Warsaw not in ruins."[43] He leaves the hotel last, taking a Polish flag from the wall and waving it with pride. His pride differs, however, from the wealthy who leave the Monopole before him. The Polish elite, including the mayor-turned-minister Swiecki, see the change in government as a way to rise through the rankings. On the final night of the war, these men and women drink (and drink some more), toasting to a new Poland to the tune of the Polonaise.

Szczuka stresses that the "mob" of elites "doesn't represent all of Poland."[44] His assertion holds little weight by the end of Wajda's film, however. Amid all the drinking and toasting to Poland, the order to assassinate Szczuka still lingers. Even when Maciek falls in love with Krystyna and begins to doubt himself and his ability to carry out the assassination, he is pulled back into the plot by fellow Home Army veteran, Andrzej. Maciek wants to live a life away from the war; Andrzej reminds Maciek that if he doesn't assassinate Szczuka, he'll be considered a deserter who betrayed the cause of the Home Army.

[42] Ibid., 00:21:11-14.
[43] Ibid., 01:36:10-15.
[44] Ibid., 01:16:37.

In the end, Maciek's loyalty overcomes his newfound desire to leave the war behind. He kills Szczuka on May 8, 1945: Victory in Europe Day. As Maciek holds the dying Szczuka in his arms, fireworks shoot from the sky behind him. The film does not end with the death of Szczuka, nor does it end with the drunken elite finding their way out of the Monopole. Rather, the morning after the assassination, Maciek plans to flee the city and start his new life. He encounters a group of soldiers whom he attempts to flee. In return, they shoot at him. Unlike in Andrzejewski's novel, where Maciek dies at once, Wajda draws out the Home Army veteran's death. The film ends as Maciek stumbles through a field of debris, clutching his wounds until he falls and succumbs to death. With the aloof Szczuka and the alluring Maciek dead, only the drunken elite remain. They represent the future of Polish politics.

Andrzejewski's novel ends in the same manner as Wajda's film: with the two leaders of their respective political groups dead and with the daft left to govern. The differences between the two narratives exist elsewhere. Understanding those differences aids in the understanding of the different political climates under which the novel and the film were created. A conversation between Szczuka and a former aristocrat named Kalicki, for example, takes place in the novel but was omitted from the film. During the conversation, Kalicki announces that the Soviet system will eliminate Polish culture and reshape the country's history. He identifies as a socialist, renouncing his aristocratic title and crafting an image of Poland so unlike what Szczuka imagines. No such conversation takes place in the film; the assertion that the Soviets will eliminate Polish culture stands little chance against the censors.

Szczuka reveals during this same scene that he spent time in a Nazi concentration camp – referred to in the novel as a "Polish [jail]" – but holds no ill will toward Poland because he sees the country's possibilities.[45] Wajda also changed this scene in the film, disconnecting Szczuka from Poland during the war. Szczuka in the film spends the war in the Soviet Union, free from a concentration camp. That Szczuka does not share the same experience as men like Maciek is important; he appears less Polish than Maciek, the Home Army veteran. The omission of the conversation between Kalicki and Szczuka from the film reveals two things: how the communist government censored aspects of Wajda's film, but also how Wajda implored subtle changes undetected by the censors.

*Kanal* (1957) and *Ashes and Diamonds* (1958) marked the Home Army's entrance onto Polish screens. Nevertheless, Polish directors battled over how to handle the Home Army. Kazimierz Kutz's *Nobody Is Calling* (1960), for example, clashes with the depiction of war veterans in Wajda's *Ashes and Diamonds.* Kutz admits to this clash being deliberate, saying Maciek in *Ashes and Diamonds* "serves as an example of the very Polish form of stupidity that places the romantic gesture above one's own life."[46] In Kutz's film, the Home Army veteran retreats into a state of isolation. The protagonist falls in love only to fall out of love as the post-war world dilapidates around him. As Marek Haltof notes, Kutz "deheroicizes" the protagonist of his film, a choice different from Wajda's films.[47] Unfortunately for Kutz, the image of Maciek as the heroic romantic in *Ashes and Diamonds* received greater national and international recognition.

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[45] Andrejewski, *Ashes and Diamonds*, 148.
[46] Haltof, *Polish Cinema: A History*, 137.
[47] Ibid., 138.

The difference between *Ashes and Diamonds'* Maciek and *Nobody Is Calling*'s Kutz shows that the memorialization of the Home Army was still a contested issue after 1956.

The reception of *Ashes and Diamonds* versus *Nobody Is Calling* indicates how Polish society felt about the Home Army. The success of *Ashes and Diamonds* pointed to an acceptance of the Home Army as a model for Polish strength in the face of Nazi occupation. After 1956, the communist government had worked this image of the Home Army into their myth of unity as a way to legitimize their authority. By accepting that the Home Army helped in the victory over fascism, the government used anti-Nazism to create a collective Polish-communist identity. Directors like Andrzej Wajda used the government's new narrative in film, though added subtle changes undetectable by government censors but detectable by the Poles who rejected the government's authority. Films about the Home Army had the ability to reach a wide audience, giving directors an opportunity to help drive the memory of the Second World War. Film became a powerful tool for creating memory. As we shall see, after 1967 the communist government adopted the narrative of the Home Army used by Andrzej Wajda and like-minded directors during the era of de-Stalinization.

### ***Who's Story?: Polish Directors and the Holocaust***

Polish directors did not limit themselves to inherently "Polish" stories; they produced films about the Holocaust as well. Films including Aleksander Ford's *Border Street* (1949) were produced in the immediate aftermath of the war to show solidarity between Poles and Jews. *Border Street* follows the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, a Jewish revolt against the Nazis that took place one year before the Home Army's Warsaw Uprising. Worth noting, however, is that Ford's original screenplay depicted hostile

relations between Poles and Jews. The government censored the original screenplay in order to maintain an image of solidarity in the fight against fascism. The film also makes no mention of the Home Army, another product of the pre-1956 censors.[48] The Poles in *Border Street's* final cut were accepted by the government because they fought against fascism, not in defense of an independent Poland.

The representation of the Holocaust in Polish cinema after de-Stalinization was marked by a revised unity myth. After the war, unity in the fight against fascism was tied to solidarity between Poles and Jews. After the thaw, unity meant a shared and inherently Polish identity. At a moment when, as Katarzyna Person noted, Jewish survivors tried to maintain their religious identity, a trend emerged for Polish filmmakers to represent the universality of suffering.

Wajda's *Samson* (1961), for example portrays Poles and Jews engaged in a "common struggle."[49] This struggle, however, stems from the singular nature of the characters' identities. Ewa Mazierska finds in *Samson*, as in other Wajda films, that "Jewishness is a negative concept, an identity imposed upon them by the Nazi oppressors and, to a certain extent, by the Polish [antisemites]. If they had a choice, they would be and always remain Poles rather than Jews."[50] The Jewish characters in Wajda's films, according to Mazierska, look "Polish" and do not observe the religious customs of their faith. Other film critics, such as Marek Haltof and Paul Coates, argue that Wajda's

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[48] Ibid., 88-89.

[49] Marek Haltof, *Polish Film and the Holocaust: Politics and Memory* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012), 84.

[50] Ewa Mazierska. "Non-Jewish Jews, Good Poles and Historical Truth in the Films of Andrzej Wajda," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* vol. 20, no. 2 (2000): 217.

portrayal of Polish-Jewish relations comes from the political pressure placed on him by the government's censors.[51]

The need to appease censors produced a series of Holocaust films adherent to the government's unity myth. Holocaust films did not have the same level of freedom as Home Army films. Wajda's subtle exclusion of the Red Army in *Kanal*, for example, could not be replicated in Holocaust films. Films that portrayed negative Polish-Jewish relations before 1956 never made it past the censors, evidenced by *Border Street*. Even after the cultural thaw, Wajda's *Samson* shows how political pressures led to a series of films that de-Judaized Jewish characters in order to show the universality of suffering during the Holocaust.

The de-Judaization of Jewish characters in Polish Holocaust films is related to the tendency for directors to de-center Jewish characters within the narrative. Both elements combined to promote the government's unity myth. In *The Passenger* (1963), for example, director Andrzej Munk pays little attention to markers of ethnicity or nationality. What is important about Munk, though, is that he comes from an assimilated Polish-Jewish family.[52] His break from "Jewishness" is evident in the film, and Marek Haltof cites that Munk "was more interested in a universal dimension of his story, therefore the lack of emphasis on the question of nationality of Auschwitz prisoners."[53] Nevertheless, the film features a Polish protagonist and places Jewish characters in secondary roles.

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[51] Haltof, *Polish Film and the Holocaust: Politics and Memory*, 84-5.
[52] Ibid., 99.
[53] Ibid., 107.

The de-centering of Jewish characters in Holocaust films after 1956 relates to the other emerging war myth at the time: the myth of the Polish martyr. This myth shows up most often in Holocaust films through stories of Poles assisting Jews. The government reinforced this myth by stressing that Poles were innocent during the war, that they came together in a unified effort to defeat the Nazis. The Poles who died assisting Jews were hailed as martyrs. The exclusion of "Jewish martyrology," as Marek Haltof names it, meant that the narrative of the Holocaust was refocused around the Polish struggle. [54] The myth of the Polish martyr proliferated in Holocaust films during the 1960s and even spread to Polish scholarship such as Tatiana Berenstein and Adam Rutkowski's *Assistance to the Jews in Poland* (1963).[55] One film worth noting that relied on the myth of the Polish martyr is the final installment in Stanislaw Rozewicz's *Birth Certificate* trilogy, *A Drop of Blood* (1961).

Rozewicz's *A Drop of Blood* points to the role Poles played in Holocaust films. The film is significant for its depiction of Polish-Jewish relations and for its depiction of Jewish children. *A Drop of Blood* (1961) opens with a series of shots of an empty alleyway; everything appears dirty and destroyed. German voices sound offscreen, telling the viewer that no one has been found in this area. Rozewicz establishes a sense of place through these shots, introducing a Polish city overrun by the Nazis. At last a child comes out of hiding; she has a dirty face and wanders alone in search of something. She finds food, then cries before curling up around an oversized coat with the Star of David placed on the sleeve. The rest of the film follows the child, Mirka, in her attempts to hide from

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[54] Ibid., 2.

[55] For more on Berenstein and Rutkowski's work, see Chapter One: Historiography.

the Germans. She appears desolate, only showing life when she receives protection from various Poles.

Mirka's story unfolds when she visits a doctor, a man who also happened to know her father. When she first meets the doctor, Mirka proclaims: "Doctor, I don't want to live anymore. Give me poison."[56] The Nazis took her family from her, which also left her isolated from the people around her. As the film progresses, the doctor, along with several Polish women, bring Mirka out from the shadows by helping her assume a Polish identity. A Polish woman takes Mirka first to a safehouse, where the child watches longingly from the window as the Polish children play outside. Mirka's isolation ends when her caretaker brings her to an orphanage in the countryside for Polish children. The orphanage and the Polish women who run it provide Mirka with freedom. She converses with girls her age and engages in song and dance. The orphanage, with its adequate portions of food and dress-up clothes, appears not unlike a fantasy world for Mirka.

The fantasy comes to an end when the police, along with a Nazi officer known for his ability to detect "race," arrive at the orphanage. The police order the children to gather in a room for inspection, the boys on one side and the girls on the other. All of the boys pass the inspection, appearing sufficiently Polish. When the girls are inspected, a child with dark hair and dark eyes immediately gets questioned. The "race-detecting" officer orders her to step out of line, signaling that she failed the inspection. Mirka is also questioned, though is dismissed after further inspection for her "decidedly Nordic

[56] "A Drop of Blood," *The Birth Certificate*, directed by Stanislaw Rozewicz (1961; Poland, Rhythm Film Group), 01:12:50-53.

features."[57] The film ends with a final shot of Mirka's eyes, full of uncertainty. She is safe, for now, but how long her safety will last remains unsaid.

*A Drop of Blood* typifies post-thaw Polish cinema about the Holocaust. While the protagonist of the film is a young Jewish girl, her story relies on the Poles who provide her with assistance. Mirka's physical features and her ability to act "Polish" likewise determine her ability to survive. At the beginning of the film, three Polish boys approach Mirka and loudly declare "She's a Jew!"[58] When she denies these claims, the boys order Mirka to pray. They let her go only when she produces the *Our Father*, the hallmark prayer of Catholicism, from memory. Mirka's ability to assimilate leads to her survival, a concept Henryk Grynberg also writes about in *The Jewish War* (1965). The three boys, however, are presented as anomalies, as hooligans not representative of the Polish population. The rest of the film follows the Poles who risk imprisonment in order to save one Jewish child. *A Drop of Blood* focuses less on Mirka and more on gracious and generous Poles.

Rozewicz's *A Drop of Blood* followed the model for Polish films about the Holocaust after 1956. Films that did not meet government criteria were banned from cinemas. Andrzej Brzozowski's short film *By the Railway Track* (1963), for example, was banned by the government until 1992 for its non-compliance with the government's narrative.[59] Based on the short story included in Zofia Nalkowska's *Medallions* (1946), Brzozowski's film shows Poles as bystanders unwilling to help a Jewish woman who fled a concentration camp. The bystanders make a decision to save their own lives through

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[57] Ibid., 01:38:05.
[58] Ibid., 01:06:02.
[59] Haltof, *Polish Film and the Holocaust: Politics and Memory*, 92-93.

their passivity, thus challenging the image of the Polish martyr. The difference in the government's response to *A Drop of Blood* (1961) versus *By the Railway Track* (1963) was tied to the narrative the government wanted to send about the Holocaust.

The importance of a unified Polish identity, coupled with the image of the Polish martyr, comprised the government's narrative about the war during the first half 1960s. In 1967, however, the question of Polish-Jewish relations came to a halt. The Six-Day War, also known as the Arab-Israeli War, led to heightened antisemitism within the country. Wladyslaw Gomulka delivered a speech that triggered an "anti-Zionist" campaign that quickly transformed into a widespread antisemitism. A substantial portion of the country's remaining Jewish population emigrated from Poland out of fear of being persecuted. Gomulka's campaign, as Wlodzimierz Rozenbaum explains, was the catalyst in a series of political and social changes in Poland.[60]

### *Conclusion*

The cultural thaw in Poland following the call for de-Stalinization in 1956 complicated the memorialization of the war that had begun in the decade prior. Film played an important role in shaping the changing memory of the war. The film industry surged in production, producing films on topics previously banned from public discourse. The Polish School emerged to confront the social and moral problems of the day. Wajda's *Kanal* (1957) and *Ashes and Diamonds* (1958) brought to life the 1944 Warsaw Uprising and the Home Army. The increase in commemorative efforts for the Home Army, including their admittance into the ZBoWiD in 1964, signaled a change in how the

[60] Wlodzimierz Rozenbaum, "The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland, June-December 1967," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* vol. 20, no. 2 (June 1978): 218.

war was to be remembered. The government incorporated the Home Army into a myth of unity in the fight against fascism. This unity myth helped create a second myth: the myth of the Polish martyr. The image of the selfless Pole dying in the fight against fascism is evident in Holocaust films produced during the period. Rozewicz's *A Drop of Blood* (1961) portrayed Polish assistance as vital for the survival of Jews during the Holocaust. The narrative of Holocaust films, however, would change after 1967 as politics in Poland strained the country's relationship with its Jewish population. Chapter Four demonstrates how 1967 marked a definitive shift in the memorialization of the war, bringing the Home Army to the forefront and placing the Holocaust, specifically Jewish voices, in the shadows.

## Chapter Four:
## Film Production during the Government's Years of Silence, 1967-1989

On June 19, 1967, the head of the PZPR, Wladyslaw Gomulka, delivered a speech before the Trade Union Congress in Warsaw that altered the country's political and social landscape. In the speech, Gomulka stated: "we do not want a fifth column to emerge in our country. We cannot remain indifferent towards people...who support the aggressor."[1] The "fifth column" in the speech refers to Zionists, and came in response to outbreak of the Arab-Israeli War. Gomulka's "fifth column," however, soon encompassed all Jews, and the anti-Zionist campaign of 1967 transitioned into the antisemitic campaign of 1968. Championed by Gomulka's political opponent, Mieczyslaw Moczar, the antisemitic campaign resulted in a rise in Polish nationalism and a mass exodus of the country's remaining Jewish population.

The antisemitic campaign at the end of the 1960s influenced cultural production and challenged Poland's existing narrative about the Second World War. In this chapter, I argue that Polish filmmakers responded to the government's changing narrative by creating films that reflected the change. The antisemitic campaign led to increased Polish nationalism. In film, this translated to depictions of the Home Army and the larger resistance movement as pillars of strength of the Polish nation. I rely on Jan Lomnicki's *Operation Arsenal* (1978) to build this argument. I then turn to the Holocaust, which did not experience the same treatment in film as the Home Army. Tightened censorship and the eventual ban on films depicting Polish-Jewish relations resulted in years of silence that lasted until the 1980s. Films that emerged after the years of silence continued to

[1] Qtd. in Dariusz Stola, "Anti-Zionism as a Multipurpose Policy Instrument: The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland, 1967–1968," *Journal of Israeli History* 25, no. 1 (March 2006), 187.

build on the myth of the Polish martyr. I rely on Stanislaw Rozewicz's *The Lynx* (1982) to build this argument. To conclude, I show that the government's antisemitic campaign affected the memorialization of the war in Polish films after 1967. I then set up how the government's post-1967 narrative about the war would affect memorialization in post-communist Poland.

### ***Poland After Gomulka, 1967-1989***

While 1967 marked a definitive shift in political and social life in Poland, the year was merely a catalyst in a series of exclusionist behaviors with older roots. Wladyslaw Gomulka took action against minorities, including Jews, as early as the 1950s. These actions included "the preparation of a full card index for all Polish Jews" as well as placing Tadeusz Walichnowski, an "anti-Zionist expert," at the head of the National Minorities Section, later nicknamed the "Jewish Department."[2] In the mid-1960s, Gomulka's political opponent and deputy minister of the interior, Mieczyslaw Moczar, likewise recruited the "Partisans," a group of anti-German, anti-Ukrainian, and antisemitic individuals who'd operated primarily in the communist underground during the war.[3] The Partisans aided Moczar in establishing a campaign rooted in Polish nationalism. The campaign, in stressing unity among ethnic Poles, also pointed to the changing attitude about the country's Jewish population.

Poland grappled with the image of the Jew on a global scale at Auschwitz-Birkenau several months before Gomulka's speech. Work began on an official memorial in the late 1950s when the Auschwitz survivors' association held a design competition.

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[2] Rozenbaum, "The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland, June-December 1967," 219.
[3] Lukowski and Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, Third Edition, 386.

Designers from thirty-one countries submitted 426 entries. After a lack of success with the original entries, representatives from Poland, Spain, and Italy were called upon to produce a new design.[4] The process of establishing a memorial took several more years, with design ideas facing rejections and reimaginings from a jury assigned to the project. The final memorial was completed in 1967. The design of the memorial matters less in the context of the Polish government's unity myth than what was written on the plaques at the memorial. Twenty plaques, all saying the same thing in twenty different languages, read: "Four million people suffered and died here at the hands of the Nazi murderers between the years 1940 and 1945." The plaques would not be updated to acknowledge Jews by name until 1995. [5] The universalization of the victims at Auschwitz-Birkenau, an internationally recognized commemorative site, reflected changing attitudes about Poland's Jewish population at the national level.

The treatment of Jewish individuals in Poland during the 1960s led some scholars to draw parallels between Gomulka's leadership and the right-wing ideologies that predated communist rule. Z. K. Brzezinski describes how, "in a curious way, [the] emerging new Polish communist elite resembles the pre-World War II extreme right-wing groups in Poland more than it resembles either its Comintern-reared Stalinist predecessors or the earlier, internationalist founders of the Polish Communist Party."[6] He goes on to explain that the emerging Polish elite aligned with the neofascist movement of

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[4] Harold Marcuse, "Holocaust Memorials: The Emergence of a Genre," *The American Historical Review* 115, no. 1 (2010), 82.

[5] The plaques would be updated in 1995 with updated figures on the number of victims and would feature less universalistic language. The current plaques read: "For ever let this place be a cry of despair and a warning to humanity where the Nazis murdered about one and a half million men, women and children, mainly Jews, from various countries of Europe." For more see Marcuse, "Holocaust Memorials," 84.

[6] Qtd. in Rozenbaum, "The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland, June-December 1967," 219.

the pre-war years. Dariusz Stola likewise argues that Jews fared better in Poland during the Stalinist years, saying that: "in the turbulent early postwar years the [communist] regime made efforts to combat (right-wing) [antisemitism] and to protect the Jews against attacks."[7] Stola notes that anti-Jewish sentiments did not disappear during the Stalinist period, but that the government departed from overt displays of antisemitic behavior promoted in the 1930s.

Wlodzimierz Rozenbaum's research confirms the findings of Brzezinski and Stola, and connects the government's treatment of Jewish individuals in the pre-war years with the campaigns launched by both Gomulka and Moczar. Rozenbaum argues that Gomulka, who was considered to be Moczar's political rival, actually "launched and supported the pseudo-nationalism of Moczar and the nationalists outside the party as well as of the veterans organization [ZBoWiD]."[8] Gomulka and Moczar both used the ZBoWiD to promote Polish nationalism through ethnic homogeneity. Gomulka aimed to use the ZBoWiD to "subjugate real patriotic feelings and steer [veterans] into the Party's own channel."[9] When Moczar took over the organization in 1964, he and his Partisans welcomed Home Army veterans to create a sense of unity among ethnically homogenous Poles.

Joanna Wawrzyniak argues that Moczar's message of unity among Poles came from his need to draw support for his political campaign. Moczar and the Partisans brought the Home Army into the government's myth about wartime martyrdom. At the 1966 Supreme Council meeting for the ZBoWiD, one of Moczar's followers remarked

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[7] Stola, "Anti-Zionism as a Multipurpose Policy Instrument: The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland, 1967–1968," 176.

[8] Rozenbaum, "The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland, June-December 1967," 219.

[9] Qtd. in Rozenbaum, "The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland, June-December 1967," 220.

that the portrayal of the Home Army soldier had been tainted by institutions like Radio Free Europe. The speaker proclaimed that the image of the "discriminated against, impoverished, and terrified" Home Army veteran did not fit the image of an individual who, in 1966, now worked as "a university dean, or a valued doctor, engineer, mechanic, excellent civil servant or manual worker, or the owner of a private workshop...who is now an active member of the ZBoWiD and a patriot."[10] While data reveals that more Home Army veterans joined the ZBoWiD under Moczar's predecessor, Janusz Zarycki, Moczar's efforts led to a wider acceptance of the Home Army in Poland.

Wawrznyiak further explains that the ZBoWiD became an institution dedicated to Polish nationalism during the 1960s. In 1966, the Main Directorate for the ZBoWiD announced that the communist party and state-backed groups would provide financial and structural support for the organization.[11] This meant that organizations including the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare offered services specifically for ZBoWiD members. Wawrznyiak describes the relationship between the state and members of the ZBoWiD as a "patron-client relation" where "loyalty to the state became ensconced in society...via monopoly control over social welfare, the awarding of military honours, and the organization of anniversary celebrations."[12] The changes the ZBoWiD underwent in the 1960s pointed to the changing narrative about the Second World War in Poland. By 1967, a new narrative would be solidified.

As the narrative about the Home Army changed to fit the ethno-nationalist campaign launched by Moczar, the narrative about the Holocaust changed as well. The

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[10] Wawrzyniak, *Veterans, Victims, and Memory*, 187.
[11] Ibid., 178.
[12] Ibid., 183.

treatment of Poland's Jewish population after Gomulka's speech and Moczar's political success affected how the country memorialized the Holocaust. The government launched an official "anti-Zionist" campaign in 1968. Historian Dariusz Stola explains, however, that many referred to this campaign as an antisemitic "witch-hunt." The government expelled Jewish members of the PZPR from their positions and protests emerged in which individuals waved banners with slogans such as "Purge the Party of Zionists" and "We'll Cut Off the Head of the Anti-Polish Hydra."[13] Upwards of 20,000 Jews and people of Jewish origin left Poland during the campaign years, leaving the remaining population a fraction of what it used to be.

Mass Jewish emigration from Poland continued through the end of the 1960s as a result of the government's campaign. The campaign began to rely on the image of the anti-Communist Jew in order to justify its antisemitic behavior.[14] When Edward Gierek replaced Gomulka as head of the PZPR in 1970, little happened to reverse the effects of the campaign. While anti-Jewish propaganda subsided under the new leadership during the first half of the 1970s, Gierek's past caught up with him by the later half. Joanna Michlic argues that, "Gierek, who had himself participated in the anti-Jewish campaign of 1968, neither dissociated his Communist government from the events of 1968 nor condemned their anti-Jewish aspect."[15] Anti-Jewish propaganda reemerged in the public sphere by 1975 in response to Poland's growing economic problems. Soon, "Jewish"

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[13] Stola, "Anti-Zionism as a Multipurpose Policy Instrument: The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland, 1967–1968," 193, 194.

[14] Joanna Beata Michlic, "'Judeo-Communists, Judeo-Stalinists, Judeo-Anti-Communists, and National Nihilists': The Communist Regime and the Myth, 1950s–80s," in *Poland's Threatening Other*, The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present (University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 257; hereafter cited as "Judeo-Communists."

[15] Ibid., 258.

became synonymous with "anti-Polish" in an effort to solidify the ethno-nationalist campaign seeking to create a unified identity.[16]

With antisemitism infiltrating Polish politics, Poland entered what Marek Haltof refers to as a "time of organized forgetting about the Holocaust."[17] The Holocaust as an event that affected Jews received little attention during the 1970s and into the 1980s. A shift in this narrative did not occur until the mid-1980s, first with the arrival of the French documentary *Shoah* (1985) to Polish screens and again with Jan Blonski's 1987 essay "The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto." Blonski's essay effectively ended the silent years and called for a reevaluation of Polish-Jewish relations during the Holocaust. His argument that Poles were complicit in the Holocaust due to their passivity challenged the myth of the Polish martyr that dominated Polish politics and public discourse.[18]

The discourse that emerged in Poland after both the screening of *Shoah* and the publication of Blonski's essay led to a revival in works that dealt with the Holocaust and Polish-Jewish relations. In 1988, for example, Andrzej Szczypiorski published *The Beautiful Mrs. Seidenman*. The novel tells the story of a blonde haired, blue eyed Jewish protagonist living in occupied Warsaw in 1943. The plot follows the protagonist, Irma, as she uses her physical attributes and false papers to leave the Warsaw ghetto. Irma faces peril outside of the ghetto, including arrest and a miraculous rescue. The rest of Warsaw's Jews unknowingly wait on the other side of the ghetto's wall for the burning of the ghetto after the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. Szczypiorski's novel, while buying into tropes about

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[16] Ibid., 259.
[17] Haltof, *Polish Film and the Holocaust*, 118.
[18] For more on Jan Blonski's essay, see Chapter Two: Historiography.

the amicable relationship between Poles and Jews, also offers new perspectives on a complex and contested history.

The 1980s as a turning point in the narrative about Polish-Jewish relations again reflects the political situation in Poland at the time. Strikes began to appear across the country over the deteriorating economic situation. In August 1980, Lech Walesa brought together the strike committees that had organized in Gdansk. In September of the same year, the strikers from Gdansk joined with other trade unions across the country and formed a single entity: Solidarity.[19] Under the leadership of Walesa, Solidarity grew in size and strength. The movement came to a halt in December 1981, however, when the Polish government imposed martial law that would last until 1983.

In terms of cultural production, the declaration of martial law meant the government prioritized censoring some topics over others. Marek Haltof notes that martial law led the government to place a ban on what they considered "unwanted" films. At the local level, however, martial law led to an unofficial (and unsuccessful) boycott of both pro-communist filmmakers and filmmaking for state television.[20] The official ban included films like Wajda's *Man of Iron* (1981), which depicts Solidarity and their successful efforts in establishing an independent union. The unofficial boycott, in contrast, included films like Roman Wionczek's *Godnosc* (1984), which offers a different perspective on the Solidarity movement.[21] As we shall see, films about Polish-Jewish relations and the Holocaust were actually unaffected by the government's ban, leading to a resurgence in Polish cinema dealing with a previously censored topic.

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[19] Lukowski and Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, Third Edition, 396-398.

[20] Haltof, *Polish Cinema: A History*, 254.

[21] For more on Polish films produced during the period of martial law see Haltof, *Polish Cinema: A History*, 254-271.

Martial law ended in 1983, but the tumultuous political situation in the country persisted through the end of the decade. The imposition of martial law led to the termination of several socio-political groups, including Solidarity.[22] The trade union was able to legally reform shortly thereafter, and the government released the remaining political prisoners – many of whom were members of Solidarity – in 1986. The situation did not improve, however, as members of Solidarity refused to participate in a "consultative assembly" sponsored by the communist government. The result was a political stalemate.[23]

Strikes continued throughout 1988 and the rising conflict between Solidarity and the government led officials to contemplate reintroducing martial law. Instead of escalating the conflict, however, the government issued a decree on August 26, 1988 that called for a series of talks between Solidarity and the government.[24] The "round table" talks began several days later when Lech Walesa met with interior minister General Kiszczak. On April 5, 1989, after over eight months of dialogue between the government and Solidarity, change had come to Poland. By June 1989, semi-free elections took place which allowed parties other than the PZPR to obtain some political representation.[25] The offices of the president and the Senate were also reinstated. Forty-five years of communist rule came to an end, but not without leaving a lasting impact on Polish political and social life. The political climate in Poland during the last two decades of communist rule affected the memorialization of the Second World War.

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[22] Lukowski and Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, Third Edition, 403.
[23] Ibid., 404.
[24] Ibid., 407.
[25] Ibid., 407.

***A Celebration of Resistance: The Home Army and Film, 1967-1989***

The Home Army was unaffected by the antisemitic campaign of the late 1960s, and a ban was never issued for films dealing with its memory. In fact, the newly constructed image of the Home Army came to stand for other Polish military groups. Television shows including *Four Tankmen and a Dog* (1966-67) and *More Than Life at Stake* (1967-1968) used the glorified image of Home Army in their own narratives.[26] Films about Polish resistance continued to be produced, including Jerzy Passendorfer's *Day of Purification* (1969) and Janusz Morgenstern's film about the Warsaw Uprising: *Kolumbowie* (1970). Even as artistic priorities shifted to depicting the communist government and communist Poland, films about the Home Army continued to emerge.[27] One such film, Jan Lomnicki's *Operation Arsenal* (1978), continued the tradition of using the Home Army as a model for Polish resistance.

*Operation Arsenal* is based on true events that took place March 26, 1943 in Warsaw. The film follows a group of youths from the Grey Ranks, part of the Polish Underground, in their attempts to free their troop leader, nicknamed "Rudy." Lomnicki fills the film with recognizable imagery of the Home Army and the Underground State, including the repeated use of the Kotwica.[28] The opening scene of the film likewise establishes it as a tale of Polish heroism in the wake of Nazi occupation. The film opens with a shot of the Nazi flag flying over a building in Warsaw. Three members of the Grey Ranks soon appear on screen, all working together to take down the flag. One of the three – Rudy – scales the building, making it to the roof and successfully removing the Nazi

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[26] Haltof, *Polish Film and the Holocaust*, 118.
[27] Haltof, *Polish Cinema: A History*, 244.
[28] Kotwica in Polish means "anchor." The Kotwica was the symbol used by the Home Army and the Polish Underground State. It remains a well-recognized and well-used symbol in Poland today.

flag. In its place, he raises the Polish flag. With the symbol of the Polish nation flying proudly, the story unfolds.

Lomnicki shows life in occupied Warsaw through the members of the Grey Ranks, the scouting branch of the Polish Underground that worked directly with the Home Army. As the three flag-stealers bike through Warsaw, they ride past both the Kotwica painted on brick walls and people being rounded up by the Nazi Schutzstaffel (SS). The boys also come across the news screening of an update on what's happening on the Eastern Front. Recognizing the footage as German propaganda, the boys sabotage the screening. One of the three throws a rock at the screen, which buys the others time to use a makeshift bomb to set the projector on fire. Satisfied, they run away.

The boys flee to the market where, coincidentally, a character delivers the only explicit line about a Jew. As the boys barter, a Nazi yells "Stop, you Jewish pig" and the camera pans to show a Jewish person being attacked by the Nazi.[29] One of the boys, identified as Alek, steps in and counters the Nazi's attack. The next scene involves him and his friends discussing whether or not Alek's decision to intervene was worth it. Rudy appears hesitant to admit Alek did the right thing. The conversation calls to mind the same tropes utilized in Polish films about the Holocaust. Alek's decision to defend the "helpless" Jew positions him as the "selfless" Pole, prepared to face the consequences for his actions.

The trope of the selfless Pole carries throughout the film, and becomes applicable to more than just attitudes toward Jews. Later in the film a member of the Grey Ranks sneaks out to remove a German sign from the statue of Nicolaus Copernicus, the fifteenth

[29] *Operation Arsenal*, directed by Jan Lomnicki (1978; Poland: Polska Studio "Iluzjon"), 00:07:23.

century Polish mathematician and astronomer. He risks detection from the SS men patrolling the streets. Other members of the Underground act similarly. In a classroom that overlooks where the SS play recreational games, members of the Grey Ranks gather together to plan a secret attack against the Nazis. There is also one moment in the film where a character says "We keep our guns in storage" to which another responds "You must be waiting for the Uprising."[30] The talk of the Uprising is treated as a selfless act, one Underground fighters are willing to die for.

The subject of death aids in Lomnicki's characterization of the Home Army and the Underground movement. When Zoska, a fellow member of the Grey Ranks, says to Rudy that he wants his inevitable death to mean something, Rudy counters with cynicism. Rudy says to him: "Who will care how we died?"[31] The line is ironic, both in the context of the film and in the context Poland in 1978, the year of the film's release. By 1978, the Home Army had become a celebrated organization, the embodiment of what it meant to be a hero. As the film progresses, the Underground characters killed for their allegiance do not die in vain. Their deaths come to symbolize the greater resistance movement and provide a spark for the living Underground members preparing for the main event: the 1944 Warsaw Uprising.

Before the spark could be ignited though, a series of events had to occur. In the film, these events begin when another member of the Underground, Heniek, finds himself face-to-face with the SS. The SS invade his home, ransacking his belongings until they find his stash of coded information about the Underground. The Gestapo take him to an interrogation room, threatening to send him to Pawiak Prison: a holding cell for Poles

[30] Ibid., 00:15:14-18.
[31] Ibid., 00:20:36.

awaiting deportation. During the interrogation, the Nazis find the name "Rudy" in Heniek's journal with a coded address. Heniek, succumbing to the relentless Nazi torture, gives up Rudy's location. The SS then invade Rudy's home, arresting his father and taking Rudy to the same interrogation site as Heniek. The Rudy's arrest mobilizes the Grey Ranks to get their troop leader back in an effort to lift the spirits of the people of Warsaw under Nazi oppression.

The Grey Ranks appear to face impossible odds, yet prepare to risk everything in order to save Rudy. Their dedication is summed up when one member of the Grey Ranks says: "We can't let [the Nazis] tread on us. Only then we can preserve our humanity."[32] Rudy himself continues to fight against all odds. He, unlike Heniek, never gives up the location of anyone operating in the Underground. The Nazis, in response, deface and torture his body through a myriad of tactics. They shave his head and, in a gesture of mockery, use a confiscated stamp bearing the Kotwica to imprint the symbol of resistance across his scalp.

When the Nazi's transport Rudy to Pawiak, the rescue operation commences. The film cuts between scenes of the Grey Ranks preparing themselves and of Rudy continuing the fight on his own. Rudy, not knowing of the rescue operation, says to the doctor at the prison: "Do you have any poison?"[33] The doctor continues the work of the SS, asking Rudy for the location of the Underground. Rudy, however, continues to ask for poison. He would rather die than betray his men, a sentiment that reaffirms the image of the Polish martyr. While the SS transport Rudy from Pawiak to the interrogation room, the Grey Ranks prepare the attack. They officially launch the attack when Rudy goes

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[32] Ibid., 00:33:50-53.
[33] Ibid., 00:54:02.

back to Pawiak, beginning by shooting at the SS and setting the transport with Rudy and the other prisoners on fire. The entire rescue mission takes little time; the Grey Ranks free Rudy and the other prisoners and take them to Old Town Warsaw.

The film does not end with Rudy's successful rescue. After the rescue, Lomnicki amplifies the image of the Polish martyr. Over the course of the fight one of the Grey Ranks, Alek, sustains a serious stomach injury. He is taken to the hospital by his girlfriend, Basia. The two dream of a life together. When the doctor takes Alek back to surgery, all appears okay. Mere moments later, the nurses wheel out a stretcher with Alek's corpse on it; the doctor says the injuries were inoperable on. Alek becomes a martyr, dying for the sake of the resistance. Rudy likewise faces substantial injuries from his time in the interrogation room and at Pawiak. His epiphany comes when he tells his fellow Grey Ranks about the newfound purpose he has found in dying. He dies shortly thereafter, never making it to surgery.

In addition to Rudy and Alek's deaths, the Underground realizes in the final moments of the film that the Nazis knew more about them than they realized. All appears hopeless, the possibility of an uprising crushed before it had a chance to begin. Lomnicki includes additional footage, however, that brings back the spirit of the resistance. The director uses footage from the assassinations of two of the Nazis responsible for the real Rudy's torture. Members of the Underground carried out both assassinations within two months of their successful rescue. The film draws to a close after the deaths of the Nazis, showing how neither Rudy nor Alek died in vain. Both deaths were important in propelling the goals of the Underground forward. Rudy and Alek are memorialized as martyrs, the embodiment of what it means to fight for Poland.

Lomnicki's *Operation Arsenal* (1978) was not alone in celebrating the Home Army and the Underground movement. Ewa Petelska and Czeslaw Petelski's *The Birthday* (1980), for example, tells the story of a young boy growing up in occupied Warsaw from 1938 until the Warsaw Uprising in 1944. He goes from wanting to study in the Sorbonne to giving up academic pursuits in favor of joining the Underground. The heroization of Polish resistance fighters in films produced in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s did not disappear with the fall of communism in 1989. Films about the Warsaw Uprising and the Home Army have continued to appear in Polish cinema, with Jan Komasa's *Warsaw '44* (2014) serving as one of the most recent examples. The image of the Home Army solidified in Polish memory during the final decade of communism through films like *Operation Arsenal*. How to memorialize the Home Army is no longer a contested issue in Poland.

***A Silent Past: The Holocaust and Film, 1967-1989***

The antisemitic campaign launched in 1967 affected the Polish film industry and the portrayal of the Holocaust in film. Jewish filmmakers left Poland in the years between 1968 and 1970, fleeing the same persecution as other Polish Jews across the country. The communist government also reentered a period of tightened censorship as a result of the campaign. Films that reflected the "true spirit of socialism" were to be the new standard, a mandate reminiscent of the call for Socialist realist films in the years prior to de-Stalinization.[34] Films about the Holocaust were particularly affected by the government's new censorship laws, and an eventual ban was issued for films dealing with Polish-

[34] Haltof, *Polish Cinema: A History*, 171.

Jewish relations.[35] Projects about prominent Jewish figures during the Holocaust, including Janusz Korczak and Jerzy Lipman, were terminated. Jan Rybkowski's *Ascension Day* (1969) was likewise shelved for not adhering to the myth of the Polish martyr.[36]

The films that emerged during the silent years centered largely on either the Polish plight or on the Holocaust as a generalized event. *The Face of an Angel* (1970), for example, follows a young boy in a concentration camp for Polish children. Similarly, *Remember Your Name* (1974) tells the story of a Russian survivor at Auschwitz reuniting with her son, who had been raised by a Polish family. Marek Haltof notes that films about parents and children reuniting after the war were common in Polish cinema, but that this motif was not applied to Jewish survivors until the post-communist period with *Keep Away from the Window* (2000).[37] The lack of films about Jewish reunions, or Jewish characters, during the 1960s and 1970s was a political choice executed by the Polish government. The government acted out of fear, worrying that films about the Jewish plight would muddle the myth of national unity they wanted to promote. As a result, Polish films produced during this period decentered Jews from films about the Holocaust.

Edward Gierek replacing Gomulka as head of the PZPR did little to change the narrative of the Holocaust during the 1970s. The silence continued. Gierek feared that any mention of the annihilation of Polish Jews would lead to talk about what Haltof calls the "embarrassing [antisemitic] campaign of 1968" and ruin the image Gierek built for himself.[38] In addition to silence about Polish-Jewish relations, the government avoided

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[35] Haltof, *Polish Film and the Holocaust*, 118.
[36] Ibid., 119, 135.
[37] Ibid., 119, 120.
[38] Ibid., 135.

the topic of the Holocaust more generally. Haltof notes how talk of the Holocaust "could also open the issue...of complicity of Poles for the wartime events that happened on their soil."[39] Rather than confront the country's past, the government covered it up.

Poland's silent years drew to a close during the 1980s. After the declaration of martial law in December 1981, the government became more concerned with suppressing films that negatively depicted the communist government. As a result, several films about the Holocaust and Polish-Jewish relations were made between 1981 and 1983. They appeared at the 1984 Festival of Polish Films in Gdansk, pointing to a reemergence of the Holocaust in Polish public discourse.[40] Jerzy Hoffman's *According to the Decrees of Providence* (1983), for example, tells a story of survival centered around a thirteen-year-old Jewish girl. Hoffman's film, however, utilized what critics referred to as "clichéd aspects" reminiscent of previous Holocaust films. One such aspect – the protagonist receiving a Polish birth certificate and finding refuge in a Polish orphanage – brought to mind Stanislaw Rozewicz's *A Drop of Blood* (1961).[41] Hoffman's film reveals that, while the silent years had ended, the discourse surrounding the memory of the Holocaust remained unchanged.

An additional film produced during this period worth noting is Stanislaw Rozewicz's *The Lynx* (1982). Much like his previously discussed *A Drop of Blood* (1961), Rozewicz's film relies on the trope of the honest Pole and plays into the myth of the Polish martyr. At a glance, the film appears unrelated to the Holocaust, focusing instead on the relationship between a priest and a partisan. The partisan, a man called

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[39] Ibid., 135.
[40] Ibid., 140.
[41] Ibid., 144-45. For more on *A Drop of Blood* (1961), see Chapter Three: The Polish Filmmaker's Response to the Home Army and the Holocaust, 1956-1967

Lynx, seeks out a Polish priest after receiving orders to execute Alojz, a Pole the partisans named a traitor for conspiring with the Nazis. Lynx desires absolution for whatever sin he is about to commit in the name of the resistance. The conflict revolves around whether or not the priest should grant absolution and whether or not Alojz is a traitor. A deeper look into the film, however, points to the relationship between Poles and Jews during the Second World War.

Rozewicz's *The Lynx* opens with a series of establishing shots, placing the viewer in a somber and desolate village in rural Poland. Sad organ music plays and the opening scene reveals more of the destruction inflicted on the village. Rozewicz then transports the viewer into a forest; all remains empty until a group of people arrive on screen. They wear all black and wander the forest until the whirring sound of a plane plays offscreen; then they disappear. As the people hide, an old man – Alojz – enters the forest. The scene, silent save the sound of the plane, establishes the film's setting, but also foreshadows a later revelation. The people in black are Jews; they are hiding from the Nazis who have attacked their village. Alojz ties into this scene because, as shown later in the film, he protects the Jews who have not yet fled to the forest.

The film turns to Father Konrad, the priest later approached by Lynx. Father Konrad carries out his priestly duties, first going to administer last rights to a dying villager. He then takes a walk through a field before arriving at an empty church where he begins to pray on one side of a confessional. As he prays, choral music begins to play. His prayers are interrupted by the entrance of a young man: Lynx. The two sit on opposite sides of the confessional and Lynx confesses to Father Konrad that he comes from afar to carry out a death sentence against a traitor in the name of "the

organization."[42] Lynx's words overwhelm the priest, and two have a face-to-face conversation after Father Konrad has a few moments to process what he has just been told. In keeping with his priestly obligations, Father Konrad urges Lynx not to kill the alleged traitor, Alojz. This first exchange between the two characters establishes the film's conflict, as Father Konrad grapples with whether or not Alojz is a traitor to the Polish nation and, therefore, if Lynx's actions can be justified.

Lynx believes he represents the Polish cause and is prepared to execute anyone complicit in crimes against his homeland. He says to Father Konrad: "That's what they react to. Terror...Germans, traitors, everyone! It shows we have power."[43] Lynx believes that the partisans' plot serves as a statement to the Nazis; the execution of a traitor gives agency back to Poland. Father Konrad does not see this as a sign of power, but he nevertheless gives Lynx Alojz's location. Of course, as soon as Father Konrad gives Alojz's location, he urges Lynx not to rush into carrying out the killing. The priest himself wants to investigate whether or not Alojz is actually a traitor. Their conversation turns back to the question of absolving sins until Lynx finally remarks: "In the hell we're living in, there are no sins."[44] What begins as a conversation about absolving sins turns into a critical commentary about the Nazi occupation and the experience of Poles during the war.

Lynx is not the only character to speak out against the Nazi occupation. Hela, an old woman who lives with and takes care of Father Konrad, says that the Nazis "catch everyone. Even old men."[45] She says this in response to an elderly man, Darus, who has

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[42] *The Lynx*, directed by Stanislaw Rozewicz (1982; Poland: Film Unit "Tor"), 00:14:25.
[43] Ibid., 00:18:10-20.
[44] Ibid., 00:20:25.
[45] Ibid., 00:29:45.

shown up to her home and asks what use the Nazis have for him. When Darus asks if he can stay a night in the property's barn, however, both Father Konrad and Hela are hesitant. Hela eventually kicks Darus out, at which point Father Konrad says Darus is "a human being after all." Hela curtly responds, "Stop with your philosophy, Father."[46] Their conversation points to the different attitudes Poles held about their role in the war. While Rozewicz does not explicitly name Darus as a Jew, Hela's unwillingness to house him in her barn parallels the real attitude some Poles held toward helping Jews during the war. By contrast, Father Konrad represents the righteous Pole willing to help.

Father Konrad finds himself grappling with the fate of his village's Jewish population throughout the remainder of the film. Before going to visit Alojz to investigate whether or not he is a traitor, Father Konrad enters an abandoned house. The scene appears insignificant until he finds a jacket in the corner of the room with an armband bearing the Star of David. This moment reveals the aftermath of a roundup. The village's Jewish residents have been deported. Father Konrad's encounter with Alojz after visiting the abandoned house furthers this point. Little comes of the talk between Father Konrad and Alojz until the priest goes to leave, at which point a little girl with dark hair exits Alojz's house. When she sees Father Konrad, she turns and retreats immediately back into the house. It is then that Father Konrad learns Alojz is hiding Jews in his home.

The revelation that Alojz is illegally housing Jews complicates Father Konrad's relationship with Lynx, who returns to the church to ask again for absolution. At first, the priest says that Lynx does not need to kill Alojz. He then says, in reference to the execution, "I'll do it for you."[47] He offers Lynx absolution in the form of carrying out the

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[46] Ibid., 00:31:00-10.
[47] Ibid., 00:51:18.

deed himself. This scene creates a different portrait of the priest, leading the viewer to wonder if the film will become a story about Polish complicity. Such a film would never make it past the censors, though. The rest of the film follows Father Konrad's attempts to protect Alojz.

At one point in the film, Hela warns Father Konrad not to return to Alojz's house because the police had come to town that day. The priest, playing the part of the martyr, does not listen. He finds Alojz several days after their first encounter and confronts the old man about hiding Jews. Alojz does not deny this and, furthering his own image as a selfless Pole, says he's not hiding them for the money. Father Konrad promises not to tell the authorities, and Alojz responds that he does not care if he's labeled a traitor. He believes in his cause and does not fear the consequences. Father Konrad briefly goes back on his word, saying that he's "going to bring them. That's for sure," in reference to alerting the authorities about Alojz's secret.[48] Again, the viewer wonders how the film will treat the subject of Polish-Jewish relations.

The answer comes in the final meeting between Lynx and Father Konrad to discuss the execution of Alojz. Lynx hands Father Konrad the gun, only to fall into a maniacal laughter. The film becomes ambiguous for a moment as Father Konrad appears to shoot Lynx before he himself passes out. When he wakes up, the body of Lynx is gone and Alojz is there waiting for him. A statue appears to have been shot as well. Alojz helps Father Konrad up and reports to him that he went to build a bunker for "my Jews," only to find in the morning that they were gone.[49] This moment helps explain the opening scene of Alojz in the forest, alluding to the fact that he has been working there for some

[48] Ibid., 01:08:55.
[49] Ibid., 01:18:12.

time to create a hiding place for the Jews. Alojz then tells the priest that they should flee, and that they're both going to join the partisans. The final moments of the film follow Alojz and Father Konrad leaving the village in search of life elsewhere.

Stanislaw Rozewicz's *The Lynx* plays into the same tropes used in previous Polish Holocaust films in order to discuss Polish-Jewish relations during the Holocaust. The film takes agency away from its Jewish characters, making them reliant on the kindness of Poles in order to survive. Rozewicz's film likewise buys into the myth of the Polish martyr through the characters of Father Konrad and Alojz. Both characters join the partisans at the end of the film, allowing them to continue to fight the Nazi occupation alongside others who share similar beliefs.

A widespread effort to challenge the depictions of the Holocaust and Polish-Jewish relations in Polish films like *The Lynx* did not begin until the mid-1980s. It was *Shoah* (1985), the documentary by Frenchman Claude Lanzmann, that opened the debate in Poland about these depictions. The communist government criticized the film, only allowing selections of the nine-hour documentary to air on Polish televisions. The general Polish public was, like the government, outraged by the film.[50] *Shoah* portrayed negative aspects of Polish-Jewish relations, including what Marek Haltof calls "the unsubstantiated claims about Christian anti-Semitism that led to the Nazi extermination of Jews."[51] This film challenged the image of Father Konrad, the Catholic priest, willingly helping a man hiding Jews. The publication of Jan Blonski's essay "The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto" (1987) likewise signaled that the years of silence had ended in

[50] Michael Meng, "Rethinking Polish-Jewish Relations during the Holocaust in the Wake of 1968," Paper presented at the Conference on Polish-Jewish Relations, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, March 2009, 7.

[51] Haltof, *Polish Cinema and the Holocaust*, 139.

Poland. The result of Poles watching *Shoah* and the attention Blonski's essay received signaled that the memorialization of the Holocaust and Polish-Jewish relations in Poland was once again becoming a contested issue. The contention that emerged would carry through the return to democracy in 1989.

### *Conclusion*

Gomulka's speech launched a campaign that altered the political and social landscape in Poland. The rise in Polish nationalism and the simultaneous rise in overt displays of antisemitism brought on by the campaign contributed to the changing narrative about the Second World War. Films about the Home Army and Polish resistance continued to appear in Polish cinema, unaffected by the government's tightened censorship on things like the Holocaust. Jan Lomnicki's *Operation Arsenal* (1978), for example, portrayed the selflessness of Underground youths in taking back Warsaw from the Nazi occupiers. The government's years of silence about Polish-Jewish relations led to the creation of Holocaust films with Poles as the center of the event. Stanislaw Rozewicz's *The Lynx* (1982), like *Operation Arsenal*, focuses on the image of the selfless Pole and portrays Jews as a people without agency. Both films reinforced the myth of the Polish martyr and portrayed unity among Poles resisting Nazi occupation. The effects of Gomulka's campaign were long-lasting, and the myth of the Polish martyr would continue to remain an important image in the government's narrative after 1989. Chapter Five demonstrates how the changing memorialization of the war in communist Poland affected the memorialization of the war in post-communist Polish museums.

## Chapter Five:
## Post-Communist Memorialization in Polish Museums, 1989-Present

In January 2020, Polish President Andrzej Duda delivered a speech to the representatives of Poland's Jewish community in which he maintained a particular stance on the Holocaust. The speech came after Duda stirred controversy for announcing he would not attend the World Holocaust Forum at the Yad Vashem Memorial Museum in Israel. He decided not to attend the Forum upon learning that he was not scheduled to give a speech at the commemoration ceremony. Duda expressed outrage, saying it was unfair that the Presidents of Germany, Russia, and France "whose governments back then sent people, Jews, to concentration camps" were scheduled to speak but Poland "who never collaborated with Germans, whose Underground State was fighting against Germans and tried to support Jews as resolutely as it could" was not scheduled to speak.[1] In his speech, Duda denied claims of Polish complicity in the Holocaust while simultaneously maintaining the amicable image of Poles helping Jews used by the communist government. Duda's speech can be situated within the larger discourse about the Second World War that emerged in post-communist Poland.

One of the ways the post-communist government contended with the narrative of the Second World War was through the establishment of public sites of memory. In this chapter, I argue that the post-communist government established museums that adapted, but did not wholly challenge, the communist government's narrative about the Second World War. Poland today has over a dozen museums dedicated to the preservation of the war. To build my argument, I rely on three. The first two, The Warsaw Rising Museum in

[1] Duda's entire speech can be accessed online at: https://www.president.pl.

Warsaw and the Home Army Museum in Krakow center on the Home Army. The third, the Museum of the Second World War in Gdansk, seeks to tell a complete story of the war from beginning to end. All three museums rely heavily on the myth of the Polish martyr promoted by the communist government. To conclude, I show that the treatment of the Second World War in Polish museums is indicative of a struggle between politics and memory that began immediately after the war.

### ***Politics and Memory: The IPN and the Rise of the Right, 1989-Present***

The 1990s transformed political life in Poland. The leader of Solidarity, Lech Walesa, became the first democratically elected president of the newly formed Third Republic of Poland in 1990. Under his leadership, Poland transitioned from a communist system to a parliamentary democracy. The PZPR disbanded, replaced by the Socialist Democratic Party (SdRP). A fully open election took place in 1991, which opened seats in the Senate and the Sejm, Poland's lower parliament house, to all political parties. A series of center-right coalition governments formed in 1991 and 1993 and the political right pushed for "de-communization."[2]

Walesa lost his reelection bid to Aleksander Kwasniewski, the leader of the left-leaning Left Democratic Alliance (SLD), in 1995. The SLD formed from the remnants of the PZPR and other left-wing groups, including the SdRP. During Kwasniewski's first term, Poland joined NATO alongside newly independent Hungary and the Czech Republic. The economy likewise stabilized by 1998, when inflation dropped below 10 per cent. Though high unemployment rates and underfunding in areas like education and public health persisted through the turn of the century, Lukowski and Zawadzki

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[2] Lukowski and Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, 2nd ed., 322.

concluded that “Poland became, in the 1990s, one of the most stable and dynamic countries of the former Soviet bloc.”[3]

Commenting on the communist government’s memorialization of the Second World War was not a priority during Walesa’s presidency nor during Kwasniewski’s first term. Reevaluating how to memorialize the Holocaust did not reemerge in public discourse until Jan Gross published *Neighbors* (2001). As we saw in Chapter Four, Jan Blonski’s “The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto” (1987) brought into question the communist government’s treatment of Polish-Jewish relations during the Holocaust. It was not until the publication of Gross’ book, however, that a widespread reevaluation of the Holocaust took place in Poland.[4] At the same time, the treatment of the Home Army remained uncontested in public discourse. While the Union of Fighters for Freedom and Democracy (ZBoWiD) fell apart in 1990, Home Army veterans established their own organization in 1989.[5] The new organization, the World Union of Home Army Soldiers, operated independent of the government and drew in members from Poland and from abroad in order to preserve the values and the sacrifices made by the Home Army.

A government-led effort to come to terms with the past did not occur until 1998 when the Polish parliament voted on an act to establish the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN). Kwasniewski vetoed the act, though the Sejm nulled his veto. In 2000, the IPN emerged as an institution dedicated to “the sacrifice, loss and damage suffered by the Polish nation in the years of the Second World War and after its

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[3] Ibid., 325.

[4] For more on Gross and Blonski see Chapter One: Historiography.

[5] Wawrzyniak, *Veterans, Victims, and Memory*, 223; the World Union of Home Army Soldiers maintains a website with information about national chapters of the organization and various museums and commemorative sites dedicated to the Home Army. This information can be accessed at: https://armiakrajowa.org.pl/ (Accessed March 2020).

conclusion" as well as "the patriotic traditions of the struggle of the Polish nation with its occupiers, with Nazism and Communism."[6] While the IPN was designed to operate independently of the Polish government, the Sejm elects the institution's president. The political majority in the Sejm possesses the ability to elect an individual whose understanding of the war aligns with their own, creating an intersection between politics and memory.[7]

The Institute of National Remembrance reigns supreme in terms of driving the narrative of the Second World War in post-communist Poland. One of the tasks of the IPN is "education and research," which includes publishing articles and monographs, as well as organizing conferences for scholars and the Polish public.[8] The IPN also opened a recent exhibit about the Holocaust meant for an international audience. The exhibit focuses on the mass genocide of Jews, but also gives some attention to the genocide of Roma and Sinti peoples as well. The mention of Jewish resistance without mentioning Polish assistance gives Jews a sense of agency that previous Polish narratives about the Holocaust left out. The exhibit, however, names the Nazis as the only perpetrators.[9] There is a reluctance on the part of the IPN to acknowledge instances of Polish collaboration.

Since its creation, the IPN has received criticism for its handling of Polish history during the Second World War. One such reason for criticism comes from the IPN's ability to not only investigate past crimes, but to prosecute perpetrators. The controversy

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[6] Quoted in Wawrzyniak, *Veterans, Victims, and Memory*, 225.

[7] For more on the election process for the IPN president, see Dariusz Stola, "Poland's Institute of National Remembrance: A Ministry of Memory?," in *Convolutions of Historical Politics*, ed. Alexei Miller and Maria Lipman (Central European University Press, 2012), 47-8.

[8] Ibid., 51.

[9] The full exhibit by the IPN is available for free download at: https://ipn.gov.pl.

surrounding the IPN's prosecution powers emerged as early as 2002, when Public Prosecutor Radoslaw Ignatiew released a report on the IPN's official findings about the Jedwabne pogrom. The report acknowledged Polish participation in the massacre, but went on to say that it was justifiable to ascribe responsibility to the Germans in a broad sense. The report read: "The presence of German military policemen from the police station at Jedwabne and other uniformed Germans…though passive, was tantamount to the consent to and tolerance of the crime against the Jewish inhabitants of the town."[10] Ignatiew also wrote that a minority of Jedwabne's population actively participated in the massacre. "The utter passivity of part of Jedwabne's population in relation to the crime committed on 10 July 1941," according to the IPN, "cannot be qualified in terms of criminal law, and therefore cannot be evaluated in terms of ascribing responsibility."[11] The official report concluded that no additional perpetrators beyond those already convicted could be found.

During his presidency, Aleksander Kwasniewski also delivered a speech about Jedwabne in which he maintained the same narrative about the Holocaust used by the communist government. Kwasniewski reminded his audience that Poland was occupied by "Hitlerite Germans" at the time of the pogrom and that "the criminals had a feeling of

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[10] Radoslaw Ignatiew released a report about the official investigation on the Jedwabne massacre that acknowledged Polish participation in the massacre but stressed the event was inspired by the German occupation. The apparent passiveness of the Jedwabne residents who watched, but did not participate in the massacre, was not, according to the report, sufficient evidence to ascribe responsibility to the entire town's population. See Radoslaw J. Ignatiew, "Findings of Investigation S 1/00/Zn into the Murder of Polish Citizens of Jewish Origin in the Town of Jedwabne on 10 July 1941, pursuant to Article 1 Point 1 of the Decree of 31 August 1944," in *The Neighbors Respond,* ed. Anthony Polonsky and Joanna B. Michlic, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 135; hereafter cited as "Findings of Investigation S 1/00/Zn."

[11] Ibid., 135.

immunity because the German occupiers encouraged such actions."[12] He also said: "The Polish state was not in a position to safeguard its citizens against a slaughter that was carried out with the consent of the Hitlerites and inspired by them."[13] Kwasniewski's reiteration of the role the Germans played in inspiring the Jedwabne massacre was not unlike the rhetoric used by the communist government. He may have aligned with the left-wing SLD, but the way Kwasniewski spoke of the war was not unique to his side of the political spectrum.

The rise in right-wing politics after the 2005 election caused the victimhood narrative and the denial of Polish participation in the Holocaust to persist. The right's rise to power stemmed from dissatisfaction with rising levels of unemployment and government spending cuts to areas including education and healthcare. The forerunner of the right, the Law and Justice Party (PiS), ran a campaign built on a "moral revolution" centered on Catholic values.[14] The PiS won the presidency in 2005 under Lech Kaczynski. His campaign stressed "conservative national values and the importance of a strong state."[15] Under Kaczynski, the PiS took an active role in strengthening Polish national identity through fashioned historical events and public spectacle. As we shall see, one such spectacle was the creation of the Warsaw Rising Museum (2004).

During the first half of the 2010s, the PiS and an opposing right-wing party called Citizens Platform (PO) used the memorization of the Second World War as a way to

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[12] On July 10, 2001 Aleksander Kwasniewski delivered a speech at the Ceremonies in Jedwabne for the sixtieth anniversary of the Jedwabne massacre. See Aleksander Kwasniewski, "Address by President of Poland Aleksander Kwasniewski at the Ceremonies in Jedwabne Marking the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Jedwabne Tragedy on 10 July 2001," in *The Neighbors Respond,* ed. Anthony Polonsky and Joanna B. Michlic (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 130.

[13] Ibid., 130.

[14] Lukowski and Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland*, Third edition, 427.

[15] Ibid., 431.

garner political support at home and abroad. In 2008, the PO established a memorial for the Jewish children of Danzig (Gdansk) who escaped to Britain between 1938 and 1939. Polish historian Ewa Stańczyk argues, however, that the PO's celebration of the country's Jews was a way for the party to gain the approval of European countries who, "up until recently, saw the memory of the Shoah as a yardstick with which to measure which states were civil and democratic and which were not."[16] The steps taken by the PO to commemorate Jewish victims was an attempt to show Europe that Poland was a civilized nation. Unlike the PO, the PiS maintained commemorative efforts for Poles that assisted Jews during the Holocaust. For example, the PiS-dominated Subcarpathian Regional Assembly backed the creation of the Ulma-Family Museum of Poles Saving Jews in World War II (2013). The museum was designed to commemorate the Ulma family, among other Poles, who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust.

The PO won the presidential election and controlled parliament in 2010, only to lose the presidency and parliament in 2015. Since the election of Andrzej Duda in 2015, the PiS have maintained control over the presidency. The parliamentary election in 2015 also resulted in a PiS victory when the Party claimed 235 of 460 seats in the Sejm. Since securing control over the government, the PiS has used its political power to direct cultural agendas in education, arts, and the media towards the promotion of "wholesome traditional patriotic values and a positive, even heroic view of Polish history."[17]

In 2018, the PiS directed the narrative about the Second World War toward a heroic view of Polish history through the passage of a Holocaust bill. The bill called for up to three years in prison or a fine for accusing the Polish nation or Poles themselves of

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[16] Stańczyk, "Poland's Culture of Commemoration," 162.

[17] Lukowski and Zawadzki, *A Concise History of Poland,* 3rd ed., 445.

collaboration with the Nazis during the Holocaust. Artistic and scientific activities were exempt. Deputy justice minister Patryk Jaki justified the bill by saying: "we have to send a clear signal to the world that we won't allow for Poland to continue being insulted."[18] The bill sparked international outrage that the Polish government was only partially respective to. Parliament voted to make it a civil, not a criminal, offense to accuse Poland of complicity in the Holocaust. The bill, now a law, contributes to the longstanding image of Polish victimhood rooted in the communist government's myth of the Polish martyr.

The struggle over the memory of the Second World War in Poland is an ongoing phenomenon. When Andrzej Duda signed the Holocaust law in 2018, he reaffirmed Poland's commitment to presenting the war in a particular way. The myth of the Polish martyr has persisted in official discourse in post-communist Poland, withstanding the change from a left-wing, communist government to a right-wing, conservative government. As a way to strengthen Polish nationalism, the current government likewise adapted the unity myth the communist government used to legitimize its authority. As we shall see, Polish museums became the most accessible way for the government to maintain an official narrative about the war in post-communist Poland.

### ***Public Spectacle: The Warsaw Rising Museum and the Home Army Museum***

Museums about the Second World War reveal that politics and memory remain intertwined in Poland. One such museum, the Warsaw Rising Museum, is a testament to Polish nationalism. The museum, located in downtown Warsaw, was the brainchild of Lech Kaczynski during his term as mayor of Warsaw and centers on three pillars of

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[18] Patryk Jaki is quoted in a *Time* article published February 1, 2018. See Tara John, "Poland Just Passed a Holocaust Bill That Is Causing Outrage. Here's What You Need to Know," *Time*, accessed March 22, 2020, http://time.com/5128341/poland-holocaust-law/.

Polish national identity: "God, honor, and fatherland."[19] A visitor traveling to the museum in 2020 has the chance to retrace the steps of the Home Army as they defended Warsaw from Nazi occupation in 1944. The first exhibit in the museum takes the visitor to a room dedicated to the role children played in the Polish underground state. A plaque at the entrance of the exhibit reads: "The children's contributions to the Warsaw Rising far outpaced their age and were no less important than those of adults."[20]

The rest of the Warsaw Rising Museum contains ephemera central to the Home Army and the Uprising. Upon leaving the children's exhibit, visitors arrive at a floor-to-ceiling monument called the "heart" of the museum which "beats for those who fought and perished – and for those who survived. It is a symbol of our remembrance and a tribute to the Warsaw Rising and those who participated in it."[21] Visitors may place their ears against the monument to hear the sounds of Polish resistance. The heroization of the Home Army carries throughout the museum. As visitors travels to the upper floors of the exhibit, they ride in an elevator covered in the armbands of fallen Home Army fighters. Visitors must also travel through a recreation of the Warsaw sewer system to experience how the Home Army avoided Nazi detection. The museum ends at the gift shop, where t-shirts, stickers, and postcards decorated with the symbol of the Home Army are available for purchase.

The Warsaw Rising Museum is not alone in its presentation of the Home Army as the embodiment of Polish strength during the Second World War. In Krakow, the Home

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[19] Ewa Stańczyk, "Poland's Culture of Commemoration," in *Poland's Memory Wars*, ed. Jo Harper, Essays on Illiberalism (Central European University Press, 2018), 162.

[20] "Children Involved in the Rising," Warsaw Rising Museum (2019: Warsaw, Poland). Information retrieved by the author December 2019.

[21] "Monument," Warsaw Rising Museum (2019: Warsaw, Poland). Information retrieved by the author December 2019.

Army Museum (2000) offers a similar presentation. The museum functions as a self-governing institution organized by the city of Krakow and the Lesser Poland Province, which encompasses sixty-one cities and towns in southern Poland. The Union of Home Army Soldiers, which organized after the collapse of the ZBoWiD, were the first to propose a museum dedicated to the Home Army in 1990. The museum opened in 2000 after gaining an entry into Krakow's register of cultural institutions. In 2001, the Krakow City Council named Home Army veteran General Emil Fieldorf "Nil" the patron of the museum.[22]

Today, the museum attempts to offer a complete portrait of the formation and disbandment of the Home Army through a range of artifacts from before, during, and after the war. Visitors walk chronologically through the exhibit, beginning with the start of the war and ending in 1989. The exhibits that don't deal directly with the Home Army, such as those on the Katyn Forest Massacre and the Holocaust, continue to tell the story of the Polish martyr. For example, one plaque from the Holocaust exhibit reads: "It was possible to save many Jews, thanks to the help of the Home Army soldiers and activists of the Polish Underground State."[23] The plaque also reminds the visitor that the Nazis were responsible for the murder of Jews.

The postwar exhibit, entitled "The Fight for Memory," provides an interesting commentary on the intersection between politics and memory. The museum, in taking an anti-communist stance, fails to tell the entire history of the Home Army during the communist period. One plaque reads: "Establishment of the [ZBoWiD] was the result of

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[22] For more on the establishment of the Home Army Museum, visit "O Nas," *Muzeum Armii Krajowej* (blog), accessed March 9, 2020, https://muzeum-ak.pl/o-muzeum/o-nas/.

[23] "It is estimated…" Home Army Museum (2019: Krakow, Poland). Information retrieved by the author December 2019.

the communist centralisation [sic], which was supposed to unite all veterans' organizations into one up to 1949. Home Army soldiers were removed from it."[24] While it was true that the communist government removed mentions of the Home Army from public discourse in the immediate postwar years, the government changed its stance in 1956 and again in 1964 when veterans were allowed to join the ZBoWiD. The museum, however, ignores both shifts in narrative. The following plaque details the efforts made by individuals independent of the government to commemorate the Home Army after 1989.

Despite ignoring how the government's narrative of the Home Army changed across the communist period, the Home Army Museum utilizes similar tropes as the post-1956 communist government. The role of the communists is deemphasized, but the museum plays on the trope of Poles uniting together to fight Nazi occupation. One quote from a museum plaque reads: "No one should remain passive when crime is committed. He, who is silent about murder – becomes an accomplice. He, who does not condemn it – allows it."[25] The rest of the exhibit speaks to the strength of the Polish Underground State. The Underground helped Polish refugees, protected Poles caught hiding Jews, and provided food for prisoners. As visitors leave the museum, they have the opportunity to look through and purchase from a much smaller selection of Home Army related paraphernalia, including pins with the organization's symbol.

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[24] "Any mentions…" Home Army Museum (2019: Krakow, Poland). Information retrieved by the author December 2019.

[25] "Quote from the 'Protest' announced on August 1942," Home Army Museum (2019: Krakow, Poland). Information retrieved by the author December 2019.

Both the Warsaw Rising Museum and the Home Army Museum present the Home Army as the greatest symbol of Polish strength during the war. The museums operate on different scales, but have a consensus in their respective exhibits. The Warsaw Rising Museum partners with country-wide organizations, including LOT Polish Airlines and PZU Group, one of Poland's largest financial institutions. The museum also grew from the vision of former president and PiS member Lech Kaczynski. In contrast, the Home Army Museum partners with local organizations, including Radio Krakow. A Museum Council oversees the museum and is appointed by the mayor of Krakow every four years. The current mayor appointing councilmembers, Jacek Majchrowski, identifies as an independent, but had ties to the PZPR and the SLD prior to his election. Majchrowski and Kaczynski, despite falling on opposite ends of the spectrum, are connected to two museums that portray the Home Army in a similar way.

***A Nationalist History: The Museum of the Second World War***

In 2017, the Museum of the Second World War opened in Gdansk as an institution dedicated to preserving and telling the history of the war to a large audience. The museum was conceived by members of the PO as early as 2008, including Polish historian and former president of the IPN's Bureau of Public Education, Pawel Machcewicz. A year after the museum's opening, PiS-affiliate and Minister of Culture and National Heritage, Pitor Glinski, appointed the newest group of members to the museum's board. The occupations of the board members vary, but many are historians or political scientists. Worth noting, however, is that Bogdan Musial, who spoke out against Jan Gross's *Neighbors*, also serves on the board.

Poland's contribution to the war is the most prominent in each exhibit of the museum, with artifacts from United States and other European soldiers and civilians less prominent. The museum stresses the suffering inflicted on the Polish nation during the war. For example, a large plaque displays a quote from Hans Frank, head of the General Government in Poland during the Nazi occupation. It reads: "Poland is to be treated like a colony. The Poles will become the Great German Reich's slaves."[26] The museum also includes patches Polish laborers were forced to wear. The description of the patch reads: "Polish forced labourers were to have the letter 'P' sewn onto their clothing. It distinguished them from the Germans. Violations of this rule were punished. The system of forced labour stemmed from the Nazis' racist ideology."[27] A chart at the end of the museum reminds visitors that non-Jewish Poles had the highest fatality rate among all non-Jewish groups.

The museum keeps with the myth of the Polish martyr in its presentation of Polish resistance, including the efforts made by the Home Army. In the "Resistance" exhibit, the section on Poland includes the oath of the Home Army. It reads: "Facing the Almighty God…I swear to be faithful to my Country the Republic of Poland…and it fight with all my strength to liberate Her from Her enslavement all the way to the sacrifice of my life."[28]

The Museum of the Second World War builds on the narrative promoted and solidified by the communist government. The most jarring example comes from a plaque

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[26] "Poland is to be…" Museum of the Second World War (2019: Gdansk, Poland). Information retrieved by the author December 2019.

[27] "Badge with the letter 'P,'" Museum of the Second World War (2019: Gdansk, Poland). Information retrieved by the author December 2019.

[28] "Polska/Poland," Museum of the Second World War (2019: Gdansk, Poland). Information retrieved by the author December 2019.

in the Holocaust exhibit about pogroms. Under the plaque for the Jedwabne pogrom reads:

> On 10 July 1941 in Jedwabne, Poles were persuaded by the Germans, probably following a pre-existing German plan, to round up their Jewish neighbours in the market square. They humiliated, beat and killed them there. They forced them to overturn a statue of Lenin, which had been erected during the Soviet occupation. Then, the Jews were driven to a barn near the Jewish cemetery and burnt alive in it. Several hundred Jews were murdered. Their property was stolen.[29]

The insistence that Poles participating in the Jedwabne pogrom were persuaded by the Germans is meant to exonerate the Polish nation of complicity in the Holocaust. The communist government used the same narrative during the 1960s. The Holocaust exhibit includes the fate of Poles during the Holocaust to show that Poles were victims in the Holocaust. The plaque from the Jedwabne pogrom argues Poles cannot also be victimizers. As we have seen, the victim/victimizer dichotomy at the Museum of the Second World War has roots in communist politics.

Ironically, though, the museum uses the victim/victimizer dichotomy to show how Poles resisted the communist government after the war. The post-war exhibit shows how the struggle for freedom did not end for members of the Home Army in 1945 and portrays the organization as the embodiment of Polish strength. This characterization of the Home Army, though, formed during the communist period. The most notable way the museum portrays Poland's post-war story is through a short, animated film produced by the Institute of National Remembrance, *The Unconquered* (2017). The film plays on loop in the last exhibit of the museum and is a testament to the strength of the Home Army and

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[29] "Pogrom in Jedwabne," Museum of the Second World War (2019: Gdansk, Poland). Information retrieved by the author December 2019.

the Polish Underground during the war.[30] *The Unconquered,* despite its critical portrayal of the Soviet Union and the communist government, buys into the same tropes about the Holocaust and the Home Army used by the government during the communist period.

The myth of the Polish martyr appears when the narrator says, “There are Poles who save Jews, despite the threat of the death penalty.”[31] As the narrator speaks, a Polish nurse reveals Jewish children hidden behind a locked door. The scene cuts to Auschwitz and the work of the Polish resistance from within the concentration camp. When a member of the Polish underground attempts to deliver a report on the Nazis to the United States, Franklin Delano Roosevelt turns his back. The narrator says: “We are the first to alert the world about the Holocaust, though politics appear to be more important than human lives – and nobody listens to us.”[32] When the film mentions the 1943 Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, the Polish Jews are shown fighting “without even a chance for success.”[33]

The film transitions away from the brief mention of the Holocaust to underground resistance and the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. The treatment of the Warsaw Uprising differs from that of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. The first scene shows a Home Army soldier adjusting his armband, so that the entire Polish flag shows, as he charges into battle. Then the narrator says how Poles broke the German Enigma code yet, “in exchange for all that we do, we are betrayed.”[34] The film does not end with 1945, but continues to show how Poles resisted communist rule. The Poznan workers strikes of 1956 and the Solidarity

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[30] *The Unconquered*, directed by Michal Misinski (2017: Poland; Institute of National Remembrance).

[31] Ibid., 00:01:59.

[32] Ibid., 00:02:20-24.

[33] Ibid., 00:02:35.

[34] Ibid., 00:03:16.

strikes in the 1980s, coupled with the faith Poles placed in Pope John Paul II, create the complete nationalist picture. The war ends in Poland in 1989 when the Iron Curtain falls.

*The Unconquered* and the Holocaust exhibit at the Museum of the Second World War show that political change in 1989 did not lead to a change in the government's narrative about the war. *The Unconquered* is decidedly anti-communist in its depiction of post-war Poland. The portrayal of the Home Army, however, relies on the same image the government used to promote unity during the communist period. The description for the Jedwabne massacre likewise relies on the victim/victimizer dichotomy the communist government used after 1967. The post-communist government adapted the politics of memory the government perused during the communist period for commemorative sites like the Museum of the Second World War.

### *Conclusion*

The change in Polish politics after the fall of communism in 1989 did not lead to a reversal of the communist government's narrative about the Second World War. The post-communist government adapted, but did not wholly change, the narrative the communist government used. The continued rise in Polish nationalism and contested nature of Holocaust memory in public versus official discourse points to a struggle over memory that began before 1989. The museums dedicated to the Second World War are indicative of this memory struggle. The Warsaw Rising Museum and the Home Army Museum use the image of the Home Army to create a unity myth rooted in Polish nationalism. The Museum of the Second World War likewise reaffirms the victim/victimizer dichotomy the communist government used after the 1967 antisemitic campaign. The image of the Polish martyr utilized in each of the three museums has

allowed the post-communist government to peruse a politics of memory with roots older than 1989.

# Conclusion

Politics have the power to shape memory, determining the stories that are told and the ones that are suppressed. Poland's memory struggle is not over and remains, even today, a site of political contestation. This study has attempted to demonstrate how politics during the communist period affected the memorialization of the Second World War in both communist and post-communist Poland. I identified three political turning points during the communist period that caused the narrative about the war to change in official discourse: 1945, 1956, and 1967. I included 1989 as a fourth turning point to show how the post-communist government adapted, but did not wholly change, the narrative about the war. Within the context of these four political turning points I have shown that the memory of the Second World War has changed radically over the last seventy-five years as the Polish government, in both the communist and post-communist periods, pursued a politics of memory.

The literature and films produced from 1945-1989 responded to the government's narrative about the war at each of the three turning points identified in the communist period. Literature produced from 1945-1956 varied in its response to the government's message as Polish authors struggled to make sense of the war themselves. When films emerged about the Second World War after 1956, two types of war narratives dominated the industry: stories about the Holocaust and the Home Army. The films produced from 1956-1967 and 1967-1989 engaged with the government's changing narrative. The myth of the Polish martyr used by the government to promote unity after 1956 found its way into films about the Holocaust and the Home Army throughout the rest of the communist period.

The way memorialization changed during the communist period solidified a narrative of the war that has persisted in post-communist Poland. Polish government officials identify 1989 as a turning point that affected the narrative of the Second World War. As we saw in Chapter Five, however, political changes after 1989 have not led to a break from the dominant narratives about the war used by the communist government. Polish museums that emerged after 1989 adapted the narrative promoted by the communist government for a post-communist audience. In particular, the treatment of the Holocaust and Home Army in Polish museums reveals a connection between politics and memory built on the government's pursuit of a politics of memory.

The continued struggle between politics and memory remains a topic of interest among historians of contemporary Poland. A longer project would look at more than literature, cinema, and museums to show how the communist government's changing narrative affected multiple forms of Polish cultural production during both the communist and post-communist periods. For example, further research might ask the questions: how did the communist government's narrative affect the teaching of the Second World War in Polish schools? And: How has the teaching of the Second World War changed in post-communist Poland? The memory struggle of the Second World War was not unique to the communist period, and it continues to evolve in post-communist Poland. The relevancy of the topic in national and international discourse today reveals the work left to be done in understanding the contention that exists in Poland's memorialization of the Second World War.

Annotated Bibliography

## *Primary Sources*

Andrzejewski, Jerzy. *Ashes and Diamonds*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1991.

Polish author Jerzy Andrzejewski captured the struggle for establishing a Polish post-war identity in *Ashes and Diamonds*. The novel was originally published in serial form in 1947 before appearing as one volume in 1948. *Ashes and Diamonds* places the reader in Poland during the final days of the war, at a time when the Germans surrendered, and the Red Army entered the country. Andrzejewski brings up questions of what Poland will look like after the war through characters who differ in both class and political ideology. *Ashes and Diamonds* is useful in my study of Poland's memory struggle over the Second World War because it represents a counter-discourse the government's official narrative.

"Document No. 5: Protocol No. 19 of PUWP CC Politburo Meeting." In *From Solidarity to Martial Law*, edited by Andrzej Paczkowski and Malcolm Byrene, 461-72. Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2007.

The Politburo, the political bureau of Poland's communist government, held a meeting on December 13, 1981 to discuss the next steps to be taken after the government imposed martial law in Poland. One of the points discussed at the meeting was what to tell Western ambassadors about the situation in Poland. Another was strategies to be implemented that would influence public opinion. The government wanted to give the illusion of a military state to make Solidarity strikers into the enemy of the state. This document provides important context for my study, showing how the communist government continued to use propaganda to direct the narrative of an event in their favor.

Grynberg, Henryk. *The Jewish War and the Victory*. Jewish Lives. Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 2001.

Polish-Jewish author Henryk Grynberg wrote about Polish-Jewish relations during the Holocaust in two novels *The Jewish War* and *The Victory. The Jewish War*, originally published in 1965, combines elements of fiction with what Grynberg intended to be an autobiographical story. The story grapples with the concept of controlling one's fate and features a character who lives because they assimilated into a Polish-Catholic culture. *The Victory* gives a critical depiction of Poland's liberation by the Red Army and was not officially circulated in Poland until 1990. Grynberg and his works are useful in my study to show how authors contended with the communist government's narrative about the war.

Ignatiew, Radoslaw J. “Findings of Investigation S 1/00/Zn into the Murder of Polish Citizens of Jewish Origin in the Town of Jedwabne on 10 July 1941, pursuant to Article 1 Point 1 of the Decree of 31 August 1944.” In *The Neighbors Respond*, edited by Anthony Polonsky and Joanna B. Michlic, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 135-136.

Public Prosecutor Radoslaw Ignatiew released a report about the official investigation on the Jedwabne massacre carried out by Poland’s Institute of National Remembrance. The report acknowledged Polish participation in the massacre but stressed the event was inspired by the German occupation. The apparent passiveness of the Jedwabne residents who watched, but did not participate in the massacre, was not, according to the report, sufficient evidence to ascribe responsibility to the entire town’s population. The report is useful in my understanding of how the post-communist government has responded to the communist government’s narrative about the Holocaust.

John, Tara. “Poland Just Passed a Holocaust Bill That Is Causing Outrage. Here’s What You Need to Know.” *Time*. Accessed December 2, 2019. http://time.com/5128341/poland-holocaust-law/.

*Times* reporter Tara John covered the Holocaust bill passed by Poland’s Senate in 2018. The original bill made accusing the Polish state of collaboration with the Nazis a criminal offense punishable by a fine or up to three years in prison. John also covered the response to the bill and how, after pushback, the Senate updated the bill to make accusations a civil offense. She reminded readers of antisemitic behavior in Poland during the Holocaust, making a specific reference to the Jedwabne pogrom. John’s report is useful in my understanding of how the memory struggle over the Second World War continues to persist in Poland.

Kwasniewski, Aleksander. “Address by President of Poland Aleksander Kwasniewski at the Ceremonies in Jedwabne Marking the Sixtieth Anniversary of the Jedwabne Tragedy on 10 July 2001.” In *The Neighbors Respond*, edited by Anthony Polonsky and Joanna B. Michlic (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 130.

On July 10, 2001 then-Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski delivered a speech at the Ceremonies in Jedwabne for the sixtieth anniversary of the Jedwabne massacre. In the speech, Kwasniewski reiterated the role the Germans played in inspiring the Jedwabne massacre and stressed that the Polish nation could not be held responsible for the actions of a few. Kwasniewski’s speech is useful in my understanding of how the post-communist government continued to use the rhetoric about the Holocaust promoted by the communist government.

Lomnicki, Jan, dir. *Operation Arsenal*. 1978; Poland, Polska Studio “Illuzjon.”

Polish director Jan Lomnicki’s *Operation Arsenal* (1978) tells the true story of a rescue mission carried out by the Grey Ranks, affiliates of the Home Army and

Polish Underground, in occupied Warsaw. The film relies the myth of the Polish martyr to show the sacrifices made by the resistance movement during the Second World War. *Operation Arsenal* builds on the image of the Home Army started by Andrzej Wajda in the 1950s and buys into the communist government's narrative about the organization as well. Lomnicki's film is useful in my study of how Polish directors built on the government's narrative about the war after 1967.

Misincki, Michal, dir. *The Unconquered* 2017; Poland, Institute of National Remembrance.

Michael Misincki's animated, short film *The Unconquered* shows the strength of the Polish nation during the Second World War and in its aftermath. The film was produced by the Institute of National Remembrance and plays on loop at the Museum of the Second World War in Gdansk. The film presents the Home Army as the epitome of Polish strength during the war and shows how their commitment to Polish independence continued into the communist period. *The Unconquered*, despite taking an anti-communist stance, shows that political change in 1989 did not lead to a change in the post-communist government's narrative about the war. The film is useful in my study of how the post-communist government has memorialized the war.

Nałkowska, Zofia. *Medallions*. Translated by Diana Kuprel. Jewish Lives. Evanston, Ill: Northwestern University Press, 2000.

Polish author Zofia Nałkowska presents a *Medallions,* originally published in 1946, as a raw portrayal about the atrocities committed by people against people during the Holocaust. Nałkowska's work with the Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes in Auschwitz inspired the novel. *Medallions* is comprised of eight short stories, each of which are told in the form of public testimonies or private conversations. Nałkowska acts as a secondary narrator who seldom interjects her opinion, leaving the reader to draw their own conclusions about the fates of the characters. *Medallions* is useful in my study because it is one of the earliest post-war novels about the Holocaust. The novel also shows a counter-discourse to the government's message about the war in the immediate post-war years.

"Poland U-Turn on Holocaust Law." *BBC News*, June 27, 2018, sec. Europe. https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-44627129.

This article by the BBC details the changes made to Poland's 2018 Holocaust Law. It also goes into the specific details of the Law, including the exemptions made for individuals claiming Polish complicity in the Holocaust for artistic and scientific purposes. The article is useful in framing the memory struggle of the Second World War in Poland and how the current struggle has roots in the contested commemoration of the communist era.

Rozewicz, Stanislaw, dir. “A Drop of Blood,” *The Birth Certificate*. 1961; Poland, Rhythm Film Group.

Stanislaw Rozewicz’s film “A Drop of Blood” (1961) is the final part in a series of films about the Holocaust. The film follows a young Jewish girl, Mirka, and her attempts to evade Nazi detection. The film relies on the myth of the Polish martyr and portrays amicable relations between Poles and Jews. Mirka is saved by Poles and is taken to an orphanage where she assimilates into Polish culture. “A Drop of Blood” can be situated amongst other films about the Holocaust produced by Polish directors between 1956-1967. The film is useful in my understanding of how Polish directors responded to the government’s changing narrative about the war.

——. *The Lynx*. 1982; Poland, Film Unit “Tor.”

Stanislaw Rozewicz’s later film *The Lynx* (1982) follows the moral dilemma of a young priest as he grapples with whether or not to absolve a man prepared to murder a “traitor” for his sins. The film is set against the backdrop of the Holocaust, though only talks about Jews in the context of the Poles who provide them with assistance. Much like Rozewicz’s earlier film “A Drop of Blood,” *The Lynx* utilizes the same image of the Polish martyr. This film is useful in understanding how the narrative about the Holocaust in Polish film changed after 1967, when the government’s narrative also changed.

Wajda, Andrzej, dir. *Ashes and Diamonds.* 1958; Warsaw, Poland, KADR.

Director Andrzej Wajda’s *Ashes and Diamonds* is based on the Andrzejewski novel of the same title. The film follows Maciek, a former member of the Home Army, as he prepares to carry out the assassination of an incoming communist official. Maciek faces a moral dilemma as the film progresses, wondering if he should carry out the assassination. Loyalty to his cause wins out and he assassinates the official. Maciek himself is then killed. The film is a commentary on the uncertainties Poles felt at the end of the war. Wajda’s depiction of the Home Army as a pillar of strength would be adopted by the communist government, making it useful for my study of the relationship between film and politics between 1956-1967.

——. *Kanal*. 1957; Warsaw, Poland, KADR.

Wajda’s film *Kanal* depicts a group of Home Army men at the end of the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. The film was the first to depict the uprising onscreen and set a prescient of Polish films about the Home Army. *Kanal* follows the Home Army as they take to the sewers in a final effort to fight back against the Nazi occupation. The film ends in tragedy, with all but one member of the group of Home Army soldiers dying. This film is useful for its portrayal of the Home Army as the selfless defenders of Poland free from Nazi occupation.

"Yad Vashem Response to the Law Passed in Poland Yesterday." *Yad Vashem,* January 27, 2018. 27-january-2018-18-43.html.

The World Holocaust Remembrance Center, Yad Vashem, issued a statement in response to Poland's proposed Holocaust Law. The statement warns against the denial of Polish complicity in Nazi crimes during the Holocaust. Yad Vashem affirms that their institution will remain committed to the pursuit of historical truth and uncovering all the complexities about Polish-Jewish relations during the Holocaust. Their statement is useful in my study to show how international organizations reacted to the 2018 Holocaust Law.

***Secondary Sources***

Aleksiun, Natalia. "Polish Historiography of the Holocaust—Between Silence and Public Debate," *German History 22,* no. 3 (2004): 406-432.

Polish historian of Modern Jewish History at the Touro College Graduate School of Jewish Studies Natalia Aleksiun examines Polish historiography of the Holocaust. She tracks key moments in historiographical shifts, including the publication of *Neighbors* by Jan Gross is 2001. Aleksiun argues that, while Gross' *Neighbors* triggered the largest shift in Polish historiography of the Holocaust, earlier periods including the late 1960s marked changes in how Polish historians wrote the Holocaust. She uses specific works to advance her argument. Aleksiun is useful in my own study of Polish historiography about the Second World War and the shifts in writing it underwent.

Berenstein, Tatiana, and Adam Rutkowski. *Assistance to the Jews in Poland, 1939-1945.* Translated by Edward Rothert. Warsaw: Polonia Publishing House, 1963.

The authors, Polish historians and associates of the Jewish Historical Institute, provide a comprehensive look at Poles assisting Jews during the Holocaust. At the time of the book's publication, little scholarship on the Holocaust had been produced altogether. Berenstein and Rutkowski argue that assisting the Jews in Poland was a much more difficult task than in any other country because Poles were also victims of the Nazi occupation. The two use Polish victimhood to create the image of the Polish martyr, someone who persisted in their desire to help the Jews despite the threats imposed on them by the Nazis. *Assistance* provides an example of the type of historiography challenged by Jan Gross. It is useful in tracking the change in Polish historiography over time.

Blonski, Jan. "The Poor Poles Look at the Ghetto." In *My Brother's Keeper? Recent Polish Debates on the Holocaust,* edited by Anthony Polonsky, 34-52. London: Routledge, 1990.

Polish historian Jan Blonski wrote an article published in *Tygodnik Powszechy*, the Polish Catholic weekly magazine, about the role of Poles in the Holocaust. Blonski argued that Poles should accept responsibility for the genocide of the Jews because of their passivity during the Holocaust. He argued against both direct Polish participation and Polish assistance, saying that Poles participated in the Holocaust through their lack of action against the Nazis. Blonski's article created a shift in Polish historiography and challenged the longstanding body of scholarship about Polish assistance to the Jews. His article is useful in understanding the complexities in Polish historiography of the Second World War.

Boyer, Pascal, and James V. Wertsch, eds. *Memory in Mind and Culture*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Professor of Individual and Collective Memory at Washington University in St. Louis, Pascal Boyer, and James V. Wertsch, a professor of sociocultural anthropology also at WUSL, edited a collection of essays about memory and how it relates to both mind and culture. The book asks several questions pertaining to memory, including how memory and history interact. In my study, I utilize the essays that focus on creating a sense of the collective, as well as how historians engage with collective memory.

Brenner, Rachel Feldhay. "The Holocaust in Polish Consciousness: Early Literary Representations." In *Polish Literature and the Holocaust*, 3–14. Eyewitness Testimonies, 1942–1947. Northwestern University Press, 2019.

Dr. Rachel Feldhay Brenner, a former Fellow for the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, examines the literary representations about the Holocaust that emerged in the immediate postwar years. She looks at the difference between fictional writing and diary entries and argues that fictional stories gives the reader an active experience, while diary entries place the reader in a passive role. Brenner also notes that readers must consider whether an author is an ethnic Pole or a Polish Jew, arguing that writing the Holocaust from a Polish perspective can create an unintentional bias on the author's part. Her work is useful in my study of the Polish literary responses to the Holocaust that emerged immediately after the war.

Brill, Ernie, and Lenny Rubenstein. "The Best Are Dead or Numb: A Second Look at Andrzej Wajda's 'Ashes and Diamonds.'" *Cinéaste* 11, no. 3 (1981): 22–26.

Film critics Ernie Brill and Lenny Rubenstein provide a critical commentary on Andrzej Wajda's film *Ashes and Diamonds*. In particular, the pair note the differences between Wajda's film and the Andrzejewski novel that the film is based on. Brill and Rubenstein talk about the differences within the context of censorship, saying how Wajda changed elements of the book to appease censors. There are also moments in the film, however, where Wajda changes elements of the original screenplay to fit his narrative, not the communist government's narrative. Brill and

Rubenstein's commentary on *Ashes and Diamonds* is useful in my understanding of how Polish filmmakers worked with and against government censors.

Brodsky, David. "Witold Gombrowicz and the 'Polish October.'" *Slavic Review* 39, no. 3 (1980): 459–75.

Writing for the *Slavic Review*, scholar David Brodsky explores how Polish authors responded to the cultural thaw of the late 1950s. He looks specifically at Witold Gombrowicz, whom Brodsky labels an "existentialist." Gombrowicz's prose was given new life after the thaw. He deviated from what was considered acceptable by the government and the thaw gave him greater success. Brodsky's article is useful in my understanding of how Polish culture changed as a result of the 1956 thaw brought on by de-Stalinization.

Chodakiewicz, Marek Jan. *Between Nazis and Soviets: Occupation Politics in Poland, 1939-1947*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004.

American-Polish historian at Patrick Henry College and the Institute of World Politics Marek Chodakiewicz published *Between Nazis and Soviets* in the post-communist period. As early as the introduction, Chodakiewicz acknowledges instances of Polish collaboration with the Nazis in light of both Jan Gross' *Neighbors* (2001) and new historical evidence. He also argues that Polish historiography widely neglects Polish collaboration with the Soviets during their first occupation of the country. Chodakiewicz's portrayal of Poles during the Second World War as both victims and martyrs adheres to the emerging shift in Polish historiography that began with Gross. His work is useful for my study for showing the complexities of the Polish war experience.

Czapliński, Przemysław. "Shifting Sands: History of Polish Prose, 1945–2015." In *Being Poland: A New History of Polish Literature and Culture since 1918*, edited by Tamara Trojanowska, Joanna Nizynska, Przemyslaw Czaplinski, and Agnieszka Polakowska. 372-406. Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2018.

Polish professor of history and literature Przemyslaw Czaplinski looks at how Polish prose changed after the Second World War. He identifies four different levels in which changes in narrative took place: geographical/cultural, class/cultural, ideological/institutional, and ethnic/ethical. I am particularly interested in the geographical/cultural level, which looks at how the changes in Poland's physical boundaries after the war affected how Poles memorialized the war. Czaplinski finds that the government stressed a collective national unity at the time, but that not all Polish literature complied with this narrative. His study is useful in my own understanding of contention that emerged between Polish authors and the communist government over war memorialization.

Davies, Norman. *God's Playground: A History of Poland.* New York: Columbia University Press, 1982.

British-Polish historian Norman Davies' *God's Playground* provides an objective survey of Poland from its formation through the Second World War. His section on the war deviates from the antisemitic and pro-Polish surveys Polish authors writing before Davies published. Davies published during the Solidarity era, a fact that allows him to look more critically at the Soviet occupation of Poland at the beginning of the war. He does this most notably in his speculation that the NKVD, not the Nazis, committed the 1940 Katyn massacre. Davies' work is useful in my study as an example of how Polish historiography changed over the course of the communist period.

Funkenstein, Amos. "Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness." History and Memory 1, no. 1 (1989): 5–26.

Israeli Historian Amos Funkenstein expanded on Mauice Halbwachs' work on collective memory in his journal article "Collective Memory and Historical Consciousness." He argues that all memory, no matter how personal, cannot be removed from a social context. Funkenstein goes on to say that the historian remains tied to the time and space in which they are writing, and that they create collective memory through the books they publish and the speeches they give. His work is influential in understanding the relationship between Polish historians and their narrative about the Second World War.

Garliński, Józef. *Poland in the Second World War.* New York: Hippocrene Books, 1985.

Polish historian Józef Galiński published his survey of Poland during the Second World War near the end of the communist period. He focuses on the role Poles played in the war effort both in Poland and abroad. Galiński also includes two additional chapters about both the Catholic Church during the war and the Jewish war experience. In his chapter about Polish Jews, he follows the historiographical trend that talks about Jews only within the context of the Poles who assisted them. He likewise describes the Poles who persecuted the Jews as a minority who followed the Nazi's right-wing political ideology. I use Galiński in my study to show the differences in how Polish historians wrote about the war.

Gross, Jan Tomasz. *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001.

Jan Gross, a Professor of History at Princeton University, uses the 1941 destruction of the Jewish community in Jedwabne, Poland by their Polish neighbors to open up a larger debate about Polish-Jewish relationships during the Second World War. In doing so, he challenges the current historiography about the Holocaust and about how the past is remembered in Poland. Prior to the publication of *Neighbors*, Polish historiography treated Polish persecution of Jews during the war as taboo. In his

concluding remarks, Gross argues that in order to reclaim its past Poland must confront what happened in Jedwabne and retell its history, a task he leaves up to the post-communist generation. *Neighbors* and the controversy that it caused is essential in my study of the struggle over the memory of the Second World War in Poland.

Grynberg, Henryk. "The Holocaust in Polish Literature." *Notre Dame English Journal* 11, no. 2 (1979): 115–39.

Polish-Jewish author and Holocaust survivor Henryk Grynberg chronicles how Poles wrote about the Holocaust after the war. He pays attention to how authors put into words an event he describes as a shock to the mind. Grynberg begins with poetry before moving to prose and concludes by saying that the works as a whole are still far from encompassing every experience or tension surrounding the Holocaust. His analysis of Zofia Nałkowska's *Medallions* is particularly helpful when framing my own analysis of the novel.

Halbwachs, Maurice. *On Collective Memory*. Translated by Lewis A. Coser. The Heritage of Sociology. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.

French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs published the first comprehensive study on collective memory in his aptly titled *On Collective Memory*. Halbwachs examines the intersection of historical writing and memory. He builds the argument that the construction of the past is influenced by the perception of the present. Halbwachs then goes on to say that society shapes perceptions of the past. His work influenced subsequent studies about collective memory, including Amos Funkenstein's work. I use Halbwachs as an introduction to collective memory and show how his work led to a wider study of history and memory.

Haltof, Marek. *Polish Cinema: A History*. Second edition. New York: Berghahn, 2019.

American-Polish film historian Marek Haltof provides the most comprehensive survey of Polish cinema, from its earliest days to modern films. He arranges his book chronologically, with specific chapters dedicated to moments of change in Polish cinema. For example, Haltof dedicates a section to the "Polish School" that emerged in the 1950s and the section that follows details the breakup of the Polish School. Haltof's work is essential for my study in understanding how Polish filmmakers responded to the government's narrative about the Second World War.

———. *Polish Film and the Holocaust: Politics and Memory*. New York: Berghahn Books, 2012.

Haltof's *Polish Film and the Holocaust*, similar to his larger survey of all Polish cinema, looks at Polish film about the Holocaust chronologically. He again breaks his chapters into sections dedicated to specific moments of change. His work provides the only comprehensive survey of Polish films about the Holocaust. Haltof's breakdown of moments of change in Polish cinema about the Holocaust is

useful in my own study. He connects these moments of change to political changes that caused the government to reevaluate the narrative about the Holocaust, making his work important for my own study.

Karpinski, Jakub. *Countdown, the Polish Upheavals of 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976, 1980.* New York, N.Y: Karz-Cohl, 1982.

Polish historian and sociologist Jakub Karpinski documents the major social movements that occurred in communist Poland. Karpinski covers everything from the workers' strikes in Pozan during the late-1950s to the factors that would ultimately lead to the Solidarity movement. He also begins by explaining what Poland looked like during the Second World War and how opposition to communism existed in Poland from the earliest days of its establishment within the country. Karpinski's work is useful in giving context for how social movements in Poland reflected the counter-discourse authors and filmmakers used in their works about the memory of Second World War.

Kershaw, Ian. *To Hell and Back.* New York: Penguin Books, 2015.

English historian Ian Kershaw's *To Hell and Back* provides a comprehensive survey of Europe between 1914 and 1945. Kershaw argues that the First World War left in its wake extreme ethnic-racist nationalism, demands for territorial revision, class conflict, and the crisis of capitalism. All of which, he goes on to say, led to the Second World War. Kershaw contends, however, that the Second World War led to the rebirth of Europe. He sets up his book to track how Europe went from the brink of total destruction to prosperity in the second half of the twentieth century. I use Kershaw for his argument that change in Europe did not come immediately, relating it to the political and social struggles that persisted in Poland in the immediate aftermath of the war.

Kochanski, Halik. *The Eagle Unbowed: Poland and the Poles in the Second World War.* First Harvard University Press edition. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2012.

British historian Halik Kochanski examines the relationship between Poles and the Second World War. Her study critiques the competing myths and misconceptions surrounding the Polish experience during World War Two. To refrain from creating a nationalist study, Kochanski looks at both the good and the bad when considering the Polish war experience, including Polish collaboration with the Nazis and general antisemitic behavior. I use Kochanski's work to exemplify how a shift in Polish historiography of the Second World War underwent a shift in the twenty-first century.

Krakus, Anna, and Andrzej Wajda. "The Abuses, and Uses, of Film Censorship: An Interview with Andrzej Wajda." *Cinéaste* 39, no. 3 (2014): 3–9.

Assistant Professor of Slavic Languages and Literatures at the University of Southern California-Dornsife, Anna Krakus, interviewed Polish director Andrzej Wajda. The pair discuss film censorship during the communist period and how Wajda included subtle changes to the film after the screenplay was finished to avoid detection by government censors. Of particular importance to my study is Wajda's commentary on *Ashes and Diamonds* (1958). Wajda admits to changing the film's script after pre-production to prevent a crackdown by the authorities. This interview is useful in my study to show how Polish filmmakers contended with the government's narrative about the Second World War.

Krzyżanowski, Jerzy R. "On the History of Ashes and Diamond [sic]." *The Slavic and East European Journal* 15, no. 3 (1971): 324–31.

Former professor of Polish literature at The Ohio State University Jerzy Krzyżanowski published a comprehensive history of Jerzy Andrzejewski's *Ashes and Diamonds*. He begins with the book's origin as a story published in serial form in 1947 before being published as a novel the following year. Krzyżanowski also examines how the reception of the book changed over time, noting how the political issues within the novel sparked controversy through the late 1950s. I use Krzyżanowski's history of *Ashes and Diamonds* to show the reception of the book and how the criticism the book received ties back to the larger memory struggle over the Second World War.

Kuprel, Diana. "Paper Epitaphs of a Holocaust Memorial: Zofia Nałkowska's Medallions." In *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry Volume 13*, edited by Antony Polonsky, 179–87. Focusing on the Holocaust and Its Aftermath. Liverpool University Press, 2000.

Postdoctoral fellow for the Literary History Project at the University of Toronto, Diana Kuprel, introduces Zofia Nałkowska's *Medallions*. Kuprel notes that Nałkowska's decision to write *Medallions* came from the author's commitment to remember the lives of those who perished during the Holocaust. Kuprel engages with the idea of one story in particular, "Professor Spanner," as a story over the victory over fascism. She also finds that *Medallions* is one of the first literary accounts that represents the Nazis as a machine for carrying out genocide. I use Kuprel's work for the insight she provides into Nałkowska's life and compare my own analysis of *Medallions* to Kuprel's.

Lambert, Alan J., Laura Nesse Scherer, Chad Rogers, and Larry Jacoby. "How Does Collective Memory Create a Sense of the Collective?" In *Memory in Mind and Culture*, edited by Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch, 194-217. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Psychologists of human memory Alan Lambert, Laura Scherer, Chad Rogers, and Larry Jacoby use historical events, such as 9/11, to engage in a study of collective memory. They show how the definition of collective memory spans across academic

disciplines, coming to mean something that creates a sense of unity among otherwise unrelated individuals. While the bulk of their study focuses on collective memory and emotion, the authors also examine the consequences of collective memory. They contend that collective memory can influence how individuals respond to the present. Their work is useful in my study of how Poles' perception of the Second World War influences how they commemorate the event.

Liebman, Stuart. "The Art of Memory: Andrzej Wajda's War Trilogy." *Cinéaste* 32, no. 1 (2006): 42–47.

Professor Emeritus at City University of New York Stuart Liebman looks at the memorialization of the Second World War through Andrzej Wajda's War Trilogy: *A Generation* (1955), *Kanal* (1957), and *Ashes and Diamonds* (1958). Liebman focuses on the ironic nature of Wajda's films. In *Kanal*, for example, Liebman notes that the two characters who are in love at the beginning breakdown by the end. In contrast, another character engaged in unrequited love at the beginning of the film dies happily when his love is finally requited. Liebman's work provides a critical commentary of Wajda's films, two of which I use in my study to show how Polish directors responded to the government's narrative about the war.

Lubelski, Tadeusz. "Three more approaches." *Film Quarterly*, no. 6 (1994): 176-187.

Polish film historian Tadeusz Lubelski looks at how Jerzy Andrzejewski's *Ashes and Diamonds* (1948) became a movie adaptation directed by Andrzej Wajda. Lubelski looks at the directors who were given the project before Wajda, including director Jan Rybkowski. The film was passed among several different directors, all of whom abandoned the project after running into conflict with censorship laws. Lubelski's article is useful in my study to show how government censorship affected how Polish directors responded to stories about the Second World War.

Lukowski, Jerzy, and W. H. Zawadzki. *A Concise History of Poland*. 2nd ed. Cambridge Concise Histories. Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Polish historians Jerzy Lukowski and Hubert Zawadzki created a concise, one volume of the history of Poland from the tenth century through 2005. The authors cover the most important political events in the country's history, including governmental shifts and responses to conflicts like the Second World War. They preface that they are telling primarily a political history and acknowledge that they give little attention to economic and social developments. They also acknowledge that there is a lack of Jewish history within their volume. Despite its limitations, *A Concise History* provides a baseline for my own survey of Poland during the period I'm studying.

——. *A Concise History of Poland*. 3rd ed. Cambridge Concise Histories. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

The third edition of *A Concise History of Poland* contains updated information about Polish politics from 2005 through 2018. It picks up where the second edition left off and follows the same format as its predecessor. The updated edition provides needed information for my survey of Polish politics after 2000.

Maerker, Anna Katharina, Simon Sleight, and Adam Sutcliffe, eds. *History, Memory and Public Life: The Past in the Present*. London ; New York: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2018.

Historians Anna Maerker, Simon Sleight, and Adam Sutcliffe present a collection of essays that deal with historical memory and how the historian aids in how individuals reflect on the past. The book deals with both theoretical aspects of historical memory, including myths of national origins, and applied aspects of historical memory. The latter section includes an essay by Sutcliffe about the politics of the memory of the Holocaust. The book's examination of the intersection between history and memory is useful in my study of how Polish historians present the history of the Second World War, and how the government influences that presentation.

Marcuse, Harold. "Holocaust Memorials: The Emergence of a Genre." *The American Historical Review* 115, no. 1 (2010): 53–89.

Professor of German History at the University of California, Santa Barbara looks at the emergence of Holocaust memorials after the Second World War. I pay particular attention to his work on Auschwitz-Birkenau and how the former concentration camp became a commemorative site. Marcuse details how the memorial at Birkenau was erected 1967 and how that memorial changed in 1995 with updated language and statistics in light of new historical evidence. Marcuse's study is useful in my own work on how the communist and post-communist governments have handled public commemoration in Poland.

Mason, David S. *Public Opinion and Political Change in Poland, 1980-1982*. Soviet and East European Studies. Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1985.

Professor of Political Science at Butler University David S. Mason documents attitudes about political changes in Poland at the start of Solidarity and martial law. He uses public opinion polls to track changes in attitude about both the communist government and Solidarity. Mason found that the imposition of martial law increased support for Solidarity and decreased support for the government. He reminders the reader, however, to be critical when examining polls from this era, noting that during martial law, only one official polling center existed. Mason's documentation of public opinion is useful in my survey of political and social changes in Poland during the communist period.

Mazierska, Ewa. “Non-Jewish Jews, Good Poles and Historical Truth in the Films of Andrzej Wajda.” *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television* vol. 20, no. 2 (2000): 213-226.

Ewa Mazierska, Professor of Contemporary Cinema at the University of Central Lancashire, looks at Andrzej Wajda’s characterization of Jews in his films. She argues that Wajda negatively portrays Jews and that his Jewish characters tend to look “Polish” and do not observe religious customs. Her work contends with findings of other film historians, including Marek Haltof, who argues that Wajda’s portrayal of Jews was a result of government censorship. Mazierska’s article is nevertheless useful in my understanding of how Polish directors responded to the government’s narrative about the Second World War.

Meng, Michael. “Rethinking Polish-Jewish Relations during the Holocaust in the Wake of 1968.” Paper presented at the Conference on Polish-Jewish Relations, Hebrew University of Jerusalem. March 2009.

Assistant professor of History at Clemson University Michael Meng looks at the changing nature of Polish-Jewish relations after 1968. Poland’s antisemitic campaign began in 1967 and continued through the end of the decade. One aspect of Meng’s paper useful in my study is the response Poles had to the screening of the 1985 documentary *Shoah*. The documentary, which shows negative relations between Poles and Jews, was criticized by the communist government and the Polish public. The film challenged the government’s narrative about the Polish martyr. Meng’s article is useful in my understanding of the contested nature of Holocaust memorialization in Poland.

Michlic, Joanna B. “The Soviet Occupation of Poland, 1939–41, and the Stereotype of the Anti-Polish and Pro-Soviet Jew.” *Jewish Social Studies* 13, no. 3 (2007): 135–76.

American historian of Polish-Jewish history Joanna B. Michlic analyzed the origin of the anti-Polish, pro-communist Jew that emerged in Poland at the beginning of World War II. She also identified scholars in Poland today who promote this stereotype as historical fact. She categorized these scholars as ethnonationalists who treated Polish Jews and other minorities as separate from Polish history. She argued that these ethnonationalists reinforced the myth of the Polish martyr. She concluded that a historian’s ability to write the history of Poles and Jews free from stereotype depended on their ability to step away from the ethnonationalist school of thought. Her work is useful in my study of the complexities in the remembrance of the Second World War.

——.“‘Judeo-Communists, Judeo-Stalinists, Judeo-Anti-Communists, and National Nihilists’: The Communist Regime and the Myth, 1950s–80s.” In *Poland’s Threatening Other*, 230–61. The Image of the Jew from 1880 to the Present. University of Nebraska Press, 2006.

Michlic's book chapter looks at the image of the anti-communist Jew that emerged in Polish discourse after the 1967 antisemitic campaign began. The government used the image of the anti-communist Jew to justify antisemitic behavior. The image of the anti-communist Jew in the communist period can be analyzed alongside the image of the pro-communist Jew some Polish historians have begun to promote in the post-communist period. Michlic's work is useful in my study to show how the government's narrative about Polish Jews affected Holocaust memorialization.

Musial, Bogdan. "The Pogrom in Jedwabne: Critical Remarks About Jan T. Gross's *Neighbors*." In *The Neighbors Respond,* edited by Anthony Polonsky and Joanna B. Michlic, 304-343. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Bogdan Musial, a historian at the German Historical Institute in Warsaw, critiques the methodology and approach to sources taken by Jan Gross in *Neighbors*. He argues that Gross is narrow in selecting sources, only choosing testimonies that fit his thesis and leaving out those that contradict it. He challenges Gross's push to create a new standard for Holocaust research and argues that Gross reduces the Second World War to just the Holocaust. Musial's critique of *Neighbors* is useful in my study of the debate that has emerged on Polish post-war historiography as a result of the book's publication.

Paczkowski, Andrez. "Jews in the Polish Security Apparatus: An Attempt to Test the Stereotype." In *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry Volume 16*, edited by Michael C. Steinlauf and Antony Polonsky, 453–64. Focusing on Jewish Popular Culture and Its Afterlife. Liverpool University Press, 2003.

Polish historian Andrzej Packowski argued that the Jews who joined the security apparatus in communist Poland no longer considered themselves Jews but communists. Both culturally and ideologically these Jews conformed to the security apparatus. While he says the focus of the article is not about Polish-Jewish relations, or even about the relationship between Jews and communism, he nevertheless admits that discussion of the security apparatus includes both pieces. The relationship between Jews and communism is especially important in my study of the types of works published by the Jewish Historical Institute during the early post-war period and how those works reflected the greater identity struggle after the war.

Paul, David. "Andrzej Wajda's War Trilogy." *Cinéaste* 20, no. 4 (1994): 52–54.

Film critic David Paul provides a critical commentary on Andrzej Wajda's War Trilogy: *A Generation* (1955), *Kanal* (1957), and *Ashes and Diamonds* (1958). I use his commentary for his analysis of a scene in *Kanal* that points to a moment where Wajda challenged government censorship. The scene is a shot of an empty bank on one side the Vistula River where, historically, the Red Army was waiting to liberate Warsaw from Nazi occupation. Wajda's omittance of the Red Army was a subtle way to resist government censorship and present a more Polish nationalist version of

the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. Paul's work is useful in my understanding of how Polish directors responded to the communist government's narrative about the Second World War.

Person, Katarzyna. "Holocaust Survivors in Post-War Poland: Conclusion." In *Assimilated Jews in the Warsaw Ghetto, 1940-1943*, 155–64. Syracuse University Press, 2014.

Katarzyna Person, a historian at the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, looks at the treatment of Polish Jews in Warsaw. Person's entire work looks at assimilated Jews in the Warsaw ghetto, but I rely on her conclusion which centers on the treatment of Jewish Holocaust survivors in Poland after 1945. Person finds that, while Jews were given equal legal treatment under the communist government, equal rights did not stop antisemitism. Person also argues that Jewish survivors maintained a sense of "Jewishness," which rejected the communist government's creation of a unified Polish-communist identity. Her work is useful in my understanding of how the communist government's narrative about the Holocaust led to contested memorialization.

Polonsky, Antony, and Joanna B. Michlic, eds. *The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2004.

Antony Polonsky, Professor of Holocaust Studies at Brandeis University, and Joanna B. Michlic, a Postdoctoral Fellow at the International Institute of Holocaust Research, compiled a series of responses to Jan Gross's *Neighbors*. The collection, called *The Neighbors Respond,* includes both public statements issued by Polish government officials in addition to essays written by Polish and non-Polish historians. The opinions expressed in each entry vary, with some being in support of Gross and others being in strong opposition. I use their work to show how the Holocaust memorialization in Poland remains a contested issue.

Raina, Peter. *Political Opposition in Poland 1945-1977*. London: Poets and Painters Press, 1978.

Historian Peter Raina provides a survey of the Polish political landscape from 1954-1977, taking specific note of instances of opposition to the communist government by Polish intellectuals. He begins with the process of de-Stalinization and continues through the movements that gave rise to Solidarity in the 1980s. Raina notes that discord in the Polish People's Republic politics began in 1945 when the communist and non-communist parties vied for power. Raina's work is useful in my survey of the Polish political and social landscape during the communist period.

Rozenbaum, Wlodzimierz. "The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland, June -December 1967." *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne Des Slavistes* 20, no. 2 (1978): 218–36.

Scholar Wlodzimierz Rozenbaum looks at the anti-Zionist campaign that began in Poland in 1967. The campaign later turned into an antisemitic campaign that forced most of the country's remaining Jewish population to flee the country. Rozenbaum argues, though, that 1967 was merely a catalyst in a series of political and social changes in Poland rooted in antisemitism. Rozenbaum's work follows similar arguments made by other historians, including Dariusz Stola. Rozenbaum is useful in my understanding of how political changes in Poland affected memorialization of the Second World War.

Snyder, Timothy. *Bloodlands: Europe between Hitler and Stalin*. New York: Basic Books, 2012.

American author and historian Timothy Snyder brings the Nazi and Soviet regimes together in a comprehensive study about the land controlled by Hitler and Stalin during the Second World War. He also brings together the histories of the Jews and the ethnic groups inhabiting that region. Snyder does this to tell a story about the people killed by the policies of Hitler and Stalin, describing both the victims and perpetrators as more than just statistics. I use Snyder, however, for his argument that the war did not truly end in 1945. Snyder marks 1947 as the true transitional year when the Soviets claimed a political victory in Eastern Europe. I use Snyder's transitional year to explain political and social tensions that persisted in Poland in the immediate aftermath of the war.

Stańczyk, Ewa. "Poland's Culture of Commemoration." In *Poland's Memory Wars*, edited by Jo Harper, 160–69. Essays on Illiberalism. Central European University Press, 2018.

Professor of History and European Studies at the University of Amsterdam Ewa Stańczyk analyzed the culture of Holocaust commemoration promoted by both the PO and PiS parties in Poland during the twenty-first century. She argued that the PO took a more universalistic approach to commemorating the Holocaust that stressed preventing an event like it from every happening again. The PiS, by contrast, has used commemoration to restore pride in a Polish national identity rooted in God, honor, and the fatherland. Stańczyk concluded that the rise of the PiS will lead to a culture of remembrance rooted in Polish nationalism. Her work is useful in my study of understanding how the Polish government handled the memory of the Second World War.

Stola, Dariusz. "Anti-Zionism as a Multipurpose Policy Instrument: The Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland, 1967–1968." *Journal of Israeli History* 25, no. 1 (March 2006): 175–201.

Professor of History at the Polish Academy of Sciences Dariusz Stola gives a detailed account of the Anti-Zionist campaign in Poland from 1967-68. He examines the campaign first as an anti-Israel policy in response to the Six Day War and

second as an antisemitic campaign. He also looks at how the campaign combined traditional communist hate campaigns with antisemitism. Through his analysis of the campaign, he concludes that a major consequence for Poland was its image across the world as an openly antisemitic country. Stola's discussion on how the campaign led to a universalistic approach to Holocaust historiography is particularly useful for my study.

——. "New Research on the Holocaust in Poland." In *Lessons and Legacies VI*, edited by Jeffry M. Diefendorf, 259–84. New Currents in Holocaust Research. Northwestern University Press, 2004.

Dariusz Stola gives a chronology of Polish wartime historiography on the Holocaust and Polish-Jewish relations, from the 1940s through the 2000s. Stola identifies three major factors that have had an influence on Holocaust studies in Poland, including World War II as the most dramatic event of Poland's history, the marginalization of Jewish wartime experiences, and the loss of free speech in Poland from 1945 until 1989. He argues that, while there has been a surge in Holocaust literature published in Poland following the end of the communist era, the majority of that historiography is centered around Poles helping Jews. Stola is useful in understanding of the complexities and changes in Polish historiography about the Second World War.

——. "Poland's Institute of National Remembrance: A Ministry of Memory?" In *Convolutions of Historical Politics*, edited by Alexei Miller and Maria Lipman, 45–58. Central European University Press, 2012.

Darius Stola's article looks at Poland's Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) and the controversy surrounding it. The IPN was designed to be a non-government affiliated association but, as Stola notes, the IPN president is selected by Poland's parliament. The IPN also has prosecution powers and is responsible for investigating crimes against the Polish nation. Stola's article is useful in my study of the post-communist government's memorialization of the Second World War.

Świebocka, Teresa. "The Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial and Museum: From Commemoration to Education." In *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry Volume 13*, edited by Antony Polonsky, 290–300. Focusing on the Holocaust and Its Aftermath. Liverpool University Press, 2000.

Teresa Świebocka, author of several additional books pertaining to Auschwitz, gives a chronological history of the former concentration camp's transition into a museum in her article for *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry.* In the article, Świebocka notes how interest in Auschwitz has increased over the years. In a strict sense, this comes from the impact the events at Auschwitz had on survivors and the lives of generations to come. The second reason for the interest in Auschwitz, according to Świebocka, comes from the symbolic meaning the camp has even for those who don't have a direct connection to it. She ultimately argues that, because of notoriety Auschwitz

has, the museum has the obligation to do more to educate the younger generation about the reality of the Holocaust. Her work is useful in my study of how the museum's exhibits and priorities changed across the communist and post-communist periods.

Tighe, Carl. "Jerzy Andrzejewski: Life and Times." *Journal of European Studies* 25, no. 4 (December 1995): 341–80.

British author and academic Carl Tighe provides a comprehensive biography of Polish author Jerzy Andrzejewski. Tighe asserts that Andrzejewski is probably the best-known Polish novelist. He also uses Andrzejewski's political trajectory, including his allegiance to and subsequent denouncement of the communist party, to explain the cultural, political, and other social changes occurring in eastern Europe after the Second World War. Tighe makes the important note that like other authors of eastern and central Europe, Andrzejewski's professional careers entangled with his personal life and political activities. I use Tighe's biographical information about Andrzejewski to help contextualize his novel *Ashes and Diamonds* (1948).

Wawrzyniak, Joanna. *Veterans, Victims, and Memory: The Politics of the Second World War in Communist Poland*. Warsaw: Peter Lang AG, 2015.

Sociologist and part-time Professor of History at the European University Institute, Joanna Wawrzyniak provides an extensive chronology of how the communist government created the myth of the Second World War in communist Poland. She looks at how public memory was shaped by the government versus the memory of the war experienced by veterans and war prisoners. She concludes that the government created different myths at different points in its history, from the myth of victory over fascism to the myth of national innocence. Her work is useful in my understanding of how the communist government's message of the Second World War shaped not only the historiography, but also the literature and films produced during the communist era.

Walesa, Lech. "From Romanticism to Realism: Our Struggle in the Years 1980-1982." In *From Solidarity to Martial Law*, edited by Andrzej Paczkowski and Malcolm Byrene, xiii-xvi. Budapest; New York: Central European University Press, 2007.

Leader of the Solidarity movement and former President of Poland Lech Walesa reflects on the period of martial law in Poland as a result of the Solidarity strikes. He argues that the aim of Solidarity was to enable the masses to realize the struggle of a few. Walesa also says that Solidarity did not suddenly appear; it was the result of years of dissatisfaction with the communist government. In concluding, Walesa says that progress is directing Poland away from a totalitarian regime, but that there is still work to do. I use Walesa's reflection to show a voice-from-the-ground response to both Solidarity and martial law.

Whitehead, Anne. *Memory*. 1st ed. *The New Critical Idiom*. London; New York: Routledge, 2009.

Author and Historian Anne Whitehead examines the approach Western historians have taken when it comes to studying collective memory. She attempts to correct the tendency for memory studies to be treated as something new and unprecedented. She does so by tracing the term "memory" in Western tradition as well as treating the current studies of memory as merely the latest in a long history of memory studies throughout Western history. Whitehead engagement with both Maurice Halbwachs and Jay Winter make her work useful in my own examinations of Halbwachs and Winter and their contributions to the historiography of collective memory.

Winter, J. M. *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History*. Canto Classics edition. Canto Classics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014.

Professor of History at Yale University Jay Winter examines how people in France, Britain, and Germany memorialized the First World War. Winter argues that the way individuals in the three countries memorialized the war contained similar elements to how they memorialized past conflicts. In doing so, he argues in favor of a traditionalist approach. Winter argues against the modernist approach, using examples from post-war literature and art, among other things, to show a continuation of traditional motifs in commemoration. Winter goes on to say that change in memorialization occurred only after the Second World War. In my study, I critique Winter's argument by showing how memorialization practices in Poland changed throughout the post-war period.