

**THE GOOD AND THE TRUE**

*From authentic testimonies compiled by Tomas Hrbek, Lucie Kolouchova, Daniel Hrbek.*

**Cast and Characters:**

Miloš Dobrý Saul Reichlin

Hana Pravda Isobel Pravda

**Production Team:**

English adaptation by Brian Daniels

Director Daniel Hrbek

Scenic and Costume Design Daniel Hrbek

Original Lighting Design Jiri Smirk

Original Sound Design Stanislav Halbrstat

Dramaturgy Lucie Kolouchova

**The Holocaust** (from the Greek ὁλόκαυστος holókaustos: hólos, "whole" and kaustós, "burnt")was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of approximately six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators. "Holocaust" is a word of Greek origin meaning "sacrifice by fire." The Nazis, who came to power in Germany in January 1933, believed that Germans were "racially superior" and that the Jews, deemed "inferior," were an alien threat to the so-called German racial community. In 1933, the Jewish population of Europe stood at over nine million. Most European Jews lived in countries that Nazi Germany would occupy or influence during World War II. By 1945, the Germans and their collaborators killed nearly two out of every three European Jews as part of the "Final Solution," the Nazi policy to murder the Jews of Europe.

In the early years of the Nazi regime, the National Socialist government established concentration camps to detain real and imagined political and ideological opponents. Increasingly in the years before the outbreak of war, SS and police officials incarcerated Jews, Roma, and other victims of ethnic and racial hatred in these camps. To concentrate and monitor the Jewish population as well as to facilitate later deportation of the Jews, the Germans and their collaborators created ghettos, transit camps, and forced-labor camps for Jews during the war years. The German authorities also established numerous forced-labor camps, both in the so-called Greater German Reich and in German-occupied territory, for non-Jews whose labor the Germans sought to exploit. Following the invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, Einsatzgruppen (mobile killing units) and, later, militarized battalions of Order Police officials, moved behind German lines to carry out mass-murder operations against Jews, Roma, and Soviet state and Communist Party officials. German SS and police units, supported by units of the Wehrmacht and the Waffen SS, murdered more than a million Jewish men, women, and children, and hundreds of thousands of others. Between 1941 and 1944, Nazi German authorities deported millions of Jews from Germany, from occupied territories, and from the countries of many of its Axis allies to ghettos and to killing centers, often called extermination camps, where they were murdered in specially developed gassing facilities. In the final months of the war, SS guards moved camp inmates by train or on forced marches, often called “death marches,” in an attempt to prevent the Allied liberation of large numbers of prisoners. As Allied forces moved across Europe in a series of offensives against Germany, they began to encounter and liberate concentration camp prisoners, as well as prisoners en route by forced march from one camp to another. The marches continued until May 7, 1945, the day the German armed forces surrendered unconditionally to the Allies. For the western Allies, World War II officially ended in Europe on the next day, May 8 (V-E Day), while Soviet forces announced their “Victory Day” on May 9, 1945.

The crimes committed during the Holocaust devastated most European Jewish communities and eliminated hundreds of Jewish communities in occupied eastern Europe entirely. It is estimated that about 345,000 World War II casualties were from Czechoslovakia, 277,000 of them Jews who died during Holocaust.

**Prague**

Prague is the capital and largest city of the Czech Republic. The Jewish community of Prague was one of Central Europe's oldest and most well-known Jewish communities before World War II. A symbiosis of three nations – Czech, German and Jews brought an exceptional cultural flourishing mainly in German literature, such as Franz Kafka or Max Brod. At the beginning of the war 118 000 Jews lived in the Czech Republic. Aproximately 80 000 of them died in Nazi death camps. Their names are written on the walls of the ancient Pinkas synagogue in Prague.

**Terezín**

This is a small fortress town, established by Joseph II in 1780, approximately 3 km from Litoměřice. The Jewish ghetto was established here in November 1941. Czechs, Germans, Austrians, Dutch and Danes were interned here and, at the end of the war, the Hungarians and Slovaks too. Terezín had a special status – it was a kind of a show-case, a model ghetto which the Nazis presented to foreign visitors from the Red Cross. Approximately 140 000 people, who were designated to be Jews pursuant to the Nuremberg Laws, passed through there and almost 35 000 died directly in the ghetto due to the very bad conditions for life. The primary function of the ghetto was to gather Jews and transport them further away, it was not an extermination camp. 63 transports altogether headed due east from Terezín, containing 87 000 people. Only about 3600 came back.

**Auschwitz**

The Polish Oświęcim (Auschwitz in German) was the largest Nazi concentration and extermination camp. It was established at the Himmler´s order from April 27, 1940. The Auschwitz camp was infamous for its harshness. The Arbeit macht frei motto, located above the main entrance of the Auschwitz base camp, was thus only cynical mockery. Auschwitz became one of the camps where mass murdering of Jews took place. Six thousand people a day could be murdered in the four gas chambers in total (Zyklone B, a substance originally designated for deratisation, was used there). From October 1942 to October 1944, more than 46 thousand inmates were deported from Terezín to Auschwitz. After the arrival of the transport at the ramp in Birkenau there came the “selection” process when the SS officers decided who would be sent directly to a gas chamber and who would be put in a labour Kommando. On October 7, 1944, there was an uprising of the inmates working in the gas chambers. They managed to destroy one of the gas chambers and thus disrupt the extermination process. All the rebels perished. Soon afterwards, the gas chambers and crematoria were destroyed at Himmler´s order since it was necessary to cover the traces as the Red Army was approaching. Approximately 60 thousand inmates were forced on death marches – lots of them were murdered in their course. On January 27, 1945 the Red Army entered the camp. It found there 7650 exhausted inmates and a large deal of evidence of the crimes that the Nazis did not manage to destroy in time – such as almost 8 tons of human hair and over one million items of men´s clothes and female dresses. The number of people murdered in Auschwitz is estimated at 1.2 to 1.6 million people.

**Tsen Brider**
This Yiddish song used in the production is an analogue of Ten Little Soldier Boys – 10 brothers try to trade different goods every time, but they die one by one until only one is left. It was made famous by Martin Rosenberg, a Polish Jew born in 1890, who was a choir master of a mixed-sex choir and a composer using the stage name Rosebery d´Arguto. In 1939 he was deported to Sachsenhausen where he secretly continued his music activity. In 1942 he learnt that he was going to be sent to Auschwitz soon. That is why he wrote a variation of the well-known Yiddish song Tsen Brider, called The Jewish Death Song. In it, the originally black humour song acquires a tragic touch and the last brother is left alone because all the others die in gas chambers. In October 1942 Rosenberg and his choir were sent to Auschwitz where the composer perished.

**Historical chronology:**

 **14th – 15th March 1939:**Occupation of the Czech lands by the German army

**16th March** Declaration of the Bohemia and Moravia Protectorate

**1st September 1939** Nazi Germany invaded Poland. Beginning of the Second World War

**27th April 1940** The establishment of the concentration camp in Auschwitz ordered by Himmler.

**19th September 1941** Obligatory marking of Jews over 6 years with the Jewish star established in the Reich and the Protectorate.

**24th November 1941** The arrival of the first transport, the Construction Kommando, at Terezín.

**End of March 1942** Beginning of mass deportation into Auschwitz.

**27th May 1942 Deputy Reich-Protector** Reinhard Heydrich assassinated in Prague.The beginning of huge repressions against Czech people.

**17th January 1945** Evacuation of Auschwitz ordered. 60 thousand prisoners forced on a death march.

**27th January 1945** Auschwitz liberated by Soviet troops.

**2nd May 1945** Administration of Terezín taken over by the International Red Cross.

**7th – 8th May 1945** Germany capitulated. End of the Second World War in Europe.

**February 1948** Czechoslovak coup d'état - Communist Party, assumed undisputed control over the government of Czechoslovakia

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