

**CZECH LITERATURE.** The oldest examples of Czech Jewish writing are glosses in medieval Hebrew manuscripts; Jewish scholars in Prague explained unusual or difficult Hebrew terms using Hebrew transcriptions of “the language of Canaan,” which was, Roman Jakobson has argued, a variant of Old Czech. These glosses are most extensive in the work of two Prague scholars, Avraham ben Azri’el of Bohemia (also known as Abraham Chladek), who wrote his commentary *Arugat ha-bosem* (Bed of Spices) in the late 1230s, and his student Yitshak ben Mosheh, whose *Or Zaru’a* (Light Sown) dates from the mid-thirteenth century. The glosses cannot really be said to constitute a literary work, but they are evidence that Jews in medieval Prague were thoroughly familiar with spoken Czech.

We have little evidence of Czech Jewish writing in the following centuries, although the reign of Rudolph II (1576–1612) saw a renaissance of Hebrew writing centered in Prague’s Jewish community. One of the most significant Jewish contributions to Czech literature may have come in this period, when the Protestant religious order the Unity of Brethren translated

Title page of the Kralice Bible.



the Old Testament into Czech (1579–1588). Two brethren of Jewish origin participated as experts on Hebrew: Lukáš Helic (d. after 1598) and Mikuláš Albrecht z Kaménka (d. 1619). We cannot specify their exact contribution, but this translation, known as the Kralice Bible, was the

greatest literary monument of Czech humanism and exerted an enormous influence, linguistic and literary, on Czech sacred and secular writing long into the future.

After the Habsburgs defeated the rebellious Czech nobles in 1620, the Czech literary language began a long period of stagnation. Clergy and nobility generally wrote in Latin and German, while literary Czech was used primarily in Catholic hymnals and homilies; the lower registers of the language survived in popular genres and daily speech. Thus, when acculturated Jews began writing in vernacular languages toward the end of the eighteenth century, they tended to choose German. Although many Jews, especially in the countryside, understood Czech, the allegiance to German was strong, thanks to the reforms of Joseph II (r. 1780–1790) and his establishment of German instruction in Jewish schools. This helps explain why there was no Jewish participation in the first decades of the Czech “national awakening”—the movement beginning at the end of the eighteenth century that led to the formation of a modern Czech national culture, literature, and literary language.

For a few years leading up to 1848, it seemed as if this situation might change, as a number of writers began to call for greater Czech–Jewish cooperation. One of the jewels of their campaign was the first poetry collection by a Jewish writer, *České listy* (Czech Leaves; 1846) by Siegfried Kapper (1820–1879). With images of autumn lakes, ruined churches, and absent lovers, *České listy* shows the clear influence of the great Romantic poet Karel Hynek Mácha (1810–1836), whom Kapper was the first to translate into German. But the numerous patriotic poems, asserting the poet’s Czech identity (“what law keeps me / from living for my homeland with my heart, my soul?”), received the most attention. In an unfortunate review, the leading journalist and literary critic Karel Havlíček Borovský (1821–1856) rejected Kapper unequivocally. Historians have debated whether or not Havlíček’s position was antisemitic; in any case it was inconsistent, for he says the Jews can never belong to the Czech nation because of their “Semitic origin,” and yet encourages them to assimilate to German culture. Less remarked upon is Havlíček’s distinction between “strident” (*křiklavý*) and “sensitive” (*citlivý*) poets. Sensitive poets transmit their own strong feelings to their readers and thus create a community of shared emotion; strident poets are clownish imitators, hiding their “lack of true feeling” in a cloak of contrived phrases. In effect, Havlíček excluded an artificial Jewish poet from a genuine community of shared national feeling, and although he was more accommodating of Jews elsewhere, his small-minded rejection of Kapper certainly helped deter Jews from writing in Czech in the following decades. But this is not to say that Czechs were not writing about Jews.

Following Oskar Donath (1882–1940), Czech literary historians have tended to speak of a romantic and a realist depiction of Jews. The romantic view, which borrowed much from Byron’s *Hebrew Melodies*, saw the fate of the Jews as mirroring that of the Czechs—they were a nation without a state, ennobled by suffering. Thus, in Mácha’s work *Cikáni* (The Gypsies; 1835), the Jewish girl Lea is struck by a gypsy’s lament that “my nation is scattered,” and sings her own moving song on this motif. If the romantic view of Jews tended to be sympathetic to their suffering, it was still one-dimensional, nor were writers as enthusiastic when Jews stepped out of the stereotype—witness Mácha’s caricature of a German-speaking Prague Jew in his “Doslov ke *Křivokladu*” (Afterword to *Křivoklad*; 1834).

The realist view, embodied in a great deal of the rural fiction that was a mainstay of nineteenth-century Czech prose, generally embraced antisemitic stereotypes. Here Jews are wandering junk dealers who arrive in a town and gradually get rich by preying on the peasants—lending to them at high interest rates, ruining them with alcohol, and eventually repossessing their land. Czech writers further saw Jews as agents of Germanization, supporting German-language schools and “converting” local officials from the Czech national cause. Such portrayals were common to a whole range of writers, both minor (František Pravda, 1817–1904) and major (Josef Holeček,

1853–1929; Alois Mrštík, 1861–1925; Vilém Mrštík, 1863–1912; or the poet Petr Bezruč, 1867–1958). The great poet and journalist Jan Neruda (1834–1891) wrote many antisemitic feuilletons, most notoriously the pamphlet “Pro strach židovský” (For Fear of the Jews; 1869), in which he calls for “emancipation from the Jews.” Neruda claims his “enmity” is political and national in nature, but his impassioned attack goes beyond the alleged “German-ness” of Jews to consider their unchanging foreignness, their physiognomy, their intellectual and spiritual inferiority, and so on.

On the opposite pole, a number of writers called for greater inclusiveness. Josef Jiří Kolár (1812–1896) wrote the popular play *Pražský žid* (The Prague Jew; 1871), set in 1620, in which the rich Jew Eliab donates money to the defeated Czech cause and refuses to flee his homeland: “My cradle was among Czechs, as was my happy home, and may my peaceful grave be among them too.” Kolár was not Jewish—Eliab is fond of crying “Saint Abraham!”—but he does articulate a notion of Czech–Jewish cooperation based on common experiences. The poet Jaroslav Vrchlický (1853–1912) contributed frequently to the Czech Jewish press; his extensive use of Jewish motifs later led some critics to claim he had Jewish ancestors, but this now seems highly doubtful. In his epic poem *Bar Kochba* (1897), long a touchstone for Czech Jewish writers, there is an implicit but clear parallel between the Jewish nation and the Czechs, both seeking to preserve their own identity in a foreign empire.

Historians have rightly observed that the Czech–Jewish movement, starting in the 1870s and gathering strength in the following decades, bore many similarities to the earlier formation of Czech national and cultural identity at the beginning of the century. Literary history, however, has yet to explain some salient differences. If the Czech national awakening was carried, to a large degree, by belles lettres—poetry, drama, and prose were bearers of national identity and signs of cultural development—the growth of Czech Jewish writing was focused far more exclusively on journalism, and most of the movement’s first major writers were essayists, philosophers, and cultural critics. (They were also almost exclusively male, another difference from the Czech case.) Even the short story writer Eduard Lederer or “Leda” (1859–1941) combined reporting and essays with his many sketches for the Czech Jewish press. The *Kalendář českožidovský* (Czech–Jewish Almanac) began publication in 1881, but long after Czech Jewish journalism was well established, only a handful of Czech Jewish writers had appeared.

It is not entirely clear why this was the case. Certainly Havlíček’s rejection of Kapper cast a long shadow, although it seems unlikely that one negative review would have silenced so many prospective writers. Perhaps more important were the intimidating national politics of Prague in the second half of the nineteenth century. Earlier, the Czech awakeners had been creating a new culture with notably fluid boundaries, when even the rules and vocabulary of the modern Czech literary language were in flux; by the

1870s, the norms of Czech culture were well established. Young Jewish writers, already facing the stigma of being outsiders associated with German culture, may have been skeptical about their chances of getting a fair reception in the literary marketplace. The one exception was Julius Zeyer (1841–1901), who was not, however, close to the Czech–Jewish movement, and for whom an interest in Jewish legends merged with a far broader interest in myth and his own brand of Catholic mysticism.

These circumstances help explain the career of Adalbert Östreicher (1862–1935), who grew up in a poor, Czech-speaking Jewish family in the Bohemian countryside. He was an autodidact, with just one year of secondary school, and his first story submissions, full of grammatical errors, were written in pencil on wrapping paper. The publisher Jan Herben (1857–1936) recognized his talent, corrected his mistakes, and suggested the pseudonym under which he would become known: Vojtěch Rakous. Hence, the first avowedly Czech Jewish writer to break into Czech literature was equipped with a number of advantages—the “authenticity” attending to his poor rural background, a Czech-speaking upbringing to inoculate him against accusations of Germanness, and a lively, colloquial style that disarmed charges that his Czech was artificial or contrived. Rakous strove for a more realistic portrayal of Czech Jews, but also recreated an idyll of rural Czech–Jewish harmony. His many stories in the Czech Jewish press were collected in various editions of *Vojkovičtí a přespólní* (The People from Vojkovice and its Environs), which first appeared in 1910 and went through six editions by the 1930s; its most popular characters were the elderly couple Modche and Rezi, whose humorous misadventures were adapted for stage, radio, and film.

By the eve of World War I, a new generation of Czech Jewish writers was taking shape—a generation born in the 1880s, who combined an awareness of their Jewish heritage with a strong Czech self-consciousness, a feeling that their attachment to Czech culture was less a move in the game of national identity and more a natural result of their upbringing. They were an urban generation; many had grown up and studied in provincial cities and then moved to Prague for high school or university. They witnessed the waves of antisemitism in Czech society in the 1890s, including the ritual murder trial of Leopold Hilsner [*see Hilsner Affair*], but World War I was the more formative experience, and the creation of an independent Czechoslovakia in 1918 seemed a stunning vindication of the Czech orientation over the German one. With the exception of the anarchist and Bohemian poet František Gellner (1881–1914?), who disappeared on the Galician front, their greatest literary achievements came after the war.

The 1920s and 1930s can be called, in retrospect, a golden age of Czech Jewish literature. Jewish writers participated in all the major literary movements of these years. Among the most notable were František Langer, a successful playwright and military doctor who had served with the Czech Legionnaires in the war; his brother Jiří Langer, who twice journeyed to a

Hasidic community in Galicia and later published a Czech collection of Hasidic legends, *Devět bran* (Nine Gates; 1937); and Ivan Olbracht, one of whose best novels, *Golet v údolí* (Golet in the Valley; 1937), depicted the clash of communal traditions and modernity among Orthodox Jews in Subcarpathian Rus'. A number of major writers wrote extensively for *Lidové noviny*, one of the best interwar newspapers, founded in 1893 by Adolf Stránský, who would later become the first Jewish minister in the postwar government: Karel Poláček's humorous sketches and biting wit culminated in a cycle of satirical novels, beginning with *Okresní město* (District Town) in 1936; Richard Weiner, the French correspondent for *Lidové noviny*, combined the careers of a foreign correspondent, cultural critic, hermetic poet (*Mezopotamie*; 1930), and short-story writer—his collection *Lítice* (Furies; 1916) was among the first examples of Czech fiction on World War I.

Jewish writers played an important role in Czech–German cultural collaboration between the wars. Franz Kafka was close to Jiří Langer and carried on an extensive correspondence with the journalist Milena Jesenská (1896–1944); Max Brod helped introduce the work of Czech artists like the writer Jaroslav Hašek (1883–1923) and the composer Leoš Janáček (1854–1928) to a German audience. Otokar Fischer (1883–1938) was a professor of German literature, later drama director at the National Theater, critic, lecturer, essayist, playwright, and poet. His translations from French, English, and German laid the foundations for a postwar generation of Czech translators who used natural, colloquial speech and sought a faithfulness that went beyond mere literalness. The versatile literary critic Pavel Eisner (1889–1958) wrote extensively in both Czech and German (and translated from each to each); his magisterial *Chrám i tvrz* (Temple and Fortress; 1946) was a convincing love letter to the subtleties and capabilities of the Czech language. Both Fischer and Eisner demonstrated that Czech Jews did not need to abandon German culture even as they made impressive contributions to Czech literature.

Jewish writers also participated in the interwar avant-garde, one of whose guiding spirits was the Russian émigré Roman Jakobson (1896–1982), also a founding member of the Prague Linguistic Circle. The poet and artist Jindřich Heisler (1914–1953) belonged to the Czech surrealist group and was instrumental in starting the French surrealist magazine *Neon* after World War II. Jiří Weil (1900–1959) was a Communist journalist, translator of new Russian literature, and member of the avant-garde grouping Devětsil. His skeptical novel *Moskva-hranice* (Moscow to the Border; 1937), based on his own experiences in the Soviet Union, portrayed the local psychology of the Stalinist purges. Weil's simple, seemingly superficial style created an illusion of objectivity that infuriated his critics, while simultaneously offering a venomous analysis of how the individual was overwhelmed by the mechanisms of collective life.

By the 1930s, a new generation of Czech Jewish writers was emerging. Egon Hostovský's first works established him as an important novelist, inheritor of expressionism and forerunner of existentialism; Viktor Fischl (1912– ) debuted with three volumes of poetry; Hanuš Bonn (1913–1941) published a slim but noteworthy volume of poems, *Tolik krajín* (So Many Landscapes; 1936). But the most significant writer to emerge toward the end of the interwar republic was the young poet Jiří Orten, one of the greatest Czech writers of the century, whose diaries and poetry have influenced several generations of Czech poets.

The Nazi occupation from 1939 to 1945 forced Czech writers to choose between emigration, falling silent, or going underground. František Langer, Fischl, and Hostovský all emigrated and continued writing abroad. Jiří Langer also escaped, only to die in Palestine, his health broken by the grueling journey down the Danube. Weil, Eisner, and Heisler survived the war in hiding; Orten was hit by an ambulance and died in September 1941, the day after his twenty-second birthday. Poláček, before being sent to Terezín, would write one of the most beloved of all Czech novels, *Bylo nás pět* (There Were Five of Us; published posthumously in 1946), a brilliant comedy about a boy's childhood in a small town.

Transports to the Terezín ghetto began in the fall of 1941. Terezín itself would become a center of Jewish culture, as its Nazi overseers allowed an extensive cultural life to develop for propaganda purposes. For Jews in the ghetto, the plays, concerts, lecture series, and poetry readings were an important morale builder and affirmation of humanity and solidarity in the midst of brutality. The children's literature in the ghetto's literary magazine *Vedem*, later published in *Je mojí vlastí hradba ghatt?* (We Are Children Just the Same; 1978 and 1995) is a chapter both sad and inspiring in Czech literary history. The moral complexity of artistic creation in the camps was not lost on Jewish artists; it was treated compellingly in Josef Bor's (1906–1979) novella *Terezínské rekviém* (Terezín Requiem; 1963), about the conductor Rafael Schächter's staging of Verdi's *Requiem*. Much later, Arnošt Goldflam's play *Sladký Theresienstadt* (Sweet Theresienstadt; 1996) would revisit the issue of art in the ghetto, tying it polemically to the question of the role and fate of illusions in a brutal world.

Czech literature was just recovering from the war when the Communist coup of 1948 dealt it another blow. The late 1940s and 1950s saw political repression and the regime's ever-intensifying antisemitism, highlighted in the Slánský show trials of 1952 [see Slánský Trial]. As in 1939, literature branched into three streams: exile, underground, and official. Hostovský settled in the United States in 1950; Fischl left for Israel in 1949 and began a new career as an Israeli diplomat, having taken the Hebrew name Avigdor Dagan. The journalist Pavel Tigrid (1917–2003) founded the important quarterly journal *Svědectví* (Testimony), published abroad from 1956 to 1992.

Back in Czechoslovakia, the official aesthetic program of socialist realism forced fiction into the straitjacket of stridently ideological plotlines. Among works by Jewish writers, two in particular were striking for their relative freedom from the prevailing socialist-realist norms. Ludvík Aškenazy (1921–1986) bypassed ideology and politics in *Dětské etudy* (Children's Etudes; 1955), short sketches about everyday experiences with his young son. Norbert Frýd's (1913–1976) *Krabice živých* (A Box of Lives; 1956), about a Nazi prison camp in the last year of the war, pushed against the tidy good-conquers-evil storylines of socialist realism. Frýd shattered his narrative into a mosaic of individual stories about the intricate negotiations among prisoners, kapos, and SS guards. Frýd avoided the ideological pathos and shallow psychology of socialist realism, but his book does retain its traces: the Communist prisoner Fredo can do no wrong, and the hero Zdeněk matures along the standard trajectory from self-absorbed egotist to politically conscious Communist.

Although most of Frýd's prisoners are Jews who have just survived a selection at Auschwitz, he deals very little with the gas chambers; indeed, *Krabice živých* helps reveal how the norms of socialist realism—demanding strong, levelheaded heroes, resolute and optimistic in adversity, secure in their faith in human solidarity and the victory of communism—were simply incapable of treating the Holocaust. Numerous reports and memoirs of the camps had appeared immediately after the war—for example, Anna Auředníčková's *Tři léta v Terezíně* (Three Years in Terezín; 1945) or Ota Kraus's *Země bez boha* (Land Without God; 1946)—but after the Communist takeover, the only real literary treatment of this theme was Weil's important novel *Život s hvězdou* (Life With a Star; 1949), about a Jew hiding in occupied Prague.

In fact, Weil was ahead of his time. It was not until the late 1950s that Arnošt Lustig (1926– ) would open up the theme of the Nazi camps for Czech literature with his short story collections *Noc a naděje* (Night and Hope; 1957) and *Démanty noci* (Diamonds of the Night; 1958). As a teenager, Lustig had survived Terezín, Auschwitz, and Buchenwald. His characters (often children and the elderly) are weak and vulnerable, but in the extreme conditions of the camps, they stubbornly cling to the whole range of human emotions—envy, jealousy, pride, lust, generosity, bravery, cowardice. Lustig's complex portrayals did a great deal to open the way for the full-scale return of Jewish themes to Czech literature in the 1960s. This return was evident both in non-Jewish authors such as Hana Belohradská (1929– ) (*Bez krásy, bez límce* [No Beauty, No Collar; 1962]) and Josef Škvorecký (1929– ) (*Sedmiramenný svícen* [The Menorah; 1964]) and in Jewish ones such as Ladislav Grosman (1921–1981), whose *Obchod na korze* (The Shop on Main Street; 1965) was based on his own screenplay for the Oscar-winning film, or J. R. Pick (1925–1983), who wrote a black comedy about Terezín, *Spolek pro ochranu zvířat* (The Society for the Protection of Animals; 1969). Much of this

Czech fiction from the occupation and the Holocaust experimented with a light touch, sometimes even flirting with humor; as Grosman wrote on the dust jacket to *Nevěsta* (The Bride; 1969): “I would like to write about what happened. But I fear the pathos of tragedy. And that may be the reason—if I can call it that—for my tragicomic vision.” Tragicomedy evolves into chilling grotesque in the work of Ladislav Fuks (1923–1994), who wrote the most striking and influential Holocaust fiction of the 1960s. Fuks was not Jewish himself, but his novels *Pan Theodor Mundstock* (Mr. Theodor Mundstock; 1963) and *Spalovač mrtvol* (The Cremator; 1967) unforgettably captured the banality and absurdity of evil during the Nazi occupation.

By the end of the 1960s, Jewish themes and Jewish writers had emerged fully from the taboos and silences of the 1950s—just one sign of the larger liberalization process that culminated in the Prague Spring of 1968. But the Soviet-led invasion on 21 August 1968 once again signaled the start of a political crackdown. This slow but steady process, known as “normalization,” was another violent break in the development of Czech literature, and once again was accompanied by the rise of official antisemitism; in 1973, for example, the manuscript for the above-mentioned *Je mojí vlastí hradba ghett?* was rejected for publication because “since 1967 Israeli propaganda has been exploiting the persecution of Jews during World War II.”

As in 1939 and 1948, writers were faced with a choice. Some, including Lustig, Škvorecký, Grosman, and Aškenazý, left the country. Nearing the end of his career as a diplomat, Fischl launched a new one as novelist, beginning with *Kuropění* (Cock’s Crow; 1975), about an aging country doctor, a Catholic who has lost faith in God but reconciles himself to his own approaching death. Other writers, such as Fuks or the agile poet Karel Sýs (1946–), adapted to the demands of the newly repressive government and reaped the rewards of loyalty. Still others hovered at the margins of permissibility. Ota Pavel (Otto Popper, 1930–1973), an established sportswriter, surprised readers with two outstanding story collections, *Smrt krásných srnců* (The Death of the Beautiful Deer; 1971) and *Jak jsem potkal ryby* (How I Came to Know Fish; 1974). These evocations, alternately comic and brutal, of his childhood before and during the war could only be published in censored form—without, for example, the story “Běh Prahou” (The Race Through Prague), in which the narrator’s father, who had joined the Communists because they promised to stop dividing people “into Jews and non-Jews,” despairs after seeing the list of defendants in the Slánský trial, 11 of whom were identified as “of Jewish origin.” He carves two Stars of David on his front gate, where he used to paint a red star.

Many of those who refused to endorse the regime ultimately moved into opposition, publishing their works in samizdat and joining the dissident movement. The example of Karol Sidon (1942–) is particularly interesting. Sidon had written two fascinating autobiographical novellas, *Sen o mém otci*

(*Dream of My Father*; 1968) and *Sen o mně* (*Dream of Me*; 1970), analyzing in part his conflicted loyalties to his Jewish father, who had died in Terezín, and his non-Jewish mother. In the 1970s, Sidon began studying Hebrew and joined Prague's small community of practicing Jews, who were subject to frequent harassment; in 1983 he emigrated to Germany to study Judaism. A number of other Jewish writers were active in samizdat publishing and the dissident movement and (like Sidon) signed Charter 77, such as Ivan Klíma (1931–), the playwright Milan Uhde (1936–), and the critic Josef Vohryzek (1926–1998). Their work tended not to deal extensively with Jewish themes, although Uhde's radio play *Velice tiché ave* (*Ave Maria Played Softly*; 1981) drew parallels between the moral failings of Czechs after 1938, 1948, and 1968, and in Klíma's *Soudce z milosti* (*Judge on Trial*; 1986), the Holocaust becomes a founding act of injustice shadowing the life of a judge who survived Terezín as a boy. Some samizdat was devoted expressly to Judaism, including the series *Alef*, edited by Jiří Daníček (1948–), and the annual *Kalendář*, edited first by Sidon and then Daníček.

After the Velvet Revolution of November 1989, a familiar pattern reasserted itself; a reawakening of interest in Jewish culture accompanied, and was part of, the larger process of political liberalization. Tigríd would become minister of culture, Sidon the Czech Republic's chief rabbi. The 1990s saw a surge of interest in Jewish literature, with the publication of collected works by Orten, Poláček, Hostovský, František Langer, and others. Many memoirs appeared, both from the nineteenth century—such as Šimon Wels's delightful *U Bernátů* (*At the Bernáts*; 1993)—and from the twentieth century, notably, Richard Glazar's *Treblinka, slovo jak z dětské říkanky* (*Treblinka, Like a Word from a Children's Rhyme*; 1994). Jiří Kovtun's *Tajuplná vražda* (*The Mysterious Murder*), a masterful account of the Hilsner trial, was a literary event in 1994. Nevertheless, although authors like Lustig, Klíma, Fischl, and Goldflam continued to produce major works, no new generation of writers arose to take the baton from their predecessors; although Heinz Jakob Tauber's *Atlantida holičských židů* (*The Atlantis of Holič Jews*) introduced an original new Jewish author to Czech literature in 2003, Tauber was born in 1917. His charming chronicle of the “boisterous idyll” of his childhood village may be the best symbol of the uncertain future, and hidden depths, of Czech Jewish writing.

*[Many of the figures mentioned are the subject of independent biographical entries.]*

**APPENDIX: CZECH WRITERS.** *[The following list identifies and briefly describes the work of Czech writers who are not the subject of an independent biographical entry.]*

**Ludvík Aškenazý** (1921–1986): Versatile author of radio plays, screenplays, fairy tales, and other genres. Aškenazý began his career as a political

journalist but soon began to write refined and lyrical stories notable for their lack of ideological rigidity—a rarity in official Czech literature of the 1950s. He emigrated to Germany after the Soviet invasion of 1968 and wrote most of his subsequent work in German.

**Hanuš Bonn** (1913–1941): Poet whose promising career was cut short by the Nazi occupation in 1939. Bonn became head of the Jewish community's immigration department and worked tirelessly securing passports and visas for Jews who wanted to emigrate. In 1941, he refused to cooperate with the Nazis in drawing up a list of names for the first transports; he was arrested and killed.

**Josef Bor** (Bondy; 1906–1979): Author of two memorable books about the Holocaust: *Opuštěná panenka* (The Abandoned Doll; 1961), a fictionalized memoir of his own wartime experiences in Terezín and Auschwitz, and *Terezínské rekviem* (Terezín Requiem; 1963), a novella based on a true event—the staging of Verdi's *Requiem* in Terezín. It has been translated into more than a dozen languages.

**Pavel (Paul) Eisner** (1889–1958): Prague writer, poet, and literary historian who wrote fluently in both Czech and German. Eisner's many translations did much to introduce Czechs to the German literature of Prague (Werfel, Kafka), as well as to introduce Czech authors to German speakers.

**Otakar Fischer** (1883–1938): One of the most versatile scholar-artists of the interwar period. Fischer was a prominent translator, poet, literary historian, playwright, director of the National Theater, and professor of German literature at Charles University in Prague. Originally a staunch assimilationist who accepted baptism, he explored an almost involuntary attraction to his Jewish roots in his poetry collection *Hlasy* (Voices; 1924).

**Viktor Fischl** (1912– ): Poet, novelist, and diplomat who began his career with several poetry collections in the 1930s, including *Hebrejské melodie* (Hebrew Melodies; 1936); while working for the Czechoslovak government-in-exile during World War II, he wrote the well-known lament “Mrtvá ves” (Dead Village) in memory of Lidice, the village destroyed by the Nazis in 1942. After the war, Fischl emigrated to Israel, took the name Avigdor Dagan, and became an Israeli diplomat. Only in the 1970s did he return to his writing career to become one of the major Czech authors in exile, with works such as *Kůropění* (Cock's Crow; 1975) and *Dvorní šašci* (Court Jesters; 1982).

**Norbert Frýd** (Fried; 1913–1976): A writer for cabaret, theater, and film before World War II, who survived Terezín and Auschwitz, and escaped from Dachau. Frýd's *Krabice živých* (A Box of Lives; 1956), about a Nazi prisoner-of-war camp, helped loosen the ideological restraints on Czech literature in the 1950s; his autobiography *Lahvová pošta* (Bottle Mail; 1971), the third part of a trilogy about his family history, was a rare acknowledgment of Czech Jewish culture in official literature following the Soviet invasion of 1968.

- Ladislav Fuks** (1923–1994): Not Jewish himself, Fuks wrote a number of brilliantly grotesque portrayals of Jews in wartime Prague, including *Mí černovlasí bratři* (My Black-Haired Brothers; 1964), *Pan Theodor Mundstock* (1963), and *Spalovač mrtvol* (The Cremator; 1967).
- Arnošt Goldflam** (1946–): Playwright, director, and actor in theater and film. Among his major works are the plays *Písek* (Sand; 1988) and *Sladký Theresienstadt* (Sweet Theresienstadt; 1996), as well as numerous dramatic adaptations (of Kafka, Dostoevsky, Karel Poláček) and the elegant short story collection *Pořád o jednom a jiné* (Still about the Same Thing and Others; 2003).
- Ladislav Grosman** (1921–1981): Author of *Obchod na korze* (The Shop on Main Street; 1965). He also coauthored the screenplay for the Oscar-winning film. In 1968 he emigrated to Israel.
- Ivan Klíma** (1931–): Prominent journalist and writer who changed from committed Communist to reformer to dissident, and who has reflected on the mechanisms of conformity, power, and guilt in plays such as *Porota* (The Jury; 1968) and *Hry* (Games; 1973–1974) and the novel *Soudce z milosti* (Judge on Trial; 1986), as well as in works written after 1989. Several cycles of short stories, including *Má veselá jíttra* (My Merry Mornings; 1978) and *Moje zlatá řemesla* (My Golden Trades; 1990) reflect the daily life of a dissident in the 1970s and 1980s.
- Arnošt Lustig** (1926–): Writer whose stories and novels about Jews and Czechs during and after World War II helped open Czech literature to treatments of the Holocaust after a long silence. Lustig escaped from a Nazi death transport as a boy, an experience he dramatized in *Tma nemá stín* (Darkness Casts No Shadow; 1958). After the Soviet invasion in 1968, he emigrated to Israel and then to the United States. Many of his works have received wide recognition in English translation, including *Dita Saxová* (1962, trans. 1966), *Modlitba pro Kateřinu Horovitzovou* (A Prayer for Katherine Horowitz; 1964, trans. 1973), *Nemilovaná. Z deníku sedmnáctileté Perly Sch.* (*The Unloved: From the Diary of Perla S.*; 1978, trans. 1985), and *Krásné zelené oči* (Lovely Green Eyes; 2000, trans. 2001).
- Ota Pavel** (1930–1973): Originally a sportswriter, but best known for two short story collections, *Smrt krásných srnců* (Death of the Beautiful Deer; 1971) and *Jak jsem potkal ryby* (How I Met the Fish; 1974), which are based on the adventures of Pavel's father before and during World War II.
- Karol Sidon** (1942–): Playwright, editor, and author. Sidon has written religious-philosophical essays such as *Evangelium podle Josefa Flavia* (The Gospel According to Josephus Flavius; 1969–1970) and the novels *Boží osten* (The Thorn of God; 1976) and *Brány mrazu* (The Gate of Frost; 1977). After signing Charter 77, Sidon emigrated in 1983 to study Judaism in Heidelberg and eventually converted to Judaism.

**Pavel Tigrid** (Schönfeld; 1917–2003): Political journalist, essayist, founder of the important Czechoslovak exile journal *Svědectví* (Testimony; 1956–1992), and a minister of culture after 1989. His *Průvodce inteligentní ženy po vlastním osudu* (The Intelligent Woman's Guide to Her Own Fate; 1988) limns the dilemmas of emigration and of Czech history.

**Milan Uhde** (1936– ): Playwright, author of stories and apocrypha, signatory of Charter 77, and a minister of culture and member of parliament after 1989. Among his well-known plays were the “nonstop-nonsense” cabaret-satire *Král-Vávra* (King-Vávra; 1964) and *Balada pro banditu* (Ballad for a Bandit; 1978), an adaptation of Ivan Olbracht's *Nikola Šuhaj, Outlaw*.

**Josef Vohryzek** (1926–1998): Leading literary critic, noted for his acumen and independence. Among the first signatories of Charter 77 and one of its spokesmen in 1987, Vohryzek edited the important samizdat journal *Kritický sborník* (Critical Review) from 1981 through 1985.

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