

# INTRODUCTION

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In 1988, the East German Ministry for Culture and the Secretary of State for Church Affairs jointly curated the exhibition 'Und lehrt sie: Gedächtnis!' ('And Teach Them: Memory!') to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the 1938 November Pogroms ('*Kristallnacht*'). The final section of the exhibition was dedicated to films about the Holocaust and Jewish persecution, a subject which, according to the accompanying catalogue, was a 'thematic constant' in East German cinema.<sup>1</sup> We may well approach such claims with scepticism. After all, it was only in 1990 that the East German parliament (*Volkskammer*) finally acknowledged the German Democratic Republic's (GDR) 'joint responsibility' for the 'humiliation, expulsion and murder of Jewish women, men and children' under National Socialism.<sup>2</sup> This statement by the *Volkskammer* marked a significant shift in terms of official, public statements about the National Socialist past by state representatives. Until this point, moral and criminal responsibility for the crimes of National Socialism had been firmly placed at the door of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). But to what extent did this belated acknowledgement of the GDR's failure to confront its 'joint responsibility' for the German National Socialist past also undermine the state's assertion that the treatment of Jewish persecution was a 'thematic constant' in East German film? This book examines the changing ways East German filmmakers approached the subject of the Holocaust and the National Socialist persecution of Jews throughout the course of the GDR's existence.

It is certainly true that prior to 1990, the ruling Socialist Unity Party of Germany (Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands or SED) never officially acknowledged any inherited responsibility for the crimes committed on its territory or by Germans during the Third Reich. Instead, it sought to recast East Germans as both the working-class vic-

tims of, and antifascist victors over, 'capitalist fascist' oppression by presenting National Socialism as the inevitable outcome of a politically and economically driven class struggle. This allowed the SED to argue that the destruction of the political and economic structures that had facilitated the rise of National Socialism meant that the GDR had 'eradicated imperialism and militarism, racism and antisemitism by its roots'.<sup>3</sup> By extension, the FRG was viewed as an unreformed continuation of those same structures that were still ruled by 'capitalist fascist' forces. As expedient as this realignment of responsibility undoubtedly was, this political-economic presentation of the past nevertheless left one crucial point unexplained: the specificities of Jewish persecution.

This interpretative framework served not only as an exculpation from the past, but also as a legitimization for the present. By presenting the working class and the communist resistance as the respective victims and victors of National Socialism, East Germans were largely absolved of responsibility for the crimes of the past. Meanwhile antifascist resistance members were celebrated as the heroic founding fathers of the 'first socialist state on German soil'.<sup>4</sup> The extent to which such claims stood up to scrutiny is dubious. While it is certainly true that the SED party leadership included several individuals who were members of the communist resistance and who had been persecuted under National Socialism, this did not extend to the population at large: only one per cent of the East German population were considered antifascist veterans.<sup>5</sup> As the writer Christa Wolf later reflected, it seemed that 'a small group of antifascists who governed the country extended . . . its consciousness of victory to the whole population'.<sup>6</sup>

In order to understand the cultural and political significance of East German Holocaust films, we must first turn our attention to the antifascist film. It should come as little surprise that the state doctrine of antifascism was a highly visible theme in East German film. Described by the Ministry for Culture as 'the first great tradition' of East German cinema,<sup>7</sup> the antifascist film played a key 'mediating function' in shaping collective memories of the past.<sup>8</sup> From biopics of leading communist figures (*Ernst Thälmann – Sohn seiner Klasse*, 1954; *Wo andere schweigen*, 1984), to war films (*Mich dürstet*, 1956; *Fünf Patronenhülsen*, 1960), resistance narratives (*Stärker als die Nacht*, 1954; *Leute mit Flügeln*, 1960) and childhood dramas (*Sie nannten ihn Amigo*, 1958; *Die Schüsse der Arche Noah*, 1983), antifascist films crossed several genres and remained a staple of East German cinema throughout the existence of the GDR.<sup>9</sup> According to Daniela Berghahn, antifascist films constituted roughly thirteen per cent of East German cinematic output, and annual film weeks

and even month-long celebrations were programmed to showcase the scope of this 'cornerstone of East German film culture'.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, in light of its popular appeal and ability to be exported around the world, film always played a central role in articulations of national identity abroad. As early as 1951, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Anton Ackermann, declared that DEFA's best films were 'our most effective diplomatic emissaries abroad because they bear witness in their vital, visual and acoustic force to the fact that, in the shape of the German Democratic Republic, a new, peaceful and democratic German state has come into being'.<sup>11</sup>

Given the significance of antifascist films in projecting and canonizing heroic East German narratives of the National Socialist past, we could perhaps expect there to be little space afforded to alternative forms of victimhood, not least those that could not easily be situated within an antifascist framework. Angelika Timm stresses that while the Holocaust was 'not ignored' in the GDR, 'for decades it played only a minor role in the GDR's historiography and political culture'.<sup>12</sup> Since the Holocaust was largely subsumed under narratives of antifascist resistance, it has long been assumed that the Holocaust and Jewish persecution were topics also largely absent from East German cinema screens. It is certainly true that in the GDR there was no comparable model to the West German process and discourse of *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* ('coming to terms with the past') which created a public and scholarly space for discussions about Jewish victimhood and German perpetration.<sup>13</sup> Rather, the equivalent public and scholarly debates in the GDR were shaped by the parameters of the class-based victim-victor framework of commemoration. However, when we look to East German filmmakers' engagement with Jewish persecution, a very different picture emerges.

The Holocaust was a present and permissible theme in East German cinema. Films about Jewish persecution were made throughout the state's existence and were regularly marketed on an international platform. Indeed, the GDR's only Oscar nomination was for *Jakob der Lügner* (*Jacob the Liar*, 1974), a film about the persecution of Jews which does not feature a single antifascist character. We must, however, be cautious about the conclusions we draw from this, as ascertaining the simple presence of a theme offers limited insights into how that theme was presented. If we focus exclusively on release schedules, it is clear that filmmakers in the Soviet Zone of Occupation led the way in cinematic engagements with the Holocaust.<sup>14</sup> The very first postwar German film, *Die Mörder sind unter uns* (*The Murderers are Among Us*, 1946), was li-

censed by the Soviet Military Administration in Germany (SMAD) and broached the subject of the mass murder of the Jews through somewhat veiled references to concentration camps, the symbolic use of stars (intended to evoke the 'Judenstern') and a carefully placed newspaper article with the headline, 'Two Million People Gassed!'. In the ensuing years, passing references became more integral narrative elements and the GDR's principal state-owned film studio, the Deutsche Film-Aktiengesellschaft (the German Film Corporation, DEFA), continued to produce films that dealt with Jewish persecution throughout the course of its existence.<sup>15</sup> However, the state's seeming willingness to permit, if not encourage, East German films that engaged with issues of Jewish victimhood is immediately complicated by its refusal to approve the release of three non-East German productions now widely considered seminal in the history of the Holocaust on film: *Nuit et brouillard* (*Night and Fog*, 1955), *Holocaust* (1978) and *Shoah* (1985).<sup>16</sup> In each case, political objections about how the past was (and was not) presented motivated the decision not to release or broadcast the production.<sup>17</sup> Thus on their own, release schedules only offer a partial insight into the relationship between East German film and the Holocaust. Rather, if we are to understand the complex and shifting relationship between film and the Holocaust in the GDR, we must interrogate how aesthetic and narrative strategies were employed in these films within the context of a state in which memories of National Socialist persecution were highly prescribed, tightly controlled and invariably politicized.

## Methodology

*East German Film and the Holocaust* is the first dedicated study of representations of the Holocaust and Jewish persecution in East German film. To date, critical examinations of East German Holocaust films have largely been limited to individual chapters within international studies of the Holocaust or they have featured within wider discussions of antifascist film in the GDR.<sup>18</sup> This is not to claim that East German cultural engagements with National Socialist Jewish persecution have been completely overlooked by scholars. Paul Doherty's *The Portrayal of Jews in GDR Prose Fiction* (1997) explores the depiction of Jewish characters in both the context of the Third Reich and postwar Germany. Mark Wolfgram's study *Getting History Right: East and West German Collective Memories of the Holocaust and War* (2010) draws on empirical data and quantitative sources such as opinion polls, audience attendance figures

and newspaper reviews in the course of exploring representations of Jewish persecution in East and West German television, film, radio and newspapers. Manuela Gerlof's study of East German radio plays, *Tonspuren: Erinnerungen an den Holocaust im Hörspiel der DDR* (2010), provides a particularly illuminating point of comparison with East German cinema and there are several parallels in terms of production and reception between the broadcast of radio plays and the release of feature films that deal with Jewish persecution. Finally, Elke Schieber's *Tangenten: Holocaust und jüdisches Leben im Spiegel audiovisueller Medien der SBZ und der DDR – Eine Dokumentation* (2016) provides a detailed thematic overview of East German films and television programmes that dealt with Jewish persecution and which allows scholars to trace the shifting levels of interest in engagements with the Holocaust. *East German Film and the Holocaust* builds on these studies through an interdisciplinary approach that places close readings of nine feature films alongside detailed archival research into the production and reception of the films in order to explore how East German filmmakers presented Jewish persecution on screen and how the state responded to such films. Each chapter combines close readings of the films' visual and narrative strategies with an examination of the films' production histories by drawing on a range of documents from the DEFA studio, the Ministry for Culture, press holdings and the filmmakers' archival holdings.

The analysis of the films in this book is informed by three principal concerns. Firstly, in order to examine the ways in which filmmakers addressed Jewish victimhood, it is important to establish how the characters' Jewish identity is codified. This encompasses not only the visual and linguistic means by which a character's Jewish identity is conveyed on screen, but also the narrative function and agency attributed to the characters themselves. This point is particularly important given that discussions of victimhood and persecution in the GDR were underpinned by a binary construction of National Socialist persecution: whereas political victims were presented as active 'Fighters against Fascism' (*Kämpfer gegen Faschismus*), Jewish victims were presented as passive 'Victims of Fascism' (*Opfer von Faschismus*). Consequently, it is important that we examine the Jewish characters' function in the plot and the impact of other – and, above all, antifascist – characters on this presentation. From this, we can establish the extent to which Jewish victims were reduced to passive ciphers for the demonstration of anti-fascist resistance or whether the films actually provided a unique space for the exploration of Jewish victimhood by placing the spotlight on a

victim group frequently pushed to the margins of East German commemorative discourses.

An analysis of victimhood should not be divorced from an examination of the perpetrators. There was a clear image of the National Socialist perpetrator in the GDR that was characterized by a dual displacement. In the first instance, responsibility was displaced vertically onto political or military elites whose actions were considered symptomatic of a politically and economically motivated class struggle. Secondly (and often concurrently), responsibility was discharged horizontally through geographical displacement whereby a clear link was established between the fascist National Socialist state of the past and the capitalist Federal Republic of the present. By analysing both the types of persecution depicted and the presentation of perpetrators, we can establish the extent to which East German Holocaust films reflected or diverged from the political rhetoric which surrounded and informed discussions of responsibility in the GDR. In this way, we can examine whether East German film upheld dominant narratives of the National Socialist past or whether it challenged the audience's relationship to the National Socialist past and, in so doing, offered an alternative space for the exploration of the figures of victim and perpetrator.

Finally, this book explores how the films were marketed by DEFA and discussed in the domestic and international press. Both the domestic distributor, Progress Film, and the international distributor, DEFA-Außenhandel, sought to promote desired readings of the films through press notes, specially-designed film booklets and programmes for audiences, posters and lobby photographs. Comparing the dominant tropes used in the press materials with those employed in the films themselves exposes important points of convergence with, and divergence from, the discussion and presentation of Jewish persecution in East German culture and society more broadly, and the specific presentation of these themes in each film. Here we discover that some of the most interesting debates surrounding East German Holocaust films in the press were not only about the films themselves, but also about the dominant modes of Holocaust remembrance in the GDR. In this contested space, we repeatedly discover fascinating exchanges about East German commemorative narratives, the extent to which these were indeed representative of East Germans' own lived experiences and whether such frames of reference were still valid and relevant for younger audiences.

All the films examined in this book were released in different political, social and cultural contexts. Situating the films within their do-

mestic release context allows us to understand the broader political, social and cultural debates unfolding at the time of the films' production and release and also avoids the danger of viewing DEFA – or even the GDR – as homogenous and unchanging. The so-called 'freezes and thaws' that characterized East German society often redrew the parameters of permissibility within a matter of months. A film could enter pre-production during a period of relative liberalization (a 'thaw'), only to encounter difficulties upon release because of the renewed political or cultural orthodoxy prevailing at the time (a 'freeze'). However, reading the films as a transparent window onto East German society also poses key challenges if we are to understand the complexities of East German Holocaust films. DEFA may have been a horizontally and vertically integrated state-owned film studio, but it would be misleading to read its output as unproblematic reflections of party positions. Seán Allan has rightly argued that to view East German cinema as little more than 'an appendage of the state ideological apparatus', is to 'ignore the often considerable tensions that existed between the filmmakers and their political masters'.<sup>19</sup> Rather, as the director Roland Gräf argued, 'art in the GDR always developed from friction, never from pure affirmation'.<sup>20</sup>

There were recurring themes in East German cinematic representations of Jewish persecution. Visually, the trope of assimilated Jewish Germans as protectors of German culture recurs in every decade of the GDR's Holocaust films. Narratively, responsibility for antisemitic persecution is repeatedly displaced onto political and military elites, and there is a consistent reluctance to consider the relationship between 'ordinary' Germans and antisemitism. Instead of grappling with widespread societal acceptance or propagation of antisemitism, the films often seek to valorize examples of antifascist solidarity and heroism, especially during the 1950s and 1960s. Although there was no explicit attempt to prescribe the limits of representation for East German cinematic engagements with the Holocaust, self-censorship undoubtedly played a role in East German filmmaking. Directors and screenwriters largely understood the parameters of aesthetic and narrative representation and the extent to which they could deviate from these dominant modes. But that does not mean that filmmakers did not seek to test, question or even challenge these boundaries. Indeed, when we study East German Holocaust films in detail, we see that it is precisely the discord between content and context that renders East German Holocaust film such valuable means of studying Holocaust memory in the GDR.

## Terminology

In any study of the Holocaust and Jewish persecution, it is important to discuss terminology. The term 'Holocaust' is used here in accordance with the definition of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum: 'The Holocaust was the systematic, bureaucratic, state-sponsored persecution and murder of six million Jews by the Nazi regime and its collaborators'.<sup>21</sup> It is not the assertion of this book that Jews were the only victims of National Socialist persecution. However, at the heart of this book is the question of how Jewish persecution was presented on screen within the context of a country that prescribed the primacy of communist persecution and resistance during the Third Reich. The films selected are all feature films with plots which play out between 1933 and 1945 and which feature a Jewish character as a primary figure in the film. Characters are described as Jewish in this book according to their designation as such in the films' plot. It is important to note that in several of the films studied here, the Jewish characters reject the imposition of a 'Jewish identity' upon them as defined by the National Socialist state and the films frequently show the difficulty assimilated Jewish-German citizens face when a National Socialist conceptualization of what it means to be Jewish is forced upon them.

The term 'Holocaust film' is a contentious one. Despite its frequent use in film scholarship, the term is rarely defined. There are no clear parameters that delineate what constitutes a Holocaust film and the term is frequently employed to encompass films that may or may not foreground the experiences of victims or survivors, that do or do not feature perpetrators, that can be set during the 1930s, during the Second World War or in a postwar context, and that are located in Germany, the so-called Greater German Reich or beyond. This book applies two criteria to the selection of films. Firstly, all the films examined here take place between 1933 and 1945. Secondly, Jewish victimhood or persecution is central to the plot. Using these criteria, nine East German films have been selected for detailed examination. The list of films is not exhaustive and the employment of the aforementioned selection criteria also means that familiar East German films such as *Die Mörder sind unter uns*, *Affaire Blum* (*Blum Affair*, 1948) and *Nackt unter Wölfen* (*Naked Among Wolves*, 1963) do not feature as case studies in this book. The omission of these films is not intended to question the importance of these films' discussions of Jewish persecution, but the core focus of this book remains on films that primarily foreground the Jewish experience during the Third Reich.



## Chapter Overview

This book is divided into five parts that correspond to decisive shifts in East German culture, politics and society. Each part begins with a discussion of the political, social and cultural developments in the period and the key developments in East German Holocaust commemoration and film that serve to frame the case studies within the broader filmic landscape. Part I examines the challenges of addressing audiences from the immediate aftermath of the Second World War to the foundation of the GDR in 1949. Described by director Kurt Maetzig as 'a wonderful period' in which 'we were very free and could make the films we wanted to make', this chapter examines how themes of Jewish persecution were approached by filmmakers at a time when DEFA operated under the auspices of the SMAD and the influence of the SED on the studio was significantly limited.<sup>22</sup> Although several films during this period include Jewish characters who are victims of National Socialism, only one film places a Jewish victim at the core of the plot: Kurt Maetzig's *Ehe im Schatten* (*Marriage in the Shadows*, 1947). Upon release, *Ehe im Schatten* became one of the most successful postwar German films and was even considered by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences for the category of Best Film. In recent years, however, Maetzig's film has been increasingly criticized for its heavy – and seemingly critically unreflexive – reliance on melodrama, a mode of filmmaking that was highly prevalent and popular in film during the Third Reich. This chapter approaches the film from a different perspective and argues that Maetzig actually seeks to appropriate and invert these familiar visual and narrative tropes in order to challenge National Socialist binary constructions of Jew and German and to rehabilitate this recently ostracized section of the population back into the nation's emotional psyche.

Part II examines the impact of celebratory antifascist conversion narratives on the depiction of Jewish victimhood in the GDR's first decade up until the construction of the Berlin Wall through Konrad Wolf's *Sterne* (*Stars*, 1959) and *Professor Mamlock* (1961). The period from the founding of the GDR in 1949 to the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 saw the rapid politicization of DEFA and a concurrent fall in the popularity of East German films among domestic audiences. Studies of East German cinema have rightly emphasized the centrality of the *Aufbau-film* ('construction film') in (re)shaping an inherent sense of East German identity among audiences in the 1950s and it is no coincidence that this decade should have seen an exponential rise in the number

of antifascist films in an attempt to promote the newly founded state's core founding narrative. The two case studies in this section reflect the central tenets of the *Aufbau* period. Both films focus on young protagonists and their antifascist conversion as they move from a position of passive indifference to becoming committed individuals determined to act against the National Socialist state. Although the topic of the antifascist conversion may appear to situate these films firmly within familiar discourses of the primacy of antifascism, these chapters argue that *Sterne* and *Professor Mamlock* create an important space for the discussion of Jewish victimhood that exists independently of celebrations of antifascist resistance and sacrifice.

Part III examines the impact of the Eleventh Plenum on East German Holocaust film. The Eleventh Plenum of December 1965 was originally intended as a forum for the discussion of economic matters. However, by the autumn of 1965, it became increasingly clear that the New Economic System (*Neues Ökonomisches System der Planung und Leitung*) had failed to overcome the GDR's ongoing structural economic problems. At the Plenum, the SED leadership attempted to divert attention away from its own shortcomings and onto the alleged 'manifestations of immorality' and presentations of a 'lifestyle alien to socialism' in East German culture.<sup>23</sup> The consequences of this cast a long shadow over East German filmmaking. Twelve films – nearly the entire year's production – were banned as a result of the Plenum, but it was the long-term effects that proved to be more decisive for the future direction of the studio. The aesthetic innovation that underpinned so many of the banned productions was hastily superseded by a return to the familiar through a heavy reliance on genre films coupled with the avoidance of any topics which could be considered politically or socially controversial. Here we encounter an unexpected and surprising finding in relation to East German Holocaust film. Two of the earliest films to be released after the Eleventh Plenum and during this cultural 'freeze' address issues of Jewish persecution in ways which, while not challenging the primacy of antifascist resistance and sacrifice, certainly did not promote them. Wolfgang Luderer's 1966 film *Lebende Ware* (*Living Wares*) presents Jews as the sole victim group of National Socialist persecution and does not feature a single antifascist character. Gottfried Kolditz's *Das Tal der sieben Monde* (*The Valley of the Seven Moons*, 1967) tells the story of the star-crossed lovers of the *Volksdeutscher* ('ethnic German') Rudek and the Jewish Pole Martyna. One of the most disturbing scenes in the film is the revelation that Martyna has been raped by a German National Socialist. These chapters explore what these films reveal about

the parameters of representation and remembrance in the GDR, not in spite of the cultural political climate of the period, but precisely because of the (real and perceived) restrictions in place.

Part IV analyses two DEFA productions from the 1970s, *Die Bilder des Zeugen Schattmann* (*The Pictures of Witness Schattmann*, 1972) and *Jakob der Lügner*.<sup>24</sup> Although both films had a television rather than a theatrical premiere and *Die Bilder des Zeugen Schattmann* was broadcast as a four-part television film, both films were made by a cast and crew composed almost entirely of DEFA employees. The 1970s was a decade of upheaval and change in the GDR. The change of leadership from Walter Ulbricht to Erich Honecker ushered in the period of reform many artists had been anticipating since the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961. Some of the most immediate changes were seen in culture. In 1972, Honecker's proclamation that there should be 'no taboos' in art was widely seen as a tacit endorsement to delve into previously unexplored stories using new artistic approaches.<sup>25</sup> The political developments of the early 1970s were not the only cause of this cultural 'thaw'. By the early 1970s, a new generation of filmmakers and audiences was coming of age, a generation that had only experienced the war as children and who, therefore, had limited – if any – first-hand experience of life during the Third Reich. On first viewing, *Die Bilder des Zeugen Schattmann* and *Jakob der Lügner* seem to uphold the generational shifts that underpinned this period of transition from a first-generation to a postwar-generation perspective of the National Socialist past. Kurt Jung-Alsen's *Die Bilder des Zeugen Schattmann* rehearses the familiar narratives of the 1950s and 1960s through the centrality of the film's antifascist conversion narrative. The younger director Frank Beyer offers a very different examination of Jewish victimhood in *Jakob der Lügner*, a film that is set exclusively in a ghetto and that only features Jewish victims of National Socialism. But again, we must be careful not to align the films with their wider production context without also reflecting on the content of the films themselves. It is certainly true that Jung-Alsen's film celebrates the actions of the antifascist resistance, while the Red Army was deliberately written out of Beyer's film because 'no division of the Red Army and no partisan group ever liberated a ghetto'.<sup>26</sup> However, closer analysis renders the films' engagement with Jewish persecution more complicated. Not only was *Die Bilder des Zeugen Schattmann* the first and only East German film to be shot on location at Auschwitz, but the graphic depiction of Jewish persecution offers the most confrontational images of any East German Holocaust film. At the same time, *Jakob der Lügner* may avoid any reference to the antifascist resistance in the plot,

but the decision to cast the veteran antifascist actor Erwin Geschonneck in the role of the protagonist's best friend problematizes the primacy of Jewish victimhood in the film.

The final section, Part V, examines the GDR's last decade through the films *Stielke, Heinz, fünfzehn* (*Stielke, Heinz, Fifteen*, 1987) and *Die Schauspielerin* (*The Actress*, 1988). This decade represents by far the clearest break with first-generation narratives of the National Socialist past. This can be seen not only in the overwhelming absence of anti-fascist characters, but also in the choice of hero: *Stielke, Heinz, fünfzehn* presents a passionate member of the Hitler Youth as the Jewish protagonist and *Die Schauspielerin* places a strong, independent woman as the central figure of identification and persecution. The break with the traditional narratives of the National Socialist past also opened up a critically reflective space for the discussion of how the past had been, and would be, remembered. The chapters conclude with a study of the behind-the-scenes debates about the resonance of the antifascist narratives of the past for the first generation of Germans to be educated and socialized exclusively in the GDR.

*East German Film and the Holocaust* reveals that the partial or sole focus on Jewish persecution was not questioned by DEFA or by East German officials at any point in the GDR's history. The inclusion of Jewish victimhood was not contingent on the celebration or commemoration of antifascist resistance, although films that feature an antifascist character often complicate the depiction of Jewish victimhood. However, although the focus on Jewish victims was not contentious, the figure of the perpetrator remained problematic throughout DEFA's output. The reluctance to move beyond the recurring characters of the sadistic SS officer or corrupt 'capitalist fascists' meant that there was little space for the audience to reflect self-critically, and nor do the films invite the audience to do this. Instead, spectators largely remain onlookers and are not called upon to question their own actions – actual or hypothetical – in relation to the figure of the perpetrator. This is not to claim that East German Holocaust films are simply reflections of familiar state discourse. On the contrary, this book reveals two surprising points. Firstly, in spite of the centrality of the antifascist resistance to East German projections of national identity, both DEFA and the Ministry for Culture repeatedly sought to promote East German Holocaust films in the West rather than more familiar antifascist action adventures. Moreover, when these films were marketed in the West, plot synopses and promotional material were often altered to downplay the more conventional, ideologically inflected readings of the film used for the domestic

market. Secondly, East German Holocaust films repeatedly created an alternative space for discussions not only of Holocaust memory in the GDR, but also of the cornerstones of intergenerational national identity in the past and present. Through these nine case studies, we discover that East German Holocaust films reveal a far more complex engagement with Jewish persecution than has hitherto been understood, not only within film, but also within society more broadly.

## Notes

1. Grabowski and Strohschein, 'Und lehrt sie: Gedächtnis', 108.
2. Cited in Timm, *Hammer, Zirkel, Davidstern*, 588. See also Timm, *Jewish Claims Against East Germany*, 226.
3. Honecker, 'Unser Staat – eine sichere Heimstatt des Humanismus'. Cited in Gerlof, *Tonspuren*, 48.
4. Honecker, 'Rede Honeckers zum 40. Jahrestag der DDR'.
5. Brinks, 'Political Antifascism in the German Democratic Republic', 209.
6. Wolf, 'Das haben wir nicht gelernt'.
7. Barnert, *Die Antifaschismus-Thematik der DEFA*, 11.
8. Schmidt, 'Krieg und Militär im deutschen Nachkriegsfilm', 443.
9. *Ernst Thälmann – Sohn seiner Klasse (Ernst Thälmann – Son of His Class)*, *Wo andere schweigen (Where Others Keep Silent)*, *Mich dürstet (I'm Thirsty)*, *Fünf Patronenhülsen (Five Cartridges)*, *Stärker als die Nacht (Stronger Than the Night)*, *Leute mit Flügeln (People with Wings)*, *Sie nannten ihn Amigo (They Called Him Amigo)*, *Die Schüsse der Arche Noah (Shots from Noah's Ark)*.
10. Berghahn, *Hollywood Behind the Wall*, 64.
11. Ackermann, 'Zum 5-jährigen Bestehen der DEFA', 7.
12. Timm, 'Ideology and Realpolitik', 188.
13. The term *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (also translated as 'mastering' or 'overcoming' the past) is a postwar concept used to describe efforts primarily in the Federal Republic and reunified Germany to address legal and moral legacies of the past.
14. The film studio DEFA predated and outlived the East German state. It was officially created in May 1946 and sold in 1992.
15. DEFA's final film to deal with Jewish persecution was the co-production *Krücke (Crutch)*, 1993. Set in postwar Vienna, the film includes a number of scenes featuring Jewish characters who have survived the war.
16. Of course, the ability to receive West German television throughout most of the GDR meant that many East Germans may have watched *Holocaust* when it was first broadcast in the Federal Republic in January 1979.
17. See van de Knaap, 'Enlightening Procedures', 74–77; Schieber, 'Im Dämmerlicht der Perestroika 1980 bis 1989', 228; Thiele, *Publizistische Kontroversen über den Holocaust im Film*, 329–33.
18. For example, Barnert, *Die Antifaschismus-Thematik*; Möller and Horche, *Die Vergangenheit in der Gegenwart*; Heimann, *Bilder von Buchenwald*; Kannapin, *Antifaschismus im Film der DDR*; Kramer, *Die Shoah im Bild*; Thiele, *Publizistische Kontroversen über den Holocaust im Film*.

19. Allan and Sandford, *DEFA: East German Cinema, 1946–1992*, 1.
20. Cited in Schittly, *Zwischen Regie und Regime*, 314.
21. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 'Introduction to the Holocaust'.
22. Brady, 'Discussion with Kurt Maetzig', 83.
23. Honecker, 'Aus dem Bericht des Politbüros an die 11. Tagung des ZK'.
24. Both *Die Bilder des Zeugen Schattmann* and *Jakob der Lügner* were co-productions with East German television.
25. Honecker, 'Zu aktuellen Fragen bei der Verwirklichung der Beschlüsse unseres VIII Parteitagés'.
26. Mark, 'Letter from Prof. Mark of the Żydowski Instytut Historyczny to DEFA'. When referencing archival material, the original German descriptor will be used if the document has an official title. If there is no official title, a description of the material will be provided in English.