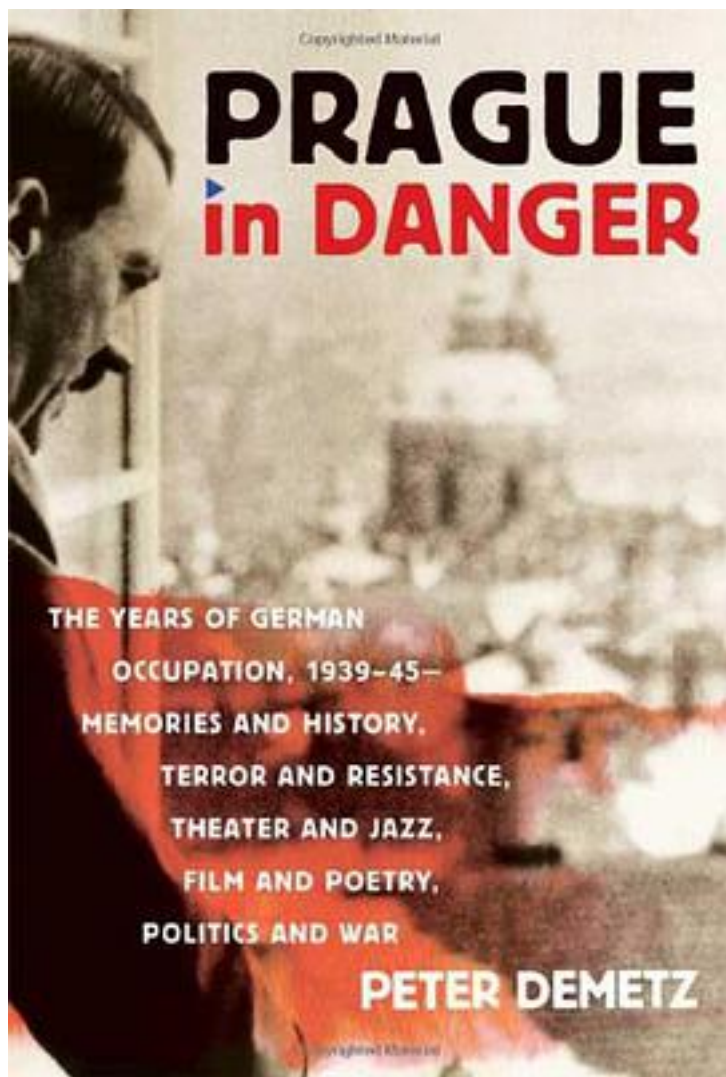


Prague in Danger



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著者:Demetz, Peter

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The Years of German Occupation, 1939-45: Memories and History, Terror and Resistance, Theater and Jazz, Film and Poetry, Politics and War

Demetz (*The Air Show at Brescia, 1909*) takes a creative approach to this account of wartime Prague, as another subtitle indicates: *Memories and History, Terror and Resistance, Theater and Jazz, Film and Poetry, Politics and War*. Interspersing political and cultural history with snippets of memoir of his own wartime experiences and those of other Czechs, Demetz, whose mother was Jewish, focuses on politics and culture to explain how the Nazis ruled his home country and how the Czechs tried to hang on to their vivid prewar cultural life. Without avoiding the issue of collaboration with the Nazis, Demetz takes great pride in Czech resistance, both political and cultural, such as honoring the late president Masaryk on Hitler's birthday, on April 20. Demetz also focuses on individuals like Milena Jesenska, Kafka's onetime lover turned political writer, who was sent to Bergen-Belsen for helping Jews and others escape from Czechoslovakia. This history is both vivid and compelling, especially Demetz's personal stories. Some of those passages, particularly how a young Demetz dealt with romance and sex in a country ravaged by war, are achingly beautiful. (Apr.)

"Prague in Danger is a compulsive read, and very finely done. There is by now a mass of more or less analytical commentary on the Protectorate, and of course we have powerful memoirs and personal testimony. But I haven't seen the two genres combined in this way, and with such great sensitivity to the interplay of public and private.

"Demetz conveys very poignantly, and with sharp insight, just what it was like to live day to day in occupied Prague, and moreover to live right at the intersection of the Czech, Jewish and German spheres. He embodies exactly what was destroyed by Nazi thuggery and then by Czech vengeance. I enjoyed too the forays into cultural history--of jazz or film, for example, or about Orten and Jesenska; and I hope that they can be appreciated, even by those who know nothing of the background, as conveying a flavour of the period and place.

"The politics are likewise depicted with a sure touch and sound judgment, as well as with an eye for the unfamiliar vignette, even in the case of the best-known episodes. Demetz's book should sharpen many readers' sense of the peculiar tragedy of the very last phase of the old multicultural Prague whose downfall he chronicles." —Robert Evans, Regius Professor of History, Oxford University

Praise for Prague in Black and Gold:

"A rich and intricate story . . . [Demetz] deftly tells the legends of the city's origin . . . He deliberately avoids the sanitized and prettified guidebook approach to Prague in favor of a more somber register which acknowledges that conflicts were never far beneath the surface and could explode in the most brutal forms." —R.J.W. Evans, *The New York Review of Books*

"[Demetz] writes with the ease and authority of a man showing us his old neighborhood. He seems to be on speaking terms with the many poets, chroniclers, rabbis, and clerics who lived and wrote in Prague, and allows us to read history through their lives and words . . . Reading Demetz is more like taking a graduate course with a master teacher: You know you are in the hands of an authority." —Helen Epstein, *The Boston Sunday Globe*

作者介绍:

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标签

评论

saw Demetz in his 90s last spring;biography about life under Protectorate; legends after legends after legends in 1930s 1940s Prague

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书评

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