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Most, the Town that Moved: Coal, Communists and the ‘Gypsy Question’ in Post-War Czechoslovakia

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ABSTRACT

As Czechoslovakia’s communist planners continually increased norms for power and coal production in the 1950s through 1970s, the sprawling surface mines of the north Bohemian brown coal basin expanded voraciously, swallowing 116 villages and parts of several larger cities by 1980. Infamously, the entire historic centre of Most was obliterated in order to expose over 85 million tons of coal. Planners envisioned a new city of Most as a model of socialist modernity. Deriding Most’s old town as a decaying capitalist relic, officials lauded New Most’s spacious and efficient prefabricated high-rises. Adding to the contrast, the majority of Old Most’s remaining inhabitants by 1970 were Roma (Gypsies). For communists, the Roma evoked an old order of segregation, class oppression and bad hygiene. By relocating Roma to modern housing, they could ‘liquidate once and for all the Gypsy problem’. This article examines the rhetorics of modernity employed as communists sought to ‘solve’ intertwined coal, gypsy and housing ‘problems’ in the city of Most. At the crossroads of several related modernising projects in the twentieth century, Most provides insight into connections between ethnic cleansing, social and environmental engineering and urban planning.

KEYWORDS

Czechoslovakia, communism, environment, Roma, coal, migration

INTRODUCTION

All that remains of Old Most is a towering late Gothic church, conspicuously isolated on a sculpted plateau north of the new city. Beyond the church, the pit begins, miles and miles of hollowed out landscape, a vacuous memorial to a vanished city and the coal that lay beneath it. If the juxtaposition of church and coal pit seems surreal, consider this: the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary used to reside 840 metres away, near the centre of Most's liquidated Old Town. In a triumph of communist engineering in Czechoslovakia, in 1975 a team of scientists, preservationists and technicians transported the 10,000-ton church on custom-built rails to its new home. Though the church stands as a reminder of the lost old town, its miraculous journey has also rendered it a monument to modernity, to the ability of planners and ideologues to reconfigure the natural and human landscape in the name of industrial progress.

The story of Most, the town that moved, seems at first glance very simple. With communist heavy industrialisation demanding ever increasing amounts of energy, planners decided in the late 1950s to mine a rich vein of coal under Most, gradually constructing a new city to replace the old one. Cost analyses determined that the procedure would not only uncover 86 million tons of coal, but also net a profit of over two billion crowns, including the expenses of demolition



FIGURE 1. Destruction of Old Most. Note the Church of the Assumption on the left, in preparation for its move the next year. Photo collection, Státní oblastní archiv (SOA) Most. Dated 26 September 1974. Reprinted with permission.

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and building new housing and services for upwards of 20,000 people.¹ Though construction and destruction proceeded in fits and starts, by the mid-1980s the project was complete. The historic streetscape of Old Most was gone, save for the itinerant church. The efficient surface mine that took its place yielded the expected revenues, fuelling several nearby power plants and bringing the promised profits. And a new socialist town sprouted amidst the coal pits. It was the communist planner's dream, with mass housing, modern architecture and rationalised infrastructure.

Though undoubtedly a story of zealous communist productivism, there are several other strands in the Most narrative that broaden its import. Two decades before Most began to move, two thirds of its population had been German. In the wake of the Second World War, Czechs expelled three million ethnic Germans from reconstituted Czechoslovakia, including the majority of the city of Brüx, the German name of Most. From 1945 to 1947, hundreds of thousands of Czechs poured into the emptying German borderlands of Bohemia, taking over housing, mines and a significant industrial network. Located in the heart of the brown-coal basin of northern Bohemia, Most was at the epicentre of a post-war national and social revolution.²

The expulsion of the Sudeten Germans from the Most region set in motion several processes that later came to be identified with communist rule. First, during resettlement in 1945 and 1946, planners and settlers alike envisioned north Bohemia as a productive landscape more than a historical one.³ Given the area's long German history, industrial importance, and recent re-settlement, a new materialist regional identity took hold that stressed labour and production. Second, in the 1940s and 1950s, waves of Roma (Gypsies) left impoverished encampments in Slovakia to seek work and housing in the borderlands. Many of these settled in Most. As Old Most emptied during the mid-1970s, a large concentration of Roma remained in the decaying old town. To communist officials, the Roma became a test of the regime's capacity to transform all inhabitants into productive and modern socialist citizens. Employing a familiar metaphor, Most's planners sought 'to liquidate once and for all the Gypsy problem' by moving Roma into modern housing that would cure them of their backward habits.⁴

'Liquidate' has a distinctive ring to it in Czech – *likvidovat* – it sounds decisive and thorough, and decidedly modern. It is no coincidence that this word resounds over and over in wartime and post-war public discourse in East Central Europe. The Nazis got things started in the region when they 'liquidated' Jews and other perceived enemies of the German nation. After the war, Czechs 'liquidated' the German population of Czechoslovakia by expelling Germans across the border into occupied Germany. And with a series of nationalising decrees, the Czechoslovak government 'liquidated' large capitalist industrial concerns, many of which had previously been in German hands. After the communist take-over of 1948, Czechoslovakia's Stalinist regime 'liquidated' class enemies, kulaks and surviving independent organisations. Two decades later, the

'liquidation' of Old Most liberated fields of coal and made way for block-style mass housing that would help 'liquidate' the region's housing crisis.⁵ And last, but not least, communists sought to 'liquidate' the so-called Gypsy problem – the failure of many Roma to adapt to prescribed norms – by resettling Roma in modern housing.

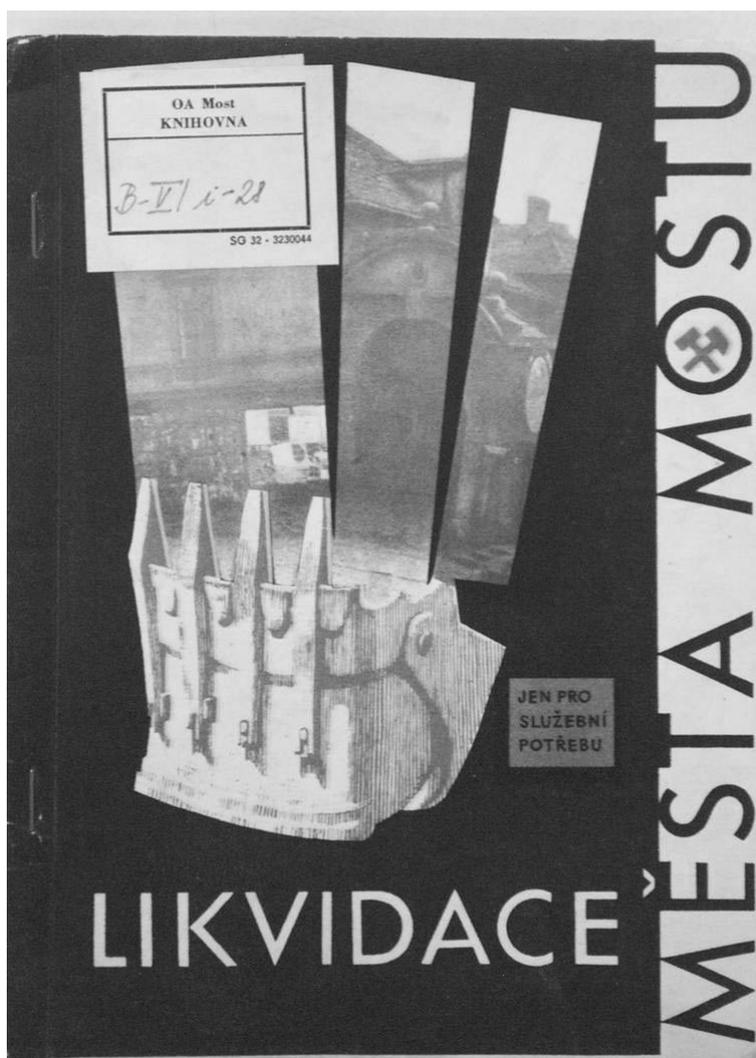


FIGURE 2. 'Liquidation of the city of Most'. Václav Valášek, *Likvidace města Mostu*. (Most: Dům Techniky a kultury SHD, undated but likely 1964).

In all these cases, liquidation derived from a vision of modernity that sought homogeneity and social control, the transformation of people, spaces and politics to suit the needs of a powerful, centralised and industrialised nation-state. This whole scale re-engineering of the human, architectural and natural landscape ties Most to a wealth of recent literature on the ‘gardening state’, a phrase associated with the sociologist Zygmunt Bauman.⁶ In *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Bauman links the ‘gardening vision’, the organising and rationalising tendency of modern states, to acts of violence in pursuit of an ideal social order.⁷ This insight, related to a broader critique of Enlightenment rationality associated with Theodor Adorno, has spilled into several historical subfields.⁸ Historians of authoritarian dictatorships, particularly of Nazism and Stalinism, invoke the gardening state to explain cases of ethnic and social engineering.⁹ A recent essay collection on ‘Twentieth-Century Population Management’, for example, bears the title ‘Landscaping the Human Garden’.¹⁰ In a comparative study of ethnic cleansing, Norman Naimark invokes Bauman’s modernity thesis to explain the extent and virulence of forced migration and genocide in the twentieth century.¹¹ Many other works blame modern, scientific worldviews for massive and destructive schemes to exploit and control nature.¹² And there is a substantial literature on so-called high modernist urban planning that has transformed many cities, for better or worse, in the twentieth century.¹³

All of these works on various aspects of the gardening state invoke general theories of dystopian modernity, and some, such as James Scott’s *Seeing Like a State*, touch on a few different fields at once, such as architecture and the environment. But few writers examine the interplay of the different applications of the landscaping concept – in other words, connections between ethnic cleansing, social and demographic engineering, urban planning and renewal, and environmental exploitation. The town of Most provides ideal coordinates for just such a study. Over a forty-year period in Most, Nazis, the Czechoslovak state, Czech settlers, communist planners and rationalising technicians transformed the city beyond recognition. My goal in this article is to explore the links between the various modernising projects undertaken in north Bohemia from the 1940s through the 1970s. Once considered a landscape of promise, Most’s gaping coal pits, uniform housing blocks, choking smog and social dysfunction became emblematic of dystopian modernity.

ETHNIC CLEANSING

In October 1938, tens of thousands of Sudeten Germans, including crowds in the coal town of Brůx (Most), welcomed the arrival of the Nazi Wehrmacht with outstretched arms.¹⁴ Seven years later, Nazi Germany lost the brutal and genocidal war waged in the name of the German nation. In the wake of the war, Czechs expelled close to three million Sudeten Germans across the border into

occupied Germany. During these waves of violent deportations and then organised transports, over 50,000 Germans left the Most region. At the same time, tens of thousands of Czechs, Slovaks and other settlers poured into the area, repopulating the city of Most by late 1946. The former city of Brüx, around 64 per cent German in 1930, became overwhelmingly Czech after the war.¹⁵

Beyond a legacy of hatred and disregard for human life, the Nazi war machine left to its Czech successors some valuable assets scattered about north Bohemia's industrial landscape. With little oil under Hitler's control, the Most coal fields were vital to the Nazi war effort. Seeking to modernise and increase production, Hermann Goering consolidated several mines into the massive Sudetenlaendische Bergbau (SUBAG) in 1939.¹⁶ A few months later, a second large firm was created under the Goering-Works umbrella to construct a hyper-modern chemical plant that would convert Most coal into oil and gas. By the time the plant went on-line in 1942, it employed over 30,000 workers, mostly forced labourers and POWs. In 1944 the Most plant pumped out over 40,000 tons of benzene monthly.¹⁷ By 1941, over two-thirds of mining and three-quarters of the chemical industry were in state hands, with production organised from a central office in Reichenberg (Liberec), which was in turn overseen from Berlin.¹⁸ Though wartime conditions led to haphazard development in the region, Nazi planners did manage to modernise coal and chemical production.¹⁹

Consolidation of the coal and chemical industries in north Bohemia were only the tip of a relentless centralisation that followed the Nazi annexation of the Sudetenland in 1938. Just as Reich German organisations had succumbed to 'coordination' after Hitler's seizure of power in 1933, the Sudetenland was quickly absorbed into the Reich. Sudeten Germans, who had bitterly opposed Czechoslovakia's centralising and nationalising tendencies after 1918, now lost all economic and political initiative to Party officials in Berlin.²⁰ Not only were north Bohemia's economy and society tightly controlled by the Nazi party-state, but the region also became an important part of the Nazi experiment in the ethnic re-engineering of East Central Europe. After the 1938 annexation of the Sudetenland, thousands of Czechs and Jews fled or were deported from the region.²¹

In 1945, the returning Czechoslovak government picked up where the Nazis left off, actually accelerating the political centralisation, economic consolidation and ethnic reorganisation of the north Bohemian borderlands. The expulsion and dispossession of Most's Germans began soon after liberation in May 1945, initiated by citizen militias and army units alike.²² 'We must liquidate the German problem definitively', President Edvard Benes declared in a typical speech in May, 1945.²³ Elsewhere Benes noted, 'The government has decided ... to cleanse the republic of treacherous [Germans]'.²⁴ These were common formulations in 1945. The Germans of Bohemia had given Czechoslovakia nothing but trouble since the foundation of the country in 1918, the argument went. It was precisely Czechoslovakia's diversity that had undermined its democratic foundations,

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leading to the state's destruction in 1938. The departure of the Sudeten Germans would simplify the political and social map of Czechoslovakia.

The expulsion of Most's Germans came in four waves. Soon after liberation in May 1945, Czech vigilantes and Revolutionary Guards forced close to 10,000 Germans from their homes and across the border into occupied Germany.²⁵ As Czech soldiers and workers entered the Most region, housing shortages led to a second burst of expulsions in August and September, totalling close to 5,000 Germans. Twenty-eight thousand more Germans left on organised transports from March to October, 1946. Of a pre-war population of around 60,000 Germans, only 7,000 remained after 1946, working primarily in the coal mines.

Even before most of the Germans were gone, the government confiscated their houses, businesses and industrial concerns. The nationalisation decree of 24 October 1945 formally transferred Most's mines and gasification plant to the state.²⁶ A massive new concern, the Northern Bohemian Brown Coal Mines (SHD), combined SUBAG and a few remaining smaller mining companies formerly in German hands. As leading politicians constantly reminded their Czech and Slovak audiences, 1945 was a national and a social revolution. Not only an alien and dangerous race, Germans were also capitalist oppressors. Several other decrees in the summer and fall of 1945 confiscated German personal property, establishing procedures for individual Czechs and Slovaks to take it over. Finally, in an effort to manage resettlement and an expected population deficit, the government set up a commission to re-organise, move or shut down former German enterprises in the borderlands.²⁷ Even though many of these businesses remained in private (Czech) hands, government planning and coordination accelerated dramatically in 1945 and 1946, well before the communist seizure of power in 1948. Simplification was the order of the day in restored Czechoslovakia: the removal of troublesome minorities, the nationalisation of key industries, the rationalisation of the economy, and the unification of political parties in a national front.

SETTLING ON A PRODUCTIVE LANDSCAPE

Before the war, Most was already a city dedicated to coal. Though the majority of mines in the region were underground, their entrances dotted the landscape and occasional subsidence left noticeable scars. The city itself was a mix of tightly wound medieval streets and late nineteenth century boulevards lined with neo-renaissance houses of the coal bourgeoisie. There were also several factories, producing beer, electricity, steel and porcelain. Mine headquarters punctuated the town centre, and imposing buildings housing the post office, district court and a grand theatre pointed to Most's economic importance. For a city of just under 28,000 people in 1930, Most was highly industrialised and reasonably wealthy.



FIGURE 3. Centre of Old Most before the move. Note the encroaching mine at the top of the photo. 1967. Jiří Dobřemysl, *Most ve fotografii* (Most: Městský národní výbor, 1967), 17.

But curiously, Most was not a showpiece of Sudeten German nationalists in the nationally contentious 1930s. Indeed, north Bohemia's Heimat (homeland) movement saw Most and the other industrial metropolises in the coal basin as

aberrations, even scars on the natural and built landscapes that defined German identity in the region. Though realising that cities were necessary repositories of culture and industry, Heimat activists associated them with many of the ills of modernity, including alienation from the soil, de-nationalisation, godless socialism and the like. In industrial cities like Brüx (Most) and Aussig (Ústí nad Labem), Hans Krebs wrote, workers lived 'in deep enmity and antagonism towards the surrounding world', alienated from the land and thus their Heimat.²⁸ Beyond the under-abundance of soil, cities suffered from an over-abundance of Czechs, who had migrated steadily since the late nineteenth century to work in north Bohemian industrial areas. In popular Heimat perceptions, Czechs were un-rooted, urban and socialist, both a physical threat to Germandom in north Bohemia and a temptation to abandon the values of Heimat.²⁹

The romanticised vision of German Heimat was widespread among Sudeten Germans in the early twentieth century. It was a deeply felt story of belonging and ownership, one that post-war Czech settlers were determined to erase. President Edvard Beneš repeated a common trope of the time when he declared in Tabor, 'We must de-Germanise our republic...Names, regions, towns, customs – everything that can possibly be de-Germanised must go.'³⁰ Czech settlers and government officials quickly laid moral claim to the German Sudetenland by establishing Czech historical narratives for the re-conquered landscapes of the borderlands. The newly-established Settlement Office and popular press highlighted historic Slavic settlement in the borderlands, ruins from long-ago Czech dynastic rule, and Czech national heroes born in the region. In a guide to a 1946 exhibition on the borderlands, the historian Albert Pražák explained, 'In the borderlands we are renewing every Czech trace and memory, so that our people here feel at home historically.'³¹

As the expulsions continued, settlers and settlement officials began advocating a new, avowedly 'modern' regional identity for north Bohemia. Images of natural landscapes and quaint country houses gave way to urban and industrial scenes. Beyond historical justice, Czech settlers legitimised their control of the borderlands by emphasising their effective stewardship of the region's industry and efficient exploitation of its natural resources. Drawing a contrast with the romantic pastoralism of the Sudeten German Heimat movement, Czechs portrayed north Bohemia as a productive landscape, a repository of natural fuel for economic growth.³²

Most and its coal became the symbolic centre of this modern landscape. Journalists, politicians and settlement officials depicted miners as heroic labourers who were the keys to Czechoslovakia's economic recovery. Merrily mixing metaphors, Vlastimil Školaudy wrote in the communist daily *Rudé právo* in September 1945 that 'Coal is today the crown jewel of our land...the generating wind of our factories, the rhythm of labour, the warmth of our homes...the blood pouring into the arteries of industry.'³³ The glorious north Bohemian coal fields inspired uplifting poetry in a 1946 publication on Most:

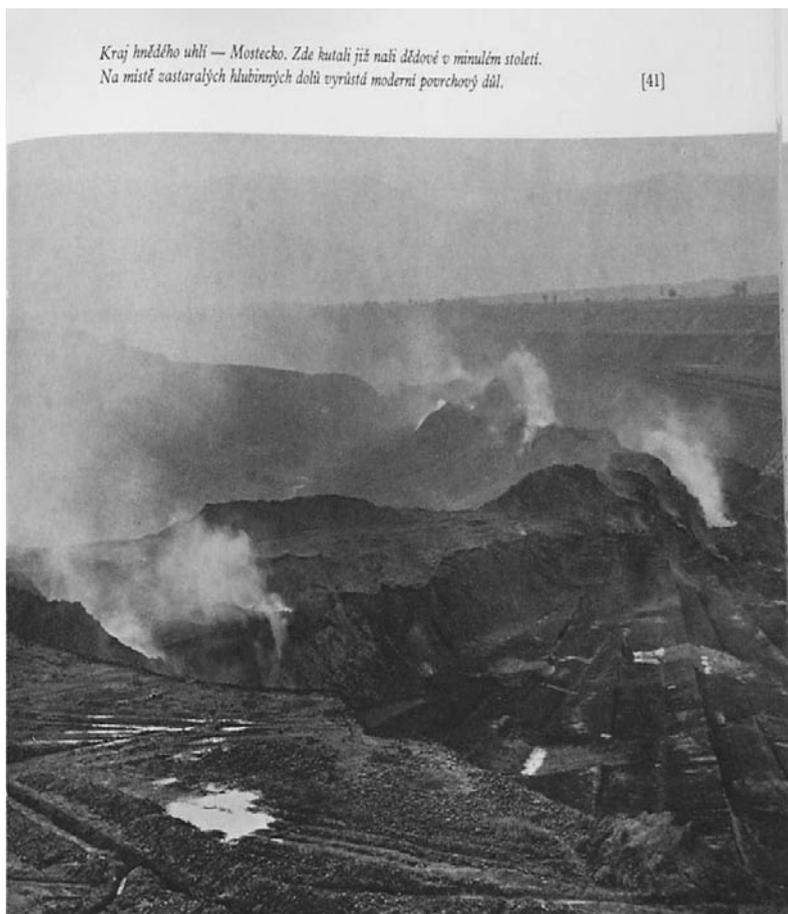


FIGURE 4. ‘Land of the brown coal—Mostecko. Here our ancestors already mined in the last century. In place of antiquated deep mines, a modern surface mine will come into its own.’ *Budujeme pohraničí* (Prague: Orbis, 1950), 41.

Here the [black] earth is the palm of God,
a garden of coal...
Everyone in line,
form brigades!
On the march...
to the mines! (SHD!).³⁴

The poem’s rousing conclusion hints at the serious labour shortages that plagued northern Bohemia’s mines after 1945. In spite of sustained recruiting and propaganda, the government could not get enough skilled workers to replace Germans

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expelled in 1945 and 1946.³⁵ Nor could the mines always retain newcomers, who often left after a few months for other opportunities in the depopulated borderlands.

The rapid turnover and labour mobility in the Most region suggests another consequence of expulsion and resettlement in north Bohemia, namely the settlers' opportunistic and materialist relationship to the region's landscape. Settlers – mostly young and un-rooted – came to work in Most's factories and mines, and to acquire German property. For years to come, they would retain a 'mechanistic' attitude towards their surroundings, as one resident put it.³⁶ Residents and planners alike understood the Most region as a working landscape, more than a historical or natural one. Settlers had little connection to the natural and built environment of Most, or to each other. This made them particularly amenable to the productivist identity advanced by the Settlement Office and leading Communist politicians.³⁷ Indeed, the Most district gave Communists a commanding 58 per cent of the vote in the 1946 elections, compared to an average of just under 40 per cent countrywide.³⁸

When the Communists seized total control of Czechoslovakia in 1948, they simply accelerated the industrialisation of borderland identity. Urbanisation increased and hundreds of formerly German villages were abandoned. Larger and smaller cities sprouted residential high-rises, not to mention more smokestacks, emblems of a now dominant productivism.

MOVING MOST

By the early 1950s, Most was a centrepiece of the Stalinist heavy industrial drive. Most's coal and power plants vitally sustained ever-increasing tempos in every industrial sector. Building on Nazi efforts to increase coal production, the communist regime expanded mines rapidly, using massive modern machines to strip layers of coal from the surface of the earth. Between 1950 and 1964 coal extraction more than doubled, to almost 50 million tons yearly in the north Bohemian basin. By 1965 surface mining made up 78 per cent of the total coal mined in north Bohemia, as opposed to 50 per cent in 1944 and only 15 per cent in 1910.³⁹ As planners demanded ever more coal, mine engineers looked hungrily for new and cheaper deposits in the brown-coal basin surrounding Most. Already in the late 1950s, expanding mines began to swallow towns and villages in the Most region, with displaced residents moving to new housing blocks in the city.⁴⁰ By 1961 mining and party officials came to the conclusion that Most itself would have to move, as the Old Town sat atop a rich lode of coal, over 86 million tons lying tantalisingly close to the surface of the earth.⁴¹ SHD engineers calculated a net profit of 2.6 billion crowns, with the cost of demolition, new construction and mining more than offset by the value of the submerged coal.⁴² Though a rapidly growing new city of Most already housed

27,000 people, at least 18,000 residents would have to leave Old Most over the next 20 years.⁴³



FIGURE 5. Mining machinery, 1961. Most Československo, photo collection dated 26 October 1961. Státní oblastní archiv (SOA) Most. Reprinted with permission.

A crucial SHD report in 1961 provided several interlocking rationales for moving Most. Beyond the self-evident need for Most's coal, SHD foresaw additional economic and social benefits of the move. On the one hand, the Most mine would free up space to discard excess overburden from the nearby mine of Ležáky, which soon would have to cart the removed earth an uneconomical 8 km for disposal. A new pit at Most would save Ležáky over two billion crowns during the projected 46 year life of the mine. As a bonus, the SHD engineers noted, the overburden dump could serve as an attractive barrier between the Most New Town and the active pits to the north and east of the city. Indeed, the report asserted, Old Most itself was antiquated and unsightly. The district's decaying structures were expensive to maintain and failed to meet 'the expectations of modern living culture and today's living standards.' It would be cheaper, SHD concluded, to build new housing than to bring Old Most up to modern standards. Fortunately, the 1945 confiscations of German property had left 75 per cent of

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Old Most's 1,237 buildings in government hands, minimising the amount of compensation that would need to be paid to property owners.⁴⁴ Finally, the move would net several million crowns in savings for transportation, as it would allow the straightening of railroad and highway corridors, cutting several kilometres off the trip from Prague to points north and west of Most. The destruction of Old Most – a messy, inefficient city sitting atop valuable coal – promised to rationalise production, housing and transportation.



FIGURE 6. Decaying Old Most, 1967. Jiří Dobřemysl, *Most ve fotografii* (Most: Městský národní výbor, 1967).

As the plan unfolded in the early 1960s, local officials conveyed reservations about the move. With justified suspicion, the Most Regional National Committee expressed scepticism that the government could build the necessary housing and facilities in time to accommodate the displaced residents of Old Most.⁴⁵ An earlier expansion of the city's housing, begun in 1949, was plagued by delays and poor planning.⁴⁶ Though completed in the 1950s, the so-called Stalingrad quarter had few stores and services. For shopping and other business, residents had to travel a kilometre or more to Old Most, which remained the commercial and administrative centre of the city. All of those services, including stores, the post-office, the court, the theatre, the miners' hall, etc., would have to be rebuilt in New Most. Light industry too was concentrated in Old Most, raising several possible difficulties. While men would have plenty of new jobs in construction, women in light industry could lose their employers as enterprises were liquidated.⁴⁷ And in a 1964 planning meeting, regional Communist Party officials worried that the destruction of the town's brewery without a suitable replacement could 'threaten the supply of beer for workers, which could cause serious difficulties.'⁴⁸

Beyond the potential horror of beer shortages, local planners also raised concerns about what they called the 'human and natural environment.' Though coal pits were unsightly, worsening air quality was a far greater concern. Planning for New Most happened to coincide with an early 1960s government initiative to 'build a socialist environment', which sparked a wealth of studies on everything from housing conditions to sulphur dioxide levels. Unsurprisingly, the Most region, with its mines, power plants and refineries was heavily polluted and getting worse. Sulphur dioxide emissions were among the highest

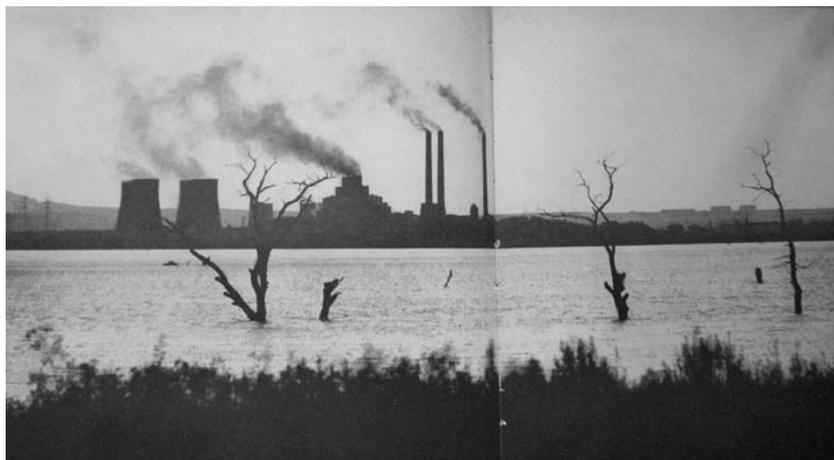


FIGURE 7. Most power plant, 1967. Jiří Dobřemysl, *Most ve fotografii* (Most: Městský národní výbor, 1967).

in Europe. Since the 1950s, forests in the nearby Ore Mountains (Krušné hory) were dying at an alarming rate.⁴⁹ The plan to mine under the city was linked to the construction of new power stations in the region, a prospect that concerned local health officials. Making matters worse, growing overburden dumps raised barriers to air flow, helping to trap smog in the Most basin. Local health officials urged planners to incorporate green zones into New Most and to give careful consideration to the location of industrial facilities.⁵⁰

Though local and regional officials aired their reservations in numerous reports and meetings, none of their objections aimed to scuttle the plan to move Most. As the Regional National Committee declared in 1962, 'In spite of the generally negative attendant influences, it is not possible to limit industrial development of the Most region. On the contrary, it is necessary to increase [industrial growth] for the benefit of the national economy, even to the detriment of the human and natural environment.' Planners should rather seek 'optimal solutions' that will create 'bearable conditions for the life of the population and limit fluctuations' of population.⁵¹ Reading documents like this brings to mind wildlife management schemes, with scientists looking for what might be called a 'survival minimum.'

Indeed, some critics pointed out the extreme instrumentalism of the project to move Most. Writing in the outspoken journal *Literární noviny* in 1966, literary critic Vladimír Karfík called the Most region 'a biological experiment on a quarter of a million people'. Planners could calculate costs and profits, Karfík pointed out, but there was no way of quantifying the damage being done to health, morale and culture.⁵² During the period of liberalisation leading up to the Prague Spring in 1968, members of the Most National Committee and the local unit of the Czech Architectural Planning Office aired their concerns about the fate of Most in both the regional and national press. Though they did not join Karfík in opposition to moving the city, they complained of a lack of government investment in culture and environmental protection.⁵³ A few architects and preservationists lamented the pending loss of Most's centuries-old urban core and the alienating feel of New Most's massive housing projects.⁵⁴ A representative from Czechoslovakia's ministry of culture noted in response that at least the government planned to save the historic Church of the Assumption. 'But if that doesn't please you', he added, 'then we'll blow the church sky high.'⁵⁵

Beyond the reservations expressed by some among north Bohemia's governmental and cultural elite, there was little popular opposition to the plan to move Most, even during the unprecedented openness of the Prague Spring. A study commissioned by the city in 1966 hinted at the reasons for residents' indifference. At least 90 per cent of respondents indicated an awareness of bad environmental conditions in Most, though 80 per cent said that the economic importance of mines and industry outweighed their negative effects. Put another way, over 65 per cent answered that good jobs were worth the damages caused by the region's industries. When asked about housing, less than 1 per

cent indicated a preference to live in Old Most, with the overwhelming majority preferring newer apartments with central heating, modern plumbing and other conveniences. Over 57 per cent answered that under no circumstances would they want to live in Old Most.⁵⁶ Few who did live there had strong attachments to the place. Almost all of Old Most's residents had arrived after 1945, and few owned their apartments.⁵⁷ It appears that Most's residents themselves shared the materialist premises of communist planners: that the production of coal and energy was Most's *raison d'être*, and that modern housing was more efficient and desirable than the decaying city centre.

In the first stage of the Most move, lasting from 1965 to 1967, officials relocated 767 families to New Most. In 1967 the demolition began. Over the next few years, the coal mine crept down the west side of the old town, the site of a future 'engineering corridor' that would hold railway lines, a highway, and the diverted river Bilina.⁵⁸ During stage two, ending in 1970, another 2,313 families moved out of Old Most, leaving just over 2,300 families on the edge of the encroaching pit, awaiting the construction of new housing. In 1975, a few hundred families, mostly Roma, still lived in the isolated old city. It was that year when – with great fanfare – heroic communist engineers successfully relocated the Church of the Assumption. Though demolition of remaining structures proceeded gradually into the early 1980s, the last residents of Old Most left in 1977.

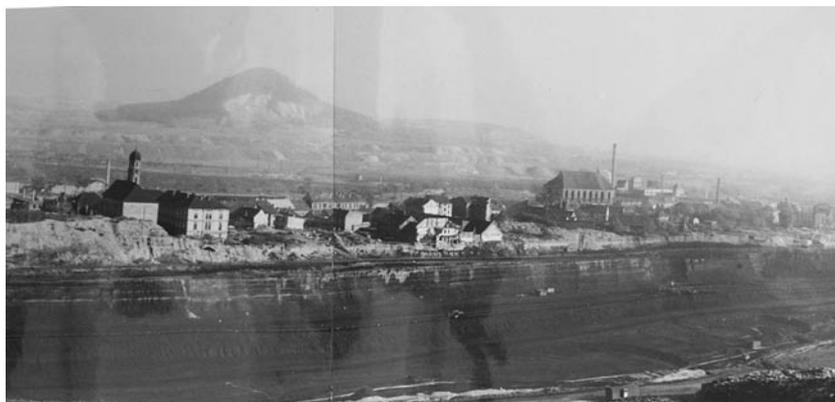


FIGURE 8. On the edge of the pit. Photo collection: Destruction of Old Most. Státní oblastní archiv (SOA) Most. Undated (likely 1975 or 1976). Reprinted with permission.

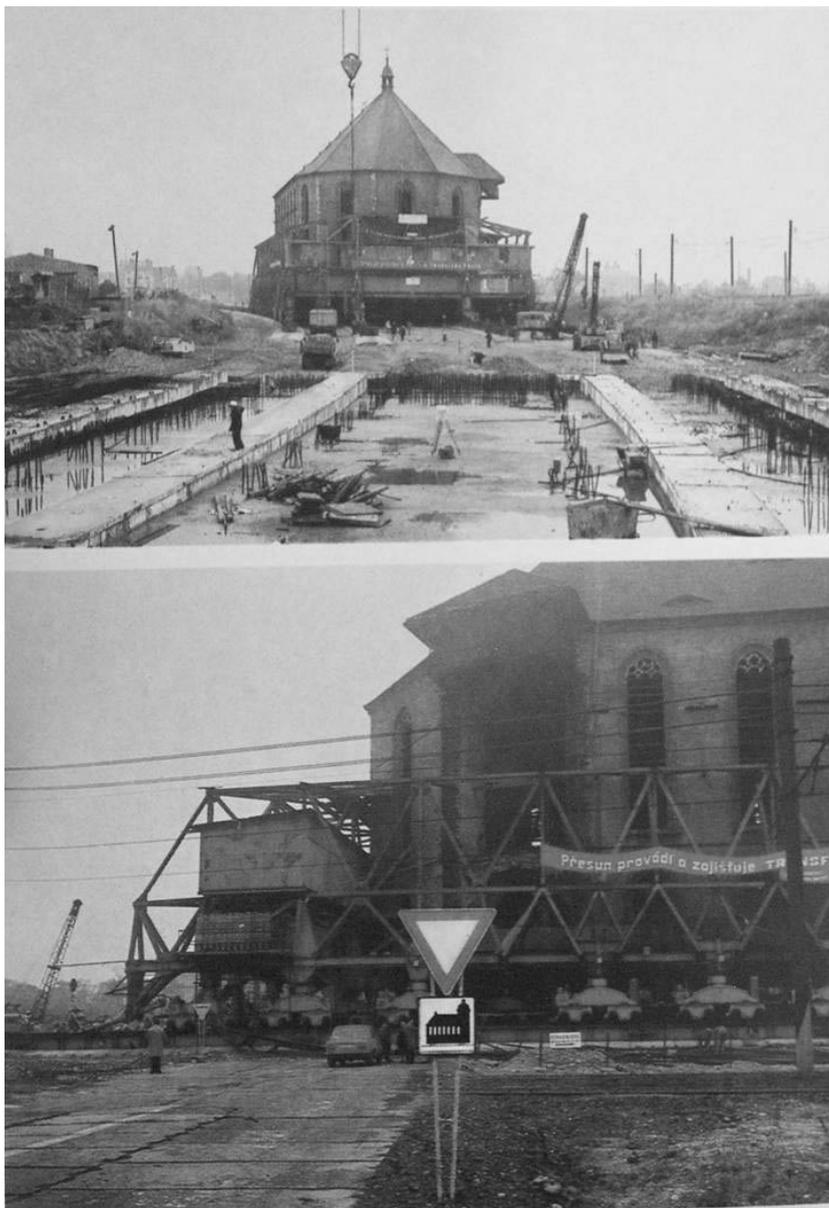


FIGURE 9. Church Crossing 1975. Městský národní výbor v Mostě, *Most 1932/82* (Ústí nad Labem: Severočeské nakladatelství, 1982).

In the meantime, New Most expanded outward and upward.⁵⁹ Though construction proceeded unevenly, the result was consistently modernist. Two wide central boulevards bisected the city, accommodating several lanes of traffic and tram lines that shuttled residents to the mines and the chemical works in Zaluží. From 1970 to 1976 dozens of new panel blocks, with 2,700 apartments, went up in the 'Garden Quarter', to the southeast of the planned city centre. So called 'satellite settlements', consisting mostly of six to ten story panel structures, sprouted beyond the central districts in the mid to late 1970s. Though housing was the first priority, planners did respond to the city's complaints about a lack of services. Construction in the new centre began with the imposing Communist Party headquarters from 1969 to 1971 and included municipal buildings, a cultural centre and a theatre by the mid-1980s. In 1984 builders replaced the old SHD headquarters with a 24-story high-rise that towers fittingly over the city.

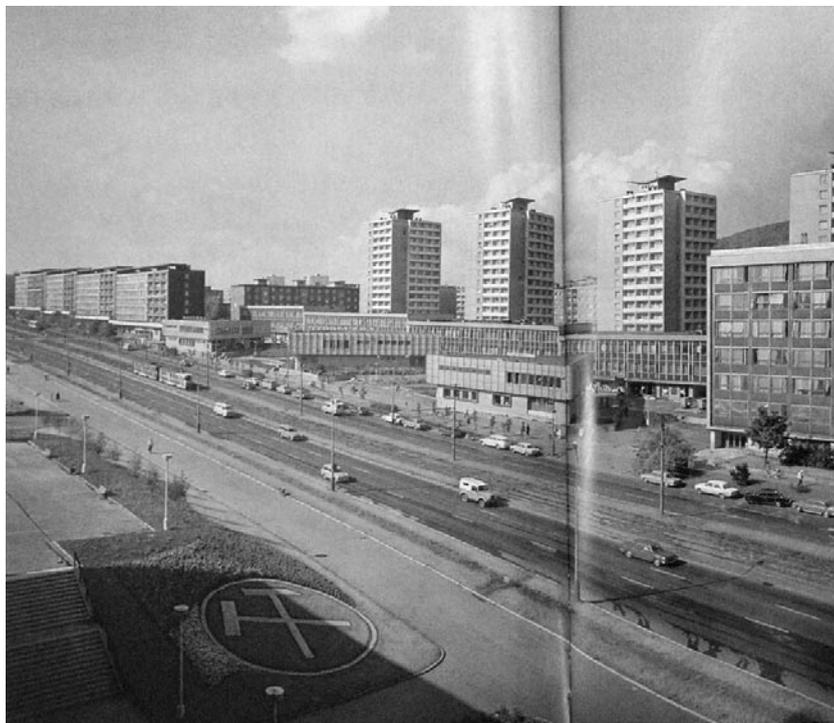


FIGURE 10. New Most, 1982. Městský národní výbor v Mostě, *Most 1932/82* (Ústí nad Labem: Severočeské nakladatelství, 1982).

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New Most emphasised the modern planning principles of efficiency, flow and separation of functions. Akin to Le Corbusier's 1930s vision of the Radiant City, New Most had designated zones for housing, transportation, entertainment, sports, administration, light industry and heavy industry. Le Corbusier would perhaps have been inspired by the clean slate that Most offered to Czech urban planners. Arguments in favour of moving Most in the 1960s seemed to follow Le Corbusier's prescription that 'wide avenues must be driven through the centres of our towns... The existing centres must come down. To save itself, every great city must rebuild its centre.'⁶⁰ The decision to rebuild Most came near the peak of post-war urban renewal efforts in Britain, the United States and France, where planners under the influence of Le Corbusier razed traditional low-rise tenements in favour of highways and towering housing projects.⁶¹

Indeed, communist planners were convinced that they were producing a thoroughly modern city on a world standard, one that provided efficient housing, services and transportation to its citizens. Most's industrial workers and miners now lived in state of the art apartments, a far cry from their former meagre existence under capitalism. In the mid-1980s the Most National Committee celebrated the city's modernity:

New Most is a broad-mindedly designed city with extensive housing projects built in modern style; some public buildings display extraordinary architectonic [sic] creativity and merit...[and] functionality...New Most represents one complex urban plan of this historical epoch; it is a socialist city from its foundations; it is a representation of our present.⁶²

Working to realise the Marxist goal of the congruence of the social and political order, Most's planners recast the city to reflect the socialist, productivist and materialist values of the regime. The symbolism was obvious: decaying Old Most, the remnants of discredited capitalism and German domination, gave way to a modern, socialist city.

SOLVING THE 'GYPSY PROBLEM'

For communist partisans of all that was modern, the spreading coal vein, the rising new city and the receding old town were an inspiration. But there was one outstanding problem that vexed those charged with carrying out Most's transformation: the Gypsies. In the decade that followed the expulsion of the Germans, thousands of Roma moved from rural Slovakia to north Bohemia in search of jobs and housing. To many observers at the time, this was a promising development, as the hitherto itinerant Roma seemed prepared to settle down in easily controlled urban settings. With abundant jobs in the area and cheap housing, Old Most became a popular destination for the Roma. Contrary to official expectations, however, urbanisation did not seem to cure them of bad hygiene,

illiteracy and poor work habits.⁶³ By 1969, when the simultaneous liquidation of Old Most and construction of New Most were in full swing, more than a thousand Roma lived in the neglected apartment buildings of Old Most.⁶⁴ In 1975, most of these families were still there, making up the majority of the remaining inhabitants of the doomed old city. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, officials puzzled over how to deal with the Roma in Most, a problem concentrated by the imminent destruction of what had become a Roma ghetto.



FIGURE 11 Nomadic lifestyle: from 'History of our Gypsies', 1955. Zdeňka Jamnická-Šmerglová, *Dějiny našich Cikánů* (Prague: Orbis, 1955), 59..

The evolving 'Gypsy question' in Most reflected the vicissitudes of wider government policy. During the 1950s and early 1960s, the Party focused on eliminating nomadism and 'improving' living conditions among the Roma. As the Interior Ministry noted in a 1952 directive, the goal was 'a more successful integration of people of Gypsy origin in the constructive (*budovatelsky*) efforts of our popular democratic republic and the gradual liberation of Gypsies from the results of backwardness as an inheritance of the capitalist regime.'⁶⁵ Věra Sokolová identifies a wide-spread 'perception that the Roma rejected the Western imperative to modernise – to order one's life according to modern modes of production, family and social organisation.'⁶⁶ It was exactly this perception of Roma resistance to modern organisation and control that irked the communist state and came to be known as the 'Gypsy problem.'

Officials saw the integration of Roma into mainstream society as a multi-step process. Once they lived in permanent housing, the Interior Ministry directed,

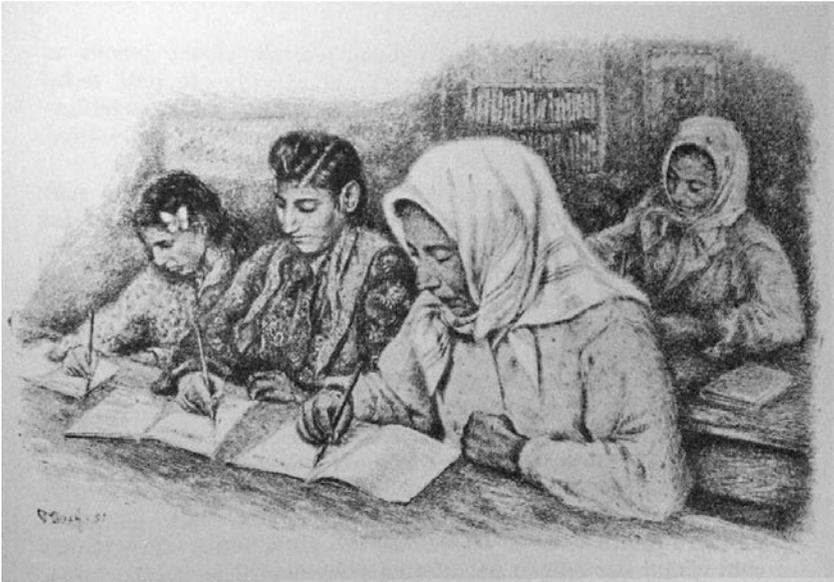


FIGURE 12. Education under communism: from ‘History of our Gypsies’, 1955. Zdeňka Jamnická-Šmerglová, *Dějiny našich Cikánů* (Prague: Orbis, 1955), 85.

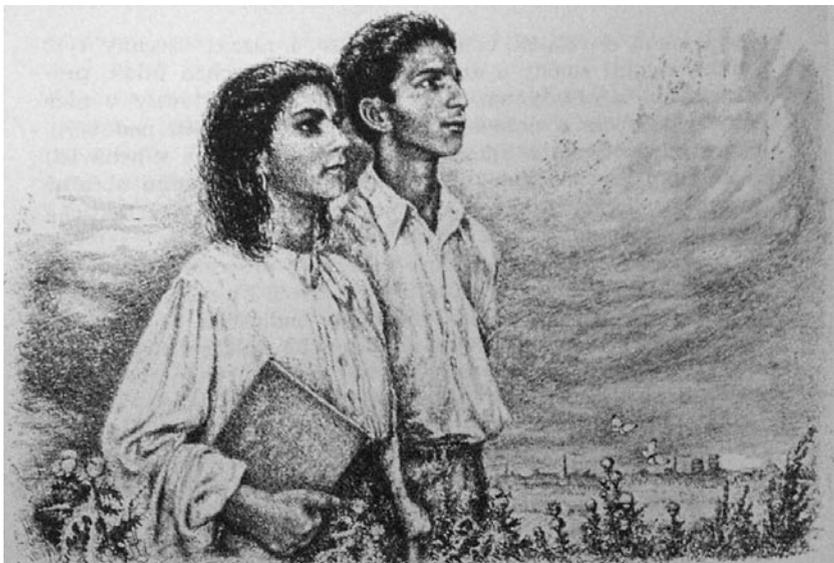


FIGURE 13. Communist enlightenment: from ‘History of our Gypsies’, 1955. Zdeňka Jamnická-Šmerglová, *Dějiny našich Cikánů* (Prague: Orbis, 1955), 105.

regional national committees should monitor their living conditions, health and educational needs. Even when settled, the government noted, most Roma were illiterate, unclean and lacked work discipline. In order to combat these lingering signs of 'backwardness', local officials set their sights on Roma children. 'An important means of reeducation of Gypsies', the Interior Ministry wrote, 'is winning over the children – primarily for a more orderly lifestyle – as children can effectively influence their parents and other adult Gypsies.'⁶⁷

Though the regime managed to settle tens of thousands of Roma in apartments, primarily in larger cities, by the mid-1960s, the 'Gypsy problem' persisted. Urbanisation and education appeared to be failing to improve Roma hygiene, work habits and acceptance among the wider population. In 1965 the government took stock, literally, of the Gypsy question, undertaking a country-wide census of the Roma and a study of their living conditions. The study divided Roma into three categories, based on their degree of adaptation to wider societal norms. Category III Gypsies, described as 'recidivists, half-wits, alcoholics', criminals and jobless or uninterested in working,⁶⁸ predominated in the Most district, comprising 1,892 out of 4,038 total Roma population.⁶⁹ Confounded by similar results across the country, the government changed course, adopting a policy of 'dispersion' (*rozptyl*) of Roma within the general population.⁷⁰ In theory, the isolation of Roma families from each other would make them more susceptible to re-education and assimilation. Over the next few years, national committees tried to carry out the new policy, but to little avail. There were several barriers, not least being that most Roma did not want to live isolated among the non-Roma population.⁷¹ Moreover, districts without a significant Roma population put up bureaucratic obstacles to the relocation of Roma in their communities. In spite of an education campaign among the general populace, few people wanted Roma neighbours. By 1971 the Most City National Committee concluded that the dispersion policy had failed. The city had managed to move only 12 families into integrated housing, an experiment that proved very unpopular with non-Roma neighbours.⁷²

Given this dismal result, Most city officials changed course yet again. As districts of Old Most fell to the bulldozer, the city concentrated displaced category II and III Roma in remaining apartments of the old city, moving out non-Roma families to make space. Only category I families were eligible for relocation in New Most. Of the 1,552 Roma remaining in Old Most in 1971, though, only 26 fell in category I, with over 83 per cent in category III.⁷³ By 1975, Old Most was effectively a Roma ghetto. When dispersal and integration failed, officials decided to build a special new district, Chanov, to house Old Most's Roma. Completed from 1976 to 1979, Chanov provided Roma with the modern housing that city planners had long envisioned. As one optimistic study noted in 1975, 'the relocation of Gypsies from Old Most to the new projects will radically improve the basic material conditions for the life of Gypsies in Most'. Insisting that 'living environment determines lifestyle', the study declared that relocating the Roma

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to modern and spacious new apartments would inevitably yield 'a change of the value system of the Gypsies'. Finally, the city could 'liquidate once and for all the Gypsy problem' in the process of liquidating Old Most.⁷⁴

CONCLUDING THE EXPERIMENT

Like so many other communist experiments, Chanov was in many ways a failure. The same social problems continued to plague Most's Roma community, and the project's buildings fell into disrepair. In hindsight it is clear that the regime's relentless materialism – the obsession with modern housing, for example – provided it with only limited insight into what constitutes a healthy human community. While paying lip service to the importance of the natural and built environment, communists consistently put the perceived economic interests of the state ahead of all other considerations. When calculating the profits of Most's coal, officials made little effort to factor in the aesthetic, psychological and environmental costs of moving the city.

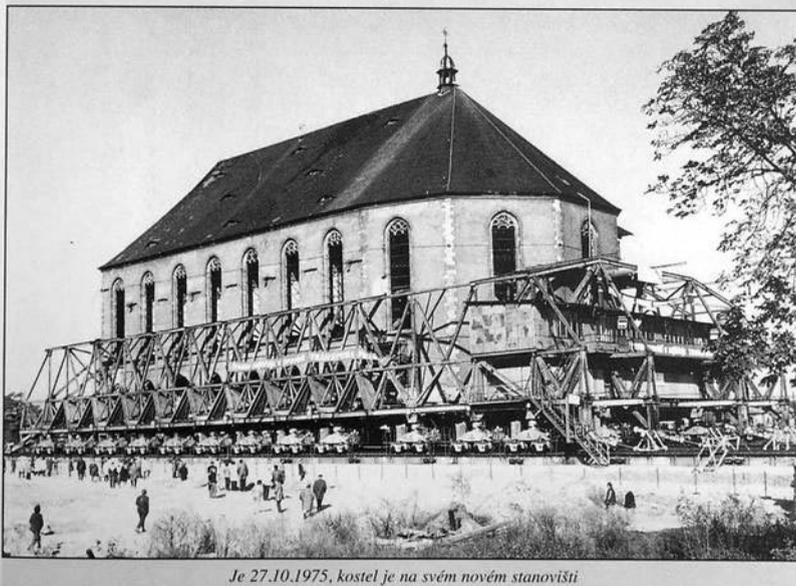
While the destruction of Most and the ghettoisation of the Roma were Czechoslovak communist achievements, they were part of a much larger syndrome of liquidations that recast north Bohemia's human and natural landscape from the 1940s to the 1980s. The Nazis set the transformation in motion by expelling or killing Czechs, Jews and Roma, re-orienting the region's industry to a centralised war economy, and modernising the process of coal extraction and utilisation. After 1945, the restored Czechoslovak government extended these 'innovations' by expelling the region's German population, nationalising and restructuring industrial concerns, and expanding surface mining. All three tendencies took root well before the communists seized power in 1948, and it was essentially this post-war matrix of modernisation within which the idea to move Most emerged a dozen years later.

As the Most case suggests, not only are these processes related under a general theory of dystopian modernity, but they are also contingently related. Not only was ethnic cleansing a project of national/ethnic engineering, but it also opened up the terrain for a range of other engineering projects: of the social body, of industrial structure, of urban environments, and of the land itself. Though these projects are rightly seen as a product of the communist transformation, their roots and reach were deepest in the cleansed regions of the borderlands, which officials saw as both a model and a laboratory for the larger project of socialist modernisation. And finally, the 'solution of the German problem' in the Bohemian borderlands led directly to the westward migration and rapid urbanisation of Czechoslovakia's Roma, thus creating a new 'Gypsy problem'. From the moment Hitler's armies surrendered in May 1945, the Czechoslovak state was obsessed with controlling and domesticating its borderlands. In Most we can see

the state fervently tending the garden: picking, arranging, planting, prodding, and in a moment of transformative zeal, bringing in the bulldozers.



Z tohoto místa byl řízen přesun kostela



Je 27.10.1975, kostel je na svém novém stanovišti

FIGURE 14. Moving the church, high tech 1975. Mostecká uhelná společnost, *Mostecko minulost a současnost* (Most: Victory, 2001), 257.

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Fifteen years after the end of the communist experiment in north Bohemia, it remains to be seen whether Most can recover any semblance of its former civic vitality. Many indicators are negative. The city remains mired in social despair, with high unemployment, a proliferation of racism (primarily aimed at the Roma), and persistent environmental problems. But there are also signs of recovery. The former SHD coal company has become a leader in the 'science' of land reclamation, planting trees and building parks (and a racetrack) on the exhausted Most coal pits. The Church that Moved is now a museum. Guides dutifully lead visitors through the handsomely restored arches of the Gothic nave and baroque chapels. But the highlight of the tour is a film proudly commemorating the church's 1975 journey to its current home on the edge of New Most. The museum guidebook explains, 'The transfer ... of the edifice further increased its significance among monuments of this country's history.'⁷⁵ This historical oddity, the 'Church that Moved', is a modern wonder, and a fitting symbol for Most, the town that moved. In destroying history, the regime made history, and that's something in which many residents of Most take pride.



FIGURE 15. Church of the Assumption, 2003. Photo taken by Eagle Glassheim, 2003.

NOTES

Many thanks to the archivists, friends and colleagues whose comments and suggestions have contributed to this article. I want to thank in particular Bradley Abrams, Melissa Feinberg, Paul Hanebrink, Cynthia Paces, Stanislav Pejša, Karl Qualls and Coll Thrush.

¹ Severočeský hnědouhelný revír--důl Ležáky n.p. v Mostě, Důvodová zpráva k záměru na rubání zásob v ochranném pilíři města Mostu, June 1961, 12. Okresní národní výbor (ONV) Most, Státní okresní archiv (SOKA) Most, ic 781 k 294.

² On the intermingling of national and social revolution in post-war Czechoslovakia, see Eagle Glassheim, 'National Mythologies and Ethnic Cleansing: The Expulsion of Czechoslovak Germans in 1945', *Central European History* 33, no. 4 (2000): 463–86 doi:10.1163/156916100746428.

³ For an overview of resettlement and post-war identities, see Eagle Glassheim, 'Ethnic Cleansing, Communism, and Environmental Devastation in Czechoslovakia's Borderlands, 1945–1989', *Journal of Modern History* 78, no. 1 (2006): 65–92 doi 10.1086/499795.

⁴ Útvar hlavního architekta, *Cikáni ve starém Mostě* (Most: Okresní národní výbor, 1975), 184. Copy of report in Fond Okresní národní výbor (ONV) Most. Státní okresní archiv (SOKA) Most.

⁵ Severočeský hnědouhelný revír, Důvodová zpráva.

⁶ Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1989), 91–2.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁸ On Adorno and other critiques of Enlightenment rationality, see David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997), 13–15.

⁹ For an overview on the Nazis and modernity, see Norman Naimark, *Fires of Hatred: Ethnic Cleansing in Twentieth-Century Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001), 57–84. On the Nazis and eugenics, see Henry Friedlander, *The Origins of Nazi Genocide: From Euthanasia to the Final Solution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995). On Stalinism and modernity, see Stephen Kotkin, *Magnetic Mountain: Stalinism as a Civilization* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995) and Kate Brown, *A Biography of No Place: From Ethnic Borderland to Soviet Heartland* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

¹⁰ Amir Weiner, ed., *Landscaping the Human Garden: Twentieth-Century Population Management in a Comparative Framework* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).

¹¹ Naimark, *Fires of Hatred*.

¹² See, for example, James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998) and Paul Josephson, *Industrialized Nature: Brute Force Technology and the Transformation of the Natural World* (Washington: Island Press, 2002).

¹³ See Scott, *Seeing Like a State* and David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1997).

¹⁴ In order to avoid confusion, I will refer to Most by its Czech name throughout this article. Brüx is the German name.

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¹⁵ Theodor Schieder, *Dokumentation der Vertreibung der Deutschen aus Ost-Mitteleuropa*, vol. IV, *Die Vertreibung der deutschen Bevölkerung aus der Tschechoslowakei*, part 1 (Bonn: Bundesministerium für Vertriebene Flüchtlinge und Kriegsgeschädigte, 1957), 10. The city of Most had 17,549 Germans and 9,740 Czechs in the 1930 census. The district of Most had a slightly lower proportion of Germans: 61,295 versus 44,812 Czechs. Many Czechs left the region after the Nazi annexation of the Sudetenland. In 1939 the Czech population of the Most district was 24,979. Petr Pavlíněk, 'Transition and the Environment in the Czech Republic: Democratization, Economic Restructuring and Environmental Management in the Most District after the Collapse of State Socialism' (Ph.D., University of Kentucky, 1995), 130. According to a Nazi census, there were 20,000 Germans and 3,700 Czechs resident in the city of Most in 1943. *Okres Most v práci a budování* (Most: ONV propagační kancelář, 1946), 13.

¹⁶ Volker Zimmermann, *Sudetští Němci v nacistickém státě*, trans. Petr Dvořáček (Prague: Prostor, 2001), 171.

¹⁷ Pavlíněk, 'Transition and the Environment', 146–147. On conditions at the partly functioning plant in the summer of 1945, see 'Stalinovy závody v Mostě' *Lidová demokracie*, 22 July 1945: 3. At that point around 15,000 Germans, many of them forced labourers, worked in the plant. Though the complex was heavily bombed during the last year of the war, Czechs and German forced labourers rebuilt the plant soon after liberation.

¹⁸ Wolfgang Braumandl, *Die Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik des Deutschen Reiches im Sudetenland 1938–1945* (Nuremberg: Helmut Preussler Verlag, 1985), 171. See also p. 569 where Braumandl outlines the Nazi reorientation of the Sudetenland economy from light to heavy industry.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 570.

²⁰ Braumandl points out that Nazi centralising and consolidating economic policies demonstrated an 'ever sharpening contradiction between ideology and reality'. *Ibid.*, 569.

²¹ Many Czechs remained, though, working beside forced labourers from various parts of Europe in the mines and chemical works. As largely skilled labourers, north Bohemian Czechs held a position in the middle of the Nazi racial/social hierarchy. See John Connelly, 'Nazis and Slavs: From Racial Theory to Racist Practice', *Central European History* 32, no. 1 (1999): 1–33.

²² By May 1947, there were only 5,679 Germans left in the Most region, mostly working in the mines. There were 79,786 Czechs. Zdeněk Radvanovský, 'The Social and Economic Consequences of Resettling Czechs into Northwestern Bohemia, 1945–1947', in *Redrawing Nations: Ethnic Cleansing in East-Central Europe, 1944–1948*, ed. Philipp Ther and Ana Siljak (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001), 255.

²³ Speeches reproduced in Edvard Beneš, *Odsun Němců z Československa*, ed., Karel Novotný (Prague, 1996), 138.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 146.

²⁵ It is not clear how many of these Germans were removed directly and how many fled as a result of fear or intimidation. Statistics in this paragraph come from Lenka Kornalíková, 'Odsun německého obyvatelstva z okresu Most v letech 1945–1947', *Diplomová práce*, Technická Univerzita v Liberci, 1995, 27, 31, 34, 37.

²⁶ On the nationalisation decrees, see Jon Bloomfield, *Passive Revolution: Politics and the Czechoslovak Working Class, 1945–48* (London: Allison and Busby, 1979), 83–90.

²⁷ See Radvanovský, 'The Social and Economic Consequences', 248–249.

²⁸ See Hans Krebs and Emil Lehmann, *Sudeten-deutsche Landeskunde* (Kiel: Arndt, 1992 [1937]), 122–33. Quotes come from pp. 126 and 133. Krebs was an active Nazi in the late 1930s and was executed in 1947 for his collaboration with the occupation regime from 1938–1945.

²⁹ My thanks to Tara Zahra for her ideas on this point.

³⁰ Speech reproduced in ‘Republiku musíme odgermanisovat’, *Lidová demokracie*, 17 June 1946, 1–2. All Czech political parties employed this kind of vehement anti-German rhetoric in 1945 and 1946.

³¹ Pražák text reproduced in Svatopluk Technik, *Výstava Budujeme osvobozené kraje v Liberci roku 1946* (Liberec: Zprávy České besedy, 2001), 50.

³² See Glassheim, ‘Ethnic Cleansing, Communism, and Environmental Devastation’.

³³ Vlastimil Školaudy, ‘Hovoří Mostecko’, *Rudé právo*, 30 September 1945, p. 3.

³⁴ Antonín Mazanec, ‘SHD’, poem in *Okres Most v práci a budování* (Most: ONV propagační kancelář, 1946), 86.

³⁵ On the labour shortage in mines, see Radvanovský, ‘The Social and Economic Consequences’, 247.

³⁶ Petr Pavlínek and John Pickles, *Environmental Transitions: Transformation and Ecological Defence in Central and Eastern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 113.

³⁷ See Glassheim, ‘Ethnic Cleansing, Communism, and Environmental Devastation’.

³⁸ Jiří Sláma and Karel Kaplan, eds., *Die Parlamentswahlen in der Tschechoslowakei 1935–1946–1948* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1986), 117.

³⁹ Pavlínek, ‘Transition and the Environment’, 126, 141.

⁴⁰ Pavlínek and Pickles, *Environmental Transitions*, 117–18.

⁴¹ Severočeský hnědohelný revír, *Důvodová zpráva*.

⁴² Olga Hniková, ‘Po nás potopa?’ *Mladá fronta*, 23 June 1968, p. 4. At the official exchange rate of 7.2 crowns/dollar (from 1953 until 1972), 2.6 billion crowns equalled 361 million U.S. dollars. Adjusted from 1970 to 2003 dollars (using GDP per capita as a basis), the yield on the mine would be around 2.7 billion dollars. Black market rates for the crown varied from around 40 to the dollar to the mid-20s to the dollar in the 1970s. Assuming a rate of around 30 crowns per dollar, the mine’s yield was around 87 million dollars; adjusted from 1970 dollars, the 2003 value would be 650 million dollars. None of these figures are fully satisfying, given the difficulty of converting a controlled communist currency, but they give some sense of the magnitude of the expected revenues from Most’s coal. Crown exchange rates come from Global Financial Data Inc. <<http://www.globalfindata.com>> (15 April 2005). For adjustment figures, see Samuel H. Williamson, ‘What is the Relative Value?’ Economic History Services, April 2004, <<http://www.eh.net/hmit/compare/>> (15 April 2005).

⁴³ ONV Most, Politickohospodářské a technické zásady pro zpracování směrného územního plánu města Mostu, March 1962, 14. Severočeský krajský národní výbor (SKNV) Ústí nad Labem, Státní oblastní archiv (SOA) Most, ic 123 k 598.

⁴⁴ Severočeský hnědohelný revír, *Důvodová zpráva*, 17, 23–5, 27.

⁴⁵ ONV Most, Politickohospodářské a technické zásady.

⁴⁶ Zápis ze schůze, Okresní plánovací komise v Mostě, re: construction progress, 10 May 1954. Okresní národní výbor (ONV) Most, Státní okresní archiv (SOKA) Most, ic 858 k 317.

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- ⁴⁷ ONV Most, Politickohospodářské a technické zásady, 20.
- ⁴⁸ Zápis za zasedání rozšířené Vládní komise pro koordinaci a kontrolu postupu při likvidaci starého a dostavbě nového Mostu, 16 July 1964, p. 10. Okresní národní výbor (ONV) Most, Státní okresní archiv (SOkA) Most, k 290 ic 767.
- ⁴⁹ Pavlínek and Pickles, *Environmental Transitions*, 55–61.
- ⁵⁰ Rada ONV Most, Komplexní vyjádření k předběžnému návrhu územního plánu rajonu SHP, 31 October 1961. Okresní národní výbor (ONV) Most, Státní okresní archiv (SOkA) Most, ic 781 k 294.
- ⁵¹ ONV Most, Politickohospodářské a technické zásady, 4.
- ⁵² Vladimír Karfík, 'Most: Obležené město', *Literární noviny*, vol. 15 no. 26 (25 June 1966): 6.
- ⁵³ See, for example, the discussion of officials in 'Už gesto obrany', *Dialog* (Ústí nad Labem) 1966 no. 3: 1–4.
- ⁵⁴ The most thoughtful and hard driving of the critics was Olga Hníková in the Communist youth daily, *Mladá fronta*. See Hníková, 'Po nás potopa?'
- ⁵⁵ Debates reproduced in Urban, Rudolf, Tschechische Presseberichte über das 'Grenzgebiet', in: Wissenschaftlicher Dienst für Ost-Mitteleuropa 18:8 (Aug. 1968), 432–56. Church quote on p. 435.
- ⁵⁶ Útvar hlavního architekta Most, 1. etapa zpracování sociologického průzkumu životního prostředí Mostecka, December 1966, 8, 9, 24, 29, 30, . Okresní národní výbor (ONV) Most, Státní okresní archiv (SOkA) Most, k 169 ic 504. This survey was one of hundreds undertaken by Czechoslovakia's Communist government from the 1960s through the 1980s. Though we cannot be certain that respondents answered any survey truthfully, I have not found a reason to doubt the credibility of the Most survey of 1966, which occurred during a period of relative openness.
- ⁵⁷ Severočeský hnědouhelný revír, Důvodová zpráva, 17.
- ⁵⁸ Jaroslav Červenka, 'Posouzení správnosti likvidace starého Mostu v rámci těžby hnědého uhlí', B.A. Thesis, Technical University Ostrava, 2000. Summary at <<http://starymost.web2001.cz/>> (18 May 2006).
- ⁵⁹ On the progress of construction in New Most, see Červenka, 'Posouzení', <<http://starymost.web2001.cz/postup.htm>>.
- ⁶⁰ Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow and its Planning* (London: John Rodher, 1947 [1929]), 128. Quoted in Peter Hall, *Cities of Tomorrow: An Intellectual History of Urban Planning and Design in the Twentieth Century*, 3rd ed. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2002), 224.
- ⁶¹ Hall, *Cities*, 234–54. Urban renewal projects were not new in the post-war period. Baron Georges-Eugène Haussmann had levelled substantial portions of medieval Paris in the 1860s in favour of boulevards and apartment buildings. In Prague, much of the old Jewish town Josefov was destroyed around 1900 in a process euphemistically called 'asanace' (renovation). The new boulevard that cut through the former Jewish ghetto fittingly bore the name Paris Street. See the fascinating account of *asanace* in Cathleen Giustino, *Tearing Down Prague's Jewish Town: Ghetto Clearance and the Legacy of Middle Class Ethnic Politics around 1900* (Boulder, Colorado: East European Monographs, 2003).
- ⁶² ONV Most, Mostecko, n.d. (1980s), quoted in Pavlínek and Pickles, 118–19.

⁶³ On the Czech Communist obsession with Roma hygiene, see Věra Sokolová, 'A Matter of Speaking: Racism, Gender and Social Deviance in the Politics of the 'Gypsy Question' in Communist Czechoslovakia, 1945–1989' (Ph.D., University of Washington, 2002).

⁶⁴ 'Cikánská otázka--největší problém při likvidaci starého Mostu', *Rozvoj* (Orgán ONV a OV KSČ Most) X:7 (19 February 1969):1.

⁶⁵ MV oběžník, Úprava poměrů osob cikánského původu, 5 March 1952, 1. Okresní národní výbor (ONV) Rumburk, Státní okresní archiv Děčín, k 400.

⁶⁶ Sokolová, 'Matter of Speaking', 126.

⁶⁷ MV oběžník, Úprav, 2.

⁶⁸ MeNV Most, Rozbor současného stavu řešení otázek cikánského obyvatelstva v městě Mostu, September 1971. Severočeský krajský národní výbor (SKNV) Ústí nad Labem, Státní oblastní archiv (SOA) Most, ic 899 k 1593.

⁶⁹ Krajská komise pro otázky cikánského obyvatelstva SKNV Ústí, Zpráva, n.d. (1966), addendum. Severočeský krajský národní výbor (SKNV) Ústí nad Labem, Státní oblastní archiv (SOA) Most, ic 899 k 1594. In addition to the 1,892 category III Gypsies, the study counted 979 category I, 789 category II, and 380 fully assimilated Gypsies in the Most district.

⁷⁰ For a summary of Czech articles about Gypsy policy after 1965, see Rudolf Urban, 'Die Zigeunerfrage in der Tschechoslowakei', *Wissenschaftlicher Dienst für Ost-Mitteleuropa* vol. 18 no. 4 (April 1968), 206–214.

⁷¹ Zpravodaj poslanců SKNV, #7, 15 May 1967, 7. Severočeský krajský národní výbor (SKNV) Ústí nad Labem, Státní oblastní archiv (SOA) Most, ic 245 k 1053.

⁷² MeNV Most, Rozbor.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Útvar hlavního architekta, *Cikáni*, 27a, 95, 97, 184.

⁷⁵ Institute for the Care of Ancient Monuments in Ústí nad Labem, 'Gothic Church of the Ascension of the Virgin Mary in Most', (Prague: Propagační tvorba Praha, 1992), 5.