

This master's thesis deals with the career of the actor and director Čeněk Šlégl (born 30 September 1899 in Prague, died 17 February 1970 in Prague), and also explores the issue of collaboration in Czech artistic circles. Čeněk Šlégl rose to become a popular film actor in the so-called First Republic. He became a successful director (making eight films between 1937 and 1939), and was one of leading figures of the Vlasta Burian Theatre. His story depicts how totalitarian regimes may impact an otherwise hassle-free and successful life.

Šlégl was confronted both by a Nazi regime and by a communist regime. During the Nazi occupation his only daughter fell under direct threat as a consequence of her relationship and a later marriage to a man of Jewish descent. After being attacked in the collaborating *Vlajka* newspaper, Šlégl forestalled further such attacks by joining the fascist organization of the same name. A side-effect of this was that Šlégl became increasingly isolated at work, both from his colleagues and from the audiences. Finally, in 1941, after more than twenty years, his film career came to a sudden end.

At that time, Šlégl came to the attention of the German security services, namely the *Sicherheitsdienst*. Under threat of imprisonment of his family members, Šlégl agreed to take part in the propaganda work of Prague radio, and published his novel "Comeback", which contains an anti-Semitic bias. Šlégl himself described his conduct during this period as a "mask of loyalty". Sadly, he played his role far too well. After a complicated investigation between 1945 and 1947, Šlégl was sentenced by a special people's tribunal to six months of forced labour.