

Organisational Schemes of the Czech Security Forces in the 1970's, Focusing on the Public Police

by Iva Kvapilova

Note: The term “National Security Forces” (Sbor narodni bezpecnosti) which refers to the whole executive branch of Ministry of the Interior up to 1989 is further understood to comprise the division of state security affairs (Statni bezpecnost, referred to as Secret Police or State Police) and the division of public security and order (Verejna bezpecnost, referred to as Public Police here). The English terms were used with respect to the literal translation of the former descriptive expressions used in the country until 1990.

By adopting the Constitutional Act of the Czechoslovak Federation, three governments took up office as of 1 January 1969, thus also three Ministries of the Interior: Federal, Czech and Slovak. This scheme also implied deep structural changes in the Czechoslovak security system that facilitated the so called consolidation process in this department. Subsequently to this Constitutional Act, further acts were adopted to gradually specify the powers of each ministry. To overcome the initial difficulties and uncertainties in the management of the security forces, the Interim Statute of the Federal Ministry of the Interior was issued as an Instruction of the Federal Minister of the Interior. The task of the Federal Ministry (“FMV”) was to deal with state administration issues and participate in the state politics of the former Czechoslovak Socialist Republic within a specified range of powers as regards national defence, internal order and state security, as well as the legal position of the security forces. Besides this, FMV exclusively controlled the State Security offices and partially the Public Police forces. Over the course of time FMV gained control of the head officers of the regional departments of the National Security Forces. The two republic ministries had competence in public order administration, civil defence, fire prevention and civil administration. Through the so-called line management system, the Czech Ministry also controlled the Public Police forces, whose main task was crime detection, public order, the protection of people and property, the safety of roadway transport and selected administrative issues. The victory of “normalisation politics” enabled the positions of anti-reform Communists to be reinforced and was obviously reflected in the gradual build-up of a centralist concept in the operations of all three ministries. The following stage, described as the “building of a developed socialist society” by the official propaganda, brought forth a definite renewal of the political nature of the security forces as a political power tool for the new state and party structures.

The activities of the newly organised security forces were governed by the relevant laws, including the new Act of the National Security forces, by the “statutes” of the ministries and by the organisational codes of each unit. The FMV and the two national

ministries also shared, together with other state bodies, in the preparation and implementation of documents in the sphere of criminal law, civil administration and international agreements and treaties.

Frequent adjustments were made to the organisation of management of the National Security forces and the military force of the Ministry of the Interior. The border patrols became controlled by the FMV, the counterintelligence was reorganised, as were the State Police investigation offices, Passport and Visa department, Public Police departments and the Regional offices of the National Security forces, and eventually the District security forces were newly organised with the establishment of the National Security Forces District Administration.

Great attention was obviously paid to the former “human resources” job. The security forces were subjected to a huge purge among its officers. The decline of political membership among the National Security forces was reversed due to the establishment of a three-stage ministerial school system, including the University of the National Security Forces, aiming at improving political engagement and professional skills. The reintroduction of political education, initially in the Public Police forces, later in the National Security forces as a whole, was another important step towards the political involvement of the security mechanisms.

The organisational schemes of the National Security forces and the relevant Ministries of the Interior in the 1970’s underwent continual reorganisation, involving the search for the “ideal” management model for the whole security agenda.

“Pilots” Action

The failed attempt at exile by the former Czechoslovak RAF members Gejza Holoda, Vladimir Nedelka, Karel Seda, Karel Schor and Jaroslav Sispera in December 1950.

by Jiri Mikulka

Over 2500 Czechoslovak citizens served in the British Royal Air Force in 1940–1945, only to become “second category citizens” after the 1948 February coup in Czechoslovakia. Their activities in the army or Czechoslovak Airlines (CSA) were undesirable from the viewpoint of the new Communist establishment and most of them quickly lost their jobs. The new circumstances made many of them take on an uneasy decision to leave their motherland for the second time in a short term and seek a new life in exile. Those who eventually decided to leave Czechoslovakia in 1948 made it relatively easily because the state borders at that time were not as tightly controlled as in 1950, when this story takes place with the former RAF members and former employees of CSA mentioned above.

A former Flight Engineer of the 311 Czechoslovak Bomber Squadron, Gejza Holoda (1918–1980), the former pilots Vladimir Nedelka (1924–1998, 310 Czechoslovak Fighter Squadron) Karel Schor (1914–1986, 311 Czechoslovak Bomber Squadron) and Karel Seda (1908–1992, 310 and 68 Czechoslovak Fighter Squadron) and former

Wireless Operator–Air Gunner of the 311 Czechoslovak Bomber Squadron Jaroslav Sispera (1920–2006), decided to leave the Czech Socialist Republic together with their families in December 1950 and use the services of the recommended guide Karel Ulehla, who was to help them to cross to Austria near Breclav. Following his instructions they had to reach Southern Moravia separately in order not to raise attention. Karel Ulehla, however, worked for the Regional Office of State Security in Brno, and instead of guiding the former RAF members and their families to Austria he handed them over to the security forces on 14–23 December 1950. The pilots and their wives lived through some hard times in investigatory custody at the end of 1950 and afterwards. The situation appeared worst for Karel Schor, who had already been interrogated by the State Security forces in the case of Josef Krivka, an agent of the American CIC, in June and July 1950 under the code name of “Olga” Action. The state prosecution in Prague named the file “Gejza Holoda and Co.” and filed a lawsuit on 24 February 1951 against the five airmen, who faced the charge of high treason and espionage, with three wives facing charges of high treason and another wife for failure to report a crime.

Karel Schor was eventually withdrawn from the “Pilots” Action and included in the trial under the “Olga” Action in Karlovy Vary on 12–17 March 1951. He was sentenced for eleven years, and the court of appeal – the Supreme Court in Prague – increased the penalty to 16 years in July 1951. The others stood before the State Court in Prague on 4 April 1951. Gejza Holoda was sentenced to 13 years, Jaroslav Sispera to 11 years and Vladimir Nedelka to 7 years. Karel Seda received the highest penalty of 14 years of imprisonment although he didn’t directly participate in the escape and was arrested in his Prague apartment, not at the borders. Marie Schorova was sentenced to 6 years, with the court of appeal reducing the charge to 18 months. Milada Holodova and Phyllis Sisperova (a British citizen) were sentenced to 18 months and Olga Sedova to 12 months’ imprisonment. The pilots served most of their penalty in the so-called Remedial Labour Camps in Horni Slavkov and Jachymov, mining uranium ore. Vladimir Nedelka, Karel Seda and Jaroslav Sispera were conditionally released in 1954–1958, Gejza Holoda and Karel Schor not until the 1960 amnesty. During the upcoming Prague Spring period (1966–1967) this group of men sentenced in the “Pilots” Action applied to renew the proceedings, which ended up with their full rehabilitation, only leaving a residuary penalty of 2 and a half years for Karel Schor for failure to report crime as part of the “Olga” Action. In 1969 the court also cancelled the penalties imposed on their wives. This was the story of five men whose only “guilt” lay in their desire to leave the country for which they fought in World War II and which had treated them so badly, and seek freedom. It was not until 1989 that they received the promotion to higher officer ranks that they deserved. Karel Seda was also awarded the Class III Order of M. R. Stefanik while he was still alive.

Political Prisoners and Their Position in the Czech Prison System in 1909–1989

by **Tomas Bursik**

This article describes the relationships between the “normalisation” regime in the Czech Socialist Republic and the political prisoners in the 1970’s and 1980’s. It is based on spontaneous memories and the available and published resources.

Two contradictory trends were at odds in the Czech prison system from the end of the 1960’s. One of them emphasised adherence to legal procedures, the educational function of the prison system, the application of new scientific knowledge etc.; on the other hand, however, the interests of the upcoming “normalisation” regime gradually prevailed, employing the coercive and separatory functions of the prison system. The prison system once again became an important means of repression for the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and its administration.

This certainly implies the approach to the political prisoners in general. It must be mentioned that the Communist regime never accepted the term “political prisoner”. A large number of people sentenced under Chapter I of the Special Part of the Penal Code were imprisoned after the political trials during 1972. At that time, political separation, where these prisoners were placed, was set up in various prison facilities; however, throughout the 1970’s and 1980’s the Communist regime was unable to clarify for itself how it was going to treat the political prisoners.

In general it can be stated that the circumstances under which the sentences were served were, in many cases, inappropriate and did not meet the rudimentary requirements that the prisoners were entitled to. With hard labour, humiliation, permanent purpose-made complications connected with administration, with communication with families, inadequate penalties for the smallest or completely fabricated offences against the prison order, the prison system gradually became fully comparable with that in place in the 1950’s.

The 1980’s once again saw contradictory trends in the Czech prison system. On the one hand it was the unceasing effort to persecute defenders of basic human rights and political freedoms, while on the other hand there was a tendency towards reform, strengthened moreover by the pressure from global public opinion and international organisations acting in this area.

Prevention, Prophylactics and Political Discipline as Conceived by the State Security Forces

by **Prokop Tomek**

The State Security forces were to perform three functions: repressive, informative and preventative. At the initial stage of establishing the regime, the State Security controlled the citizens primarily by openly repressive means. From the beginning of the 1960’s, following the Soviet example, so-called preventative-disciplinary, prophylactic

and dissociating measures were adopted to punish acts against the regime. At first this was an alternative penalty for offenders from a “similar class”, i.e. the working class. From the 1970’s this penalty was used in cases when criminal prosecution was difficult to achieve. Preventative-disciplinary measures amounted to hundreds of thousands of cases in a variety of forms. Their legal status was quite dubious. As they comprised serious interference in the rights and freedoms of the citizens, they were taken indirectly by the secret police by acting upon employers, school management, state administration etc., and included suspending students and precluding them from studies at secondary schools and universities, exclusion from public organisations (such as the Socialist Union of Youth, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia etc.), preventing private travel abroad (intervention by Secret Police with employers in order not to recommend that border permits be approved), terminating employment, halting career advancement, bans on employment, dismissal from office and demotion to a lower position with a lower wage, making long distance studies impossible by changing working conditions, preventing enrolment in university or the withdrawal of state approval for a clergy job. These steps, often inconspicuous, in some cases led to forced removal from the country if combined together.

This article aims to describe the characteristic features of prevention by the secret police and to evaluate its contribution to the punishment of citizens by means of statistical analyses. It also deals with the formal and theoretical background of prevention and its practical impact on the citizens with examples from various social environments.

Known as Pavel Svatý

The Life Story of Prokop Drtina, an Official, Politician and Political Prisoner

by **Ondrej Koutek**

This article is dedicated to the important Czech official and later politician Prokop Drtina, whose life was closely linked with the development of democracy in Czechoslovakia. He was born on 13 April 1900 to the family of Frantisek Drtina, a close collaborator of Tomas Garrigue Masaryk. After studying law, Drtina started his career with the Czech Tax Directorate and his public activities date back to the same time. In 1925 he joined in the newly established National Labour Party. From there he left to join the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party in 1928 where he stayed to the end of his political career. Prokop Drtina also played an important role in the activities of the social and debating club Pritomnost (“The Present”), was one of the editors of *Demokraticky stred* (“Democratic Centre”) magazine and wrote articles for other press materials.

A major turning point in his career came in November 1929 when he was appointed as an official of the Presidential Office. At the end of 1935, President Edvard Benes appointed him as his secretary, and Prokop Drtina thus became his closest collaborator. With President Benes he went through an emotional period during the September crisis of 1938 and the president’s subsequent resignation. Following this, Drtina gath-

ered together a group of his political friends, who went on to lay the foundations of the national resistance while he had to leave the Presidential Office and began his career at the Supreme Administrative Court. In 1939 he participated in the activity of the resistance organisation called Politicke Ustredi ("The Political Headquarters"). When the threat of his arrest became imminent at the very end of the year, he decided to flee the country. Using an illegal channel, he successfully reached England where he immediately joined up with Edvard Benes.

Drtna became a political official of the Presidential Office in exile. Besides his work of an official, however, he was also the deputy chairman of Pravni Rada ("Legal Counsel") and was involved in radio propaganda. He was the chairman of the Broadcast Advisors Committee and a popular BBC commentator known as Pavel Svaty. In August 1944 he was appointed a member of the government delegation for liberated territories, with which he reached Banska Bystrica during the Slovak National Uprising. After the defeat Drtna went back to London. In March 1945 Drtna travelled with key London representatives, led by Benes, to Moscow, where discussions were subsequently held over the first Czech government and its programme.

After returning to his homeland, he continued his career as an official, but he was immediately appointed as a member of the head committee of the National Socialist Party. On 28 October 1945 he became a Member of the Interim National Parliament, and shortly afterwards, on 6 November 1945, he was appointed Minister of Justice. At that time the department was organising primarily retributive court proceedings. The so-called national purity process was accompanied by many political conflicts in which Drtna sided with law and justice. On the other hand he was accused by the Communists of protecting traitors and collaborators. In June 1947 he was a member of the government delegation during discussions with Stalin in Moscow over the Czechoslovak participation in Marshall Plan. He was thus a direct witness to the crucial moment in the Communist's path to absolute power. The domestic political situation subsequently escalated, including a failed attempt to assassinate three ministers – Petr Zenkl, Jan Masaryk and Prokop Drtna. The following investigation of the attempt uncovered indications that some officials of the Communist Party had been involved.

On 20 February 1948, Drtna and other non-Communist ministers resigned, which then triggered the Communist coup. When President Benes accepted the resignations, Drtna leapt out of the window, attempting suicide in protest and in fear of arrest by the State Police. He ended up with serious injuries at a hospital under continual police supervision. In August 1948 he was transported from the civil hospital and spent the following five years in investigative custody. After endless questioning and custody, Drtna stood before the Supreme Court on 15 December 1953 and was sentenced in a prefabricated and secret trial to 15 years of imprisonment.

In 1960, following an amnesty, he was released. After this he worked as an assistant librarian in the Library of the National Technical Museum. In May 1967 he retired. In 1969 he was finally rehabilitated. However, the rehabilitation was retracted by the already normalised justice and in 1975 he was sentenced again. It was in prison that Drtna began gathering his memoirs, a work to which he later dedicated the entire last years of his life. The history of these memoirs was tinged with the same affection as the life of their author. Drtna finally managed to support Charter 77, following which

he faced a campaign of hatred against himself and the increased attention of the State Police. Prokop Drtina died on 16 October 1980.

Arnold Keilberth, Journalist and State Police Informer

by Prokop Tomek

This paper is an attempt to reconstruct the life story of Arnold Keilberth (1929–2001), a Secret Police informer. The effort to describe the phenomenon of collaboration with the Secret Police faces difficulties as to the variability and diverse conditions regarding the relationship between an individual and the power.

Arnold Keilberth was a Czech German and spent the Nazi occupation in Great Britain. In the 1960's he worked his way up to an important post at the International Department of the Central Committee of Trade Unions. He played a part in establishing links with Western Germany. In 1970 he was excluded from the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and lost his job because of his leanings towards the reform groups of the Prague Spring. Several years later he made a career as a correspondent and cooperator with the western media in Prague. He visited not only the diplomatic environment and western European journalists but also the dissidents. At the same time he was a long-term and fruitful informer to the Secret Police from the 1960's and, paradoxically, his importance grew with the social decline. He is also important for his research into the opposition environment in the late 1980's. Keilberth's "engagement" in the Secret Police services continued for a short time even after 1989, thus indicating the initial continuity between the security system and the past system, which was phased out only gradually and slowly.

This paper aims at revealing the details and causes of this particular relationship between an individual and the political police.

“With Calm Head, Burning Heart and Clean Hands”

Command of the Czech Ministers of the Interior to mark the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Felix Edmundovic Dzerzinsky, the founder of the Soviet secret service.

by Petr Blazek

The document shows the methods by which the great ideological campaigns were prepared under the Communist regime. The framework of celebrations to mark the 100th birth anniversary of Felix Edmundovic Dzerzinsky, the first chairman of the Bolshevik secret police, in 1977 was set up by the joint command of Jaromir Obzina – the Interior Minister of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Josef Jung – the Interior Minister of the Czech Socialist Republic, and Stefan Lazar – the Interior Minister of the

Slovak Socialist Republic. The introduction to the published document also describes the development of the cult of the founder of the Bolshevik “Ceka”, who became a glorified example for members of the secret police in all the Soviet satellite countries in the latter half of the 20th century. The actual execution of this campaign also comes under attention. The key role in preparing and executing it was played by various units of Ministry of the Interior, based on which, in October 1977, the Department for Political Education, Tutorship, Culture and Promotion of the Federal Ministry of the Interior was newly established, being referred to under the codename of Department IX of the FMV.

Documents on Bohumil Lausman in the British Archives

by **Sylva Simsova**

This study provides an overview of the most important documents on the Czech Social Democratic politician Bohumil Lausman (1903–1963) which are lodged with British archives. They comprise part of the Blazej Vilim fund in the British Library in London (the Lausman file is signed MS ADD 74982A), British Foreign Office documents lodged with the National Archives in London (FO 371) and materials placed in the Churchill Archives in Cambridge: the funds of Blazej Vilim (BVLM/2/5 and BVLM/2/10) and Karel Maiwald (MWLD/2/35). The author broadly cites from these funds, namely from the correspondence between Bohumil Lausman and his friends. These documents imply that the position of Lausman after leaving Communist Czechoslovakia at New Year in 1949 was quite difficult, as many Czechoslovak Social Democrats in exile took offence at the part he played in the Communist coup in February 1948. On the other hand, as the documents of the British Foreign Office indicate, for British officers it was a reason to deny Lausman an entry visa for some time. The correspondence lodged with British archives also goes into great detail about the creation of the book “Kdo byl vinen?” (Who Was Guilty?) which Lausman published in Vienna in 1953 and in which he tried to defend his views in February 1948. The British archives also keep an interesting resource on Lausman’s death in 1963 – the testimony of Stefan Pagac, with whom Lausman shared the same cell after being kidnapped by the Communist secret police at the end of 1953. A recording of the testimony of Pagac in Slovak is lodged with the British Library. However, some eyewitnesses do not consider this testimony to be particularly reliable.

Archive Materials on Czechoslovak RAF Pilots (So Called “Past People”) in Section 1 and 3 of the ABS Archive

by Xenie Penizkova and Svetlana Ptacnikova

The Czechoslovak Army, including the Czechoslovak pilots who fought in England during World War II as members of the RAF, drew the attention of the Communists shortly after the war. A real witch-hunt started in the army in February 1948. In the first stage it was focused on the elite of commanders (“western elite”) of the Czechoslovak air force following a list that had been drawn up in advance. The top-ranking officers were arrested soon after February 1948 and their persecution continued until 1955–1956. It included prefabricated trials, the interrogation of officers and soldiers who had participated in the resistance abroad, and also impacted on their families and friends. Many soldiers managed to escape from the country early enough; others waited. Unfortunately they often fell victim to various secret police informers and decoys. Many of them were arrested and sentenced to many years in the toughest prisons, others were sent to forced labour camps, while the remaining ones were demoted and forced to take subordinate labouring jobs.

All of this is witnessed in the written materials lodged with the ABS (Archive of Security Forces) of the Ministry of the Interior. The first part of this article is focused on operative materials (generally referred to as the file agenda), investigation files and Inspection of Ministry of the Interior files, lodged with Section 1 and 3 of the ABS Archive. As a sample the authors selected Czechoslovak Squadron commanders and Air Force Generals, former members of the RAF in Great Britain, who were alive in February 1948: 49 people in total. A detailed list of them, including an overview of the preserved archive materials, is given in Annex 1. The next part of the article, to be published in one of the coming volumes, will focus on the materials of Section 2 of the ABS Archive, i.e. the file agenda of the II, III and VI Department of the Ministry of the Interior, the so-called H Fund (historical fund of the former Study Institute), interesting files from the IV Department (Surveillance Department) and files from the former I Department (Foreign Intelligence).

The First Festival of the Second Culture

by Pavel Ptacnik

On 1 September 1974, to mark the occasion of the wedding of Arnost and Jaroslava Hanibal, an underground concert, later called “the first festival of the second culture”, was held in Postupice near Benesov, hosting, among others, groups and singers such as the Plastic People of the Universe, DG 307, Svatopluk Karasek and Karel Soukup. As part of the “Hostyn” Action, the Secret Police gathered information at the end of August indicating that a big-beat music event, which could be anti-state in nature, was to be held in the Benesov region. Despite this they let the concert go ahead, probably

because they did not realise all the connotations at that point. The State Police was primarily unaware that this event was going to be visited by virtually the same people as were involved in the local “longhair disturbances” in the Ceske Budejovice region on 30 March 1974. The wedding celebration went even more smoothly owing to the attitude the Secret Police officers in Benesov, who saw no harm in it. It was only the subsequent check-up on those who attended the Postupice concert that supplied important information to the Secret Police which led to a full understanding of the “threat” of this community to the ruling Communist regime and to the decision to launch an “operative analysis” of the group.