

Summaries

STUDIES

Czech security services and the search for materials of the Third Reich

► **Stanislav Polnar**

The search for Nazi Germany materials hidden on the Czechoslovak territory was an inextricable part of the framework in which the Czechoslovak security apparatus developed in the years 1945–1989. The failure that the Czechoslovak police and security services experienced at the start of 1946 near Štěchovice was used as a pretext for criminal persecution of selected top functionaries after February 1948. During the Prague Spring, demoted minister of the interior Rudolf Barák wanted to use the legends surrounding the Štěchovice archive to fully rehabilitate himself. In the 1980s, the issue of hideouts as possible storage places of hazardous explosives and ammunition was linked to the fight against period-specific political terrorism. Special attention should be given to analyzing the used search methods. In addition to questionable operative-search activities carried out by the StB and the use of psychotronics, various specialists also searched for Nazi documents, including pyrotechnicians, divers, expert witness from various branches of criminalistics, geologists, mining engineers and construction specialists. This was done using earth-moving heavy machinery and, last but not least, a great amount of manual work.

Several reasons for why the search was unsuccessful can be identified. To begin with, the search was never a centrally supervised and coordinated activity that would involve the whole security apparatus. Attempts at centralizing the issue failed. Among other things, so-called Štěchovice syndrome became a limiting factor as the long-term search focused exclusively on the grounds of the former SS army engineers school in Hradištko, or the Benešov region in Central Bohemia. Other parts of the country were searched vigorously, but always for only short periods of time, unsystematically, spasmodically and with no regard to nation-wide perspective.

Presidential amnesties in 1960–1969. Preparations, course, outcomes

► Radek Slabotínský

The study examines presidential amnesties that were passed in the 1960s. Their execution was complicated and caused various problems. Also the outcome was questionable at best as in the end it did not satisfy neither of the involved parties, i.e. neither those who served long prison sentences that were not justified nor those who took decisions on these complicated matters as civil servants and politicians. The communist government presented it as a political problem that was reflected in numerous government and party declarations, including newspaper articles.

Amnesties and pardons that were stipulated in the Constitution of 9 May 1948 and from 1960 also in the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic as one of the most prominent and important constitutional powers of the president were based on the tradition of announcing amnesties and giving pardons during the time of the so-called First Czechoslovak Republic, and on the outside looked like an element of continuation of the legal order of the First Czechoslovak Republic. However, when taking a closer look, we can see that it was a trick that was supposed to show the citizens a kinder face and humaneness of the communist regime. Even the selection of people that were to be included in different amnesties was linked to a narrow group of those in power. People who received unlawful sentences were put at the mercy of those who took those decisions about them. The convicts were often disappointed and disillusioned when they learnt that they were not included in a given amnesty. For many of them, further life in prison became almost intolerable. Also the fact that some political prisoners left corrective institutions only at the time of the Prague Spring is a certain memento. Furthermore, those people did not become fully-fledged citizens after their release, but were still looked upon as second-class citizens that trespassed against the people's democratic regime. This stigma often prevented them from returning to normal life.

“Next time he won't be allowed to enter the CSR.” Jakobson's second post-war visit to Czechoslovakia in 1957 in StB archives

► Robert Dittmann

Following the Khrushchev political thaw, also Czech Stalinists were forced to accept a gradual establishment of international contacts with the West. One of the manifestations of this relaxation was the visit of renowned linguist Roman Jakobson (1896–1982), who had spent almost 20 years in inter-war Czechoslovakia, but who stayed in the US after the war. Both his visits in 1957 were closely monitored by

employees of the Ministry of the Interior, who also made use of a wide net of collaborators. The article gives a detailed description of the context, course and consequences of Jakobson's second visit in September – October 1957.

Before the saints moved, or a look behind the curtains of the relocation of the Church of the Assumption of Virgin Mary in Most (Part 1)

► Josef Vávra

The study aims to describe the struggle for leadership in Transfera in the years 1968–1969, which caused a several-year delay in the relocation of the Church of the Assumption of Virgin Mary to its current position.

In the 1950s, the question arose of what should be done with the city of Most, which sat on top of a lignite mine. In 1964, a decision was made to demolish the old city of Most and build a new one, but to preserve the deanery Church of the Assumption of Virgin Mary. In the following two years, a commission of experts led by S. Bechyně and J. Wünsch decided that the best way to save the church would be to move it to a different location. Company Transfera was set up in 1968 to carry out the relocation and J. Wünsch was appointed its director.

Since late 1968, J. Wünsch had received a lot of criticism, and in 1969 he was dismissed as director. O. Novák, who up until then served as secretary of the Government Commission for the Coordination and Oversight of the Demolition of Old Most and the Construction of New Most, was appointed new director. After that, Novák took various steps to make sure that Wünsch would not be able to finish his work. A new feasibility study was commissioned. This decision was one of the reasons why the church could not be relocated in 1972 as planned; the relocation took place only in 1975. At the beginning of 1969, as criticism was mounting, J. Wünsch approached K. Mejzlík, officer at the Investigation Directorate of the Public Security, asking him to investigate the suspicion that someone was trying to thwart the relocation and that public funds were being wasted. However, the investigation was suspended as it was concluded that criminal proceedings could not be launched. Nevertheless, the main investigator expressed his concerns that the relocation was at risk, and suggested that all actions carried out by relevant institutions should be reviewed.

Back under the State Security surveillance. Introduction to re-emigration in the years 1968–1989

► **Beáta Hrenyová**

The article explores the subject of so-called returnees to Czechoslovakia, i.e. Czechoslovak citizens who emigrated behind the Iron Curtain in 1968–1989, either for family reasons or in search for a better future, and later reconsidered and decided to return to their home country. This group of people was seen as a controversial part of society by the communist leadership. Their return to Czechoslovakia could be used to boost the legitimacy of a regime weakened by the departure of thousands of its citizens. On the other hand, there was a risk that they returned because they had established cooperation with western intelligence agencies. This was one of the reasons why returnees aroused the interest of the State Security, which wanted to use them for various purposes, such as obtaining information about Czechoslovak émigrés, discouraging potential future émigrés, or for PR purposes using their stories of life in exile. The aim of the article is to offer readers a basic insight into the subject of returnees and their experience with life in exile, and to show how they reflected upon their decision after being confronted with the members of the State Security. The subject is viewed through the prism of documents preserved in the Register of Émigrés and Returnees compared with subject files, other types of StB documents, depositions of returnees in mass media, and available literature.

Hijacking of a regular line bus at the Strážné border crossing on 9 November 1984

► **Martin Pulec**

The study looks into the half-forgotten case of a 1984 hijacking of a regular line bus. The text draws primarily on the study of archival sources stored in the Security Services Archive; other sources of information include the media and interviews with eyewitnesses. It gives a description of how the case unfolded, the course and execution of the hijacking, negotiations between the hijacker and the security services and the elimination of the hijacker. Further, it studies the culprit's personality and describes the investigation of the case, which included some surprising moments. The hijacker of the bus was sentenced to many years in prison, his act and the operation undertaken by the Border Guards was often mentioned in the press and used as propaganda by the regime.

The author highlights the fact that this case happened 6 years after the much more famous bus hijacking by the Bareš cousins. The two cases are put in context and partly compared, while special attention is given to the approach of the members of the Border Guards to the solution of the case.

BIOGRAPHIES

František Hieke-Stoj. A true soldier

► František Prepsl

The study is dedicated to former Czechoslovak intelligence officer František Hieke, who is mentioned in numerous publications that explore the second resistance and whose acts are definitely noteworthy. The study focuses mainly on Hieke's professional life, from his military beginnings during World War I to the interwar period to the turn of the 1940s and 1950s, when he was persecuted by the regime.

Using the available archival documents (deposited in the Security Services Archive) and literature, the study takes a closer look at František Hieke's personality. A comparison was drawn between the information from the archival documents stored in the Military Historical Archive and Hieke's memoirs published in the *Historie a vojenství* journal, which allowed for a more precise depiction of Hieke's acts of support to the domestic resistance during World War II. Additional information from the collections of the National Archives of the Czech Republic and the Prague City Archives was also used.

A political biography of communist functionary Vítězslav Fuchs (1915–1993)

► Tomáš Hemza

The presented study looks into the life of functionary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia Vítězslav Fuchs (1915–1993). Main attention is given to his tenure as secretary of the Regional Committee of the CPC in Ostrava in the years 1946–1951. The study makes use of information from archival documents stored in the National Archives in Prague, the Security Services Archive and the Opava Land Archive. Vítězslav Fuchs was born in Ostrava in a German-speaking Jewish family. He studied law in the 1930s. Following the economic depression of the 1930s and the

rise of Nazism, he got involved in politics, and in 1936 he became member of the Communist Party. In 1939 he escaped from Czechoslovakia to the United Kingdom and in the autumn of 1941 he joined the Czechoslovak army. His political career peaked after the war. For almost five years he led the party organization in a major industrial region. He was actively involved in the successful takeover of power by communists in 1948 and the subsequent Stalinist terror. However, in 1951 he fell victim to the ongoing purges in the Communist Party and was imprisoned until 1956. He never returned to active politics after his release from prison.

MATERIALS

Military intelligence in the first half of the 1950s

► **Eduard Hošek**

The study aims to expand the knowledge about military intelligence in the first half of the 1950s. It makes use of materials in the collection of the Intelligence Directorate of the Main Staff (still mostly unprocessed) and archival documents (single documents) that originated from everyday activities of the Intelligence Directorate and which are stored there. The study gives a brief description of the origin and some of the tasks undertaken by the Intelligence Department of the General Staff up until it was renamed the Intelligence Directorate, and includes also information on organization, planning, management and control at the Intelligence Directorate, including mentioning certain problems that this organizational unit of the General Staff faced when completing its tasks. The last part of the study is dedicated to two individuals who acted as head of the Intelligence Department and chief of the Intelligence Directorate.

Study Institute of the Ministry of the Interior against the occupation II (August – September 1968 in the collections of the Security Services Archive)

► **Pavel Žáček**

The author follows on from his paper on the Study Institute of the Ministry of the Interior and its activities in August 1968, which was published in the *Almanac of the Security Services Archive* 16/2018. The first part gives a brief description of the

Study Institute, which was established by the first vice-minister of the interior of the CSSR, Stanislav Padrůněk, on 1st August 1968. However, the task the Study Institute was originally presented with was different. It was supposed to prepare and process materials focused on further development of the ministry and its agencies, present expert opinions and reviews of proposed conceptual measures, as well as collect, evaluate and use important scientific and technical information. In August 1968, members of the Study Institute supported the existing state and party leadership. At that chaotic moment they actually replaced the central apparatus of the Ministry of the Interior, mainly the minister's secretariat and the ministry's information system.

The introduction is followed by a carefully prepared edition of eight documents which the Study Institute of the Ministry of the Interior prepared between 30th September and 9th October 1968. The documents were prepared not only for use by the ministry's leadership, but also by the Czechoslovak government and the members of the Defence and Security Committee of the National Assembly. Their aim was to document illegal activities of the occupying forces and their meddling in the internal affairs of the CSSR. These reports were one of the reasons why the Study Institute was dissolved at the end of 1968.

REPORTS

The Iron Curtain 1948–1989. Exhibition commemorating the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Iron Curtain (Brno, 12 November 2019 – 27 September 2020)

Jiří Válek

International conference "The year 1989 and the protection of the state border. Security conditions in the border regions in the 1980s" (Brno, 20–21 November 2019)

Tomáš Slavík

Conference "Ukrainians and their neighbours in history: politics, economics, religion, culture and everyday life" (Przemysł, 11–12 September 2020)

Vlastimil Ondrák

Conference of police historians (Prague, 17–19 September 2020)

Pavel Vaněk

Attack on Capuchin monasteries under Operation K (Sušice, 23 September 2020)

Jan Geier, Petr Petřivalský

Agenda of Act No. 262/11 Coll., on the Participants in Anti-Communist Opposition and Resistance, at the Security Services Archive, 2011–2020

Tomáš Bursík, Světlana Ptáčníková