

## The last reorganisation of the intelligence service. Staff reductions at the Central Intelligence Directorate of the National Security Corps in the years 1988–1990

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In April and May 1988, the leadership of the Federal Ministry of the Interior began an extensive reduction of the security apparatus. For example, the Chief of Staff of the National Security Corps' Central Intelligence Directorate, Brigadier Karel Sochor, informed the Minister of the Interior of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, Vratislav Vajnar, of the need to reduce the number of officers in the First Directorate of the National Security Corps by 30%. According to the stipulated numbers, the headquarters of communist intelligence were meant to comprise 1030 planned job positions, but in reality there were 905 staff officers and 69 civilian workers. 588 people worked as operatives at home and abroad (the plan anticipated 63 more).

Among other things, in the months that followed and in connection with the reorganisation of the intelligence service, management at the National Security Corps' First Directorate also conducted a number of analyses of the personnel structure of headquarters' operational departments, legalised officers in the so-called First Reserve (operating under the cover of various departments and organisations in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic) and the Second Reserve, which primarily performed its tasks abroad in "rezidenturas" (a *rezidentura* was roughly equivalent to a CIA station). Using various calculations, they attempted to defend themselves against overt political pressure to reduce their apparatus whose privileged position was based on National Defence Council Resolution 33, dated 9 December 1982.

During the last years of its existence, the National Security Corps' Central Intelligence Directorate was forced to repeatedly defend its activity and to inform a number of unauthorised officials from the state and Party apparatus of confidential facts concerning its work, including cooperation with its partners (who included the USSR). It was only under the new political conditions which prevailed at the beginning of 1990 that management at the First Directorate of the National Security Corps accepted a 30% reduction in its staffing levels and the streamlining of its organisational structure. The study is supplemented with documents concerning an overview of the "legalised" posts of the First and Second Reserves – which operatives used as cover for their real work and which were assigned to the intelligence service for operational use in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and abroad according to individual departments (October 1982), the focus and most important tasks of foreign *rezidenturas* in the final period (March 1989), and a list of intelligence officers in the diplomatic corps (March 1989).

## The failure of the secret services: Czechoslovakia 1945–1948

Igor Lukeš

After officers from the American intelligence service arrived in Czechoslovakia in May 1945, it seemed as though fortune had smiled on this outpost of Western democracy. They were educated men full of resolve who understood Czechoslovakia, spoke the language of its citizens and knew its history. They had time to prepare for a clash with the Soviet adversary, which they could expect, and they enjoyed the unconditional support of their country's ambassador Laurence Steinhardt.

Another thing that also played an important role was the fact that around half of the Czech political and military elite as well as a large percentage of those working in the security apparatus were favourably disposed towards the American intelligence officers who requested information from them. The Americans whose task it was to gather confidential political, military and commercial data in Prague had access to some of the highest-ranking officials at the offices of the president and the government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior. Passing on information to American intelligence officers was not viewed as treason and a person did not lose his honour by doing so. It was a service to democracy. It is hard to imagine another country where the interests of American intelligence officers coincided to such an extent with the interests of their sources. In the light of these circumstances, the rapid defeat of democracy and the subsequent triumph of totalitarianism in February 1948 is all the more humiliating.

In regard to her stay in Prague, Louise Schaffner declared that the post-War American intelligence service severely lacked training for the given region. („I am convinced that, if the British had been looking after the Nechanský case, everything would have turned out better.“). Naturally, the British intelligence service would have used methods that they had perfected over the course of many years operating in various political environments. They would also have simply conducted themselves well as spies. Nevertheless, the British had already operated in other countries of post-War Eastern Europe such as the Baltic Republics, Poland and Albania, and their missions had equally disastrous results.

Consequently, it is not possible to conclude that workers from the American intelligence service did not fulfil their duties with enough effort and professionalism, which would have been required of them in the struggle against the adversary they faced in Prague in the years 1945–1948. The West first had to fully realise the hidden dangers that were inherent in the Cold War before deciding to adopt the Soviet model of intelligence work. The irony of the matter is that, when the Americans finally mastered this in Communist Bloc countries in the 1980s, hostilities had already abated and traitors in the ranks of the CIA and the FBI meant that nobody could savour this victory.

## From *Polizeiverstärkung* to *verstärkte SS-Totenkopfstandarten* Evolution and implementation of some repressive SS forces, 1933–1941

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The units known as *Polizeiverstärkung* and later *verstärkte SS-Totenkopfstandarten* were a transitional stage in the evolution of armed SS divisions. Their importance to the *Reichsführer-SS* Heinrich Himmler was based on their independence from the army and the police. Another important element in their existence was the fact that they effectively operated in a legal vacuum and enabled the SS to purposely sidestep the army, which had obstructed the development of armed SS divisions. In the first half of the 1930s, they were formed as a means of ensuring the internal political pacification of Germany in the event of a military conflict, but in view of the general widening of the role of the SS in Nazi expansion plans, they were given newly formulated objectives in 1939. Officially, they were identified as policing divisions and most of them were employed as occupant units safeguarding German interests in occupied territories. In occupied Poland, they even participated in the first extermination operations.

From the autumn of 1939 to the summer of 1940, the *verst. SS-Totenkopfstandarten* also comprised the predominant part of SS forces in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Initially, these “police reinforcements” were primarily meant to ensure the security of industrial enterprises and arms transports to the Reich. Nevertheless, they soon assumed responsibility for guarding German administrative and police authorities in Bohemian and Moravian capital cities and they simultaneously fulfilled a representative role. Despite a lack of personnel and material equipment, they also comprised a strong auxiliary force in the case of extraordinary events. Their most significant action in this role took place on 17 November 1939 when they occupied university buildings and were also responsible for the execution of student leaders who were arrested.

Although the *verst. SS-Totenkopfstandarten* were eventually used for policing purposes, they never became part of the German police corps. The ambitions of the SS extended further and, from the outset, the SS-T.St. were trained as military units even though they were never used for combat purposes throughout their existence in the years 1939 – 1940. Moreover, the Wehrmacht did not recognise service in these divisions as the fulfilment of compulsory military service. After the creation of the *Waffen-SS*, the *verst. SS-Totenkopfstandarten* gradually became superfluous. Consequently, they began to be disbanded in 1940 as part of extensive changes in the organisational structure of the *Waffen-SS*. As such, they were partly dissolved and their potential was used to augment existing units or to create new ones. The remainder were transformed into motorised infantry regiments and included in the formation of SS brigades and divisions. The reorganisation reflected the general trend in the development of the *Waffen-SS*, i.e. its conversion into a powerful military force (even though a number of SS units continued to be used exclusively for repressive purposes). In Germany and the occupied territories, including the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, the *verst. SS-Totenkopfstandarten* were replaced by specialised divisions. The

training of recruits continued to be provided by replacement battalions for individual SS regiments and buildings were watched by newly created SS guard battalions.

## The Peasants’ demonstration: motivation, manipulation and personal consequences

Jiří Urban

That author of this study draws attention to a case of resistance against the communist regime, which occurred in a Czech rural district almost 60 years ago. The work deals with a peasants’ protest rally in front of the District National Committee building in Dobruška. In December 1949, local private farmers decided to respond to official inspections of their homesteads (which forced them to deliver disproportionately large amounts of produce within the framework of the Czechoslovak Communist Party’s agricultural policies) by organising a protest march to the District National Committee. A Czechoslovak national flag was raised at the head of the procession and around 300 people took part in the event. The state security authorities responded with the mass detention of selected farmers, whom it then portrayed as a group of subversives. This resulted in the political trial of 18 farmers, whom communist propaganda disparagingly described as the “village rich” or “kulaks.” The case was heard before the Prague State Court in Hradec Králové. Prison sentences ranging from 13 to 25 years were given to six people who were identified as organisers, while sentences of 1 to 9 years were meted out to the others. Fourteen people had all their property confiscated while five were subsequently forced out of their homes as part of a nationwide security clampdown known as Operation K (“kulaks”). The study describes what motivated the farmers to resist and gives an account of what went on behind the scenes during the investigation. It also outlines how the treasonous group was fabricated and provides details of the hardships suffered by those who were convicted as well as the difficulties subsequently experienced in their district. The paper draws on documents from both central and regional archives.

## Vysočany 1968: the 14th (special) Congress of the Czechoslovak Communist Party

Lukáš Cvrček

Although its outcomes were short-lived, the 14th Congress of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, which was convened as an emergency congress in Vysočany, Prague, was one of the most important events of Czechoslovak history in the 20th century. The fact that it was convened rapidly just one day after the invasion of the country

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by forces from five Warsaw Pact states as well as the fact that it adopted conclusions denouncing the occupation helped consolidate nationwide resistance and contributed to the failure of efforts by collaborators to establish a worker-agrarian puppet government and to justify the occupation.

The collapse of the political plans for the invasion forced Soviet leaders to come to the negotiating table with a Czechoslovak delegation in Moscow. With one exception, they managed during these proceedings to coerce the Czechoslovak representatives to sign the so-called Moscow Protocol, part of which included an undertaking to annul the results of the extraordinary 14th Congress in Vysočany. The members of the Moscow delegation succeeded in fulfilling this part of the enforced agreement immediately after returning home, when their influence managed to persuade officials elected to the Party's central bodies at the Vysočany Congress to resign from their posts so as to prevent a schism in the Czechoslovak Communist Party. This represented a victory for the idea behind the Moscow concessions, which supporters of reforms used to promise the possibility of saving at least some of the changes that had been introduced. Nevertheless, the final defeat of the Prague Spring was only delayed for a relatively short time.

As an important political event during the era of the so-called Prague Spring, the 14th emergency congress has been more or less dealt with by all specialist publications focusing on the events of 1968 in Czechoslovakia. Nonetheless, the Vysočany Congress has not been a central theme in any of these works. This study represents an attempt at comprehensively mapping out the convening of this congress, the preparations for the event, its proceedings and the annulment of its outcomes as well as the responses to it. As an extremely political event, the history of the 14th emergency congress is primarily conceived as a history of proceedings that went on behind the scenes and on various committees of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and other "fraternal" communist parties.

The text is divided into two main units focused on the period before the congress and the actual course of proceedings at this event. The first part is devoted to the organisation and content of preparations for the 14th emergency congress and the political context in which it was held. In regard to deliberations and disputes concerning the convening of the congress, the text provides a rough outline of the political situation in Czechoslovakia in the first half of 1968 set against the backdrop of the Soviet Union's policies as a superpower. Nevertheless, it has no ambition to serve as a kind of chronicle of the Prague Spring and it offers no narrative of this nature.

The second part records that actual course of events at the congress and the influence that the conclusions of its proceedings had on the situation in Czechoslovakia during the first days of the occupation. The course of events leading to the annulment of the congress's outcomes and the adoption of the policies of the Moscow Protocol at a meeting of the Czechoslovak Communist Party's Central Committee on 31 August 1968 is also mapped out in detail. A short chapter at the very end of the book is devoted to media responses and other reactions to the 14th emergency congress as well as the public attitude to the event. The text is accompanied by appendices containing lists of the members of central bodies of the Czechoslovak Communist Party who were elected at the Vysočany Congress.