



On the Cold War Front

Czechoslovakia 1948-1956

This exhibition is dedicated to the thousands of unknown fellow citizens who, after February 1948, decided to actively fight from abroad against the Communist power in Czechoslovakia. Dramatic battles of the Cold War took place on the border between East and West in the years 1948-1956. The secret operations of exile intelligence groups have been practically forgotten by now. Today we search for their significance both for the development of our country and for the traditions of the struggle for freedom and democracy.

25. 2. – 3. 5. 2009

The City of Prague Museum

Na Poříčí 52
Prague 8

The moment that the Communists took over the reins in Czechoslovakia on February 25, 1948 may be understood, among other things, as the beginning of the anti-Communist resistance. It is no secret that Western non-Communist powers participated in this resistance, which combined the interests of Czechoslovak exiles with the interests of the countries facing supposed or real threat from the Soviet Union and its nascent system of satellites.

The anti-Communist resistance, called the “third resistance” in Czechoslovakia, is understood (if it is accepted at all) as concrete armed, intelligence or sabotage operations between the years 1948-1956. The participants were tens of thousands of Czechoslovak citizens, either living on state territory or in exile, who acted of their own will. In many cases, the resistance formed independently and spontaneously, in response to the terror the Communists were unleashing against those who thought differently. Where this resistance was organized, it was directed by several not very tightly coordinated centers abroad.

The country's position between East and West predestined it to witness dramatic Cold War clashes. While they did not develop into open conflict, they are undoubtedly significant. In recognizing and describing them, we can also come to appreciate their victims' value.

More than fifty years have passed since the couriers' operations, but the topic is still little known, and historical science covers it only randomly. Many documents are yet to be made available – mostly from democratic countries' archives. Yet it is our duty to try to clarify and redefine what happened. We must answer questions concerning the significance and accomplishments of the resistance. We must remember the thousands of fellow citizens who were imprisoned, executed or killed on the border, and who embarked on a war against totalitarian power, conscious of the huge risks this involved for themselves and their relatives.

Last but not least, this exhibit reminds us of the anniversary of the Communist coup d'état in Czechoslovakia – the reason why thousands of our fellow citizens bravely fought the totalitarian power.

The (Communist) Secret Police (StB) succeeded in capturing about four thousand people who participated in intelligence operations in Czechoslovakia as couriers, organizers abroad and their assistants on Czechoslovak territory.

Approximately 250 couriers were sentenced to long-term imprisonment. Nineteen couriers were executed, at least seven died on the border, and eleven died in prisons.

Not all of them were textbook heroes. They lived in an era that placed immense demands on the individual. Yet they took the risks, and they deserve our respect.

On the Cold War Front – Czechoslovakia 1948 - 1956

This exhibition is held under the auspices of the mayor of Prague 1 Ing. Petr Hejma and the mayor of Prague 8 Josef Nosek

Curator of the exhibition:

Prokop Tomek

Graphics and exhibition design:

Mária Hostinová

Exterior caption architecture :

Milan Buchta

Production:

Marek Čulén, Bohumila Křížová

Language editing:

Jitka Šmídová, David Svoboda

Translation:

Antonín Hlušík

Translation language editing:

Alexis Gibson

Printing:

Signpek s.r.o

Registrar:

Renata Gallová

Loan of display items:

Police Museum of the Czech Republic
Security Services Archive
Military History Institute

Photographs:

Security Services Archive

Construction:

Roman Bártů

Display arrangement:

Eliška Braidlová

Lighting:

ZUCAR s.r.o.

25. 2. – 3. 5. 2009

Open daily 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. (Closed Mondays)

www.ustrcr.cz
www.muzeumprahy.cz



Městská část
Praha 8

