

"ESPIONAGE" IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AT THE TIME OF NORMALIZATION

Prokop Tomek

The 1970s and 1980s in Czechoslovakia are known as the period of normalization. It is sometimes claimed that in contrast to the 1950s, this time was not characterized by any severe repression. However, we may find evidence to the contrary when searching in the dark corners of the communist past. The most severe penalties were imposed for espionage, which was considered the gravest offence against the Republic (Section 105 of the Penal Code). The severity of sentence for a completed act ranged from 10 to 15 years of imprisonment, and even capital punishment could be imposed. Less severe penalties were administered in cases of attempted offences of this kind or their preparation. An "average" penalty was around 10 years imprisonment, often in the most severe 3rd category of correctional institution. A release on probation could be considered only after two thirds of the sentence had been served, but it was granted rather scarcely due to the length of the sentence. A number of people condemned for this kind of offence were thus released from prison only in the spring of 1990. Under the conditions of Czechoslovak normalization, the basically legitimate need to protect information that was important for state security interests thus turned into an instrument of persecution. The elastic wording and interpretation of the law allowed for its Section 105 to be used on purpose. It may come as a surprise that suspicion of espionage was the most frequent reason for the State Security (StB) to take an active interest in a citizen and launch the so-called investigation. For illustration, a total of 1788 cases were being worked out by StB on a national basis on December 31, 1975, of which 397 cases, i.e. 22 per cent, concerned suspected espionage. Yet the StB operative staff were able to submit only 190 motions to commence proceedings in the same year, and only seven of these motions concerned the crime of espionage (23 cases related to the criminal offence of illegally leaving the Republic, 14 concerned defamation of a state representative, 11 cases concerned

sedition, etc.). From the mid-1970s to the mid-1980s, the number of espionage cases under investigation ranged between 400 to 600 a year, with only a small number of them leading to imprisonment. The presented information about the number of cases nevertheless indicates how many people were encircled by the invisible network of StB secret agents, how many people were screened, watched and bugged. Prokop Tomek's study exposes concrete cases in order to reveal the procedures used by StB to "produce" suspects. It also provides an overview of the employed practices that were illegal even under socialist law, and introduces the victims of this licence – people who were called "spies" but were mostly innocent and only fell victim to StB provocation.

A LOBSTER THAT DISAPPEARED WITHOUT ANY TRACE

Daniel Běloušek

The fate of defectors in the world of intelligence services is very varied. If they are detained in the territory of their home country, they usually face high penalties, and if they succeed in fleeing abroad in time, they face court trials waged against them in their absence. It is always important for an intelligence service to map the defector's activity, to establish the degree of danger it poses to the security interests of the given country, and to collect as much evidence as possible about the enemy service for which the defector has worked and the length of his/her service. The case presented in the study called A Lobster that Disappeared without any Trace is a little different: Lieutenant-Colonel Jan Fila, member of the Czechoslovak State Security service, literally disappeared without any trace. He prepared his defection from Czechoslovakia in 1986 so perfectly that Czechoslovak state bodies failed to learn anything about his whereabouts in spite of considerable effort exerted until November 1989. Consequently, it was not possible to launch any criminal proceedings against him. The presented study traces Fila's career during which he appeared to be a typical

representative of the communist establishment. He joined the Communist Party at the close of the 1960s, and after the Soviet occupation he used his chance and joined the State Security service amid purges directed against employees loyal to the reform leadership. He attended the Moscow school for intelligence agents and soon was sent to the United States as a spy. There he got in the focus of American secret services whose offer apparently started the end of Fila's career as an StB agent. His subsequent departure or actual disappearance was only the consequence.

THE BRABEC CASE AN ATTEMPT TO RECALL A "COLLABORATOR OF THE SOVIETS"

Pavel Žáček

The Czechoslovak State Security (StB) service, just like other power components of the communist regime, was closely linked with Soviet political police, either the NKVD or the KGB. The "Brabec case" is worth mentioning in this connection. The life of Eduard Brabec must have been interesting and it could be possibly characterized as rather exciting. A Czechoslovak citizen went to search for a living in the Soviet union, to be recruited to the Soviet intelligence service at the beginning of the 1930s. At that time he was working as a driver at the Polish embassy. His importance rose sharply when he moved to the German embassy, where he could be found at the start of World War II. He then became one of the informers working for the Soviet side. The last meeting with him was recorded by the NKVD on the eve of the German invasion of the USSR. The collaboration was then discontinued, and Brabec stayed in German services throughout the war. After its end he left for the United States where he tried to lead an ordinary life. When Czechoslovak intelligence service came across materials proving Brabec's former collaboration with their "Soviet friends" in the archives, they made an attempt to restore it, this time against the American side. However, due to Brabec's limited potential usability and particularly due his absolute lack of interest in any

kind of collaboration, the matter ended up as a failure and the “Brabec case” was placed ad acta.

THE LIFE AND WORK OF MILOŠ KNORR

Libor Svoboda

Miloš Knorr ranks among the legendary figures of the struggle against totalitarian regimes. A soldier who took part in fighting against the Nazis remained faithful to his conviction after the war, and after the communist takeover in Czechoslovakia in particular. He left his homeland in May 1948 for Austria in order to join the struggle against the communist regime that was coming to power in his country. As a high-ranking intelligence officer he was in charge of hundreds of political refugees. His task was to disclose State Security agents among them, and to earmark possible future collaborators of American secret services and their Czech colleagues. He organized actions of agents and planned and provided for the functioning of the Czechoslovak intelligence service in emigration. He engaged himself in intelligence activity with the hope that the communist regime would certainly fall within several years, yet his desire did not come true. In the mid-1950s he asked to be relieved of service and commenced the life of an ordinary civilian. Miloš Knorr died on July 1, 2008, at the age of almost 90 years. Libor Svoboda's article is aimed at paying respect to this man.

FIRST LINE FIGHTER PILOT AIR FORCE COLONEL IN MEMORIAM STANISLAV FEJFAR AND HIS ODYSSEY

Ladislav Kudrna

Hundreds of pilots and air staff from Czechoslovakia fought in the ranks of the RAF, the British Royal Air Force, in the course of World War II. Ladislav Kudrna's article is dedicated to the fate of one of them, Stanislav Fejfar, but it is also designed to pay tribute to all the others, and to recall events preceding and

following the Munich Agreement on the occasion of this year's 70th anniversary of its signing.

After Czechoslovakia's occupation by German forces in 1939, the then career soldier and professional pilot Stanislav Fejfar did not hesitate a moment and left the newly emerged Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Via Poland he got to France where he was forced to join the Foreign Legion together with hundreds of his compatriots, and he waited impatiently whether a war against Germany would break out. When this finally happened, he could only witness the moral and actual fall of the French Army, yet he kept fighting throughout all of the French campaign. After the collapse of France he moved to Great Britain, whose ability to mobilize war effort was incomparable with France's resignation. Stanislav Fejfar became a fighter pilot of the 310th Czechoslovak Wing of the RAF and soon one of its commanding officers. He took part in the Battle of Britain, and continued to fulfil his tasks regardless of growing fatigue and nervous strain. This effort may have become fateful to him – he was shot down and died on May 17, 1942 in fighting against German fighters. He was then one of the commanders of the 313th Czechoslovak Wing of the RAF. Fejfar's story is only one of many, with more than 500 Czechoslovak pilots perishing in World War II. The present study is aimed at paying tribute to all those courageous men who fought for their ideals.

JAN ZÁRUBA COMMUNIST PARTY APPARATUS WORKER AT THE INTERIOR MINISTRY

Milan Bárta

The life story of Jan Záruba, worker of the former communist apparatus, is not an exciting account of an eventful life but a perfect study of an average “cadre” at the level of today's middle management, one that was indispensable for the functioning of the communist regime. Jan Záruba based his career on his membership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. As an experienced party functionary he was

appointed deputy interior minister at the beginning of the 1960's, and he proved to be a loyal follower of the party line. During the 1968 reform movement, however, he was unable to cope with the newly emerging situation. He had to leave his function after Josef Pavel had come to the lead of the Ministry, and he became the head of the Interior Ministry Inspection Section. His problems culminated after the Soviet-led invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968 and he committed suicide shortly afterwards.

ON THE WAVES OF RADIO FREE EUROPE

THE STORY OF JAROSLAV AND PAVEL PECHÁČEK

Prokop Tomek

Radio Free Europe represented a significant phenomenon for more than 40 years, a symbol of struggle against the distortion of information, concealing of events, and against censorship. The name Pecháček was connected with this radio station throughout its existence. The life story of Jaroslav and Pavel Pecháček, father and son, is another story typical for Czechoslovakia of the 20th century. The father was forced to emigrate due to the communist takeover in 1948 while his son stayed in Czechoslovakia. They met again only after two decades when the son had to leave Czechoslovakia in consequence of another historical upheaval in the centre of Europe. Both of them achieved success in the same field, working for the Radio Free Europe and Voice of America stations and heading them for many years. They were both kept under close watch of the State Security (StB) service, but both lived to see the fall of the communist regime in their home country. Prokop Tomek's biographical study embraces the Pecháček family's struggle against both the Nazi and the communist regimes, their professional career, problems with the State Security, as well as Pavel Pecháček's activities following November 1989. It is not by chance that the study is included in the section called Against Totalitarianism.