

**PRESS REGULATION BEFORE
15 MARCH 1939
CENSORSHIP DURING
THE INCREASED DANGER TO
THE REPUBLIC**

Pavel Žáček

The term “second Czechoslovak republic” refers to a period of transition from a fully democratic regime to an authoritative government model, which was finally eliminated by the German occupation in March 1939. The loss of democratic powers after Munich brought the advocates of strong hand leadership into power and led to increased state intervention in civil rights. One of examples was the strengthening of existing censorship and the introduction of new and stricter laws. In practice it meant close control of all existing newspapers and journals as well as the enforcement of government control over the period media.

**CZECHOSLOVAKIA – OCCUPANTS 4:3
AN ANALYSIS OF ONE MARCH NIGHT**

Jan Kalous

The Czechoslovak team confronted the Russian team twice on ice at the world ice hockey championship in Sweden in March 1969, six months after the Warsaw Pact armies' occupation led by the Red Army. But the political and moral aspect of both matches highly surpassed all sports aspects. The Czechoslovak hockey players had a unique chance to formally avenge the occupation of their country and they took every advantage of it. They won both matches, which provoked a surge of celebration that quickly turned into anti-soviet demonstrations. They escalated into a night attack of the Aeroflot and Inturist offices in Prague and to this day there are still speculations to the effect that it was a planned provocation of the State Security. At any rate, the official leadership of the country took advantage of the incident, consolidating its regime and quickly doing away with the rest of the members of the reformatory wing in the leadership of the communist party who had remained in their positions even after the occupation.

**A SHOOTING “AGENT”
LIFE AND DEATH OF LUBOMÍR
KOUKAL**

Petr Mallota

Lubomír Koukal's tragic story perfectly illustrates the situation in Czechoslovakia after the communist coup d'état in February 1948. Lubomír Koukal was not involved in politics – he simply longed for a peaceful and happy life in a free country. This is why he escaped to Austria in 1951, where his fiancée joined him later. They suffered from lack of money, so he decided to come back to Czechoslovakia illegally and ask his fiancée's father to help them. The local quarters of CIC learned of his plan and its deputy asked Koukal to bring the letters from other refugees, who could not get in touch with their families, across the border. Koukal obtained a payment as well as a gun, although he could not handle it. Soon after crossing the line two policemen spotted him in Veselí nad Lužnicí and caught up with him at the local train station. A fight ensued in the waiting room and Koukal took out his gun to threaten the policemen. But one of them started to shoot and Koukal also pulled the trigger, wounding him fatally. He tried to shoot himself afterwards but failed and the second policeman managed to disarm him with the help of passers-by. The Czechoslovak Communist tribunal turned this case into an example of the western countries' interference with the internal affairs of Czechoslovakia and Koukal into a bloodthirsty American mercenary, which could not be farther from the truth. Koukal was sentenced to death and executed.

**HOME SEMINARS UNDER THE
SCRUTINY OF THE STATE SECURITY
MONITORING OF A GROUP
OF PHILOSOPHERS DURING
NORMALISATION**

Anna Meclová

Many young people were denied the right to study and educate themselves freely during the period referred to as normalisation. The loss of hope for obtaining university education made

a group of dissident philosophers organise home seminars, also referred to as underground universities or anti-universities. These were informal lectures, which took part in flats of some dissidents, and brought together former teachers and students who discussed philosophic ideas as well as current events that were impossible to discuss in public. Lectures started to spread especially after the foundation of Charter 77. Many of its signatories lost their positions and were forced to leave their work and/or studies. The alternative home seminars enabled many of them to study and fulfil themselves. Some of them started to organise seminars at their homes and even to lecture. Of course the State Security monitored these activities and their organisers were followed by a staff of a monitoring district.

**FROM THE STAGE TO THE GALLONS
STORY OF ACTRESS ANNA
ČALOUNOVÁ-LETENSKÁ**

Jaroslav Čvančara

Anna Čalounová-Letenská was a gifted Czechoslovak theatre and movie actress whose popularity rose quickly during the Second World War. While fully occupied by her work and obtaining more and more prestigious roles, in private she joined the resistance against Nazi Power in the occupied Czechoslovakia side by side with her husband Vladislav Čaloun.

This proved fatal for her soon after the successful assassination of Reinhard Heydrich by Czechoslovak paratroopers on 27 May 1942. Letenská was in direct touch with a resistance group, which was helping the paratroopers immediately after their attack of Heydrich, and she was arrested soon as part of extensive repressive measures. She was released briefly to finish her last film, only to be sent to the Mauthausen concentration camp where she was executed in October 1942. Her last movie, a comedy entitled *Přijdu hned* (Will Be Right Back), was premiered in December 1942 and became a huge success.