



## SUMMARY

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## Czech involment in secret international diplomacy Did Czech communists and U.S. diplomats know about Soviet intentions in the winter of 1939?

Ladislav Kudrna

In 1939, five Czech communists travelled from Prague to Moscow. The reason for their journey was the fact that Moscow had ceased criticizing the actions of Nazi Germany in its radio broadcasts. In October of the same year, they finally managed to get an audience with Alexander Mihailovich Alexandrov, who was then chief of the Central European Division of the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs. These Czech “rebels” were unpleasantly surprised to learn of a non-aggression pact. Alexandrov gave them a comprehensive explanation of Stalin’s policy. It was important that the conclusion of the pact had caused the War. An encircled Germany would never have gone to war. Moscow’s objective was for the conflict to last as long as possible and for it to be restricted to three combatants – Great Britain, France and Germany. After the collapse of the Third Reich, the Red Army would march into Europe, whose inhabitants would accept any regime that followed the end of hostilities. Whereas Lenin had succeeded in creating communism, Stalin would lead Europe into a global revolution. Besides this, the pact enabled the Soviet Union to gain Poland’s extensive eastern territories with minimal effort. Moreover, nothing could now prevent it from implementing the planned Bolshevization of the Baltic States. At the same time, in obtaining a base by the Baltic Sea, it succeeded in gaining economic and military control of that region. Hitler had put himself at the mercy of the Soviet Union. He was completely dependent economically on Moscow. Czech communists should remain calm, because the situation had never been as favourable to Soviet interests. As regards comrades who had been arrested in the Protectorate, Alexandrov told them that there would be no revolution without sacrifices. Upon returning to the occupied Czech lands, the five Czech communists made a report of their stay in Moscow. On 17 November 1989, this fell into the hands of the American Consul General in Prague, Irving Nelson Linnel, who subsequently sent it to his head office in Washington. This was where it was found after 40 years in the National Archives and Records Administration by Professor Kalvoda and Professor Lukeš, who discovered the document independently of each other. Thanks to the Israeli researcher Shaulim, a copy also eventually found its way to me. While Professor Lukeš does not doubt the authenticity of the document, some Czech historians view it with scepticism. At the beginning of the 1990s, Professor Valenta told Professor Lukeš the names of all five communist “rebels”. Unfortunately, he made no record of these names, because it did not strike him as important at the time. After an intensive study of archive materials, I managed to discover a record written in Russian in the National Archives in Prague with the names of five Czech communists who attended an unspecified congress in Moscow in 1939. But are these the same five Czech communists referred to above? It is evident that until the names of these delegates are discovered and confirmed, the report will continue to be the subject of speculation. Unfortunately, without access to the archives of the Russian Foreign Ministry, there is effectively no chance of any progress on this issue.

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## The Second “Elusive Jan” affair The unsuccessful secret-service provocation of Jan Smudek in 1947

Jiří Plachý

This study is dedicated to the post-war persecution of Jan Smudek, who is known primarily for his thrilling escape from the country to join the resistance in the spring of 1940. During the war, he served in the Czechoslovak foreign army in the West. After the conflict ended, he returned to the country and became the national administrator of a factory in Rossbach (now Harnice v Čechách) near the town of Aš. In 1946, he unsuccessfully stood for parliament as a candidate for the Czechoslovak People’s Party, and he made no secret of his critical attitude to the political conditions that prevailed in the “Third Republic”. In February 1947, the Defence Intelligence group (Obranné zpravodajství – OBZ) led by Bedřich Reicin attempted to implicate him as part of a completely fabricated “anti-state” group, which was apparently operating in the Jáchymovsko region. To this end, they used Štefan Csiffary, an adventurer of dubious reputation who fled from the Czechoslovak Republic for family reasons before Christmas 1946. In the American zone of Germany, he accidentally came across a Czechoslovak UNRRA patrol unit, which he thought was part of “Prchal’s Army”. He was enticed back to Czechoslovakia, where he was arrested. Through his acquaintance, Dagmar Novotná, Corporal Ludvík Kala, an agent provocateur working for the OBZ, attempted to persuade several people (including some foreign soldiers, especially RAF officers) to take part in illegal activity. After this proved unsuccessful, he visited Jan Smudek directly with Novotná and asked him for help in crossing the border to Germany. On 11 February 1947, Smudek was arrested in Čerchov. The case against him, however, had a lot of formal defects and the actions of the Czechoslovak security services were distinctly unlawful in nature. Smudek was eventually only convicted of a misdemeanour in an administrative procedure, for which he received a sentence of 14 days in prison. The entire case had been followed by the media and non-communist deputies of the National Constituent Assembly. Despite this, those who had been guilty of illegal action were not punished, and in many ways the “Smudek Affair” inspired the subsequent “Mostecká Affair”, which occurred in the autumn of 1947. Shortly after the communist putsch of February 1948, the “Elusive Jan” escaped aboard for a second time and he did not return to the country until the 1990s. He died in 1999 in Díly u Klenčí pod Čerchovem.

### February 1948 as the birth of an illegitimate regime

Kamil Nedvědický

This study looks at the legal contexts of the communist putsch in Czechoslovakia in 1948. The roots of the events that took place in February 1948 can be found not only in the years preceding that time, but also during a period that is far older. First, the

author seeks an answer to the question as to why a totalitarian Czechoslovak Communist Party government was not established as early as 1945. He finds an answer in the international context of that era, when Czechoslovakia acted as a kind of “shop window” for the Soviet Bloc, and had the task of proving the possibility of democratic parties being able to co-exist with the communists. The author considers the proclaimed “Czechoslovak road to socialism” to be nothing more than a propagandistic proposition, as demonstrated by facts proving the Czechoslovak communists’ complete lack of independence and their unconditional submission to Stalin’s USSR. Moreover, representatives of the Czechoslovak Communist Party themselves clearly declared that there was no other route to socialism besides the Soviet one. The next part of the text contains an analysis of the legal situation in the period 1945-1948. Attention is devoted to the political contexts ensuing from the newly established system of the National Front and the international context, where the incorporation of the Czechoslovak Republic into the Soviet Bloc can be deduced. The focus of the legal analysis in the given time frame deals with the issue of Czechoslovak Germans and Hungarians, as well as the principle of their collective guilt for the Nazi reign of terror, which was enshrined in legal regulations, and the transfer of the burden of proof to defendants, which is identified (in the same way as it has been by other authors) as an antecedent to the repression of the regime that emerged after February 1948. As an issue that is legally very contentious, the study also describes the statutory definition and activity of Special People’s Courts, which prosecuted the perpetrators of Nazi crimes and their accomplices. The impact of nationalisation is also not overlooked, and emphasis is placed on the difference between this policy and that which existed under communism, consisting of the fact that it was considered necessary to provide compensation to the people who were affected. The so-called Lex Schwarzenberg law went even further. This once-off piece of legislation illustrates the deliberations of the state’s political representatives on the irreversible nature of the route to socialism. The author also points out the importance of state security, where the activity of communists aimed at seizing unlimited power in the country is most vividly apparent. Using several specific examples, the paper demonstrates the breach of legal precepts by representatives of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in the security services and their expedient approach to the law. It also refers to illegal methods and preparations used by the communists for a decisive battle. The author outlines an entire range of facts proving that it is impossible to describe the years 1945-1948 as a period of government by rule of law and democratic principles. Nonetheless, as opposed to the era after February 1948, this period did allow for the possibility of invoking one’s rights and exercising constitutionally guaranteed freedoms, albeit with great difficulty.

As regards the course of events in February 1948, the author defines the difference between legality and legitimacy, whilst also describing the illegal practices of the communists before the resignation of ministers from democratic parties. He emphasises the completely legal approach of the democrats, which clashed with the expedient attitude of the communists who did not view the law as a framework that defined the limits of their actions, but as an instrument that was specially constructed to bene-

fit and serve the Communist Party. He reaches the conclusion that the communist putsch was inevitable and describes its development in terms of constitutional law. He identifies the resignation of not 12, but 14, members of the government as a crucial fact. When this occurred on 25 February 1948, the government became inquorate and therefore non-existent from a constitutional standpoint. The author also draws attention to the tactical and propagandistic considerations that led the communists to claim the resignation of only 12 ministers, thereby invoking the argument that the situation simply involved replenishing and reconstructing the government. The reasons for this approach can be found in the international context, where the communist putsch was being discussed in the UN and had attracted the attention of the entire world. Consequently, Czechoslovak communists tried to simulate the legality of their seizure of power. The reality, however, was utterly different, and the fact that there were 14 resignations overturns the idea that the course of events in February 1948 was constitutional in formal terms, which is a view that has also been supported up to now by some of the specialist literature on the subject. The author describes possible alternatives that would have been in line with the constitution and points out that the government of the “revived National Front” cannot be viewed as being constitutional, despite the fact that President Edvard Beneš accepted the resignation of the 14 ministers under unacceptable pressure from the leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and appointed a new government under Klement Gottwald, which had apparently only been replenished and reconstructed. The study does not omit the actual implementation of the putsch, in which the illegitimacy of the communists’ actions is patently obvious. The illegal practices of the security services, the arrest of well known democrats without any legal basis, the unconstitutional methods of illegal “action committees” and the purges they carried out at all levels of the state apparatus, in political parties and factories, as well as the similar manner in which ministers were thrown out of their offices, before their resignations had been accepted, by usurpers from the ranks of the action committees (even though the ministers had a mandate from voters in free elections) demonstrate the Czechoslovak Communist Party’s complete contempt for the constitution, laws and democratic rules. A typically putschist phenomenon comprised raids on the secretariats of other parties by armed communists and the participation of illegal Party units/people’s militias in the seizure of power. Likewise, the nomination of Communist Party agents in other parties for government was completely at variance with democratic principles. Moreover, the structure of the new government did not respect the results of the elections in 1946. Slovak bodies were also illegitimately taken over, which trampled on the will of voters who had ensured an overwhelming victory for democratic parties in 1946. Furthermore, the study draws attention to the repressive nature of the new authority, which clamped down on demonstrating students and subsequently terrorised entire swathes of Czechoslovakia’s population with mass purges, a class concept of law and a dictatorship of the proletariat (the Czechoslovak Communist Party). Consequently, the author provides a basis for the thesis that the events of February 1948 comprised an anti-constitutional putsch, which was not rooted in the will of the citizens of the Czechoslovak Republic, as expressed in free elections. This therefore

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results in the conclusion that the regime of the Czechoslovak Communist Party was illegal and illegitimate right from the very start of its existence, both in accordance with the standards of the time and recognised legal precepts.

## A political task. Active measures at a time of crisis for the communist regime

Petr Cajthaml

This study describes the activities of the Czechoslovak State Security agency in the department dealing with so-called “influence politics” (propagating active measures and disinformation) during the period following the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact forces. It chronicles the time of immediate paralysis that followed the invasion of August 1968, which was a period of frantic activity during the struggle for power and the efforts of subsequent “normalisers” to assert themselves. Ultimately, it also depicts the first years of hard-line communist entrenchment following the invasion, which was called “normalisation”. This period was a time when a structure was created for intelligence operations aimed at wielding political influence, which continued throughout the 1970s and 1980s. State Security’s main tool in the preparation and implementation of active measures was the propagation of reports that were intended to damage or confuse enemies and to promote its own influence. The methods they used consisted of classic press propaganda, the circulation of leaflets, the distribution of falsified correspondence and direct contacts with agents.

The Prague Spring, the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact forces, and the subsequent period of normalisation resulted in a number of upheavals in the work of the intelligence service of the Ministry of the Interior. In the years 1969-1971, it used State Security’s active measures and counterintelligence methods. The main aim of active measures during the advent of normalisation was to support conservative, pro-Soviet groups in Czechoslovak politics and to remove the influence of reformists, opposition groups and émigrés whilst stabilising the regime, which had been badly shaken. Most existing operations aimed at the so-called “main adversary” (i.e. the USA and its allies) had to be curtailed or completely terminated due to the decimation of the State Security apparatus. (Some important State Security officers emigrated and many had to leave the agency after political purges.)

The study recounts the organisational and personnel changes in State Security departments which were implemented by active measures, and it describes the objectives and character of the main operations of this type. The author also devotes attention to changes in the cooperation between the disinformation departments of Czechoslovak State Security and the intelligence services of other countries in the Soviet Bloc.

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## The genesis of comparative fascist studies and the “new consensus”

Ondřej Cinkajzl

A theoretically based study of fascism is almost unknown in Czech historiography, and extensive foreign debates on the subject have not been considered over a long period of time. This text seeks to at least partially rectify this shortcoming and to raise awareness of one important and rather controversial part of contemporary discussions on fascism and its significance as a social-science concept, i.e. the so-called “new consensus”. In recent years, this school of thought has gained considerable recognition in the Anglo-Saxon milieu. The main proponent of this approach, British historian Roger Griffin, has been endeavouring to ensure the qualitative formulation of a new comparative model of fascism and a change of paradigm in fascist studies. In his work, he primarily emphasises the positive content of fascist ideology and the constitutive role of the core of the ideology for fascist practices and the political style of fascism.

The introduction to the text briefly summarises the various forms of the comparative model of fascism since the 1960s and it thematises the main issues associated with the study of fascism. The focal point of this exposition consists of a detailed discussion of Griffin’s concept of fascism and the identification of its ideological roots. It also takes stock of the significance of his work in contemporary discussions. The article concludes by striving to argue that, despite some deficiencies in his approach, it is possible to view Roger Griffin’s efforts on behalf of the further study of fascism to be both valuable and beneficial.