

Summary

The publication „Czechoslovak Justice in 1948–1953 in Documents, Part III“ has been prepared for publication by the same team of authors as the two previous volumes, by members of the staff of the Police of the Czech Republic, the Office of the Documentation and Investigation of the Crimes of Communism, Criminal Police and Investigation Services (ÚDV), and employees of the National Central Archives (SÚA) in Prague. It is a culmination of the publishing of documents illustrating the deformation of the judicial system of the communist Czechoslovakia and illegitimate conduct of the judiciary in the first years of communist dictatorship.

Unlike the first two parts of this series of edition containing separate and mutually independent documents, this volume is offering key documents of four typical monster processes. The aim was to present some of the strata of society affected by reprisals as well as frequent illegitimate conduct of organizers of judicial trials. The publication deals not only with the course of specific trials but also with further development of cases of their main figures.

The first case presented is that of a military resistance group „Truth will prevail“, formed and controlled by the State Security (StB). In May 1949 thirteen men were brought to the Senate of the State Court in Prague for trial, and the communist opponent and military commander of the Prague Uprising in May 1945 General Kutlvašr was framed up as their leader. The State Court passed death sentences in three cases, a life sentence in one case, and long-term prison sentences in the other cases. Attempts to reverse the situation in the state, to overthrow the communist hegemony, were considered to be the major crime. These „activities“, however, were fabricated by the State Security and wilfully ascribed to that group, so it is evident that the communists pursued the aim to get rid of their ideological opponents as soon as possible and in the most effective way.

Another chapter comprises documents related to a large campaign called „the operation Building up“. The fabricated indictment issued against the management of the uranium mines in the town of Jáchymov, building contractors and building departments of the „Jáchymov mines“ (who were called the „Building up“ group) was based on economic crime, embezzlement, bad coordination of work and thefts allegedly committed from 1946 to 1949. However, they were blamed by the investigators primarily not for personal enrichment, but for fabricated subversive and spying activities, attempts to do harm to Czechoslovakia or the Soviet Union and to preserve uranium ore for the Americans as the group was labelled as those who believed that the Americans would come soon. In March 1951 twenty two persons were brought to court for trial. One of the accused was sentenced to death (commuted to life sentence later), the other were sentenced to imprisonment.

The third documented monster process focuses on reprisals in agriculture. The case Vlček and Co. is concerned with a group of South-Moravian farmers who refused to join collectivised JZD (unified cooperative farms). The formation of the group (Vlček and 19 more farmers and workers) had been incited by the State Security who wilfully and falsely labelled them as persons doing harm to the cooperative, sabotaging agricultural machines and foiling all attempts to raise agricultural productivity – all this together with western agents. In the major trial and two successive by-trials that are also mentioned in the publication, 43 persons in all were brought to court. All of them were sentenced to imprisonment, which consequently resulted in large damage to their farms having been run carefully until that time. The last case is that of Mádr and Co., illustrating how the communist power strived to restrain or eliminate the influence of the Church on the society. The main figure in the trial was a theologian O. Mádr who was brought to court for trial together with 9 other persons. Because Mádr's actual activities (organizing groups or associations of young worshippers) did not pose any significant threat, the indictment had to be backed up by fictitious contacts with foreign agents and fabricated extensive spying activities in the benefit of the Vatican. The trial resulted in two death sentences. Mádr was sent to life imprisonment, the other were given long-term prison sentences.