

## Summary

### **Jiří Plachý: The State Security Investigation and Surveillance as regards the Roman-Catholic Church Priests in the Litoměřice Diocese**

The study is a probe into the issue of the State Security (StB) fight against the Roman-Catholic Church within one diocese. It is divided into two main parts – the first focuses on staffing composition and working methods of the „last group“ of operational agents of the State Security Administration in Ústí nad Labem in the field of counter-intelligence protection of the Roman-Catholic Church. The other part deals with investigation and surveillance of individual priests in the parish administration of the Litoměřice Diocese. This documentation contains surprising facts: almost two thirds of priests (106 of 161) were investigated and surveilled by the State Security. Nearly every fifth was held prisoner in the 1950s or 1960s (excluding sanctions outside court, internments or service in Support Technical Battalions). But on the contrary, considering the number of persons investigated and surveilled, the percentage of recruited secret collaborators is relatively small, and no less surprising is the finding that the overwhelming majority of such collaboration cases came to an end still before 1989. On 17 November 1989 the State Security had only ten secret collaborators at its disposal among the diocese priests and had to rely on the information from among laymen or the public. In the second half of 1980s the State Security priority became the fight against the secret church and orders.

### **Václav Vaško: Václav Vaško: Archbishop Beran – a Symbol of Resistance against Communism**

The study deals with a dramatic life and career of Prague Archbishop Josef Beran, a very religious man, who loved his homeland and had courage to face two totalities. He grew up in a devoutly religious family. After finishing his theological studies in Rome and gaining pastoral experience in the country as well as a big town, he entered a career as a professor at the Theological Faculty of Charles University and became the Rector of the Prague Archbishop Seminar. During the period after the assassination of Heydrich he was arrested and held prisoner in Nazi concentration camps. He returned home with a reputation as a hero. His appointment as Archbishop was warmly accepted even by his communist friends whom he got to know in concentration camps. However, he soon got involved in an argument with them after he warned against increasing aggression of the communist regime. Thanks to the Archbishop the Catholic Church refused to recognize legitimacy of February 1948 and defended human rights violated by the regime. The conflict between the Church and the state culminated when the communist regime began to implement plans in order to convert the Catholic Church into a sort of national church separated from Rome and made preparations for a fraudulent Catholic Action. The Archbishop declared it as schismatic and for that reason he was labelled a head of reaction by the regime. Sixteen years of strict internment followed. As late as 1965, after being appointed Cardinal by Pope Paul VI, the Vatican diplomacy succeeded in making Prague agree on a compromise according to which, admittedly, Beran was allowed to leave for Rome but at a price of his banishment from the republic. In Rome he still managed to participate in the Second Vatican Council where he gave an admirable speech on religious freedom. The Prague Spring raised his hope of coming back home but even communist reformists did not permit him to. When he died in 1969 he was banned to be buried in his homeland. Following the decision of Paul VI, his bodily remains were placed side by side to the popes in St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome.

### **Jiří Plachý: Bishop Trochta in the Hour of Great Trial**

The study deals with a little known chapter of the life of Bishop of Litoměřice ThDr. Štěpán Trochta. In December 1948 the bishop brought secret instruments from Rome to Czechoslovakia by which Pope Pius XII permitted the activity of the Church even in the conditions of persecution by the communist regime. Under these instruments, Trochta began to build a parallel church structure in his diocese. His activity culminated in summer 1949 after the publication of a pastoral letter the Voice of

the Czechoslovak Bishops in the Hour of Great Trial and after the internment of Archbishop Josef Beran. During next months the germ of the future secret church was destroyed by a series of operations of the State Security Service and state administration. Trochta himself (from July 1950 interned in his residence) was arrested in January 1953, and together with his closest colleagues, in July 1954, sentenced to serve 25 years of imprisonment.

### **Adolf Rázek: Excommunication Decrees**

The author traces the development of relationships between the Church and the state since the communist coup in February 1948 after their sharpening in July 1949 as well as follow-up repressions in the second half of 1949. The opening chapters of the study deal with the first conflict dating back to the period after the Bishop Conference banned the priests from standing for candidates in May 1948. The ban became a suitable pretext for suspending negotiations between the Church and the state. In spite of verbal assurances about religious freedom and willingness of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) to show tolerance manifested by a provocative request for solemn Te Deum for President Gottwald, restrictions on freedom of church life continued. Under this situation the Corps of Bishops made attempts to come into negotiation and reach an agreement. Further chapters briefly outline the development in 1949 which culminated on 25 April 1949 by the adoption of the Church Liquidation Plan at the meeting of wider presidency of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (ÚV KSČ). The adopted procedure was presented to the public by Minister Kopecký at the X Congress of KSČ. Practical implementation of the programme was assigned to the so called „Church Sixth“ under the leadership of Minister Čepička. Since June 1949 events occurred in quick succession after the formation of the communist Catholic Action. Its creation caused a defence reaction of the Corps of Bishops which issued circulations and pastoral letters where they tried to explain the impact of all restrictions imposed on the Church by the state. For their dissemination the state launched widespread repressions not only against the clergy, but also against laymen who acted as couriers or substituted postal service. In reaction to the conduct of the Communist Party and the state, the Vatican issued a decree on excommunication of Catholics being involved in the Czechoslovak Communist Catholic Action, and shortly after another decree applicable throughout the world, excommunicating active members of communist parties. The final chapters show a few cases of repressions in Czechoslovakia which followed after the said decrees were issued. Judicial authorities qualified and punished their application as high treason under Act No. 231/1948 Sb. even though it was solely a matter of church law. „For acts committed in connection with criminal offences of the clergy“ layman Christians were prosecuted too. In their case a more lenient qualification was used, yet sufficient for the purpose of intimidation. A large number of laymen convicted in this way were later released under the amnesty, which was effectively used by way of propaganda as „a proof of willingness of the Communist Party to tolerate the Church“.