

The Rise and Fall of CSLA?! Military profession (1960-1970) in the collective memory of the officer corps

Jiří Hlaváček

Abstract:

The aim of this dissertation thesis is the reflection of everyday life and the (transformation) of the professional identity of the officers' corps in the 1960s in the collective memory. The research is based on narrative analysis of oral-historical interviews with witnesses who served in the Czechoslovak People's Army during the period under review. Memories of witnesses are compared with other types of historical sources. The first part of the thesis is devoted to the problems of everyday life in the socialist type army. The content analysis focuses on the motivation of witnesses for the choice of the military profession, the specifics of military life, ideology in the army, the relationship between the soldiers and the public, as well as on the combat readiness and role of the Czechoslovak army in the eventual potential cold-war conflict. The second part of the thesis deals with the actions of actors on the background of event history. It is followed by the reflection of the Prague Spring, the August occupation of 1968 and the subsequent normalization of the army in the early seventies. The main focus is on the narrative analysis of the actors' strategies and the different treatment of the two groups of narrators (the so-called normalized soldiers and rehabilitated soldiers) with the concept of "military honor".

Key words: Czechoslovak People's Army – Military Profession – Everyday Life – Prague Spring – Occupation – Normalization – Oral History – Collective Memory – Identity