

Abstract

Augustin Navrátil

This thesis addresses the life and work of Augustin Navrátil (1928-2003), a Roman-Catholic activist from the Moravian township of Lutopecny near Kroměříž. A. Navrátil has not been subject of a complex publication yet, although he is the author of the largest petition demanding religious – and with that going hand in hand also civic – liberties in socialist Czechoslovakia (1988, 600 000 signatures). Followingly, this is the first attempt to biographically outline the personality and motivations of this farmer, politician (member of the party Lidova strana), man who signed Charta 77 but also a husband and father of nine children. The aim is to cover his life from his birth, over his family background to the beginnings and heights of his social engagement. The text will mainly deal with 22 open letters in which he drew attention to various illegal practices and actions of the Communist power, as well as with the three petitions he authored (1978, 1985 a 1988) and the samizdat (self-published) journal *Křesťanské obzory* (*Christian horizons*), which he published with a group of others from June 1988 to July 1990. In contrast to most Czech dissidents, he was never sentenced to a prison term for his activities, but he had to involuntarily undergo repeated psychiatric treatment. He was diagnosed with the so-called paranoia querulans, a very frequent psychical disorder among Czech "fighters for justice". Apart from Navrátil, also the circle of his closest helpers will be presented as well as the support from all over the world which this Roman-Catholic from Lutopecny received.

The main focus of the work is on the period before the Velvet Revolution, for this we also find the largest number of sources and various responses and reactions. Following the Revolution, many took different roads due to time and ideological reasons – to this day, this topic remains painful for some of the living witnesses. Navrátil, however, did not cease to be an active citizen: we will briefly look into his other activities as well.

Apart from various materials from the archives, we make use of the opportunities offered by oral history, introducing unique viewpoints and connections. Of course, oral history also brings with it the risk of distorted memories, which we try to avoid by carrying out comparisons with other respondents and historical events.

Keywords

petition, samizdat, open letters, psychiatric treatment, psychiatric diagnosis, institutional and ambulant treatment