

## ABSTRACT

This study deals with the topic of provocative actions of the State Security forces against illegal groups of the so called third resistance movement in the initial stage of Czechoslovak communist regime. It describes two less known yet well-prepared and in their consequences successful provocative actions aimed at functionaries of the National Socialist Party. They are set into the context of an extremely precarious period of the cold war and unfavourable development in the home country, mainly due to gradually deepening economic, social and eventually political crisis heightened by stronger reprisals and political processes. The main topic is the establishing of an illegal resistance group called „*Za svobodu*“ („*For freedom*“), its activities in the years of 1948–1951 and its infiltration and gradual destruction by the security apparatus of the communist regime. The existence of this group proves one fact so far omitted in specialized literature, that after the Czechoslovak coup d'état in 1948 there were also active members of defence forces who joined the anti-communist resistance movement. The State Security (StB) included the resistance group „*Za svobodu*“ into its plan „*akce Skaut*“ („operation Scout“) which is considered to be the largest provocation act of the State Security during its existence. Making use of a project of the so called *Czechoslovak labour party* and with the help of an agent provocateur JUDr. Vlastislav Chalupa („*maj. Král*“), the State Security infiltrated approximately 17 illegal groups. *Maj. Král* and his „illegal“ associate Josef Damián (agent of the State Security) also managed to infiltrate the group of Josef Vlasatý, which later adopted the name „*cpt. Hrdý*“. Josef Vlasatý, a former secretary at a regional secretariate of the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party in Prague, was active already in the anti-nazi resistance movement. He gradually built up an illegal group composed of several subgroups active in Prague and its surroundings. Josef Vlasatý had contacts with former members of the National Socialist Party, the Sokol organization and workers of industrial enterprises. In the early summer of 1951 he also established contacts and started cooperating with Karel Strmiska, a chief sergeant at the police headquarters in the district of Prague 9 – Vysočany. Karel Strmiska formed his own subgroup composed of active members of the state police. Most of them were members of the „old“ police forces and gendarmery of the so called „first republic“. With the help of the Canadian embassy in Prague and Ferdinand Třebický, a former head of the police forces, Josef Vlasatý established contacts with national socialists in exile so that the group could send and receive news. The resistance activities of his group, which were organized in connection with generally anticipated state coup, involved obtaining political, economic and – thanks to contacts with the group

composed of state police members – also security information. The group also published anti-regime texts, circulated illegal printed materials (although published under the direct control of the State Security) and economically and financially supported families of fellow citizens oppressed by the communist regime. Security organs kept track of the illegal activities of Josef Vlasatý since the summer of 1948. Four agents successively investigated and surveilled the group. Three of them were secret police officers who passed themselves off as members of the „central bureau of the resistance movement“ cooperating with the exile. In 1950 the organs of the State Security gained Josef Vlasatý's trust and started monitoring him. The documentation of the group's activities, although written by the State Security agents, is thus quite extensive. Members of the individual subgroups were arrested in the autumn of 1951 and in the subsequent four court trials sentenced to rigorous imprisonments. Three members of the state police subgroup were sentenced to death and the executions were carried out. 42 people were convicted in connection with Josef Vlasatý's group, which undoubtedly makes it one of the largest political processes of 1950's. The accompanying case study deals with the problem of „*operation Kühnel*“, most likely the main intervention of the State Security forces against the staff and functionaries of the National Socialist Party headquarters. It examines in detail the case of Josef Kühnel, the head organization secretary of the Socialist Party. The State Security made use of his resistance activities in their large intelligence operation carried out within the operation Scout with the aim to infiltrate illegal organizations connected with the former National Socialist Party, monitor them for a long time, conduct their activities and eventually destroy them. The whole operation was based on a secret kidnapping of Josef Kühnel carried out by officers of the State Security. They used him as a source of information for intelligence purposes and then arrested him during a feigned border crossing within a provocative plan called „false frontier stone“. Both case studies can be taken as an evidence of active anti-communist resistance in the ranks of functionaries and members of the National Socialist Party. They are also testimonies of the State Security ruthlessness. In their effort to monitor and manage illegal groups State Security members commonly resorted to illegal provocative methods. The case studies also prove that in the context of international development at that time and a deep economic, social and political crisis of the post-coup regime, members of the third resistance movement were deeply convinced of a speedy fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia at the beginning of 1950's. Last but not least, they also document significant manifestation of civil courage in difficult times of a setting totalitarian regime.

## KEYWORDS

agent, operation Kühnel, operation Skaut, journal Hlas svobodné republiky, Czechoslovak National Socialist Party, Czechoslovak Labour Party, exile, illegal operations, illegal press, „cpt. Hrdý“, „maj. Král“, dead drop, political processes, provocative operations, group composed of state police members, group „Za svobodu“, Sokol, third (anti-communist) resistance movement, intelligence operations