

Abstract

The thesis is concerned with political trials in Czechoslovakia in the 1950s, an issue that continues to provoke various emotions in our society.

The initial chapter aims to explain the historical context and describe events preceding the politically motivated trials.

Using available archival materials and the literature, the first general part describes who was affected by the trials, who was responsible for them and how the then prison system worked with regard to political prisoners. This section is based on facts contained in studies published after the year 1989, historical resources and testimonies of persons who lived at that time.

The second section introduces two particular political prisoners; their stories may be used to demonstrate activities of the then investigators, courts and prisons as well as interpersonal relations established behind bars. The first prisoner is Dagmar Šimková. She was arrested and charged with subversive activities in 1952 and released fourteen years later, in 1966. In 1968, she emigrated to Australia to stay there until her death.

The other person is Lubomír Školoud, a former member of the Scouts from Hradec Králové, who was also arrested and charged with subversive activities in 1950 and released fourteen years later. In 1968 he did not use the opportunity to leave for abroad and spent the rest of his life in Hradec Králové with his family and fellow scouts.

In the past, both political prisoners wrote books depicting their experiences during those fourteen sad years. The books were used as the basis for describing their fate.

The last, and shortest, section of the thesis reports on how communist regime crimes were dealt with after the 1989 revolution and who continues to be interested in the issue.

The thesis concludes that political trials of the 1950s are totally untenable from today's perspective, due to pressure on courts, interrogation under torture or violation of fundamental human rights and freedoms.

The appendix to the thesis contains photographs of the prisoners and some related documents.