

ACTIVITIES Extraordinary People's Courts in the period 1945-1948

Abstract

The purpose of my PhD. Viva thesis was analysis of standards created on the basis of the Decrees in relation to the activities of Extraordinary People's Courts in individual regions, as a means to punish war crimes, traitors and collaborators.

Retributive justice was a response to the events of the war. The legal regulations concerning both topics were not created spontaneously in response to the end of the wartime conflict, but were prepared over an extended period by the government in exile and international organisations during the war.

As well as a general list and description of the basic Decree legislation, the author's goal was also to describe to readers implementation of these regulations during the chaotic post-war period in Czechoslovakia. Implementary regulations were used for this purpose, not only on the level of decrees, but also in the form of guidelines, instructions or interpretive standpoints, which expounded the fairly terse provisions of the Decree and also responded to the current problems concerning interpretation at the time. Specific criminal cases heard by the Extraordinary People's Courts were also processed for the purpose of fulfilling this goal, so that the author was able to illustrate practical execution of regulations on retributive justice in the Czech lands.

Archive sources, particularly the State District Archive in Prague, Extraordinary People's Courts Fund in Prague, which contains files of specific cases heard before the Extraordinary People's Court, were also used to achieve the author's goals. The specific archive sources are valuable in the sense that they contain references to legal regulations and also the specific methods how these regulations were practically realised, including records of the affected people's attitude to the matter. The archive sources in particular can provide an insight into the specific and detailed procedures by the defence within the terms of proceedings before Extraordinary People's Courts, or during administrative proceedings. The testimonies of a considerable number of witnesses testifying during proceedings before Extraordinary People's Courts, which describe the specific period and certainly confirm the need for Extraordinary

People's Courts when they describe the actions of people tried by them, are an especially interesting source of knowledge.

The author included a treatise by probably the most important figure of retributive justice, not only in the Czech Republic, JUDr. Bohuslav Ečer, in his work as an essential supplement to retributive justice in particular. The author believes this treatise is important, mainly due to its description of creation of the international foundation for retributive justice, in which JUDr. Ečer was involved as a member of the United Nations Commission. He also played an irreplaceable role during formulation of the facts of the case of war crimes, such as directing an offensive operation or membership in criminal organisations.

The author concludes that even though retributive justice is topics that was current over seventy years ago, it continue to be the impulse for legal, political and social debates.