

This dissertation is dedicated to a very important Czech official and later politician Prokop Drtina, whose life was closely linked with the development of democracy in Czechoslovakia. The main objective of this thesis is to draw the attention to this unique person and to illustrate the history of Czechoslovakia on his life story. He was born on 13 April 1900 into a prominent Czech family. His father, František Drtina, was a famous philosopher and a close collaborator of Professor Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. Drtina's childhood was very inspiring because he grew up surrounded by the Czech intellectual elite. Young Prokop Drtina was conducted by his interest in history and politics to a study of the law faculty in Prague.

After studying law, Prokop Drtina started his professional career in the Czech Tax Directorate and his public activities date back to the same time. In 1925, he joined the newly established National Labour Party which, however, totally failed and was disbanded after five years of activity. In 1928, he left it and joined the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party where he stayed to the end of his political career. Prokop Drtina also played an important role in the activities of the prestigious debating club "The Present" ("Přítomnost"). After that, he was also one of the editors of "Democratic Centre" ("Demokratický střed") magazine and wrote some articles also for other prints. A major turning point in his professional career came in November 1929 when he was appointed an official of the Presidential Office. After T. G. Masaryk's resignation, Edvard Beneš was elected a new Czechoslovak President in December 1935. He chose Prokop Drtina to be his personal secretary. Prokop Drtina thus became his closest collaborator and personal trustee. With President Beneš he went through an emotional period during the Sudeten Crises of September 1938 and the President's subsequent resignation.