

February 1948 from the Slovak perspective

Róbert Letz

The theme of the communist takeover in February 1948 in Czechoslovakia has been treated in detail. This study aims to analyze this key event from the Slovak point of view and offer new insights and interpretations. The common characteristics of the state allowed the process of Sovietization to begin, which included the establishment of the authoritarian leftist-oriented political system of the National Front, where the major positions of power were occupied by Communists. In 1945 Slovakia again became a part of Czechoslovakia. The Communist Party was counting on the 1944 uprising, the arrival of the Red Army, and worsening social conditions to create a revolutionary element in the newly revived Czechoslovak Republic. However, the 1946 parliamentary elections in Slovakia saw the Democratic Party victorious (up to 62% of the votes). By contrast, the Communist Party prevailed in the Czech part of the state (40% of the votes). The authoritarian system of the National Front, which discouraged political opposition, and misunderstandings among the other Czech parties led to a debasement of the Slovak election results, with the goal of weakening Slovak state authorities. Officially, the Communists had two political parties in the country – one under the name of Czechoslovakian and the other Slovak, but they acted in unison. In the autumn of 1947, the Communists rehearsed their takeover in Slovakia. Under their control, the state security fabricated an antigovernment Slovak conspiracy. Communist-controlled organizations (trade unions, guerrillas, peasants) took extra-parliamentary steps to force the Democratic Party to resign. This crisis in Slovakia was a dress rehearsal for the communist coup in February 1948. It points to the disunity of the other parties and their failure to stand up to Communist tactics. The events of February 1948 were only a reverberation in Slovakia. By that time non-Communist members of society were already disillusioned about the possibility of standing by their own policies. Very interesting is the attitude of Slovak exiles from 1945 to February 1948. The mistake can be particularly found in the actions of President Edvard Beneš and in the active collaboration and concessions of the democratic parties towards the Communists.

Ota Tulačka and the covert actions of members of the U.S. Embassy in Prague from 1948 to 1949. Anti-Communist activities and links to StB „Kámen“, „Prague – Žatec“ and „Hansa“

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This work looks back at 100 years since the birth of its main protagonists – Ota Tulačka, the leader of the illegal organization “Cyril”, Josef Hýbler, a former fighter pilot in the RAF, and Walter Birge, the third secretary of the U.S. Ambassador. Their paths crossed in postwar Czechoslovakia just after the communist takeover. Remembering

them offers a look at the very unusual cooperation between some rather unknown actors of the third anti-communist resistance and members of the U.S. Embassy in Prague. Revealed here are the secrets of the safe passages to the West for prominent military, political and civilian people who went through Všeruby in Domažlicko. This area saw the presence of fake borders and members of the local police who were used by the secret police and intelligence agencies of the Ministry of Interior for one of their most secret provocative acts, known as „Kámen“. This study includes reminiscences of U.S. diplomat W. Birge and information on the activities of an employee of the intelligence division of the United States Embassy, Reinhold Pick. There is also information on the links of an armed takeover led by Miloslav Jebavý, known as action „Prague – Žatec“. Not even the failure of this action discouraged Ota Tulačka, alias „Cyril“, from organizing other border crossings, including initiating intelligence cooperation with the network run by Major Jaromír Nechanský and Veleslav Wahl, preserved in secret police documents as action „Hansa“, which was used by the U.S. intelligence agency and generated the mistaken impression that the aim was to change the regime in this country. The conclusion of the work offers a necessary insight into the background of the Cold War and encourages the reader to reflect on the policy priorities of the Western powers during key moments in the history of Central Europe.

CDUCE.

Exiled Christian Democrat of the International during the Cold War

Martin Nekola

The article focuses on the Christian Democratic Union of Central Europe (CDUCE), one of the supranational organizations of the anti-communist exiles during the Cold War period. The CDUCE, founded in July 1950 in New York, brought together former Christian Democratic politicians from Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Yugoslavia. This article begins with a history of the institutionalized cooperation of European Peoples' and Christian Democratic parties from the 1920's and recalls in a short overview organizations like International Christian Democratic Union or Nouvelles Équipes Internationales. In the following sections, the article focuses on the CDUCE, its beginnings, activities, personal composition, organizational structures, as well as on relations with other international Christian Democratic bodies and on internal problems, mostly caused by national interests of member delegations. Further attention is paid to the CDUCE's congress held in March 1953, and on the ideologically-close Central European Federation of Christian Trade Unions and, additionally, on the efforts of the CDUCE to establish contacts in Latin America. The author states that CDUCE was one of the most important among the plethora of international organizations of East-European émigrés. In spite of the seeming decrease of influence from the end of the 1950's, the Union maintained strong ties to Christian Democratic policy on the international level, and its leaders participated in a number of projects. After the fall of the Iron curtain, the CDUCE decided to termi-

nate its activities and to join the European Union of Christian Democrats. The history of the exile „internationals“, including the CDUCE remains understudied. It is a tempting task for researchers to explore this half-forgotten chapter of the Cold War.

A long way through the woods. Political developments in Ukrainian integral nationalism and the presumptions of the Ukrainian Resistance Army

David Svoboda

The article deals with the genesis and development of Ukrainian integral nationalism. It describes its roots and tries to elucidate the problem of its social basis and general reception as well as its mental leanings in the context of the major changes taking place in interwar Europe. The grassroots of this powerful movement were represented by radical Ukrainian-Galician youth deeply embittered by the failed attempt to establish an independent Ukrainian state on the ruins of the Romanov and Habsburg empires and gradually embracing totalitarian concepts as a way out of its underdog status in interwar Polish Rzeczpospolita. Far from being an ideological monolith, the Ukrainian underground movement represented from the late 1920's by the Organization of Ukrainian nationalists (OUN) was undergoing a conflict of generations and political agendas. The main division line ran roughly between the home-based "krajoviks" and the Leadership ("Provid") under the aegis of European powers with Germany in the first place. The course of events in the late 1930's was a catalyst of inner developments within OUN as it had to take a clear stance toward the new challenges stemming from Hitler's expansionist policy at the cost of OUN's foes. Following the fall of Polish republic the young adherents of Stepan Bandera got the upper hand in OUN in terms of activity and ideological fervor. The OUN-b thus set a basic paradigm of Ukrainian nationalism. Its botched attempt to declare Ukrainian sovereignty in 1941 helped deepen the trench between its members and German occupational authorities. From that moment on the OUN-b started its gradual shift toward anti-German resistance. This battlefield, however, had only to be one of many.