

Organization and Functioning of Intelligence Formations since the Creation of Czechoslovakia Until the End of World War II

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Abstract— The paper discusses issues of creation, organization and functioning of intelligence formations operating in Czechoslovakia in the period between the rise of an independent state until the end of World War II and presents the mechanisms of recruiting full-time officers and spies as well as civilian informers. In addition, the paper features methods used by intelligence agents as well as applied models of managing human and operational capital together with examples of undercover actions undertaken by specialized intelligence units.

Index Terms— Czechoslovakia, intelligence services, special operations, World War II.

I. INTRODUCTION

The creation of the independent Czechoslovak state in 1918 was accompanied by multifaceted initiatives, one of them was espionage activity which started to play a very important role. Political, military and economic information was immediately transmitted to the political authorities of the newly created country led by professor Tomáš G. Masaryk (Bauer 2018). It should be remembered that back in 1915 T.G. Masaryk had formed the first informal underground organization called Maffie or, alternatively, the Secret Committee. This organisation played a very important role in the fight against the Habsburg monarchy during World War I. The first head of the service was doctor Přemysl Šámal, a lawyer who was also the vice-chairman of the Realist Party lead by T. G. Masaryk. After 1918, P. Šámal, became the Chancellor of the Cabinet of the President of the Czechoslovak Republic and was also in charge of an organisation called the Underground Fight whose structures were created on the territory of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. P. Šámal was captured in 1941 and murdered by the Nazis in Berlin.

The Secret Committee operated on the so-called occasional espionage as its members did not have much professional

preparation or training. From the data collected by researchers, it appears that in the initial period Maffie had as few as 104 members. The organization had its contacts deployed at the Imperial Court in Vienna, and thanks to cooperation with Richard Bienert from the Police Presidium in Prague, the members of the Secret Committee participated in coordinated intelligence games. In the beginning of 1918, members of the organization set up an eavesdropping station near Prague and started listening for radio correspondence between the Austrian and German general staffs. The intelligence gathered from the eavesdropped messages was sent in an encrypted form to Czech citizens living in Switzerland. Through this channel the information could reach T.G. Masaryk and E. Beneš who then had a chance to actively influence the political situation in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Thanks to the early intelligence activity, Masaryk and Beneš managed to establish closer contacts with some intelligence officials in France and Great Britain who used undercover sources of Czech and Slovak emigrants in their activities.

II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF INTELLIGENCE FORMATIONS IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA FROM THE CREATION OF THE STATE TO THE END OF WORLD WAR II

The British intelligence especially valued the services of a private intelligence organization of a Czech American Emanuel Voska. This social democrat lived in the United States since 1894 and practiced business and journalism. He returned to Prague in June 1914 with the intention to establish a network of journalistic correspondents who were to publish American press articles in Czech newspapers. The outbreak of World War I found Voska in Prague where he participated in a number of meetings with Czech politicians, including T. G. Masaryk, at whose request he undertook active acquisition of contacts among representatives of the Triple Entente and gave Masaryk important information about Austria-Hungary, including data



on economic and military potential. Not only was E. Voska an important channel of information transfer with foreign partners, but thanks to the support obtained from the United States Navy Intelligence, he managed to create an effectively operating intelligence network which revealed more than 150 German agents operating in the territory of the USA. When the United States joined the war in 1917, he placed his agent network and the intelligence documentation at full disposal of the US Armed Forces. Then E. Voska carried out political and intelligence tasks in revolutionary Russia. After completing the mission, he returned to Europe as a United States Army captain, where he performed intelligence tasks and sabotage against Germany. It should be noted that also during World War II, Captain E. Voska carried out intelligence activities against the Third Reich as a soldier of the Office of War Information in Istanbul. After 1945, he returned to Prague, where five years later he was detained by the State Security (Dworzecki, Ondicová and Mlýnek 2013), convicted of espionage for the United States and sentenced for ten years in prison. He died on 1 April 1961 and was rehabilitated after the collapse of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia. Other members of the Secret Committee were also repressed e.g. J. Hajšman, the Director of Propaganda Section of the Ministry of the Interior between 1922 and 1938 which served as a cover for the intelligence service. As a member of labour unions J. Hajšman was imprisoned by the Germans during the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia but he managed to survive. Another member of Maffie, Jan Hajek who was the head of an intelligence service unit i.e. the Third Section of the Ministry of the Interior from September 1919, was first imprisoned by the Germans during the war and then imprisoned again by the communist security services on charges of espionage for Great Britain. Vladimír Sís, who was also a member of the Secret Committee in the interwar period, officially a journalist, was imprisoned under the German occupation for five years and in 1949 the communist regime sentenced him to twenty five years in prison where he died.

Apart from the two Czechoslovakian intelligence services mentioned above, there was yet another intelligence formation opened in 1923 and structurally located at the Police Directorate in Prague. This was a counterintelligence service, which on 1 January 1938 was renamed the State Security Service and operated under that name for a year. The State Security Service supervised some special police departments operating in district towns. These special departments were also in close cooperation with Department II of the General Staff of the Czechoslovak Underground Organization. Department II was the main intelligence force of the young Czechoslovak state, which, as already mentioned, was formed during the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Given the socio-historical circumstances, it was logical that particularly in the first decade of the existence of the Czechoslovak Republic, the intelligence activities were focused on Hungary and Austria, and only later the operations expanded to Germany and Poland. The subversive actions of members of the radical German minority in the Czech Republic and Moravia, as well as the revisionist Hungarian minority in Slovakia, together with territorial demands put forward by the governments of Germany, Hungary

and partly Poland, determined the nature of strategic directions of intelligence services of the Czechoslovak Republic. The intelligence activities against Austria were not based on real concerns about the military threat but on speculations and fears about the potential renewal of the Habsburg monarchy.

The Czechoslovak Defence Forces in the initial period of activity formed their advisory and staff structures somewhat provisionally without detailed organizational plans (Mohyla 2018). The support was offered by officers of the French army headed by gen. Mauric Pellé, who was the Chief of the General Staff in Prague. Another Frenchman who from June 1919 to October 1920 held the position of Chief of Department II (Intelligence) of the General Staff General was Georges Ihler. He was later replaced by his deputy, major Ceněk Haužvic who held the post until December 1923. Department II under Haužvic was re-modelled after the French military intelligence services. The intelligence recruits were trained by French officers. A Russian general P. F. Rjabikov also served as the advisor to the early military intelligence structures. Based on his suggestions, the first professional handbook 'Intelligence services during the war' was published in August 1920.

The beginnings of intelligence activities of Department II were quite amateurish. Among the recruits and candidates one could encounter smugglers or ideological volunteers who were a very easy prey for foreign counterintelligence services. Gradually, the military intelligence service of Czechoslovakia managed to build its functional structures and create an effective network of agents based on people with qualifications and predispositions to conduct effective conspiracy work. Apart from active operational agents, the military intelligence service also used the so-called dead contacts, couriers and recruits whose task was to select new candidates for the service. The new generation of intelligence officers with professional military education and appropriate training took the military intelligence structures in Czechoslovakia to the next level of development.

The Intelligence Centre of Department II of the General Staff consisted of two primary groups. The first was called the exploration group and was divided into offensive and defensive section. The task of the offensive section was to gather information on potential military threats from outside, including information on enemy armies and their training, organization and equipment, logistic capabilities, procedures and mobilization plans, information on the political and economic situation in other countries, about the development of new military technologies, new types of weapons implemented for field operations, the military industry, the dislocation of military units, about airports, warehouses, command posts, strategic communication facilities etc. This type of information was gathered by a network of spies operating abroad. The second was the defensive section which served as a buffer against the penetration of foreign intelligence services into the ranks of the Czechoslovak army. This section of counterintelligence also protected the military industry and the military facilities of the Republic. Officers serving in this section held positions in all military units and in all command positions in the army. Information gathered within this section

regarded activities and areas of interest of foreign intelligence services. Officers of this section verified soldiers and all civilians who had access to classified information. The defensive section cooperated with the Gendarmerie, the State Police and the Intelligence Service of the Ministry of the Interior. Officers of the section had specific enforcement powers, in certain cases they conducted reconnaissance and observation of persons suspected of espionage. In addition, in the structure of the Intelligence Department of Department II operated a group of analysts who compared and evaluated the acquired information and prepared reports for further operational use. Soldiers from the decryption group carried out activities aimed at breaking ciphers and codes of foreign countries and conducted professional training in this area for selected members of intelligence network. A group of military liaison officers of the Intelligence Department maintained contacts with liaison officers from other countries and guided (in the scope of intelligence) their own liaison officers serving outside the Republic. There was also a separate group within the intelligence department which dealt with operational finances and complex issues regarding underground financing of intelligence activities performed by agents, informers and various associates.

The organizational structure of Department II evolved practically with every new chief. In August 1927, gen. Vlastmil Chalupa, who was considered a friend of President T. G. Masaryk, became the head of Department II. V. Chalupa was a legionary who previously served as a deputy Minister of Defence. The next head of Department II, Václav Klofáč, was previously a liaison officer of the Army of the Czechoslovak Republic in Vienna. Later, despite holding a prominent position in the intelligence service, he repeatedly expressed critical views on internal political problems of the country. In March 1934 he was replaced by gen. Šimon Drgáč, an ex-military liaison officer at the embassy in Paris. The new head of Department II introduced a number of major organizational changes. First of all he gave priority to intelligence activities undertaken against Germany, which can be considered a fundamental turn in the doctrine of Czechoslovak military intelligence of the time.

Lt. col. František Moravec, who was appointed the head of the reconnaissance group on 30 September 1934, was extremely critical of the activities and results achieved by Department II in the early 1930s. In his opinion ... *the intelligence network against Germany did not exist, and a small number of agents with a very low level of competence were not able to regularly gather useful information of military nature* (Moravec 2014). In addition, in his view, information about Hungary was insufficient. Department II did not dispose of apartments or other undercover objects, it did not have hidden contact points and the technique of secretive photography and encryption of information was at a very low level, the codes and ciphers used were primitive and rarely used. In addition, there were no intelligence facilities in friendly or neutral countries aimed at carrying out intelligence activities in Germany. F. Moravec pointed out that between 1930 and 1934 an extensive and expensive intelligence network in Vienna passed on to Prague

detailed information about private life and gossip regarding love affairs of royal family members and Austrian aristocracy. Such information was practically useless from intelligence point of view. The agents failed to provide any information on, for example, secret construction of the German Reichswehr or the overt violation of the Treaty of Versailles by Germany. Despite sometimes divergent opinions of experts regarding the somehow controversial attitude of F. Moravec, it remains an indisputable fact that he introduced fundamental changes in the system of functioning of Department II of the General Staff of the Czechoslovak Army. The reorganization in accordance with his instructions included raising the number of employees which had a significant impact on the efficiency and quality of the intelligence information. The new system of intelligence introduced by F. Moravec consisted of the following levels:

- Central headquarters in Prague responsible for management and control of activities of subordinate services and for analysis and evaluation of gathered intelligence;
- Four regional intelligence centres in Prague, Brno, Bratislava and Košice. Their task was to conduct operations against targets in Germany, Austria and Hungary. They were operational groups and their administrative affairs were performed by the headquarters in Prague;
- Intelligence outposts reporting to regional intelligence centres. The outposts were staffed with officers responsible for selecting new agents and conducting recruitment projects. The outposts were located near national borders in places of a strategic nature and operated in strict conspiracy;
- Intelligence organs deployed in the commands of individual branches of the Czechoslovak Army, in divisions and in regiments. They also reported to regional intelligence centres.

Department II also established agent centres in foreign countries such as Switzerland, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden; these foreign units were directly subordinated to the Central Headquarters in Prague. The branches in Switzerland and the Netherlands were of vital importance because through them it was possible to manage the network of spies operating in Germany. During World War II the agent centre in Switzerland was used to conduct subversive and intelligence activities in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. Even before the outbreak of war, the activities of intelligence outposts in Litoměřice, Liberec, Hradec Králové, Plzeň, České Budějovice, Moravian Ostrava, Znojmo, Banská Bystrica and Uzhhorod were also very important. In 1938 efforts were made to create an agent centre in Poland but due to the political situation at that time this idea was abandoned.

The increase in efficiency of intelligence activities was also a consequence of changes in procedures of cooperation between Department II and official Czechoslovak authorities. Pursuant to the agreement with the Ministry of the Interior, the Police and the Gendarmerie were ordered to cooperate with the military intelligence service. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided the intelligence service with information on territories

which were of interest for the intelligence. Effective cooperation was also established with officers of the Customs and Border Guard, the Directorate of State Forests and with the Department for Combating Drug Smuggling at the Ministry of Finance of the Czechoslovak Republic. The Ministry of Post and Telegraphs assisted Department II in the implementation of telephone tapping and in interception of written correspondence and telegrams. There was also a radio control service in the structures of this ministry which monitored radio communication from outposts in Prague, Brno and Košice. Radio intelligence tasks were carried out through a network of eleven eavesdropping stations, two of which were located in Moravia and two in Slovakia. The stations intercepted radio communication carried out by the armed forces of the neighbouring countries and the encrypted signals were forwarded to the team of cryptologists of Department II.

During counterintelligence activities directed against German and Hungarian spies, Department II intercepted signals about intelligence activities of Soviet agents in Prague. Espionage activities undertaken by the Soviets began as early as in July 1920 after the arrival of a seven-person Repatriation Commission of the Russian Red Cross in Prague led by a historian Salomon Gillerson, who later remained the head of the Russian Trade Mission in Czechoslovakia. The police observed attempts initiated by S. Gillerson to establish contact with some representatives of the Czechoslovak Army and representatives of radical left-wing groups. The members of the Trade Mission began to build intelligence network directed not only against the Tsar's White Guardsmen who emigrated to Czechoslovakia but also against neighboring countries. Despite the fact that the Soviet intelligence activities in Czechoslovakia at that time were not the most intensive, Soviet agents followed Russian and Ukrainian emigrants living in Prague and made efforts to steal secrets of the military industry of the Republic. According to a report of the deputy head of the Political Intelligence Centre, Jan Unšlicht, who was sent to the Intelligence Center of Department II, the Soviet agents monitored their emigrants and tried to persuade them to return to their home country. They also undertook recruitment activities, penetrated the structures of anti-Soviet organizations and provoked tensions, conflicts and defeatism.

Department II of the General Staff of the Czechoslovak Army and the Intelligence Center of the Police Presidium in Prague failed to monitor and effectively neutralize Soviet operations which made Czechoslovakia a very useful base for Moscow for further espionage activities primarily against Western Europe. Due to ineffective domestic intelligence, Czechoslovakian authorities tolerated operations of British, French and Italian intelligence officers, who officially were just diplomats. The Intelligence Centre of the Police Presidium in Prague exchanged information about the Soviet agents and emissaries of the Comintern with the police forces of ally countries. The exchanged information included photographic materials as well as data on false documents, passports, etc. As early as in May 1921, the Police Intelligence Centre received from the Scotland Yard a list of Comintern activists from various countries who were about to be detained in Prague. The

Soviet agents with the help of Czechoslovak communists managed to obtain Czechoslovak passports and documents authorizing them to stay in the country. Members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia received these documents from the employees of public offices e.g. from Sudeten Germans and then passed them on to Soviet diplomats. In addition, in 1932, Soviet agents managed to break into the building of the Police Directorate in Chomutov, from where they stole 1,500 Czechoslovakian passports. Czechoslovakia served as an important base from which Soviet agents were further sent to Western Europe countries.

The operations of German and Soviet spies were concentrated on intelligence and documents regarding military production in Czechoslovakia. The Ordnance Factory in Brno was the centre of attention as well as Skoda Transportation Plant in Pilsno and the Prague Freight Company which produced materials for the army. The Soviet Diplomatic Mission in Prague openly recruited Czech engineers offering them employment in the Soviet Union. Moscow used its cover organization Proletar Esperanta Korespondando (the League of Workers-Esperantists) for intelligence purposes. Czechoslovakian collaborators acting for ideological reasons provided information that interested Soviet intelligence. Espionage for the Soviet Union was supported by the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. A communist MP Jozef Haken publicly stated that he considered revealing military secrets of the Czechoslovak army to Moscow as an honour (Stone and Strouhal, 1989). However, it should be noted that the pro-Soviet ideological agents usually did not have access to strategic data, therefore the information they passed to the Soviets was very general, superficial and completely unsuitable for intelligence purposes.

The change in Czechoslovak-Soviet relations caused by the alliance agreement of May 1935 (which included a secret annex on mutual intelligence cooperation), was also reflected in the cooperation of the intelligence services of both countries. In January 1936, a joint conference was held in Prague where professional intelligence studies on German military potential were exchanged and a joint concept of conducting activities aimed at collecting information about Germany was adopted. The next step in strengthening the cooperation of the intelligence services of both countries was a visit to Moscow of a six-member- delegation of Department II headed by Lt. col. Franciszek Hajko. The Czechoslovak delegation was received by the Chief of the General Staff of the Red Army, marshal Mikhail Tuchaczewski, and the highest representatives of Soviet intelligence (GRU) took part in the meetings. Due to the fact that the Soviet Union did not have a common border with Germany, the head of the GRU Semion Urickij asked for the possibility to establish an intelligence facility in Czechoslovakia where one hundred Soviet intelligence officers would be trained and then transferred to Germany. The proposal was not accepted but as early as on 27 May 1936, a joint Czechoslovak-Soviet agent centre began operations in Prague under the name Vonapo 20. It was managed by captain Karel Paleček who had four officers of Department II and a number of telegraphists under him. His partner on the Soviet side was

major Kuznecov, who in Czechoslovakia used the name of Emil Vosyka. In 1938, E. Vosyka was replaced by a young graduate of the military technical school working under the pseudonym Kamil. According to captain K. Palečka, this agent centre did not need any Soviet cooperation to accomplish its tasks efficiently. As agreed in Moscow, half of the operating costs of Vonapo 20 were borne by the Soviets who also had the right to inflict agents. The joint agent centre was highly effective. After its creation, by the end of 1937, the centre recorded data of 623 people of particular interest for the intelligence, 24 of them were recruited in Germany, five were recruited in Austria and two were Sudeten Germans recruited in northern Bohemia. Vonapo 20 also assisted in relocation of Soviet officers and specialists to Spain. According to gen. F. Moravec, more than 120 people holding Czechoslovakian passports were transferred to Spain through Austria, Switzerland and France. Only 30 people were detained by the Swiss and sent back to Czechoslovakia. In most cases, the agents were sent back from the Swiss-French border after being exposed due to their ability to speak Russian. Under this bilateral cooperation, representatives of the Czechoslovak side were more open in the exchange of information, while the Soviet contribution was not so extensive. Such imbalance was characteristic of the entire period of "cooperation" between Czechoslovakian and Soviet intelligence services.

Due to close relations with the Soviets, Department II had to cease all forms of cooperation with Polish intelligence because its staff objected to the operations of the Soviet intelligence services. These operations, which Poland considered a threat to its security, were usually performed from the intelligence facilities located in Czechoslovakia. Moreover, Warsaw accused Czechoslovakia of secretly supporting Ukrainian separatists. The commander of the French Service de Renseignement, col. Louise Rivet, attempted to organize a meeting in Paris of representatives of the heads of the Polish and Czechoslovak intelligence services. The meeting did not take place, however, because after subversive actions taken by Poland in 1938 in Těšín Silesia, Orava, Spisz and Subcarpathian Rus, the Czechoslovak side took counterintelligence measures against Poland. Despite this situation, Department II of the General Staff of the Czechoslovak Army tolerated the anti-German activities of Polish intelligence undertaken in the territory of Czechoslovakia.

In Austria, the activity of Department II could be considered a complete failure. The agents did not provide any information about the planned annexation of this country to Nazi Germany. Also other intelligence services of the Ministry of the Interior and specialists from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not discover German plans in this regard. Agents and officers of the Czechoslovak intelligence provided information on the dislocation and movements of German troops on the Austrian border but no offensive agent network operated in the structures of the German and Austrian army, police, intelligence services or other significant political or economic structures of these countries. The *Anschluss* of the territory of the Federal State of Austria to the German Reich triggered total liquidation of the agent network built in this country by the Czechoslovak

intelligence. Despite the fact that in 1938 Department II had 455 agents operating in Austria in its registers, only 72 of those agents filed reports containing valuable information. In addition, these agents did not have any radio communication equipment which in practice meant that regular transfer of information was impossible.

A report on intelligence activities of Department II prepared by a group of analysts in January 1939, clearly indicated that the most important information about German military potential was provided not by the domestic network of agents but by members of the French and Soviet intelligence. Cooperation between Department II and the French Army (Deuxième Bureau) was of a routine nature. Meetings of chiefs of intelligence took place in Prague and Paris twice a year. Between 1934 and 1935 a joint intelligence facility operated in Prague under the name Poste Mixte and the French Service de Renseignement (Intelligence Service of Department II of the General Staff of the French Army) donated the sum of 1.2 million crowns to that facility. After liquidation of the post, major Henri Gouyou remained in Prague as a liaison officer of the French intelligence service. Despite intensive efforts undertaken by Czechoslovakia to tighten the relationship, representatives of French intelligence remained reserved in bilateral contacts and looked down on their Czechoslovak partners.

After the German purge of 29-30 June 1934, known as the Night of the Long Knives, in which Adolf Hitler fearing that the paramilitary SA had become too powerful, ordered his elite SS guards to murder the organization's leaders, the Czechoslovak intelligence intensified cooperation with the British Secret Intelligence Service. Its representative, major Harold Charles Gibson arrived in Prague in February 1934 as a British consul. Initially, British-Czechoslovak intelligence cooperation was only occasional and implemented in conspiracy conditions. The British did not have enough information about Germany at the time when its chancellor Adolf Hitler publicly presented his strategic visions of changes on the European continent.

Despite a fairly critical assessment of the overall activity of Department II, one cannot ignore the fact that in the spring of 1937 the Department possessed quite detailed information about German military potential. The Czechoslovak intelligence was informed about the structure of the German army, number of its soldiers, mobilization potential, procedures adopted as part of completing combat operations and integrated activities of German combat units and air force. The German intelligence service (Abwehr) in special secret bulletins from 1936, 1937 and 1938 devoted to European intelligence services, presented actions of Department II as the greatest threat to the security of the secrets of the Third Reich. Three Abwehr facilities in Dresden, Munich and Wrocław implemented direct counterintelligence activities against the Czechoslovak intelligence network. The German minority living in the Sudetes produced convenient operational opportunities for the activities of Abwehr agents. The Czechoslovakian law was not helpful in combating activities of Abwehr agents as the penalties for espionage and subversive activities were rather lenient. Also the attitude of the Czechoslovak society,

especially from the north of the country, was predominantly pro German. There were many collaborators with the German regime tempted by appropriate financial gratification. Abwehr's double agents were able to penetrate the network of Department II outpost agent centres in Brno, Bratislava and České Budějovice. Hungarian agents were infiltrating Czechoslovakia from Austria as their intelligence centre was located in Vienna. From 1931 Lt. col. Gottfried Reichbauer led his agent network under the cover of a Hungarian trading company operating in Austria. This Hungarian resident organized a group of agents-traders made up of former officers of the imperial-royal army who maintained regular professional or social contacts with partners from Czechoslovakia. It was only after the complex intelligence game carried out in the autumn of 1938 by Czechoslovak intelligence, that G. Reichbauer's agent network was exposed and he himself was dismissed by the Central Office in Budapest. The liquidation of G. Reichbauer's intelligence network did not mean the definitive defeat of Hungarian intelligence because Reichbauer continued to conduct his agent activities in southern and eastern Slovakia. When it comes to counterintelligence activities of Department II, from the spring of 1936 more than 250 agents were detained and 9 transceiver stations were detected. Three of these stations remained secretly active until the September mobilization of 1938.

When analysing the activities of Department II in the interwar period, it should be pointed out that it had several very effective agents in its espionage network e.g. Paul Thümmel, Franz Dobianer and Hugo Zappe. P. Thümmel operating under the code name A-54 managed to provide information on: the exact date of the occupation of Czechoslovakia, mobilization activities against Czechoslovakia, the organizational structure of the German intelligence service, the personal data of German agents operating in Czechoslovakia, the number and approximate location of German broadcasting stations, the action plans to be implemented as part of operations on the territory of Czechoslovakia, as well as about the first German offensive against France, the Wehrmacht attack on the Netherlands, the German operation against Yugoslavia, the preparations of the Third Reich for the invasion of the Great Britain and about the state of the Soviet Air Force. P. Thümmel was a co-founder of the NSDAP Assault Division and before the war he worked as the head of the intelligence facility in Chemnitz whose activity was directed against Czechoslovakia. Thümmel's intelligence activity was most valuable between spring 1937 and the start of German occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939. Later, he collaborated with the London headquarters of Czechoslovak Armed Struggle until he was detained by Gestapo in December 1944. He was murdered in the Terezin prison in 1945 just before the end of the war. According to gen. F. Moravec, he was an extraordinary agent but some of his opponents claim that he was a double agent acting for the benefit of Abwehr, entrusted with the task of disinformation of Czechoslovak intelligence. When it comes to Franz Dobianer, his intelligence activities were based on running a fictional parbank under the name Deutsche Kreditverwertung which was located in the Czech city of Ústí

nad Labem. The activity of the parbank was officially focused on German citizens but in fact served the Czechoslovak intelligence service to select and recruit agents. The parbank operated under the camouflage of the Czechoslovak banking lottery and offered loans and lottery tickets through advertisements placed in magazines and journals published in the Third Reich. F. Dobianer managed to recruit over a hundred agents. In 1939, F. Dobianer was detained by the Gestapo following a denunciation but despite intense interrogations and torture, he did not confess to espionage. He was arrested for a second time in 1943 and was sent to prison in Berlin where he was murdered. The third famous agent of the Czechoslovak intelligence, Hugo Zappe was a Sudeten German who volunteered to cooperate against Germany in 1931. He received the code name Z-1943 and in February 1934 began operations in the Sudeten German Office for Border Control and Migrants in Dresden. As a result, he provided information on more than forty agents working for the Gestapo and Abwehr under various covers in Czechoslovakia. H. Zappe regularly sent information about the Gestapo meetings in Dresden and in 1936 he obtained plans of Wehrmacht invasion of Czechoslovakia. Thanks to his reports, more than thirty German agents were detained. Despite signals to the management of Department II that Zappe's life may be in danger, Zappe did not receive any support and he was detained by Gestapo in January 1936. In August 1938 he was sentenced to death and despite Prague's efforts to release him as part of a spy swap between Germany and Czechoslovakia, he was executed on a guillotine.

Between 1936 and January 1939, the Head of Department II of the General Staff was col. F. Hájek but in reality it was col. F. Moravec, the deputy of F. Hájek, who played the leading role in the Czechoslovakian intelligence service. On 2 January 1939, col. F. Hájek resigned from the post due to German pressure and went to the Hague as a liaison officer. In his new role, he managed to negotiate with a representative of the British intelligence service SIS an asylum in London for his intelligence colleagues. On 11 March 1939, major H. Gibson of the British intelligence service in Prague confirmed that a Royal Dutch Airlines (KLM) plane would be sent for F. Moravec and eleven employees of Department II. This group was to include: Lt. col. Oldřich Tichý, major Emil Strankmüller, major Jozef Bartík, major Alois Frank, captain František Fryč, captain Jozef Fořt, captain Václav Sláma, captain Ladislav Cigna, captain Karel Paleček and captain Bohumil Dítě. All of the aforementioned officers were Department II experts who dealt with German issues and specialized in counterintelligence, cryptography and military issues. The evacuees took to London reports and agent files of the most valuable collaborators. In addition, significant financial resources were taken to be used to conduct further operations outside the country. Other intelligence materials were handed over to major Gibson before departure who secured their transport to Great Britain via diplomatic mail. The group of officers under the command of F. Moravec began intelligence activity in the United Kingdom as "Franka" Intelligence Centre which was later included in the structures of the Ministry of Defence of the Czechoslovak Republic created in London after the recognition of E. Beneš's

government by the British authorities. The group operated under the name Department II of the Ministry of Defence and cooperated primarily with the British intelligence service MI6, and later with French intelligence and representatives of the Soviet intelligence services NKVD and GRU. The group of F. Moravec not only cooperated with its allies, but also conducted activities through its agents and an intelligence network created with the help of the Soviets in Bohemia, Moravia and in Slovakia. After the Battle of Stalingrad in 1943, the Soviets changed the tone of communication with F. Moravec demanding the inclusion of Department II into the intelligence structures already existing in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. F. Moravec's resistance in this matter resulted in him being placed on the list of politically undesirable people. The list was created by the authorities in Moscow and forwarded to President E. Beneš. For this reason, F. Moravec, who was promoted to the rank of general on 20 August 1944, could not immediately return from London after the liberation of Czechoslovakia. In October 1945 he became the commander of a division in Mladá Boleslav but in January 1948 he decided to emigrate to escape repressions from the communist authorities.

After the group of F. Moravec left for London, col. František Havel, former chief of training, became the head of Department II. His task was liquidation of the intelligence service. A large part of Department's II documents and archives was then in the hands of Abwehr and Gestapo. The Germans were surprised to find that this documentation was not destroyed. Thanks to this documentation the Germans were able to recreate the organizational structure and agent network of Czechoslovak intelligence and counterintelligence (Miko 2017). In total, nearly 850 intelligence officers were identified. Most of these people were ordered to give a detailed account of their activities since 1926. As a result, the Germans managed to identify 579 Czechoslovak agents of German origin. Most of them were sentenced to many years of imprisonment or murdered.

The First Slovak Republic, fully subordinate to the Third Reich, created on 14 March 1939, took over the police and intelligence services of the former Czechoslovak Republic in the entirety of the Slovak Republic territory. On 12 May 1939, the Chief of Staff of the Main Military Command ordered changes in the functioning of the intelligence service at the level of individual central level commands. The reorganization of the Slovak national defence gave rise to a new headquarters to which a number of intelligence officers was assigned. During the transition period of the reorganisation, the Czechoslovakian regulations were still in force. To avoid vacancies in the service, the commanders of individual centres were instructed to recruit candidates for intelligence officers from among the private soldiers who spoke at least basic Hungarian or Polish. Military intelligence structures were subordinated to the Ministry of Defence in Bratislava.

On 1 January 1940, the government of the First Slovak Republic decided to create the Security Service Directorate within the structures of the Ministry of the Interior. Off-site branches of the security service were established in Prešov, Zwolen and Žilina. The main task of this formation was execution of protective intelligence activities, including

observation of persons and organizations that were detrimental to the newly created Slovak state. The security service prosecuted perpetrators of attacks, saboteurs, persons organizing emigration of Slovak citizens as well as organizers of other actions which in the light of law in force at the time, were considered illegal. The police forces also participated in the prosecution activities. The Minister of Interior Ferdinand Ďurčanský appointed Jozef Mišík, a political associate of President Jozef Tiso, as the head of the security service. However, the new head of the security service was not a fanatic supporter of the Nazi Germany and took actions aimed at reducing attempts of German intelligence services to use Slovak Security Service for their own purposes. Therefore, during negotiations in Salzburg in June 1940, Adolf Hitler forced J. Tiso to replace the Minister of Interior with the Commander of the Hlinka Guard Alexander Mach. The Hlinka Guard functioned between 1938 and 1945 as a paramilitary organization and an armed section of the Slovak People's Party. This formation was legalized and armed in October 1938 by the First Slovak Republic. However, its branches were set up without the consent of the relevant state authorities and the working methods of Hlinka soldiers were illegal. A separate role was played by the Hlinka Guard Response Troops which at the end of World War II performed operations of a police-military nature and fought military and civilian targets in Slovakia alongside the German army. Hlinka Guard took part in persecution of Czech, Roman and Jewish as well as liberal Slovak citizens and was responsible for deportations of local Jews. On 28 October 1938, pursuant to Regulation No. 15/1938 of the Government of the First Slovak Republic, the Hlinka Guard became the only military organization in Slovakia. The Guard, which was originally to deal with unitary military training of boys and men aged 6 to 60, over time took over competences of a public administration body. A government Regulation of 5 September 1939 extended the powers of the Hlinka Guard. The act established a set of recruitment rules for this organization and prescribed forms of supervision over related associations such as e.g. the Hlinka Youth. The imposed regulations were badly received by the society, therefore, on 21 December 1939, the Hlinka Guard was declared a paramilitary organization with voluntary membership. The role and tasks of the Guard were changed significantly by the Act of 5 June 1940. From that moment, the Hlinka Guard began functioning as a political police cooperating closely with the Directorate of the Security Service. Special professional training courses for the most talented guards were conducted by German instructors in the Third Reich. The highest commandant of the Guard was J. Tiso and the first Commander of this organization was Karol Sidor (until March 1939). As a component of the Slovak security apparatus, the Guard brutally suppressed any form of resistance to the regime. During the Slovak National Uprising of 1944, the Hlinka Guard Response Troops attacked insurgents and civilians alongside German military units. After the fall of Nazi Germany and the liberation of the country by the Soviet, Romanian and Czechoslovakian armies, the Guard was liquidated and its leaders and active members had to stand trial (Sokolovič 2009).

The Directorate of the Security Service began intensive cooperation with German intelligence services and security formations especially in the area of repressions directed against Jews, members of the Communist Party and against task forces cooperating with the Czechoslovak government in London. The low efficiency of intelligence work carried out by agents of the Directorate is illustrated by the fact that they were not able to obtain information about the creation (illegal under the law in force at the time) of the Slovak National Council or about preparations for the Slovak National Uprising. This low effectiveness was to some extent the 'fault' of the head of Department II of the Directorate of the Security Service František Jurč and Commissioner Ondrej Maxián who collaborated with the Slovak resistance movement. Generally, the impact of activities of the Directorate was weakened by cooperation of Slovak intelligence officers with the resistance movement. The sabotage activities continued after 1943 when Ján Beňuška became the new chief of the Directorate. He closely followed the situation on the fronts of World War II and made contacts with representatives of the underground resistance movement. For this activity he was sent to a concentration camp where he died in 1945. After the arrest of J. Beňuška in December 1944, Pavol Denk became the head of the Directorate. He was an eager Gestapo collaborator who ordered to destroy some of the archives of the Directorate of the Security Service after the evacuation from the territory of Slovakia in spring 1945. In 1941 P. Denk accepted German citizenship to be able to work in the Criminal Department of the Police in Vienna in the years directly after war. During this time he cooperated with many foreign intelligence services. Then he emigrated to the United States. It should be mentioned that P. Denk betrayed many employees and officers of the Directorate who sympathised with the resistance e.g. J. Beňušek, F. Jurčo, L. Števonka and Š. Haluška. They were all arrested by the Germans, tortured and either murdered on the spot or sent to gas chambers in concentration camps.

At the Yalta conference in February 1945, the leaders of the anti-Hitler coalition determined that after the defeat of the Third Reich, Czechoslovakia would be in the Soviet sphere of influence. President Edvard Beneš, who was still in London, accepted the Soviet plan of reconstruction of Czechoslovakia and its political reality. The dimension and shape of the Soviet plan were very evident while creating new intelligence structures in the reborn Czechoslovakia. The commander of the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps in the USSR, gen. Ludvík Svoboda, agreed to the request of the Head of Intelligence Service of the 4th Ukrainian Front gen. L. Z. Mechlis regarding the creation of a military intelligence service based on the provisions of the Red Army which was planned to act as a counterbalance to Department II of the Defence Ministry of the Czechoslovak Republic in London headed by gen. F. Moravec. The Military Defence Intelligence was created on 7 January 1945 and the members of the management of Ministry of Defence of Czechoslovakian government in exile had no influence over this decision. Despite a formal illusion that the creation of the aforementioned institution was aimed at separating offensive and defensive intelligence tasks in the

army, in reality it meant that this independent intelligence service had extensive executive powers and was authorized to detain people, perform searches of persons and facilities, transport of imprisoned persons and other activities of strictly repressive character.

From the very beginning, the organizational structure and activities of the Military Defence Intelligence were under strict control of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Following the wish of gen. L. Z. Mechlis, lieutenant Bedřich Reicin became the head of the formation. Already in 1935, the Intelligence Centre of Presidium of the Police in Prague suspected that B. Reicin was a contact of the Soviet intelligence services but due to the lack of hard evidence, he avoided conviction. Before escaping to the Soviet Union in 1939, Reicin was an activist of the Communist Youth Union and the editor of a communist propaganda journal *Rudé právo* (published between 1920 and 1989). He also worked at the Czechoslovak broadcasting station of Radio Moscow. Together with his deputy Karol Vaš, they maintained close contacts with NKVD officers, who in the staff of the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps were not only responsible for communication with the Red Army command but also controlled the activity of Military Defence Intelligence. Lieutenant B. Reicin was initially a political officer in the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps, where the communists had the last word about everything. Therefore, it should not come as a surprise that the vast majority of Military Defence Intelligence officers came from the ranks of political commissioners.

III. CONCLUSIONS

The Military Defence Intelligence focused its activities on two areas. First area referred to activities aimed at protection of counterintelligence of the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps. These activities were managed by B. Reicin and consisted of building a network of agents in the ranks of the Corps, covert observation and control of soldiers and officers and verification of new commanders of military units especially those who returned from London after the end of WWII. The second area of activity was under the command of K. Vaš who was responsible for the intelligence of the Army Corps. Vaš directed operations against foreign agents, spies and saboteurs. He was also in charge of activities focused on collaborators and traitors and for intelligence supervision over citizens from the liberated areas of former Czechoslovakia. In addition to intelligence activities, the Military Defence Intelligence also carried out tasks traditionally performed by the military police.

The Military Defence Intelligence constituted a human resources and technical base for the Military Council chaired by Defence Minister gen. L. Svoboda in the process of creation of a new intelligence structure called the Central Intelligence Agency.

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