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### Year of fire.

## The creation of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army and the background to the Volhynia massacre in 1943

David Svoboda

The study examines the internal dilemmas and debates in the heart of the Ukrainian insurgent movement on the eve of the tragedy caused by the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) in Ukrainian Volhynia in 1943. The tragedy appears linked to events surrounding the creation of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UIA), intended as a response to changes occurring on the battlefields, meaning the prospect of a probable return of Soviet power to Western Ukrainian territory. Against a backdrop of intensifying Nazi terror in the Reichskommissariat Ukraine, the Ukrainian underground opted for a split from the German administration which it had hitherto successfully infiltrated in order to secure weapons and training for its cadres. After a wave of desertions by Ukrainian police officers their places were filled by local Poles for analogous reasons to those of the Ukrainians, an attempt to secure the Polish position prior to the return of the Soviets, with whom – like the Ukrainians – the Polish government in exile in London were in dispute over the eastern borders of Poland. The study takes a polemical position with regard to the tendency to explain the anti-Polish ethnic purge carried out in line with OUN and UIA ideological postulates as a kind of import from Nazi practices. It demonstrates that the programme positions of the Ukrainian nationalists in actual fact emphasised socialist and national liberation principles formulated in fundamental opposition to the practices of both totalitarian regimes, Nazi and Soviet. The decision to rid the Polish element from the disputed territory was later explained by the OUN as an instrument in the battle to remove the occupiers from Ukraine; however, the nationalists in reality also included the civilian Polish population in that category.

### From Vienna to Ravensbrück.

## Members of the Czech minority in Vienna deported to the Ravensbrück concentration camp

Pavla Plachá

More than 40 women born on Czechoslovak territory were deported from the territory of Austria to the Ravensbrück concentration in the course of WWII. They were a decidedly heterogeneous group in terms of nationality and ethnicity (including Czechs, Germans, Jews and Romanies). Likewise the Nazis' reasons for persecuting them had various motivations (racial, ideological, ethnic, religious). In addition, assessing the women's relationship to their native country is today very difficult.

In exploring the historically established Czech resistance in Austria it is necessary to focus on Vienna and its Czech minority, which over 3% of Vienna's citizens

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identified themselves as belonging to in 1939. Soon after the war broke out the Nazis proceeded to gradually eliminate Czech community life in Vienna. The resistance of the city's Czechs was thus driven not only by ideology but also by nationality.

Around 10 female members of what was referred to as the Czech section of the Communist Party of Austria were deported to Ravensbrück for their resistance activities. Its women members were predominantly recruited from a Czech sports association. Ideologically they were close to the Social Democratic Party and once the Nazi persecution began Vienna's Czech minority began carrying out illegal activities in conjunction with the Communist Party. Their classification as "political" prisoners helped them to a certain degree to survive the cruel conditions of the concentration camp, as did their experience from the resistance, organisational ability, political views and language skills. Thanks to their cultural and ideological closeness they frequently established contact with Czech female prisoners, ties that endured after the war when the women were involved in the creation of Austria's Ravensbrück Camp Society.

### The 99<sup>th</sup> SS-Standarte.

#### The creation, organisation and activities of the Znojmo regiment of the Allgemeine-SS

Jan Zumr

The study analyses the creation, organisation and activities of the 99<sup>th</sup> SS-Standarte, one of 126 regiments of the Allgemeine-SS established on the territory of Southern Moravia and the north-eastern part of Lower Austria following the occupation of the borderlands. A general introduction to the Allgemeine-SS is followed by an outline of the incorporation of those parts of Southern Moravia into Lower Austria and a brief characterisation of the SS in Austria. The author analyses the composition of the 99<sup>th</sup> SS-Standarte, the location of individual units and the command structure, introducing the most important officers. He also describes service in the Allgemeine-SS and the Znojmo regiment, which predominantly involved doing sports, ideological training and participation in Nazi celebrations. With the outbreak of war most members of the 99<sup>th</sup> SS-Standarte were transferred to the Wehrmacht and armed SS units. The remaining men had two main tasks: the recruitment of young men to the Waffen-SS and looking after conscripts' families. The study concludes with an exploration of Czechoslovak (and Austrian) judiciary's post-war efforts to punish members of the Znojmo Allgemeine-SS regiment.

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## The 8<sup>th</sup> SS and police court in Prague

Petr Kaňák – Jan Vajskebr

The 8<sup>th</sup> SS and police court in Prague (SS- u. Polizeigericht VIII, Prag) became part of the independent SS and police court system in 1940. Its powers included judging crimes committed by officers of the *Waffen-SS*, the security (*Sipo*) and regular (*Orpo*) police, the security services (*SD*) and eventually a whole range of auxiliary police units (*Luftschuttpolizei*, *Feuerschutzpolizei*, *Technische Nothilfe* etc.) on the territory of the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia. At the close of WWII up to 280,000 people were subject to it. At least four senior judges, resp. court chiefs, headed the court and many Czech Germans who had built up their careers during the First Republic passed through it. The court dealt with a broad range of crimes – from desertion to property, disciplinary and sexual offences to traffic violations – and subsequently handed down punishments such as jail terms, the loss of civil liberties and even the death penalty. The number of sentences imposed undermines the established thesis of the SS being an elite force, with many repeat offenders being found in its ranks. However, the court played only a marginal role in the persecution of Czechs, at least in comparison with other elements of the Nazi judiciary.

### Beelzebub versus the Devil.

#### The so-called Soviet mission, the Vlasov army and the Prague Uprising

Pavel Žáček

The activities of the Soviet intelligence agencies, or units posing as such, remain a relatively unknown chapter in the Prague Uprising of May 1945. A specific role was played by the staff of senior Red Army lieutenant Vladimir Mechislavovich Radolinsky (1913–199?), one of the defenders of Odessa and a Romanian prisoner of war, who in spring 1944 moved to Prague, where he operated under the codename “Sokolov”. In the initial phase of the uprising, his group, referred to in period sources as a “Soviet (Russian) mission”, were involved in the broadcasting of rebel radio and in inviting the Vlasov army’s 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division of the Armed Forces of the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia to Prague. As well as acquiring intelligence information, the “mission” held intensive negotiations with the Vlasov army and presented their demands with regard to the rebels’ military and political leadership. On the afternoon of May 7, 1945 Radolinsky even held talks with the division’s commander, Major General S. K. Bunyachenko, in Prague’s Jinonice. The following day his group, under pressure given the critical situation and the approach of German combat groups, again argued for the sending of a Vlasov army division to help Prague, even at the cost of ousting the Czech National Council. Despite the fact that Radolinsky established contact with Red Army organs on May 9, 1945 he was arrested by the SMERSH military counter-intelligence in connection with inviting

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“traitors of the nation” into the Czechoslovak capital. In later years he was persecuted for his war-time activities and operations in Prague.

## Considerations, documentation and (non)investigation of Nazi “euthanasia” in Czechoslovakia, 1945–1990

Michal V. Šimůnek

For several decades after the end of WWII, the crimes committed against the lives and health of patients within the framework of Nazi “euthanasia” were of marginal interest. In socialist Czechoslovakia – incidentally as in the former GDR, for instance – crimes against groups marginalised for health reasons garnered little or even no attention; their victims were expelled from the collective memory.

Documentation was closely linked to the official investigations carried out by the State Security (StB), which in the case of Czechoslovakia could have been submitted either in the immediate post-war period or in the 1960s. In terms of methodology, it was in the main subordinate to police practice and characterised by both a deficit of historical analysis and a lack of basic orientation in the subject. In view of the complicated nature of the issue it is therefore unsurprising that the conclusions – which essentially from the very beginning had no ambition to analyse Bohemian and Moravian materials in the broader context in which Nazi “euthanasia” was carried out – were in the end markedly superficial and contradictory and in all of the cases examined simply trailed off. However, there was merit in the fact that they managed to gather and record at least some testimonies and data that may today prove useful in historical research.

## The Vlasov army in the battle for Prague: Co-operation between the military command of Great Prague and the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division of the Armed Forces of the CLPR in documents (Part I.)

Pavel Žáček

One of the most controversial subjects directly linked to the Czech uprising of May 1945 is the appearance of the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division of the Committee for the Liberation of the Peoples of Russia (CLPR) led by Major General Sergei Kuzmich Bunyachenko – according to German numeration the 600<sup>th</sup> infantry division (Russian) – on the side of those fighting for Prague.

This edition of the 210 most important reports and records concentrated within the framework of the intelligence and information system of the Military Command of Great Prague – “Bartoš” captures in a nuanced manner the dramatic development of events in Prague and its environs in the days 5 to 9 May, 1945.

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Members of the individual departments of the “Bartoš” staff kept records of all important information and processed them into the form of reports from individual uprising staffs, military command, departments of the government army, gendarmerie, police, national committees and individual citizens, in some cases taking possession of written reports delivered to Bartolomějská St. by courier. Within the staff of the “Bartoš” command records were distributed to individual departments or handed over to staff vice-chiefs or chiefs, in some cases directly to army commander Brig. Gen. Karel Kutlvašr and his deputies.

Fresh information relating to movements of their own, Vlasov army or German units was drawn on special operational maps and recorded in war diaries. To a limited degree it was also intended to provide information to the “Alex” senior HQ or in some cases the Czech National Council or even the rebel radio. The final three edited documents from 11 May 1945 contain an evaluation for Soviet military agencies of the participation of Vlasov army units in the battle for Prague.