

Political trials of the 1950s - a concrete case study (The Babice Case)

Abstract

The subject of the thesis "Political Trials of the 1950s - a Specific Case Study", subtitled The Babice Case, was a description of the application of the general tools of political persecution used in the Czechoslovak Republic in the 1950s to the specific case of the actions of Ladislav Malý and the group he formed around him, culminating in the shooting at the Babice school and the subsequent political trials. Also significant is the aim of placing the political trials in Czechoslovakia in the context of the times and the international political situation, which played an important role in the Babice case.

The first chapter of the thesis formulates the aims of the thesis and the background on which it is based.

The second chapter of the thesis describes the significance of the political processes and the general background of their organisation. An important part of Chapter 2 of the thesis is a description of the legal framework for the conduct of political trials, focusing both on substantive aspects, such as the newly defined offences, and on procedural issues, especially the limitations on the rights of the accused. The legal biennium, an initiative aimed at changing the legal system to reflect the needs and ideology of the Communist Party, is also described as a significant phenomenon.

The third chapter briefly describes the situation in the region of Moravian Budejovice, especially with regard to the position of the church and the impact of collectivisation on a traditionally agricultural region.

The fourth chapter describes the actions of the group around Ladislav Malý in the vicinity of Moravské Budějovice. This description is necessary to understand the mechanism by which the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia made the actions of a poorly organized group of a few men within the political process appear to be those of a large, well-organized group whose goal was to overthrow the regime and commit violence against Czechoslovak citizens.

The fifth chapter is devoted to a description of the political trials following the arrest of the members of the group around L. Malý, and the sixth chapter follows this chapter with a description of the rehabilitation of those convicted.

The seventh chapter is devoted to the political trials in the USA, the aim being to show that political trials and public denunciations of alleged enemies were not reserved for the Soviet sphere of influence, and to show that the preservation of freedom of speech and civil society, even to a limited extent, led to a limitation of the consequences of these trials, while in Czechoslovakia critical reflection on the political trials had to wait until the Prague Spring and, to a full extent, until the end of the communist regime.

Key words:

Political processes, Babice, communism