

National Minorities in the Western Borderlands of Czech Silesia from the Perspective of State Security Corps in 1945¹

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Abstract:

In May 1945, Western Silesia, originally inhabited predominantly by the German population, found itself in a completely new situation. The region was once again controlled by the Czechoslovak state power, which wanted to re-organise life in the borderlands. Therefore, it was necessary to handle the issue of the German population, as well as the influx of new settlers from the Czechoslovak inland and abroad. Changes took place on the other side of the border as well, and neighbouring Germany was replaced by Poland. These aspects gave rise to a completely new security situation that the newly formed security corps had to address. The article attempts to follow the relationship of the Czechoslovak security corps to the members of other nationalities who lived in the researched area or with those whom they came into contact while guarding the non-fixed state borders. Research shows that, in 1945, the National Security Corps (SNB) indeed took qualitatively different approaches to various nationalities, ranging from strong hostility and distrust towards the Germans, through vigilance towards the Polish, to an ambiguous attitude towards re-emigrants.

Keywords:

Czechoslovakia, national issue, national security, Silesia, the Third Republic

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Introduction

When the war ended in May 1945, Czechoslovakia had to face a number of new challenges. This study will focus mainly on the issue of dealing with the German minority, chaotic and disorganised security conditions in the selected Silesian border districts, unclear management of the Czechoslovak-Polish state border in Silesia, and the migration wave both from Czechoslovak inland and abroad heading to the borderlands from which original inhabitants were being

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displaced. In the very first post-war weeks, all these problems in the borderlands merged into a single and indivisible entanglement, which this study will address. The objective of the study is to outline the attitudes of members of the newly formed state security corps of Czechoslovakia and other corps ensuring security towards various nationalities and the context in which these nationalities were mentioned in materials originated by state security corps. This study will thus focus on certain selected minorities occurring in the researched area in the course of 1945, however, it will also discuss the Polish armed forces along the new common border. The Polish side was included in the research because, in the given period, the mutual dispute over a number of Silesian territories escalated, and there were a lot of incidents and border crossings by the armed forces of both parties (Binar – Jirásek 2012, pp. 65–66). The researched area is delimited by selected administrative districts, namely Opava-venkov, Hlučín, Krnov, Bruntál and Frývaldov.

In order to fulfil the set objective, i.e. to identify the attitudes of state security corps towards members of individual nationalities, it is necessary to determine if there were any guidelines issued by superior authorities defining the methods of dealing with members of the nationalities or creating a model of how to approach them. In this case, it does not only involve the regulations and guidelines of the Ministry and the Provincial Headquarters in Brno, but it is also necessary to consider daily orders issued by the SNB headquarters at the branch or by subordinate bodies that responded to events encountered by members of the security corps in fulfilling their duties in the researched area. Furthermore, it must be examined how and in what contexts members of individual nationalities were mentioned in documents originated by state security authorities. This means, in particular, how these nationalities were referred to and in what context. The study will then observe the differences in the declared approach to individual nationalities and the extent to which the actual line of duty reflected the officially declared attitude to these nationalities. The examples of specific cases involving members of other nationalities do not cover all documented incidents, but they aim to demonstrate the actual application of the approach towards the monitored nationalities.

Since there was a large number of various nationalities in the researched area in the post-war period, it will also be necessary to select those that the study will primarily address. Firstly, these will be members of those nationalities that were present in the selected districts for the entire period under review so that it is possible to assess whether their relationship with the state security corps changed in any way. In this respect, these are mainly Germans, with between 2.5 and 3 million living in the Czech lands at the end of the war. However, their position

was significantly damaged by the recently-ended war, the aversion to the Germans pervaded all of Czech society, and there were strong calls for settling accounts with the Nazis and displacing all the members of the German minority from the Czechoslovak Republic (Staněk 2005, p. 13). In the researched region, the Germans were concentrated mainly in the western districts of Krnov, Bruntál and Frývaldov, even though a large number of them lived in the Opava District as well. On the contrary, the number of Poles was relatively low. Although not many of them lived in the selected region, the relationship with Poland was quite specific, and there were a lot of incidents with members of Polish armed forces at the troubled state border. The Czechoslovak state security authorities looked askance at Poland and Poles, also due to mutual territorial disputes. For this reason, Poles are included in the study as well. It also includes members of the Soviet armed forces, who had a significant impact on life in the researched districts in 1945. Moreover, it addresses re-emigrants heading to the Czechoslovak Republic to settle in the borderlands. Although they were not foreigners, they came from various countries, many of them did not speak Czech (or Slovak), and they were often characterised by their own moral and cultural values. Therefore, they were also included in the research.

The study is based primarily on documents drawn up by local stations of the National Security Corps, district administrative commissions and district national committees, and reports and regulations of the provincial headquarters, or the SNB headquarters – Ostrava branch of the Provincial National Committee. Periodic reports on the state of security intended for the Ministry of the Interior and other central authorities in Prague were used as well.

Characteristics of the Researched Area

In terms of the territory, the article focuses on the western districts of Czech Silesia, i.e. the areas delimited by the administrative districts of Opava-venkov, Hlučín, Bruntál, Krnov and Frývaldov. The researched area lies on the historical border between Moravia and Silesia. In terms of the administrative system of the Czechoslovak Republic, it was located in the territory of the Ostrava branch of the Provincial National Committee, however, it does not form any comprehensive historical or administrative unit and includes districts belonging to both Western (Opava) Silesia and the Hlučín District, annexed to the Czechoslovak Republic no sooner than in 1920 (Gawrecká 2003, pp. 296–305). The districts included in the research were selected based on several criteria. First of all, these districts had to belong to the western part of Czech Silesia. Other selection criteria a) the specific national composition and the related significant decrease in the total population, b) the borderlands with newly acquired Polish

territories in Silesia, c) geomorphological and economic differences that distinguished the areas from the rest of Czech Silesia.

National composition

The national composition can be deemed a key selection factor. In this view, the defined region is specific because, until 1945, the Germans constituted a majority in the population of some districts (Bruntál, Frývaldov, Krnov) or were heavily represented in others (Opava). Throughout Silesia, no other district was inhabited by a larger number of Germans than the selected ones. The inclusion of the Hlučín District is specific, as only a minimal part of the population claimed allegiance to German nationality in 1930 and, despite recognising Czech as their mother tongue and considering themselves Moravian, they accepted the annexation of the territory to the Czechoslovak Republic lukewarmly. By contrast, there were strong ties to Germany, which was demonstrated, among other things, by the fact that the number of votes received by German parties was significantly higher than the number of people officially declaring themselves to be German (Gawrecká 2003, pp. 342–344). After the break-up of the First Czechoslovak Republic, the inhabitants of the Hlučín District were granted German citizenship, and local men thus had to join Wehrmacht and other German armed forces. Although not all of them fought for the Third Reich willingly, and some of them even participated in Czechoslovak resistance movements (Neminář 2018, pp. 79–82), the Czech majority's view of the inhabitants of the Hlučín District after the war was influenced by their negative pre-war attitude towards the Czechoslovak Republic and the service of many locals in the German army. Negative relationships were reflected in distrust of local inhabitants and inquiries to confirm their national credibility, and some even requested to displace all local people to Germany.

The post-war expulsion completely changed the national composition of the selected districts and enabled a diverse multinational population. The rest of the population was joined by settlers from both the Czech lands and Slovakia. In addition, a large number of re-emigrants started flowing to their old homeland after 1945, responding to the invitation of the Czechoslovak government. Until 1948, the territory of the selected districts was also inhabited by other nationalities, such as Hungarians forcibly displaced from southern Slovakia, Croatians originally residing in South Moravia, or Roma. Given the ongoing displacement and the arrival of a large number of new settlers, it is difficult to reconstruct the region's precise post-war national composition as it is only outlined in reports of some State Security Offices. According to them, in August 1946, there were 23,251 Czechs, 2,564 Slovaks, 19,625 Germans, 164 Poles, 182 Austrians, 49 Russians

and a few Yugoslavs, Bulgarians, French, Italians, British, Hungarians, Belgians, Romanians and Swiss in the Krnov District (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 221, inv. no. 317, The total number of persons registered in the Krnov District, dated 22 August 1946). The situation in the Frývaldov District was also quite complicated and, despite being inhabited by 21,110 Czechs and 1,693 Slovaks, the district was still home to approximately 70,000 Germans, mostly waiting to be displaced. Besides them, there were also members of other nationalities, where French and British were the most represented ones, both numbering a few dozen people (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 221, inv. no. 317, A list of repeatedly or newly registered persons living in the Frývaldov District). According to the population census, the Hlučín District was inhabited by 40,825 people, of whom 11,759 (29%) were Germans. (Staněk, 2017, p. 138). However, the mentioned figures are rather mere fragments calculated by various institutions at different times, and their information value is thus limited. A comprehensive overview of the national composition of the population in the districts under review was not available until the first post-war census in 1950. On the basis of this census, the transformation of the examined region in terms of represented nationalities is expressed in Table 1.

Although the 1950 results are quite problematic as they do not take into account the Roma or re-emigrants, who were included in the category of Czechs or Slovaks, they provide at least a general outline documenting the national fragmentation of the region. Based on the data, it can be concluded that there was an almost full exchange of the population in the Krnov, Bruntál and Frývaldov Districts. Opava-venkov District transformed significantly in terms of present nationalities, and only the Hlučín District maintained the pre-war state to a certain extent due to its specificity. The studied region thus became characterised by a much greater national diversity than in the east, where a large Czech community lived even before the war, and its members continued to live there after May 1945.

The displacement is also associated with a rapid decline in population in all districts. This was related to war events where, afraid of the arrival of the Red Army, many people, mostly Germans, fled to the west. Later on, the number of inhabitants of the monitored regions decreased markedly also due to the mass displacement, and especially the western districts were almost depopulated. In the Bruntál District, the population dropped by about 17% between 1930 and 1945, and it kept decreasing after the displacement started, so three-quarters of local homesteads were registered as uninhabited in 1948. (Topinka, 2005, p. 536 and Káňa, 1976, p. 24). Only about a half of the 71,717 inhabitants living in the

Frývaldov District in 1930 stayed there in 1950, while the German minority almost disappeared, numbering only 1,800 people. A similarly large depopulation rate can be observed in other districts of the defined region as well. The Hlučín District was an exception to a certain extent, however, its population also decreased by about 14% between 1930 and 1950.

Table 1: The nationality of population in regions, districts and regional cities

1930 census	Nationality							Total	
	Czechoslovak	German	Polish	Jewish	Other	Foreign nationals			
Bruntál	1,043	47,182	38	14	16	841		49,134	
Frývaldov	2,703	66,987	50	30	55	1,892		71,717	
Hlučín	45,110	2,213	60	12	6	1,239		48,640	
Krnov	2,839	56,744	67	101	24	2,220		61,995	
Opava	62,826	48,624	349	516	168	3,133		115,616	
1950 census	Nationality								Total
	Czech	Slovak	Ukrainian and Russian	Polish	German	Hungarian	Other	Not specified	
Bruntál	21,968	3,749	430	133	930	26	155	70	27,461
Jeseník	30,037	5,052	94	180	1,854	124	158	72	37,571
Hlučín	40,985	216	9	187	462	5	13	44	41,921
Krnov	33,407	4,193	61	273	654	30	182	90	38,890
Opava	69,196	1,241	87	427	1,806	70	118	107	73,052

Source: The table is compiled from the Statistical Lexicon of Municipalities of the Czechoslovak Republic. Vol. II. Moravian-Silesian Land. Prague. Ministry of the Interior and State Statistical Office, 1935. The census of people, houses and flats in the Czechoslovak Republic as of 1 March 1950. Part I. The most important results of the census of people, houses and flats for regions, districts and municipalities. Prague, State Statistical Office, 1957.

Border with Poland

Another criterion for inclusion in the selection was a common border with Poland in the western part of Czech Silesia. This condition was met by all districts, except for the Bruntál District. This criterion was applied because Czechoslovak-Polish relations were very tense in the course of 1945 due to disputes over several

Silesian territories. The thing is that not only was an old dispute over Těšín Silesia re-ignited, but the Czechoslovak government also attempted to claim selected areas of Upper Silesia, including the Głubczyce and Racibórz areas. Against a background of mutual claims, a number of incidents took place along the shared border, during which Polish troops entered the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic and, conversely, Czechoslovak troops entered the Polish territory. On 10 June, during the so-called Racibórz incident, a part of the territory south of the town was occupied (Binar – Jirásek 2012, p. 66). The territorial dispute was not limited to the demands of both formally allied governments, but the annexation of the aforementioned areas was also widely supported in the Czechoslovak Republic by the inhabitants of districts along the state border, as evidenced by a memorandum of the District National Committee and Local National Committee in Opava of 1 June 1945, supporting the government's objectives (Janák 1993, p. 65). In the letter addressed to the government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, these ambitions were supported by part of the population of the Hlučín District, and their demands were not limited only to the Głubczyce and Racibórz areas, but they also required the annexation of other Upper Silesian territories (State District Archives in Opava, coll. of the District National Committee in Hlučín, box no. 16, Letter to the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Council of Ministers). The claims to the selected Silesian territories found an echo from the armed forces, which submitted a number of reports on the dismal conditions in the Głubczyce and Racibórz areas, which were used as a humanitarian argument in favour of the annexation of the disputed areas (Binar – Jirásek 2012, p. 76). With the shared border as a selection criterion, it is possible to monitor the interaction between Czechoslovak and Polish parties and the incidents that took place on the border of the two formally allied states.

Geographical and economic conditions

The last selection criterion involves geographical and economic conditions that would distinguish the selected area from the remaining territory of Czech Silesia. Geographically, the Bruntál, Krnov and Frývaldov Districts were characterised mainly by the massif of Hrubý Jeseník, that is by mountain and sub-mountain landscape. The undulating terrain of Nížký Jeseník extended to the Opava District, and the Opava Upland stretching from the Cvilín Hill in Krnov covered the entire Hlučín District. The nature of the landscape largely determined the economic focus of the selected region, which distinguishes it from other, most eastern Silesian districts. The examined areas are typical for a predominance of smaller residences, less significance of industry and, contrarily, an important role

of agriculture and forestry. By contrast, more easterly districts are characterised by heavy industry and mining, which considerably affected the nature of this territory. Therefore, this difference was also considered when selecting the researched area.

Formation of National Security Corps in the Region

After the end of the war, there was a debate about the future of Silesia, which was administratively merged with Moravia into the Moravian-Silesian Land prior to the war. However, there was a growing inclination towards the restoration of the Silesian provincial administration, which was also partially supported in Prague. The idea of the Silesian National Council was that the historical territory of Czech Silesia would be administered independently together with the Ostrava hinterland, formed by the Moravian districts of Ostrava, Nový Jičín and Místek. This idea was partially turned into reality when, on 15 May 1945, the government decided to establish a branch of the Moravian-Silesian Provincial National Committee in Moravská Ostrava, which was subsequently confirmed by Presidential Decree No. 121 on the territorial organisation of administration by national committees in October 1945. (Janák, 2003, p. 409). The establishment of Silesian self-government was also supported in terms of state security. As the contribution to the memorandum of the Provincial National Committee to the government, it was mentioned that the borderland nature of the region, local German and Polish agitation and the complex national situation required security to be managed directly from Moravská Ostrava, not from distant Brno. Supporting arguments included the establishment of Silesian Voivodeship in Poland and local security authorities. (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 142, inv. no. 274, A contribution to the memorandum of the Provincial National Committee in Moravská Ostrava to the Government of the Czechoslovak Republic in the matter of the establishment of the self-governing Silesian land).

Against a background of the disputes over the future of Silesia, new state security bodies began to be established as early as in May. In accordance with the government resolution, a new security apparatus was formed in the Czech lands during May and June 1945. The new security corps organisation was to be divided into three services: uniformed security corps (mostly former police officers and gendarmes); uniformed emergency corps; and ununiformed national security corps, including both domestic and foreign intelligence. This formation was sometimes rather confusing, as during May and June, old security corps co-existed with new revolutionary authorities, which were subject to national committees. By its order of 30 June, the Ministry of the Interior established the National Security

Corps (SNB). Following a purge, this corps was to be joined by members of the existing security forces, i.e. police officers, gendarmes and general executive police officers. The corps also admitted former partisans, members of Czechoslovak foreign troops and returnees from concentration camps. (Kvapilová, 2003, pp. 68–70).

This turbulent development and the formation of a new security corps was, of course, reflected in Silesia, where it was decided to establish a special headquarters for Silesia after 15 May and following the recognition of the branch. The headquarters' task was to manage the activities of security authorities in the territory of the branch. These security authorities were first named the National Guard and later renamed the National Security Guard. On 12 June, the Ministry of the Interior acknowledged the existence of this headquarters, which was later established as a branch office of the SNB Provincial Headquarters based in Moravská Ostrava (Kroupa, 1977, p. 26). Simultaneously with these changes, a decree of the Ministry of the Interior changed the name of the Silesian state security authority to the National Security Corps. (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 142, inv. no. 274, A daily order no. 1 of the SNB Provincial Headquarters, Ostrava branch). By decree of the Minister of the Interior V. Nosek, Cpt. Jindřich Sedlák was appointed the commander of the National Security Corps in Silesia (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-131-1, A daily order no. 4 of the SNB Headquarters, Ostrava branch, dated 8 August 1945). The scope of the National Security Corps' authority was defined to copy the territory of the newly established branch, i.e. the territory of Silesian districts and adjacent Moravian districts of Moravská Ostrava, Místek and Nový Jičín. In October 1945, regional headquarters with the same organisational structure as the provincial headquarters were set up in the jurisdictions of each regional court. Within the branch, two such headquarters operated in Opava and Moravská Ostrava. The regional commander was the superior commander of district headquarters (Kvapilová, 2003, p. 69), which were usually located in district cities. Their duties included preventive and repressive care for public peace and order in the district as long as it was within the scope of the district (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 142, inv. no. 274, A daily order no. 1 of the SNB Provincial Headquarters, Ostrava branch). Already in May, two key departments were established in the National Security Office, which was later renamed the National Security Directorate. One of them was the criminal department, which dealt with common criminal offences, offences against the controlled economy, the organisation of searches, raids, inspections, etc. (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 142, inv. no. 274, A definition of the jurisdiction

and duties of the criminal department of 28 July 1945 and the Organisation of the criminal department, dated 15 May 1945). The second one was the political department, which handled state political issues (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 142, inv. no. 274, A daily order no. 1 of the SNB Provincial Headquarters, Ostrava branch).

The process of forming a new security corps was slow, however, about 200 SNB stations were set up in the jurisdiction controlled by the branch headquarters by the end of June. One of the main problems was staffing as 70% of all the stations were staffed by only one, two or three men at most at that time. Western districts were in the toughest situation as three stations in the Opava District, eight stations in the Bruntál District and seven stations in the Krnov District, including the entire Osoblaha Hook, could not be staffed due to a low number of available workers (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 142, inv. no. 274, Restaffing of the National Security Corps in Silesia, dated 30 June 1945). However, the situation was gradually stabilised in terms of personnel, and new district commanders of the National Security Corps were appointed in all eleven-district headquarters in September. For the purposes of training new SNB members, a branch of the professional training school was founded in Bruntál. It started operating on 1 March 1946, and almost eighty SNB candidates applied (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-134-4, A daily order no. 54 of the SNB Headquarters, Ostrava branch, dated 24 May 1946). Another similar school preparing newcomers for service was founded on 25 March 1946 in Krnov and soon produced new SNB members (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-131-5, A daily order no. 89 of the SNB Headquarters, Ostrava branch, dated 31 August 1946). The immediate personnel shortage eased off, also thanks to the arrival of members and training of new ones, and according to the daily order of the SNB headquarters for the branch, the headcount of SNB members was sufficiently high in February 1946, so applicants from among pre-war gendarmerie and uniformed police were not admitted (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-134-4, A daily order no. 21 of the SNB Headquarters, Ostrava branch, dated 21 February 1946).

Relationship to nationalities

Germans

The year 1945, when the entire region was in chaos after the just-ended war, certainly deserves special attention in relation to the members of other nationalities moving in the monitored districts. At this troubled time, it was

first necessary to resolve the relationship with the German minority, therefore, this issue is addressed by many reports. The significance of the Germans is also evidenced by the wide range of topics discussed in the materials of security services in this context.

The basic framework of relations with the Germans was governed by regulations, which made the Germans an underprivileged population. These regulations reflected the strong anti-German mindset that appeared in Czech society during the war and was even foreshadowed by the Košice Program, which declared that only those Germans who were anti-fascists and had been persecuted for their loyalty to the Czechoslovak Republic could retain the Czechoslovak citizenship. The others were to lose their citizenship under this program. (Text of the Košice Program, http://www.totalita.cz/txt/txt_kv.pdf). The program was implemented, among other things, by Constitutional Decree of the President No. 33/1945 Sb., concerning modification of Czechoslovak citizenship of persons of German and Hungarian ethnicity, Section 1 of which declared that the Germans and Hungarians who had been granted foreign citizenship under the occupying power's regulations had lost Czechoslovak citizenship, and those who had not, lost Czechoslovak citizenship upon the entry into force of the decree. The regulation did not apply only to those who had claimed to be Czechs or Slovaks in official records of the republic or who had been persecuted by German or Hungarian authorities (ed. Jech – Kaplan 2002, p. 345). The post-war republic also severely limited the property rights of Germans, which were substantively affected by following presidential decrees. These include Decree No. 12/1945 Sb., under which all agricultural property owned by Germans or Hungarians was confiscated, with the exception of the property of those who took part in the fight for preservation and liberation of the Czechoslovak Republic (Petráš, 2007, p. 97). Decree No. 5/1945 Sb. established works councils in enterprises owned by a German, a Hungarian or a collaborator. These enterprises were also to be controlled by the national administration, which essentially constituted the first phase of the expropriation of the Germans. Further confiscation of German property was enacted under Decree No. 108/1945 Sb. The cumulative effect of these regulations made the vast majority of Czechoslovak Germans second-class people, and this underprivileged position was also reflected in the attitude adopted towards them by state security authorities. In order to punish German criminals and collaborators, retribution decrees (No. 16/1945 Sb. and 17/1945 Sb.) were issued, which established extraordinary people's courts and the National Court.

It is true to say that the attitude of state security authorities to the Germans copied the state policy, and the SNB headquarters required its members

to be extremely tough to the Germans, where the main goal was to displace all the German inhabitants gradually. While the Germans were on the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic, they were perceived as a population that is unreliable with respect to the state. In relation to the Germans, the headquarters encouraged members of the corps to remember the wrongs done by the Germans to the Czechs and treat them fairly but firmly, uncompromisingly, and reservedly. This attitude was confirmed by a decree of the SNB general headquarters, which warned that in locations where corps members, who had served there already back in 1938, re-commenced their service friendly relations were restored, and the corps members were thus not sufficiently vigorous in intervening against the Germans. Therefore, the headquarters consistently called for corps members not to establish any friendly relations with the Germans, especially women (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-131-1, A daily order no. 6 of the SNB Headquarters, Ostrava branch, dated 10 August 1945). Strictness was also required from soldiers who ensured security in the occupied borderlands in the first post-war weeks. The army was one of the tools to get as many Germans as possible away from the territory of the republic, but it also ensured peace, order, and protection of both state and private property of Czechoslovak citizens and helped administrative authorities eliminate the remaining hostile persons. In vast parts of Silesia, these duties were assigned to the 1st Czechoslovak Independent Tank Brigade, which was tasked to displace Germans in the area between Vrbno and Jablunkov (Staněk 2005, pp. 21–22). The principles of the relationship between deployed soldiers and the Germans were to be based, among other things, on the “Ten Commandments for Czechoslovak Soldiers in the Border Regions”, which required the men to be harsh and unforgiving to the Germans. One of the commandments even encouraged them not to cease to hate the Germans, behave towards them as victors, not only towards men but also German women and children (Čapka – Slezák – Vaculík 2005, pp. 27–28). The distrust and control of Germans working in various administrative functions was also demanded by the Ministry of the Interior, which pointed out cases where “loyal” Germans issued certificates of loyalty to the Czechoslovak Republic to former NSDAP members (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 182, inv. no. 288, Anti-state activities of Germans, dated 30 October 1945). The Frývaldov District Administrative Commission even demanded that a criminal sanction be drawn up for “Germanophilia” cases in which the population of Czech ethnicity provided the Germans with various benefits. (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 182, inv. no. 288, A monthly situation report from the Frývaldov District, dated 15 October 1945).

The aforementioned orders and decrees show that both the state security corps and the army officially demanded that their subordinates be extremely harsh and uncompromising towards the German population in the country. As one of the main goals of the Czechoslovak government in relation to the German minority was to displace it, the SNB's attitude towards it was significantly affected by the ongoing displacement. The concept of the displacement had been developed at the highest government level for quite some time but, in the conditions of the ending war, the government waited for the decision of great powers in this regard. Since the issue was not yet resolved in May 1945, all binding measures aimed at transferring Germans across the border took place very hastily (Von Arburg – Staněk 2010, p. 278). Under these circumstances, where regulations under which the replacement was to take place were gradually drawn up in the central area, Germans were concentrated in internment camps, but cases of violent expulsion were no exception either. In this context, certain differences can be observed between the western and eastern part of the examined region regarding the manner in which the concentration and general consolidation of new power took place. These differences were attributable mainly to specific conditions. In May 1945, the Opava District was inhabited by many Czechs, and camps were quickly set up both in Opava itself and the administrative district of Opava-venkov. In these camps, Germans who were to be displaced were interned under the supervision of members of the army or security corps. In Opava, a detention and labour camp was established in former Masaryk's Barracks as early as on 8 May, and the task of guarding the camp was entrusted to members of the security corps, later directly to the National Security Corps. (Dorko 2016, p. 183). Different conditions prevailed in the west, where the new power established very slowly due to the low number of Czechs living there. A lot of Czechs from the inland headed to these districts in May, however, it did not contribute to stability as many of them did so only to exploit the area. Security was ensured by partisans at first, and the Natural Security Guard helped with it as well. In addition to providing security, the job of these partisans was to detain Germans, confiscate property and implement various discriminatory measures. Although the conditions in the west were much more complicated, Germans were also concentrated in camps in Bruntál, Krnov and Frývaldov Districts, where they had to wait for displacement, even though these were established later, during June and July 1945 (Staněk 2005, pp. 298, 304 and 308).

Since the Germans were considered unreliable with respect to the state, commanders of military units in the borderlands, security corps and various armed groups embarked on the violent expulsions of Germans on their own initiative (Čapka – Slezák – Vaculík 2005, p. 28). These expulsions also took place in the monitored region with the help of members of the security corps, who kept order

and checked the luggage carried by displaced persons, confiscating valuables and money, as was the case of the expulsion of Germans from Javorník on 12 and 13 July (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 182, inv. no. 288, Displacement of part of the German population from Javorník, dated 26 July 1945). The large expulsion of approximately 2,500 Germans from Krnov, which took place on 14 July, followed a similar pattern. The strong anti-German attitude of members of state security corps and authorities towards the Germans is also reflected in the fact that, during this expulsion, German communists, social democrats, and relatives of members of Czechoslovak foreign troops who were to be excluded from the transports were ultimately transported as well (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, Concentration and expulsion of Germans from Krnov, dated 20 July 1945). This case in which German anti-fascists were also subject to the expulsion was not unique, however, given the fact that the deported included close relatives of members of the Czechoslovak foreign troops, it required closer attention of authorities and the National Security Corps. The persecution and displacement of German social democrats and theft of property were also discussed in the party's memorandum sent through the Czechoslovak army in Britain to the Ministry of the Interior. In addition to arbitrary expulsions of German anti-fascists, the memorandum also pointed to extremely poor living conditions that prevailed in detention camps under the supervision of security authorities. Under these circumstances, a special camp was finally set up in Krnov for German social democrats, which was separated from the camps for other Germans from Krnov (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, A memorandum of the German Social Democratic Party in Krnov, dated 4 August 1945).

As demonstrated by the Krnov case, the principle of collective guilt applied to each and every German significantly influenced the conduct of members of the security corps. However, it is hard to say how many German anti-fascists were personally affected by this attitude, which is also related to the fact that it is not possible to quantify the exact number of anti-Nazis in the Czechoslovak Republic after the end of the war. In response to a number of complaints, the Ministry of the Interior attempted to resolve this issue, requiring SNB members to be extremely cautious, not to include loyal Germans in transports and, likely due to the tense atmosphere prevailing in the country, be fair to them. The Ministry also admitted that the original tough and uncompromising approach led to the fact that anti-Nazis and loyal Germans were persecuted in the same way as former Nazis (Security Services Archive, coll. 304. inv. no. 304-131-9, A daily order no. 7 of SNB Rýmařov, dated 23 October 1945). However, even these commands did not

fundamentally improve the position of German anti-fascists in the upshot, and the confiscation of property and displacement continued to affect them. The effort to re-grant them Czechoslovak citizenship, which was to happen under Section 3 of Decree No. 33/1945 Sb., was not that successful either. With regard to aggressive nationalism and anti-German sentiment, only a small number of German applicants managed to obtain it (Spurný 2011, pp. 192–193). As a result of these conditions, many German anti-fascists eventually decided to leave the republic.

Against the background of the internment and displacement of Germans, there were cases of theft, looting, murder and rape committed against the German population in the post-war months, which was once again caused by the war-torn atmosphere of anti-German nationalism. These cases occurred mostly in the first post-war weeks, and the monitored area alone registered high incidence with a relatively large number of victims. The perpetrators included partisans as well as members of the newly established security corps (Staněk 2005, pp. 294–314). The Ministry of the Interior tried to fight these widespread excesses by issuing a circular on 25 September 1945, in which it particularly criminalised the theft of property of detained Germans, occupation of their flats and similar cases. The circular also called for checks on the implementation of restrictive measures to prevent mistakes and unacceptable behaviour. (Staněk, 1991, p. 116). Despite all that, a number of similar cases took place in the following months.

Anti-German attitudes often mixed with efforts to prevent the spread of anti-Czech sentiment and the smuggling of valuables across the border. These initiatives resulted in further measures that the Germans understandably perceived as a personal attack. For example, the Czechoslovak party considered the distribution of prayers for the refugees among the displaced Germans to be a form of anti-Czechoslovak political agenda, and the SNB commanders at the branch were encouraged to take action against the public reading of these prayers whenever they thought it was targeted provocation (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-131-5, A daily order no. 70 of the SNB Headquarters, Ostrava branch, dated 15 July 1946). In another case, a decree of the Provincial National Committee in Brno pointed out that the Czech population had sometimes donated food to displaced Germans. In response to that, the Provincial National Committee encouraged members of the corps to take strong action when such donations were found during the inspections of the luggage of the displaced Germans. This action was justified by a suspicion that it was a channel for smuggling valuables from the Czechoslovak Republic, sending messages abroad and supporting Germans prosecuted by extraordinary people's courts for their crimes (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-134-4, A daily order no. 54 of the SNB Headquarters, Ostrava branch, dated 24 May 1946).

The sentiment and attitude of the general public were also strongly anti-German in the post-war period. In the context of settlement, Decree No. 27/1945 played an important role as it regulated the return of Slavic inhabitants to all areas of the Czechoslovak Republic (ed. Jech & Kaplan 2002, p. 318). This framework also allowed for the spread of propaganda, promoted mainly by the Settlement Office, which helped to form the prevailing opinion that the influx of Czechs to the borderlands was not an expansion of Czechs, but primarily a correction of historical injustices committed by the Germans against the Czechs (Spurný 2011, pp. 32–33). The fact that this propaganda has a strong impact on the settlers coming to the examined region was pointed out by the report of the National Security Office in Moravská Ostrava, according to which the Czech population, especially from the inland, treated the Germans all alike and thought it was necessary to Czechize the entire border region (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, Concentration and expulsion of Germans from Krnov, dated 2 August 1945). The scope of expulsion required by the population of Czech ethnicity varied, ranging from requirements to displace the Germans completely to opinions that only those that were unreliable in relation to the state had to leave. A part of the public demanded the re-education of young German children, who were to participate in the renewal of the republic (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, Sentiment and attitudes of the Czech population to the expulsion of Germans inland, dated 21 August 1945). The new settlers took a particularly negative view on cases where the old Czech inhabitants sided with the local Germans, especially when it prevented the prompt transfer of German property to the national administration. In fact, in the case of many Czech settlers, the colonisation process can be seen as a form of enrichment at the expense of the Germans. They often broke into German flats, exacted accommodation from German families and robbed their homes (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, The influx of population from the inland to the borderland, dated 6 July 1945). On the contrary, the work ethic of some newcomers was poor and, as noted by the District Administrative Commission in Frývaldov, agricultural colonisation was particularly slow as many of the newcomers thought that the Germans would work for them on the farms (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, A situation report from the political district of Frývaldov, dated 24 July 1945). Also, for these reasons, some newcomers were very critical when they could not acquire property quickly and blamed the National Security Corps for trying to maintain order in this heated atmosphere. Such a case occurred in Bruntál,

where a national administrator who was not allowed to take over the assigned company complained that although the German owner was a member of the NSDAP, both the National Security Corps and the police did nothing about it and, therefore, requested the Ministry of the Interior to rectify the situation (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 182, inv. no. 288, An indictment of Oskar Woseipek, his son Josef and daughter Ilsa, dated 28 September 1945). Similar resolutions of the colonists, accusing the SNB of favouring the Germans, appeared in the Frývaldov District, but the investigation revealed that the actions taken by corps members against the Germans complied with the rules. However, even this did not ease the harsh and unforgiving attitude of the majority of the population towards the Germans. What is more, these critical attitudes were intensified by biased articles in the Hraničář magazine, the objectivity of which was also questioned by the local administrative commission (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 182, inv. no. 288, A monthly situation report from the Frývaldov District, dated 15 October 1945). Nevertheless, similar public attitudes and indictments only increased the pressure on members of the security corps to be as tough on the Germans as possible.

In the context of the German question in SNB materials, the conditions in the ethnically and linguistically highly complex Hlučín District, whose inhabitants considered themselves Moravians, took a prominent position. Given the complicated local situation, the aggressive attitude of the Czechs towards the Germans, as well as the fact that local inhabitants became part of the Third Reich after the Munich incident and had German citizenship, the end of the war raised concerns there. The complicated determination of the nationality of the local population makes it difficult to quantify how many Germans lived in the area after the war, however, according to a report from the turn of September and October 1945, 5,500 persons of German nationality were registered in the Hlučín District (Staněk, 1991, p. 138). It should also be noted that, in the Hlučín District, members of Nazi organisations were often considered Germans in the post-war months, which makes it even more difficult to determine and quantify the German population in this area (Plaček 2000, pp. 112–113). The complex local situation was further complicated by the fact that a large number of refugees from areas occupied by Poles headed to the region. These included ethnically ambiguous Moravians as well as Germans trying to flee from the Poles (Staněk, 1991, p. 135). The local administrative authorities were apparently aware of the complex situation as the District Administrative Commission in Hlučín stated in July 1945 that the national issue was still quite sensitive in the area. The commission tried to defend the local population and claimed that a number of local men conscripted into

the German army deserted voluntarily and served in Allied armies to prove that, despite being granted German citizenship in 1938, part of the local population retained the Czechoslovak mentality (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, A report on the political and economic situation in the Hlučín District, dated 10 July 1945). On the other hand, the chairman of the customs administration in the Hlučín District clearly stated that although the region was calm, the local population did not regard the Czechoslovak Republic with favour (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, Hlučín and Opava Districts)³.

Much like other districts in the monitored region, the German population was concentrated in detention camps, which took place in cooperation with the army and other security forces (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, A report from the Hlučín District, dated 16 July 1945). The locals could file an application to reclaim their lost citizenship and thus be removed from the camps and transfers with the screening commission, however, many of the inhabitants of the Hlučín District were not happy with the commission's work. According to complaints addressed to the District National Committee, the members of the commission did not carry out their work impartially and issued certificates also to Sudeten Germans who were members of both the SdP and NSDAP, while the applications of locals were denied (State District Archives in Opava, coll. District National Committee in Hlučín, 1945–1960, box no. 16, inv. no. 149, The letter "Solution of ethnic issues in the Hlučín District", undated). Similar issues were pointed out in a report of September 1945, according to which the population felt harmed by the fact that former party members remained employed in public offices and companies, while the administration authorities concentrated people with no ties to the NSDAP to detention camps and forced labour (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, A monthly report for September 1945 on political and economic conditions in the Hlučín District). The decision of the District Administrative Commission not to accept citizenship applications for a longer period caused great concern, especially among wealthy residents and property owners, who were afraid of being considered Germans and consequently losing their assets (Provincial Archives in

3 For more information on the issue of the population of the Hlučín District, see EMMERT, František: *Češi ve Wehrmachtu*. Prague, Vyšehrad 2005. For the population of the Hlučín District in Czechoslovak foreign troops, see NEMINÁŘ, Jiří: *Feldgrau i battledress: Hlučičané v československé zahraniční armádě*. In: *Slezský sborník*. Vol. 116, No. 2 (2018), pp. 75–96.

Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, A monthly report for August 1945 on political and economic conditions in the Hlučín District).

In addition to being concentrated in camps and displaced, the Germans were also closely monitored in the context of their possible armed resistance to the Czechoslovak state. Moreover, the population possessed a large number of weapons after the war, which understandably made the security authorities greatly concerned, so they organised inspections of the apartments of members of Nazi organisations and their sympathisers, during which they confiscated mainly weapons and ammunition (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, A report on the political and economic situation in the Bruntál District, dated 10 July 1945). Despite many interventions, SNB reports issued in post-war months are full of indications of groups of armed Germans roaming the region, and people were particularly afraid of the German organisation Werwolf, which operated mainly abroad according to the SNB. According to the rough information dating back to the summer of 1945, the organisation operated in small groups consisting of former members of the army, SS, SA, and other organisations, as well as Czechoslovak Germans. The reports indicate that the organisation was well-armed and equipped (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-30-3, A report on the activities of the political intelligence department, dated 17 July 1945). However, other reports claimed that the prominent position in Werwolf was held by young Germans aged 16 to 18, who were subject to the guidance of trained agents (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-30-3, A report on the activities of the political intelligence department for the period from 1 to 14 August 1945). What is clear from these vague reports is that even intelligencers did not have a good grasp of Werwolf's power and capabilities, and the organisation was consequently credited with a large number of incidents without it being established that the organisation was actually behind them. On the other hand, the Czechoslovak authorities were aware that not all cases of unsolved accidents or acts of violence were necessarily the work of Werwolf, as was the public's idea (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-30-3, A report from Krnov, dated 4 August 1945). The organisation of Werwolf was not uncovered until following months when it was identified as the perpetrator of some unsolved cases (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-30-3, A report on the activities of the political intelligence department for the period from 1 to 30 September 1945).

The uncertainty and fear induced by Werwolf operations in the examined region made the security authorities identify a number of detained Germans as

members of Werwolf without having proved they were linked to the organisation in any way. There was a significantly large number of such arrests during the summer and early autumn of 1945. One of them took place on 4 August, when an alleged member of Werwolf was arrested in Cukmantl (today's Zlaté Hory) and testified that there was a larger unit of this organisation operating in the Šumperk District. According to her testimony, women were actively involved in the activities of the unit, which was allegedly seated in Głubczyce (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, A situation report of the Provincial Headquarters, Silesian branch, dated 7 August 1945). A similar arrest was reported on 16 to 18 June 1945, when seven men were arrested in Staré Město pod Sněžníkem who were believed to belong to the organisation. In this case, however, the men could actually have been members of Werwolf as the arrest was followed by the discovery of dozens of boxes of weapons and ammunition hidden nearby in the woods below Králický Sněžník (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. č. 285, A finding of the Werwolf warehouse, dated 19 July 1945). The fact that it was a Werwolf cache is also evidenced by the testimony of other arrested persons, who claimed that a number of officials of Nazi organisations had taken part in various courses in the last weeks of the war where they had been trained in shooting and sabotage. After the end of the courses, they went back home carrying boxes of weapons and ammunition, a large number of which were buried in the woods around Jeseník (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-30-3, A report of the National Security Corps in Hanušovice, dated 27 August 1945).

A series of incidents and attacks that took place in the region shows that the fear of attacks was not entirely unfounded. On 10 July 1945, a firefight took place between the camp guards and unknown attackers near the detention camp in Javorník (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, Displacement of part of the German population from Javorník on 12 and 13 July 1945). Another camp in the Frývaldov District, this time in Adolfovice u Frývaldova, was attacked on 17 August, where there was a shooting between attackers and SNB members, who killed a German who wanted to escape from the camp (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-30-3, A report of the Provincial SNB Headquarters in Brno, dated 17 August 1945). During another incident taking place on 13 July in the border village of Brumovice in the Krnov District, there was a firefight between an SNB member and several Germans (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, A situation report for 21 July 1945). Another incident was registered on 24 July in Bretnov (today's Široká Niva), where an officer of the Czechoslovak army was shot. In

response to the attack, the security authorities arrested several dozen members of the NSDAP and SA, who were either put in custody or transferred to the detention camp in Bruntál (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, A situation report of the Provincial Headquarters, Silesian branch, dated 1 August 1945). On 9 August, five 80mm mines were planted on the road connecting Opava and Bruntál, however, they were found and defused before they could cause any harm (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-30-3, A report of the Provincial Military Headquarters of the National Security Corps in Brno, dated 10 August 1945). Only a few days later, a motorcycle patrol of SNB members suffered a shooting attack on a road between Malá Morávka and Bruntál. The responsibility for the attack was attributed to German civilians from Starý Vogelzejf (Stará Rudná) (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-30-3, A report from the SNB station in Malá Morávka, dated 20 August 1945).

On the other hand, German militants were held responsible for all sorts of incidents in which the Germans did not have to be necessarily involved. These include an alleged bomb attack committed on 3 July in Bruntál, where the explosion in a state defence guard station killed one member of the guard and injured two other men (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, An official record of the event of 3 July 1945). In response to this incident, 19 persons of German ethnicity were summarily executed by order of the commander of the 3rd Battalion of the 1st Tank Brigade, which kept order in the town at that time (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, The assassination of members of the security guard in Bruntál, dated 4 July 1945). According to Tomáš Staněk, however, the explosion was a result of mishandling a grenade (Staněk, 1996, p. 102). A completely fictional attack by Germans took place at the end of September 1945 in Stará Červená Voda in the Frývaldov District. The original testimony claimed that there had been an attack on the local settlement commissioner in which the commissioner's driver had been killed. He was actually killed due to improper handling of a gun, and the culprit wanted to avoid responsibility by blaming the Germans (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 182, inv. no. 288, A report of the control department on the case of killing, dated 6 October 1945). In another case in July 1945, a patrol was assaulted near Javorník, which was followed by a shooting. However, it was subsequently established that there had not been any German saboteurs present. But the battalion commander of the 1st Czechoslovak Independent Tank Brigade stationed in Frývaldov decided to displace all unproductive Germans from Javorník as a punishment for the firefight. At the

same time, a mass execution similar to the one in Bruntál was reportedly planned, but the idea was abandoned in the end, and selected Germans were only beaten by the guards of the camp in which they were held (Staněk 2005, p. 310). Although the materials of state security authorities do not mention many similar cases where the Germans were held responsible for various incidents, it is not precluded that a number of cases attributed to Werwolf were not committed by Germans. Given their position in the post-war republic and the generally anti-German sentiment of the population, they could be easily victimised and blamed for many mistakes made by individuals and members of the security corps.

In the materials of state security authorities, Germans are often described as recipients or, conversely, disseminators of anti-state propaganda. This propaganda concerned mainly the future of the borderlands and the German minority in Czechoslovakia. According to the rumours, the Czechs were to leave the borderlands, and the territory was to be occupied by Western armies, which would end the displacement of the Germans (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 142, inv. no. 275, A monthly report on the political situation at the branch, dated 18 October 1945). Similar topics were addressed by the German propaganda in the Krnov District, which included rumours of getting even with the Czechs soon. These rapidly spreading rumours had one thing in common – they all claimed that the Germans were to be supported by a Western power, Great Britain, or the US, although it was also said that new German forces would be developed in Argentina and things like that. Another similar campaign took place in July when leaflets were captured in the neighbourhood of Bruntál, encouraging the German population to resist Czechoslovakia because the tide would soon turn in favour of the Germans (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, The German illegal leaflet campaign, dated 2 August 1945). These rumours did not appear only in the post-war months, even in November 1945, a report circulated in the Opava District that a quarter of a million former German soldiers and SS members armed by the British would occupy the borderlands (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-30-3, A report of the National Security Office in Opava, dated 7 November 1945). There was also pro-Habsburg propaganda claiming that the monarchy had been restored in Austria, led by Otto von Habsburg, and the Sudetenland was to become part of his new empire (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, A report on the political and economic situation in the Bruntál District, dated 10 July 1945). Another version of this rumour claimed that the successor to the Austro-Hungarian throne had married the daughter of the American president in the US and that the monarchy

had been subsequently restored (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-30-3, A report of the command of the Spálov station, dated 19 October 1945). The purpose of this propaganda was mainly to boost the morale of the German population, decimated by not only the wartime defeat but also by the beginning of the forced displacement from their homeland (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, The attitude of the Nazi or German population towards the Czechoslovak Republic, dated 12 July 1945). That is why most of these rumours agreed that the displacement would stop, the Czechs would be expelled, or the Germans would be at least given the same rights as the Czechs, and in order to enforce these goals, a foreign army would enter the borderlands, or the Sudetenland would be occupied directly by German forces and subsequently annexed to another existing state, or it would become independent (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-30-3, A report of the National Security Office in Opava, dated 7 November 1945; A report of the SNB station in Vízemberk, dated 19 October 1945).

Furthermore, there was yet another type of propaganda, claiming that new Freikorps units were formed in Poland, the task of which was to agitate against the annexation of Głubczyce and Racibórz areas to the Czechoslovak Republic by spreading anti-Czech reports among Polish services (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 142, inv. no. 275, A monthly report on the political situation at the branch, dated 18 October 1945). This propaganda demonstrates both the widespread aversion to the Germans and the prevailing negative attitude towards the Poles. It stemmed from border disputes in Těšín Silesia and efforts to annex the Upper Silesian regions to Czechoslovakia, which was also the objective of both Czechoslovak and Silesian institutions, declaratively supported by a demonstration for the restoration of Silesian self-government and annexation of the Upper Silesian regions held on 22 July 1945 in Opava (Janák, 1993, p. 72). These goals were also promoted to the disadvantage of the Poles by some press, which reported that "Russia can find a reliable support only in Czechoslovakia, but less so in Poles, who often show signs of hysteria and mass psychosis" (Staněk, 1991, p. 135). This widespread propaganda targeted at the Germans in the Głubczyce and Racibórz areas claimed that Czechoslovakia would be occupied by the Soviet Union and the Sudetenland would be annexed to Austria. According to other information, a network was formed in the borderlands, leading those interested in joining Freikorps across the border to Poland (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 182, inv. no. 288, Freikorps in the territory occupied by the Poles, dated 18 October 1945). All these reports were received with extreme concern because the National Security Corps believed they helped

to boost the self-confidence and determination of the Germans, which caused a number of problems in dealing with them.

Poles

Although the Poles are by far less frequently mentioned in the SNB materials from 1945, they are still considered a closely monitored nationality. This was mainly due to extremely problematic relations with Poland, stemming not only from the age-old dispute over Těšín Silesia that flared up again after the end of the war but also from the shift of the eastern German border to the Odra and Lužická Nisa rivers, which opened the issue of Kłodzko, Racibórz and Głubczyce areas, claimed by both Czechoslovakia and Poland. The Czechoslovak party defended its right to Těšín Silesia by arguing that the pre-Munich border had to be respected, while the other three territories were claimed based on historical and national arguments (Janák, 1993, p. 63). The disputes caused many local incidents in the post-war weeks, where the militants of both sides crossed the border. The most serious one was the so-called Racibórz incident on 10 June 1945, in which Czechoslovak units invaded the territory occupied by Poland and took over the territory south of the town. Although the members of the 1st Czechoslovak Independent Tank Brigade withdrew from the area and the incident was resolved on 14 June in the presence of Czechoslovak, Polish and Soviet military representatives, the invasion intensified the tension in mutual relations (Binar – Jirásek, 2012, p. 66). In those circumstances, military units concentrated on both the Czechoslovak and Polish sides of the border, and a conflict was around the corner (Janák, 1993, pp. 65–66). Fortunately, it never happened, and mutual negotiations took place in the following months in this tense atmosphere in order to resolve the problem.

The increased tension in mutual relations was also reflected in the attitude of the Czechoslovak state security authorities towards Poles occurring in the republic. The decree of the Minister of the Interior of 26 September 1945 informed that there was a large number of Poles in the Czechoslovak Republic who avoided registration and did not report even to the Polish consulate. Therefore, these were considered politically harmful persons with an anti-Soviet mindset, mostly members of the National Armed Forces (NSZ), who were to be expelled back to Poland immediately after their capture (Security Services Archive, coll. 304. inv. no. 304-131-1, A daily order no. 20 of the SNB Headquarters, Ostrava branch, dated 24 August 1945). A smaller number of settled Poles could also be found in the monitored region. In the Frývaldov District, these were mostly Poles who came during the German occupation and stayed there after the war. However, even

those were closely monitored, especially in 1945 (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, A situation report from the political district of Frývaldov, dated 24 July 1945).

Given the tense situation, the security authorities paid special attention to the Polish occupation of the shared border and possible border incidents. As is apparent from summary reports, these cases occurred quite often in 1945 in the examined area. On 14 June, an incident took place between Úvalno and Branice in the area occupied by Poland, during which Polish soldiers crossed the border to the Czechoslovak side and stayed there for several hours until the next day. A similar event happened again in the same area a few days later. In another case, six Polish soldiers entered Vidnava in the Frývaldov District on 19 June after getting lost on their way to their guard post (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, A situation report on the conditions on the border of the Opava and Hlučín Districts, dated 29 June 1945). Other cases of Polish soldiers crossing the state border were registered quite frequently in the following weeks. According to the Financial Guard and SNB, during their border crossings, Polish soldiers tried to determine the number and location of Czechoslovak armed forces in the borderland, as was the case near Jindřichov in the Krnov District on 29 July (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, A situation report of the Provincial Headquarters, Silesian branch, dated 7 August 1945). There were also shootings at the border. On 29 August, two female Germans were shot by border guards near Rusín in the Krnov District while crossing the border. These were apparently women who delivered messages and supplies to the Germans in the Głubczyce area (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-223-5, Shooting by the Polish guard, dated 30 August 1945). In another case of 29 November 1945, several Polish soldiers crossed the border near Ondřejovice in the Frývaldov District, broke into a house inhabited by Germans and robbed it while threatening the inhabitants with weapons (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-223-5, A report of a robbery committed by Polish soldiers on the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic, dated 29 November 1945). Another case occurred on 17 December, when a Polish patrol opened fire on Czech children near the state border and then dragged them into Polish territory, from where they were released after a few hours (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-223-5, A report on an incident at the state border, dated 19 December 1945). As is clear from the aforementioned examples, in 1945, border incidents became a relatively common phenomenon on the Czechoslovak-Polish border even beyond the thorny area of Těšín Silesia.

Poland and Poles living in the Czechoslovak Republic were on the radar of the state security authorities also as part of the fight against anti-Czechoslovak propaganda. It was active mainly in the area of Těšín Silesia and based mostly on the disputed control over this territory, but the echoes of the Czechoslovak-Polish dispute can be observed in the researched area as well. In the autumn of 1945, Polish propaganda activities aimed at questioning Czechoslovakia's rights to the areas of Głubczyce, Kłodzko and Racibórz were registered in the Opava and Hlučín Districts. According to the National Security Office in Krnov, several dozen Poles came from Těšín Silesia as refugees to agitate in border villages, and they were even accused of murders and kidnappings of Polish refugees in the borderland (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 142, inv. no. 275, A monthly report on the political situation at the branch, dated 18 October 1945). Other cases of murders attributed to Polish militants reportedly took place at the end of December in the Krnov District (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-30-3, A report on the activities of the political intelligence department for the period from 15 to 31 December 1945).

Red Army soldiers

The relationship with Soviet soldiers in Czechoslovakia was also relatively problematic. On the one hand, a majority of the population was genuinely happy about the arrival of the Red Army, on the other hand, there was an increasing number of problems and criminal cases where the perpetrator was a member of the Soviet troops. These incidents, of course, happened in the monitored region as well. With the suspect soldiers, the SNB had to follow the order of the SNB provincial commander at first, according to which Red Army soldiers committing crimes in the republic were to be treated harshly and, if necessary, in arms. The detained soldiers were ordered to be transported to the provincial headquarters (Security Services Archive, coll. 304, inv. no. 304-131-9, A daily order no. 7 of SNB Rýmařov, dated 23 October 1945). This order was later extended by agreement between Czechoslovak central authorities and representatives of Allied armies, stating that a crime committed by their soldier was to be referred to the judicial authorities of the relevant army. Therefore, in the event of unlawful conduct committed by Red Army soldiers, a report written in Russian, describing the crime and indicating the name, rank, service category and other information clearly identifying the perpetrator, was to be sent to the military headquarters of the relevant Soviet unit. However, as stated by a prosecutor of one of the Soviet troops stationed in Czechoslovakia, only those files were to be forwarded based on which it was possible to identify the perpetrator. On the other hand, the Red

Army authorities themselves encouraged the Czechoslovak security authorities to immediately and vigorously use force against their soldiers who acted violently or otherwise indecently, including the authorisation to use a weapon (Security Services Archive, coll. 304. inv. no. 304-131-1, A daily order no. 24 of the SNB Headquarters, Ostrava branch, dated 30 November 1945).

The number of incidents between members of national security corps and Red Army soldiers or crimes committed by Soviet soldiers temporarily staying in Czechoslovakia registered in the monitored area was high, especially in the period shortly after the end of the war. In July, thefts committed by members of the Red Army became rampant in the Bruntál District (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, The seizing of property of Czech citizens by members of the Red Army, dated 19 July 1945). According to the District Administrative Commission in Krnov, Soviet soldiers wandered the Silesian borderland frequently, often drunk, and violently requested civilians to give them horses, cattle, corn, or other daily necessities. In many cases, the perpetrators were never caught because they disappeared before the state security authorities or armies arrived (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, A complaint about indecent behaviour of members of the Red Army, dated 27 August 1945). This was also the case of the incident on 3 August, when a large group of Soviet soldiers assaulted two farmers in Oldřišov in the Opava District and robbed them of cattle under the threat of weapons. Then they left in the direction of Racibórz and were never found (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, A report of a special security incident, dated 7 August 1945). In some cases, however, the state authorities arrived in time, which often made the situation even more aggravated. One of the most serious cases took place on 3 July 1945, when several Soviet soldiers demanded farm animals in Lichnov in the Bruntál District. Their demands were opposed not only by local members of the National Security Guard but also by Soviet soldiers from another unit stationed in Lichnov. In the shooting that ensued, one Soviet soldier was killed and another one was seriously injured. The whole case was then referred to the NKVD authorities (Provincial Archives in Opava, coll. of the Provincial National Committee, Ost. branch, box no. 147, inv. no. 285, Incidents caused by members of the Red Army, dated 11 July 1945).

Re-emigrants

New settlers were arriving at the borderland on a mass scale already during the displacement of the German population. These did not include only

the Czech and Slovak population but also people from abroad as, in July 1945, the Czechoslovak government invited compatriots to return to their homeland and help to settle the borderland. Many Czechs from Volhynia, Romania and other territories accepted this invitation in a short time and came back to Czechoslovakia. Their arrival was considered pragmatic in terms of populating the abandoned areas in the borderland and also awakened a national pathos, stating that the returning of the nation's lost sons would help free the land from Germanic tyranny (Spurný 2011, p. 287). Many Czechs and Slovaks returned to the country from abroad as early as 1945, and by 26 January 1946, the Ministry of Agriculture registered 3,619 independent farmers from the ranks of re-emigrants (Vaculík, 2001, p. 57). The earliest comers included former members of the 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps in the USSR originating from Volhynia as well as compatriots from Romania, Yugoslavia, and other states and optants from Subcarpathian Ruthenia, for whom the Ministry of the Interior issued an option certificate (State District Archives in Bruntál, coll. of the District National Committee II in Bruntál, box no. 553, inv. no. 739, The citizenship of members of foreign troops). Although these re-emigrants were perceived as Czechs or Slovaks, they brought their own values and cultural and social capital. That is why they were included in this research, even though they were not officially considered members of another nationality (Spurný, 2011, p. 20).

New settlers were welcome as the borderland became depopulated due to the beginning of the displacement of the Germans, but the attitude towards the re-emigrants was not only positive, and they could be considered politically unreliable depending on their country of origin. For the state security authorities, the borderland was an important area in terms of security, and they closely monitored who was settling there. Specifically, re-emigrants from Romania, both Czechs and Slovaks, were considered reliable in terms of state security by the state authorities only after an unspecified period (Kreml & Jirásek, 2015, p. 335). The Ministry of the Interior considered re-emigrants from Hungary directly unreliable in relation to the state. Therefore, in order to maintain security in the borderland, the Ministry of Agriculture was instructed not to give the settlers from these countries entire villages but to distribute them among a number of settlements where they would live next to settlers from the inland, who were perceived as reliable in relation to the state (Nosková & Váchová, 2000, pp. 208–209).

Conclusion

It can thus be observed that national themes and instructions on how to treat members of various nationalities were amply represented in the SNB

materials between May and December 1945. However, as is apparent from the above, there were major differences in the attitudes taken to individual nationalities and their members.

Naturally, the greatest attention was paid to the Germans. Given the heated post-war atmosphere characterised by an understandably strong anti-German sentiment, it can be said that the German population was conceived in the materials of security corps as a threat to state security or as a group the members of which must be expelled from the Czechoslovak Republic. These attitudes were evidenced not only by a number of orders and decrees of national or provincial headquarters, which requested their subordinates to be uncompromising to the Germans, but also by official state policy expressed by presidential decrees. The German population was subject to the principle of collective guilt, which proved fatal to many anti-fascists, as is demonstrated by the Krnov case, in particular. Although the corps headquarters and the Ministry of the Interior tried to regulate the conduct of their members by regulations and orders, there were still many excesses and problems. The Germans were thus mentioned in the SNB materials in various contexts, however, with a few exceptions, they were perceived as a security threat or perpetrators of anti-state activities. It should be noted that, in the monitored districts, these attitudes were supported by the local Czech population and, moreover, the interventions of SNB members against the Germans were considered too mild in some cases. Therefore, these attitudes shaped the view of corps members on the Germans.

Other nationalities appearing in the SNB materials in a larger scope in 1945 included the Poles, the relationship with whom was also not entirely positive. In the context of disputes over the Upper Silesian regions, they were perceived as a threat, their military units at the border were closely monitored, and the SNB focused on Poles living in the region.

The SNB's attitude towards Soviets and settlers coming from abroad was much more positive but not entirely trouble-free, in particular, the attitude towards re-emigrants was ambivalent. On the one hand, both the SNB and local authorities were aware of the fact that re-emigrants were essential in repopulating the borderland, on the other hand, there were concerns regarding the reliability of re-emigrants from certain countries, so various regulations were issued to prevent their continuous settlement that could give rise to problems in the future. Soviet citizens are mentioned in the SNB materials mainly as members of the Red Army who disrupt order in the region. As follows from the aforementioned incidents, these were not isolated cases, however, the Soviet military authorities tried to participate in solving them and did not prevent the SNB from using weapons

against Soviet soldiers while enforcing order. It is clear that the national issue was overshadowed in these cases, and the cases can be perceived mainly as crimes of individuals or smaller groups, which is why the commanders did not operate with any ethnicity-based guidelines.

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