

Résumé

The publication deals with the activities of one of the military secret services – defence intelligence service in 1945–1950. The military defence intelligence service (OBZ) played an important role in the struggle for political power in the post-war Czechoslovakia. Headed by Bedřich Reicin, it contributed to gaining control over the security branches of the Ministry of the Interior as well as over the secret services by the Communist Party as early as 1945. It considerably contributed to the seizure of power by the Communist Party in February 1948 and its strengthening in the subsequent period. In the last phase of its activity the military defence intelligence service participated in preparations of unlawful processes, particularly those with military persons. It significantly contributed to actions of provocation, resulting in unlawful conviction and imprisonment of hundreds of persons over the years 1948–1951. Tens of them were even executed.

The first part gives a detailed analysis of associations with a formation of the military defence intelligence service early in 1945 as well as of the circumstances of the appointment of Lieutenant Bedřich Reicin as head of the OBZ department of the first Czechoslovak military corps in the USSR. The attention is focused on the activities of the military defence intelligence service during the war and until the end of the state of emergency in December 1945. In that period of time, in close co-operation with the Soviet intelligence services, OBZ participated in arresting hundreds of persons and their forcible transportation to camps in the USSR. OBZ also screened officers and sergeants who enlisted in the new Czechoslovak military forces and significantly contributed to gaining control over the Ministry of the Interior in 1945. In autumn 1945 the defence intelligence service launched intelligence defence of factories essential for the defence of the state, thereby considerably extending its activities to the civil sector as well.

Another part of the publication deals with the activities of the military defence intelligence service from the beginning of 1946 when its extensive reorganization took place until February 1948. At that time the OBZ activities considerably increased. It gained

a privileged position among all the secret services. Already at this time it participated in the persecution of officers, mostly of those involved in the western resistance movement. It also directed its activities abroad, predominantly at the request of the Soviet intelligence services. Besides, OBZ also contributed to strengthening the influence of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSC), especially in the military forces. It watched officers discharged from the military forces for any reasons, compiling lists of troublesome people. In autumn 1947 it participated in sharpening the situation on the domestic political scene through its participation in the so called 'Mostecká espionage affair' or in a conspiracy in Slovakia. During the February events in 1948 colonel Bedřich Reicin, the OBZ head, was one of the KSC top leaders and on the basis of the materials prepared by him 25 generals were discharged from the military forces immediately after the seizure of power by the Communists.

The final part of the publication is devoted to the activities of the military defence intelligence service after the February 1948 until the arrest of Bedřich Reicin in February 1951. At that time the military defence intelligence service, still headed by Bedřich Reicin, participated in carrying out the first purges in the officer military corps. After Bedřich Reicin moved to take on the office of the deputy minister of national defence, his office was taken by colonel Josef Musil. OBZ became directly subordinate to Bedřich Reicin and participated in the persecution of officers to his „order“, mostly of those involved in the western resistance movement. The military defence intelligence service commonly used unlawful methods of investigation in their work, resulting in forced testimonies of the imprisoned and hundreds of the convicted in the staged processes. The decline of the defence intelligence service began in connection with the takeover of the office of the minister of national defence by Alexej Čepička in April 1950. Early in 1951 Bedřich Reicin was arrested and later on other OBZ leading officials and investigators. This was the end of the activities of the defence intelligence service under the leadership of Bedřich Reicin, but not of the unlawful investigation methods of the security branches. Further unlawful processes followed, this time with the Communist officials.

The publication is completed with a number of documents and

photographs, allowing to learn more about the activities of the military defence intelligence service in the period under examination and also documenting the backstage of the struggle for political power in Czechoslovakia in the post-war period.