

The Show Trial of JUDr. Milada Horáková:

The Catalyst for Social Revolution in Communist Czechoslovakia, 1950

Adam D. E. Watkins

Central Connecticut State University

New Britain, Connecticut

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Abstract

Over the last twenty years and since the fall of the Iron Curtain, stories that were once silenced under the Czechoslovak Communist occupation are at last being voiced. The discovery of accounts of those who were persecuted under communism has hitherto remained unexamined and often overlooked by Western scholars. As information unravels out of the classified vaults, archives, and journals of the not-so-distant past, the global community is increasingly learning chronicles of survival, perseverance, and plights for human rights under the Red Star. This historiography documents one woman's unfaltering courage and journey with the ushering in of Czechoslovak Communism in 1948. The study deconstructs the show trial's influence on inducing a country to foster the Communist movement against decades of democratic traditions. The research reveals the impact of the show trial of Dr. Milada Horáková in 1950 and how it was instrumental in reforming a society, marked the beginning of Stalinism, and ushered forth a perverted system of justice leading to a cultural transformation after the Communist putsch. Furthermore, the revolution truncated intellectual thought and signified the end of many social movements – including the women's rights movement in Czechoslovakia.

With the advent of the Communist government in 1948, a crucial turning point occurred within the Communist movement in the minds of a nation which revolutionized Czechoslovak public opinion, silenced critics, and secured allegiance to the newly created Communist state. The research illustrates how this decisive event served as a catalyst for Stalinism to succeed in a democratically-rooted society. Josef Stalin and Czechoslovak Communist leaders could purge

politicians, control the media, and structure economic collectivism but they required a vehicle to transfigure the mentality of Czech citizens. This was compulsory to assure the future of the furthest Communist satellite state. The research argues that the process and propaganda surrounding Dr. Milada Horáková and twelve other cultural symbols was an imperative turning point in communism's success thus signifying the start of Stalinism's apex in Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, it contends that without the show trial and execution of Dr. Milada Horáková, the following show trials and political purges of the early 1950s which liquidated approximately 200 people would have not have had the public support if her trial had not established the social and "legal" precedent. The May-June show trial of Dr. Milada Horáková in 1950 was a watershed moment in Soviet "judicial" processes that ultimately enabled other victims to be led to the gallows. Consequently, her show trial was neither an overt political purge nor a religious eradication to eliminate the Roman Catholic Church as the other trials demonstrated, yet it functioned as a trial to culturally revolutionize the minds and beliefs of a nation so fiercely independent which can only underscore the sophistication of the propaganda at that time.

Acknowledgement

A special thank you F.M. for listening to my bantering for days, weeks, and months on end with this project. Without your support and humor, I'd still be on the first page. You made for an excellent travel partner throughout this thesis' journey across the Atlantic and thank you for your endurance with our endless conversations over café tables throughout Europe. I feel comforted in the fact knowing that whatever I envision for my future, you are there to support and encourage me to *go for it*.

S láskou, děkuji!

Dedicated to

MUDr. Naděžda Kavalírová

And the Confederation of Czech Political Prisoners

*With warm gratitude for believing in me
and granting me the blessing to go forth.*

May the courage to remember endure.

Introduction

The intention of this historiography on Dr. Milada Horáková is, above all, to document an unknown history that is rarely discussed outside the Czech Republic or in the English language. It is a subject matter that has not been researched or compiled in North America. A mother, wife, lawyer, politician, Holocaust survivor, women's right advocate, and human rights campaigner, Horáková was a pioneer in the face of acute political and social adversity. The research's goal is to intimately study her narrative of survival and acts of selflessness for her fellow countrymen and what we, as global citizens, can apply to our own lives. This project is to structure a foundation for future research aimed at preserving political prisoners' stories and legacies that have been marginalized from history. Secondly, this study examines the impact that the show trial generated within the Czechoslovak society and the goal it ultimately fulfilled for a country not entirely persuaded by Czech Communism. It pinpoints the moment where vital social transition arose. It analyzes the role of fear as a weapon and how the emotion was utilized as a systematic means to exploit the Czechoslovak citizens during the height of Stalinism. Researching the show trial unveils the turning point in Czech mentality to succumb to the totalitarian regime and the Sovietization of their society. Examining the show trial's authority within the historical framework of socio-political transformation furthers a reader's understanding of the elements that paralyzed a country in Soviet occupation for four decades. However, to comprehend why Dr. Horáková was selected as the symbol during the upheaval and as one to personify the consequences of social dissidence, one must first research her life within the historical context.

Methodology

The historiography considers a succession of events progressing to a singular moment that revolutionized mid-century Czechoslovakia. Methods utilized in this research study provide theoretical explanations on why the show trial occurred, the socio-political factors during that time frame, and varying descriptions surrounding the event's importance. It examines the relationship between an individual to her society, to others, to a culture, a political system, and to a country in tumultuous transformation. It seeks to weave these events and sentiments to provide an explanation of the past, how it was the impetus for the apex of Stalinism in Czechoslovakia in 1950, and the relevance to today. As Czechs and global citizens alike learn of the events that occurred behind the Iron Curtain, many of these narratives like the one examined in this study are vital in comprehending the past to ultimately progress in the post-Communist region. As more documents have become unearthed and accessible to the academic and interested community, they enabled this study to be researched at this time. Dr. Milada Horáková is virtually unknown in the West and has not been examined in the English language since 1995. Over the past fifteen years, a significant amount of declassified documents, letters, newsreels, and personal accounts have been released underscoring the need for this research to occur. Furthermore, judicial application to those tied to the show trial in 1950 have been transpiring in Prague since 2007 thus illuminating facts and arguments not currently considered nor documented until this time.

The sources utilized to craft the research study have been court documents, transcriptions, letters, radio broadcasts, newsreels, film, public records, journals, government

reports, political quarterlies and columns, newspaper editorials, photos, and interviews. The primary sources firstly focused on the media and literature generated in the years 1948-1950 which led up to the height and origin of the climax of Stalinism. They encompassed mid-Century Czechoslovak annuals, publications, and reports filed both outside and inside the country. The secondary materials were anthologies, historical accounts, and relative records surrounding the time period which aided in reconstructing the socio-political environment in relationship to an event that was examined in the research. Lastly, the research was conducted in the English, Czech, and French languages that pertained to the research at hand.

It was essential to use external criticism to judge the authenticity of documents and historical sources whilst compiling this research study. The author was in contact with academics and scholars domestically and abroad to cross-check data and statistics mined during the thesis process. Internal criticism that drew upon the author's experience was also fundamental in compiling the study to assess the internal meaning of the documents and judge their legitimacy. With a critical eye, the author pulled upon varying materials that were applicable and accurate. It judged the motives for all components cited. For the study on the show trial of Dr. Milada Horáková, the content analysis phase was demanding but crucial in producing a cohesive study that future researchers and academics could benefit from as more information becomes available in the coming years.

In addition, the author travelled to Prague, Czech Republic to conduct an oral history interview with the director of the Confederation of Czech Political Prisoners, MUDr. Naděžda Kavalírová, in August 2009. This interview proved invaluable as gaps in printed research

available existed and without consultation to the Confederation in Prague, the study could have not incorporated many essential answers required for this project. While in the Czech Republic, the author also interviewed Mr. Zdeněk Mareš in České Budějovice who provided insight into the Czechoslovak Communist impact on regional towns. This information was imperative in learning of the regional effects of Communism at the pinnacle of Stalinism. Two additional visits were made in November 2009 to The Netherlands and Belgium to consult with academics and scholars surrounding outstanding queries related to this thesis project. The trips in November were supportive in nature and were vital for consultation on the show trial of Dr. Milada Horáková, historical events, and modern questions. Although written documents were heavily relied upon, the study is put forth also with the inclusion of oral histories which bolster comprehension of the subject. The interview conducted at the Confederation of Political Prisoners afforded the author privileged access to unprinted literature, publications, and consultation with those whom endured the same circumstances as those surrounding Dr. Horáková.

Finally, the success of this thesis was constructed by braiding many elements from the historical, political, judicial, and sociological vehicles available at the time of conception. The archival research coupled with context analysis surrounding Horáková was vital in compiling a study - one that is essential in documenting for those interested in the subject material and relating the narrative to the West. Researching this topic, the author found that many of the pieces surrounding the trial of Dr. Horáková were freckled throughout the Czech Republic and parts of Europe yet were never produced nor articulated in one cohesive project. Either in Czech, English, or French, the available materials did not draw upon each other or connect the

narrative of Dr. Horáková in one study. Furthermore, they did not take into consideration the succession of events, internal and external factors leading to the trial, and the complex interplay of social forces to produce one coherent study to serve as a foundation for future research. It was the goal of this project to command methodology to not only produce a fact-based study of the trial and the evolution of major events in Dr. Horáková's life, but to process those facts and how they were interrelated to produce the ultimate outcome faced by the accused. The project is documented for others who seek to research her chronicle or others similar to Dr. Horáková's in their own unique perspective and approach such important and timely matters surrounding the persecuted. The study is one that can be related to all those whom have suffered and are currently suffering under oppression and is instrumental in the global vision for humanity around our global community in modern times.

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Note:

ABS, or *Archiv bezpečnostních složek*, refers to the “Security Services Archive,” based in Prague. Illustrations throughout this study are accessed from the ABS collection.

Don't be frightened and sad because I am not coming back any more.

Learn,
my child,

To look at life early as a serious matter.

Life is hard, it does not pamper anybody, and for every time it strokes you,

it gives you ten blows.

Become accustomed to that soon, but don't let it defeat you.

Decide to fight.

Have courage and clear goals and you will win over life.

Letter

Milada Horáková to daughter Jana Horáková.

Pankrác Prison, June 1950.

1

The Passage toward Sovietization

Following the days of the horrific Second World War, most of Central and Eastern Europe were in the clutches of Stalin. General popular opinion in these states viewed the Soviet Union as the liberators from Nazi Fascism however nothing could be more further from the truth. Politically motivated, the “liberation” in 1945 was a ruse agreed to by American and British powers to allow the Soviets to emancipate these cities across Europe. To illuminate, and as it pertains to then Czechoslovakia, the American forces were allowed under Truman to liberate Plzeň but could not infiltrate more east into the country to carve the Nazis out of Prague. After the Yalta Agreement, the Americans, British, and Soviet powers agreed to craft a line from the Baltic Sea pulling down to the Adriatic Sea as to “who” would eventually get “what.” Stalin had known he could manipulate the socio-political consequences of the Munich Agreement in 1938, signed by the Americans, British, and French, that annexed parts of Czechoslovakia to Hitler without a struggle. The Allied agreement that turned the country over to Fascism would resonate with the Czechs in 1945 whilst resurrecting the country in the post-War years. The Czechs believed that they no longer could rely on the promises made by the West therefore allowing the political and public dismay to shift toward Soviet support and the rise of the Communist Party. Czechoslovakia in the post- War years was dependent upon international support in restoring their pre- War democracy as many leaders such as President Beneš were returning from exile in London. It can be argued that this openness or dependence

on outside state actors to aid the Czechs politically was exploited and served as one of the reasons why support for the Communist Party (*Komunistická strana Československa* or *KSČ*) spiked in 1946. As Kubat explains, “The Communists – who during the First Republic (1918-1938) had averaged about 10 per cent of all votes – scored a “landslide” victory in the May elections of 1946” (Kubat 696). However, Mr. Kubat’s assertion that the election was a “landslide” is not wholly correct. In fact, the Communists lost the election in Slovakia in 1946 to the Democratic Party and in the Czech lands, the Communists won only a third of Parliamentary seats but with stiff competition from three other anti-Communist parties which vied for democratic seats (*Československá volební statistika*). In the case of the latter and as we shall see with Dr. Milada Horáková, the main threat to the Czech Communist Party was the Czech National Socialist Party (*Česká strana národně sociální* or *ČSNS*) lead by President Beneš. Collectively, however, the small country of Czechoslovakia after the War years slightly turned their embattled country towards Moscow to seek rebuilding and military support that ultimately played into Stalin’s wishes. The overall “assistance” in Czechoslovakia from the Red Army and Soviets was one dimension of obtaining support for the Communist Party. Another example was the Communists orchestrating “People’s Courts” to try those guilty of War crimes against the Czech people in Prague. The latter stayed their presence for an additional two years after the War and underlined the perception that the Soviets were aiding via cooperation, justice, and camaraderie. In essence, support for the Communist Party existed but Czech society required much more grooming to convince the democratically-rooted country into supporting Communism immediately after the War. With the absence of the West in Central European matters in the years after the War, the socio-political ground was becoming fertile for

a Communist coup d'état that would come to fruition by February 1948. The free election of 1946 would be the Czech's last for over four decades.

With the bitter arguing in Parliament with the newly appointed Communist seats, KSČ's Prime Minister Klement Gottwald and his party were actively working in conjunction with USSR's leaders to devise elaborate strategies and propaganda to overthrow the multi-party government. The tactics devised between Moscow and Prague were carefully calculated and executed with much help from the Soviets who had familiarity in propaganda and campaigns from the early 1920s. In Czechoslovakia, a popular method to prop the new order was to overthrow public figures on charges of treason or espionage. These declarations before the public under the ruse of collaboration with foreign enemies such as the Nazis during the War were effective in establishing the new order. Furthermore, the Soviets and Communist Czechs focused efforts on an intensified Czech class struggle which relied heavily on students, farmers, peasantry, and lower-middle class citizens' support. As the tension grew, the democratic parties of Czechoslovakia underestimated this sophistication and organization of the Communist Party thereby lacking countermeasures to circumvent the Communist's argument. For example, one author notes, "Instead of combing their efforts, the democratic parties competed among themselves just as they hoped to compete with the Communist Party . . . the democrats' disunity of aims and methods were in sharp contrast to the strict discipline and carefully planned strategy on the Communist side" (Duchacek 513). The KSČ momentum leading up to the February coup was gaining strength as the Czech Communists relied on campaigning for worker's rights while unleashing propaganda against the democratic parties on baseless claims of anti-Czech involvement with foreign leaders. This tactic would draw on the

public fear produced after the Munich Agreement of 1938 and the treachery it symbolized. The intensity at which the Communists were campaigning at this junction is articulated by Duchacek who states

Some were convinced that the rhythm of Communist demands had quickened because the Communists feared defeat at the polls and therefore desired to settle the election issues beforehand and at the same time wanted to impress the voter with the continued success of Communist activities in the government and parliament, so that he would vote for the winners and not the “permanent losers,” the democratic parties.

Duchacek 520.

Furthermore, Duchacek also comments that the Communist machinery devised a way to isolate one Democratic Party from the other or to publically demonize a leader for any anti- state activity (513). This argument underscores the Communist reliance on international factors and stressors to duly sway the internal socio-political issues in Czechoslovakia. However, the Czech people were not fully aware that the Czech Communists were in cooperation with a larger, more powerful apparatus in Moscow. The Soviet carnage and upheaval, as exemplified in the horrors of the Great Soviet Purges of the 1930s, was well known in Czechoslovakia. It was also known in the post- War years that a romanticized view of pan- Slavic unity existed. The average citizen, conversely, could have not predicted that the Soviets and Czech Communists like Gottwald or Secretary-General of the Party Rudolf Slánský would use Communism as an instrument of terror, destruction, and a weapon of revolution. To this end, the greatest disaster of the political partnership was that the Czech Communists implemented the most violent crimes against their fellow citizens which highlights shared blame with Moscow. The

Czech human cost would be significant to those who would oppose Stalin and the Soviet-Czech agenda. The working class ruse was a political arm veiled to assume exclusive control of these lands fueled only by manipulating the fears and vulnerability of Czech citizens in the post- War years. If the populace had known that Stalin and Czech Communists would annihilate the judicial, industrial, cultural, and agricultural facets arguably the citizens would have not backed the discourse from Parliament. After all, the Communist movement was campaigned to the people as a political structure to be guided by the people, the working class, and working intelligentsia – not the Soviets or the KSČ. Moreover, with many media outlets now nationalized by the KSČ in 1947 and led by the Cultural Affairs Minister Gustav Bareš, any democratic message was significantly weakened, distorted, or blocked. Instead, the Czech nation was broadcasted daily pro-Soviet rhetoric. What the Communists offered was “a specific national path to socialism, a route that would be peaceful, without civil war. It found its origin in a democratic and national revolution, like that of 1918, but this time led and directed by the working class” (Skilling 103). By 1948, and after a period of restored democracy in Czechoslovakia in what is referred to as the Second Republic (1945-1948), the Kremlin propaganda apparatus had stripped the public down thereby giving way for pro-Soviet political leaders to drive their message to their fellow brothers and sisters to unite against the treachery and imperialism of the West. Shortly following, and with the threat of Soviet military intervention, democratic parliamentary leaders in the last week of February 1948 handed in their resignations to President Beneš which collapsed the government and unified Czechoslovakia with the Soviet Union. With the Communist coup having succeeded,

Czechoslovakia was the last state to align with the Kremlin in the Soviet bloc. The nation was only months away from the free elections scheduled for May 1948.

Countries like Hungary, Poland, and Czechoslovakia soon were swept up in fierce Russianization. Russian language, customs, traditions, and holidays were taught to the people, economics and trade seeking to sow the Soviet seeds were imposed, and the gradual effort to form one Soviet identity had begun. The plan “was designed to create new generations which would be isolated from Western culture and influence and trained to recognize and applaud the benefits of Soviet and Communist rule” (Byrnes 8). In a country of over 15 million people from various cultural, ethnic, religious, and ideological backgrounds, the complexion of the state would pose a challenge for the newly appointed leaders of Communist Czechoslovakia to transform. The country had been molded and sculpted by decades of artistic contributions under the Monarchy but accelerated sans Vienna after 1918. Throughout the early 20th century, Czechs seized control over their destiny through the arts, movements, and cultural events which outlined the society. The society fell into many varying social “buckets” throughout the country with each presenting a cultural contribution to the state. After the Monarchy, the authors, artists, public figures, and varying cultural leaders were devoted to prop up their country singlehandedly, propel forward in their destiny, and embrace the future without serving as a conglomerate state.

During the 1920s and 1930s, Czech culture flourished. Divorced from the Monarchy, the Czechs celebrated their identity, patriotism, and ingenuity via the arts, academic arena, and intellectual thought. The revitalization period, sovereign from Austro-Hungarian Monarchy,

afforded Czechs the forum to culturally engage and challenge themselves in their society. Moreover, contributing to the Czech society also was a display of national pride in spite of the Monarchy as a way to demonstrate their independence from Vienna. During the First World War, the arts in Czechoslovakia were repressed and subdued due to the German and Austrian aggression however, with its conclusion, it gave birth to plurality and inventiveness. Czech Cubism was born and influenced art and architecture with leaders such as Emil Filla and Vlastislav Hofman. The Cubist movement evolved into Czech Surrealism which was well received in Paris and around the continent. In literature, authors such as Jaroslav Hašek authored *The Good Soldier Švejk* that contributed to quintessential Czech humor and reflection on the War's inhumanity. The Czech Existentialist movement was pioneered by the works of Ladislav Klíma and the Čapek brothers who commented on anti-Fascism through their folk-inspired prose. The 1920s and 1930s were of great advancement in the Czech literary world but would be dismantled with the presence of Nazi suppression that, by 1941, began to deport these authors to concentration camps for extermination. During this same year, newspapers and varying publishing outlets were shut down thus silencing these authors and their message. Their prose fought against Fascism yet sadly, many of these contributors did not survive the War. Their involvement in the Czech Resistance movement was successful until that year with very few returning to their country by 1945. Those who did not remain in the country by the February coup d'état rose the genre of exile literature, stemming from France, the Americas, and England. By 1950

. . . we find 'Soviet Reality' and Soviet practice in every sphere of art and science appealed to by Czech critics as the touchstone of rectitude . . . The procedure for obtaining permission to publish books became highly complex in all cases where

ideological points were involved . . . A department of Prague University Library was made responsible for controlling all books sent or taken out of the country, and quite apart from political works, even volumes of lyrical verse have been put on the contraband list after adverse criticism of the Party.

Viney 471-472

The authors who remained in Czechoslovakia learned of tight censorship and all avant garde prose was illegal. Anything that was against the Cultural Department of the Prime Minister was grounds for imprisonment. Coupled with the broadcasted show trials, the artistic and counterculture was transformed via silence and fear. Those who had embraced these artistic movements quickly distanced themselves from the art and evolution of social rights and freedoms provided under the democracy. Those who aligned with the Communists now engaged in the socialist realist genre that was void of all expressions of dissidence or subversion. With many of the artists having perished during the War or having fled Communism, the Czech Resistance movement during the rise of Soviet Communism could not successfully or strategically organize itself to undermine the rise of the Red Tide. The show trials inflicted terror on any individual who embraced “Western” ideologies, currents of thought, or freedoms of expression that was against the Soviet and Communist grain.

Music and the arts during the 1920s and 1930s also contributed to the founding of the Czechoslovak state and projection of identity. The country had been the home of acclaimed composers Antonín Dvořák and Bedřich Smetana in the 19th century and Prague was considered to be a music capital after Leipzig. The Czechs celebrated with dance and song in the 1920s and combined the two in what Westerners know as *polka*. Perhaps the most joyous of polka songs is the “Beer Barrel Polka,” or “Škoda lásky” (Wasted Love). Although this may appear as a

lighthearted reference, the era was one of celebration and proclamation of Czechs having value on the continent without being in the shadow of the Monarchy. Included in liberated music and entertainment styles was the contribution of contemporary Jewish music in Prague which documented many laws and religious beliefs of historical Jewish faith. Judaism was culturally gaining more public acceptance in the democratic state of Czechoslovakia. In addition, music also was vital in other religions and expressionism around the country. For example, the Roman Catholic Church, premier venue of religious hymns and song with centuries of European composers, was banned under the Communists and the music (in addition to the religion itself) could not be accessed by parishioners. Instrumental in celebrating identity, music in opera, theater, religion, and dance was defused. By 1948 and the early 1950s, music was replaced by Soviet songs and their traditional folk music. The theater and dance halls had been nationalized which censored all Czech music and disposed of these ballads. Moreover, the emergence of Soviet songs or artistic renderings partly eliminated the arts in the Czech language. This Soviet entrance onto the Czech cultural scene displaced the Czech language and performance pieces thereby muting any artistic adaptations of classics that could have been used as a tool to insert a double (subversive) meaning into a performance. With the emergence of the show trials of Czechoslovakia and their broad reach, those who operated in the small corners of cultural society were paralyzed by fear that they would be apprehended and also imprisoned. Because Czech theater and opera could not be performed unless reviewed and approved, the music could not reach the people and the media had control over what records and scores could be sold in the country. For students who wished to learn these arts, curriculums and professors were disposed under Communism thereby ensuring that there could not be a reemergence of

artistic or cultural influence. By the early 1950s and during the show trials, many of these musical masterpieces fell into obscurity and illegality thus removing cultural identity and revolutionizing a society into conformity.

In 1948, now that the Communists had seized total political control, conformity would be expected and other varying cultural or socio-political dissidents would ultimately be liquidized. To demonstrate, “the Soviet Union found itself encircled and isolated. Stalin reacted by turning the occupied countries into satellites, using them as a military defense belt and forcing the Soviet pattern on every aspect of their political, economic, and social lives” (Hodos 2). This was achieved through the eliminations of professors at Charles University in Prague and elsewhere, the banning and destruction of books at national and regional libraries, demotions or disappearances of leaders throughout the state, outlawing of religious practice, and countless other methods utilized to erase traces of Czech culture. The economic dimension that Hodos incorporates could not have pertained more to the newly Communist state of Czechoslovakia. At the end of the 1940s, Czechoslovakia was the most developed and economically secure satellite that Moscow obtained. The gross domestic product and gross national product far exceeded the neighboring countries to the east and did not financially demand heavy rebuilding after the War like Poland, East Germany, and Hungary required (Hodos 2). In a culture where higher education was prized, many Czechs were skilled in engineering, military defense, and medicine – all of which was crucial to the success of the newly expanded USSR. Geographically speaking, Czechoslovakia was also the furthest state from Moscow and positioned between the “western imperialists” to the north and the south. Czechoslovakia was essential for it “helped to assure the frontiers of the Soviet Union against

attack; it gave the Soviet Union a strong advance base in Central Europe; it divided the great continent of Europe and placed a gun at the forehead of Western Europe” (Byrnes 11). Indeed, Czechoslovakia was unequivocally essential in serving as a geographic, economic, and protective state. Due to the value it was assigned, Stalin and other Soviet leaders knew that there was a possibility that Communist loyalty could waver as the Soviet message could be perverted by the proximity to the West. In order to secure its borders and totalitarian strength, Stalin and Gottwald knew that the Czechoslovak society would require more attention and pressure unlike other states in the Soviet bloc. To this end, the search to implement a social mechanism that would be unequivocally influential and revolutionary had begun.

2

The Birth of the Czechoslovak Show Trials

In a state where democracy and its corresponding ideals had flourished since the fall of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, rapid and violent Sovietization would need to occur to transition the mentality of the society. As Marie Homerová explains, “When civilizations or systems undergo extensive change, one replacing another wholesale, those responsible for instituting the new system often feel it necessary to eradicate as many aspects of the old system as possible. This is done in order to secure the new order” (Homerová 136). The Czech culture was strong in democratic beliefs and a cultural turning point would need to transpire to transform the society. An *enemy* to the state would have to be identified. With the Communists having seized power and control of broadcasting, their propaganda was delivered daily through short wave radio. To highlight, a passage that illustrates the terminology heard in the country in 1948-1949 explains that

Rhetoric broadcasts on the radio was replete with expressions new to the Czechoslovak vocabulary; “the fight against class enemies” or “Western imperialism hostile to the proletariat.” The radio dangled the threat of a Third World War which it reported was being prepared by “American imperialists and Zionists.” The nation was startled to learn that “class enemies” were people whose political views had always been thought of democratic.

Homerová 138.

As the physical walls of the Iron Curtain were being erected and the Communist message delivered daily, the plan to instill the Soviet agenda was being sharpened. Socially, a vocal minority of people in Czechoslovakia and other Soviet satellite states were outraged by the

second wave of victimization and occupation immediately following the Germans. The country was not collectively convinced this was the path or destiny for their nation. In Prague, the underground movement and former politicians who were vital during the Czech resistance under Nazi oppression rallied to restore democracy and independency to keep the Communists at bay. Not only specific to Czechoslovakia, countries such as Poland, East Germany, and Hungary also sought to escape the Soviet tyranny by holding lectures, crafting underground networks, distributing leaflets, and other forms of anti-Soviet expression. But how could Stalinism eradicate the opposing voice to the Party? After what could be described as brief pontification, Stalin recollected the “legal” concept of the Great Soviet Purges -- or show trials.

A show trial’s

“. . . aim is to personalize an abstract political enemy, to place it in the dock in flesh and blood and, with the aid of a perverted system of justice, to transform abstract political-ideological differences into easily intelligible common crimes. It both incites the masses against the evil embodied by the defendants and frightens them away from supporting any potential opposition.

Hodos xiii

Stalin was determined to sustain influence, presence, and the agenda in these countries in his final years. Leaders of the people’s democracy sought to quell the uprisings and amass the political and social dissidents for prosecution on trumped up charges of treason and espionage. However, who exactly was a threat and a working class enemy? Homerová outlines the three categories that were targeted to answer this question. For example,

This new legislation facilitated the persecution of three major groups: the leaders and members of the pre-war democratic political parties, domestic non-communists who had fought against the Nazi occupation, and Czechoslovak soldiers who had fought on the side of the Western allies of democratic Czechoslovakia during the war. In addition, much negative attention was

directed against the Catholic Church, which was considered to be the most dangerous potential opponent for the new atheist regime, and anti-Semitism was employed by the regime as a major element in its drive for Stalinization.

Homerová 137.

The Czech leaders and Soviets knew that those who fought and organized the Czech resistance would have the strength and networks to the West to unhinge the Communist agenda. Those who strove to protect the state under Nazi oppression were also considered national heroes and heroines. Furthermore, it was held that these individuals who were associated with the ideologies of the West or democratic state did not align with the characteristics of a Communist Party. Furthermore, it posed a risk to the Party if a creation of a second underground movement was engineered to overthrow the Communists. Religious leaders and parishioners were also a threat to the state as the anti-Communist message because they were already organized with direction coming from the Vatican – or the West. Ascribing to a religion also diverted attention away from Stalin and onto a *greater being*. Under the Soviets, individuals were citizens who answered to the state – not to God. Included in this bracket of enemies of the state outside of Roman Catholics were Quakers, Jews, and Evangelicals. In short, the “ideal” citizen after the Communist indoctrination was challenging to discern. A developed Soviet society and its citizens belonged to the state and could not participate in extra-state affairs ranging from religious activities, educational outlets, and cultural groups. These activities were believed to be ones of Western origin and posed as a threat to revert a society or counterculture back to their “Western” heritages. Banning such practices and groups was two-fold. If an individual engaged in organizations or activities not supported by the Communist state, individuals were easily identified as dissidents and therefore, punished via

public example or trial. Conformity was instrumental in identifying an enemy. However, establishing the enemy and forming the working class citizen to benefit the USSR would be no easy feat. From this, the requisite for a sophisticated ministry to propel propaganda was crucial in generating change in the Soviet bloc. The creation of the Czechoslovak Constitution to institute laws and regulations was vital for the new “working-class” citizens. The Party would need assistance to obtain information and to process “illegal” activity in efforts to apply the policies, procedures, and laws of the new state.

In Czechoslovakia, Gottwald and the Ministry of the Interior collaborated to extend and refine the secret police (Státní bezpečnost) – or StB. StB agents were given ruthless authority to spy in a variety of methods and document individuals and sometimes families to discount any legitimate or illegitimate claims of treachery to the state. StB agents also were employed to manifest theories or falsify information to charge innocent victims on conspiracy charges against the republic. StB agents were engaged in forced disappearances, murder, torture, and unlawful detention. For those who went to public trial, the fabrication of crimes rendered an individual to forced labor, prison, or execution. Upon release and return to society after the sentence was served, citizens could recognize those who were detained and questioned as they appeared deaf in their left ear as most StB agents were right handed. As it pertains to show trials, the StB agents were in charge of organizing propaganda and show trials to try groups of people who personified an ideology or were a cultural symbol and physical embodiment of social justice. Categories were created to form a *group* or *faction* – political, social, religious, and other countless buckets crafted by the StB to correspond with the current cultural climate. Often times, clusters of people were posited as co-defendants regardless if they knew one

another or not. Prosecuted groups could range anywhere from two to up to fourteen or more individuals serving as co-defendants or propaganda-termed “co-conspirators.” As Homerová continues

A major the [sic] task of the StB, we now know, was to prepare political trials and other forms of persecution. Their assignment was carried out relentlessly. Over the years from 1848-1955, several waves of show trials affected and horrified Czechoslovak society and the international community. Czechoslovakia had been the last country incorporated into the Soviet bloc, and therefore the big post war “purge trials” or “show trials” began later than the other Soviet satellite countries.

Homerová 137.

Gottwald, Slánský, and others corralled possible threats, “spies”, and sometimes their family members for secret trials in the beginning and in high profile, radio broadcast show trials toward the end. In preparation, the state judicial branch had been nationalized, hence all judges who were aware of the laws and regulations of democratic Czechoslovakia were immediately dismissed. The working party judges were positioned to ascend the vacancies to facilitate court proceedings. These “judges” were educated in advanced six month Soviet courses and classrooms to establish Soviet and Communist proceedings after the previous judges were disposed. Under this new system of judicial power and propaganda, Jiří Pelikán states that “this select group arrogates to itself the right to condemn as enemies not only individuals but entire social groups – often including children . . . The Party decides on the verdicts – including death sentences – to be handed down by the courts; and this even before the opening of a trial” (Pelikán 23). In Czechoslovakia, the 1950-1954 show trials’ sentences given were the most violent and high profile out of the satellite states. This is due not only to the cultural dynamics of the Czech society but also the reliance on a violent intensified class

struggle which would undoubtedly reflect Czechoslovak leaders' loyalty toward Stalin. Furthermore, many Czech leaders, resistance fighters, and democratic icons who did not manage to flee the country before 1948 were viewed as potential threats to overthrow or undermine the Communist agenda. With the Soviets having perfected the show trial, this was the course of action that was decided upon at some undocumented point in history.

For many, the basic formula seemed foolproof and appropriate in applying pressure for those struggling against the Communist takeover. The layout was strikingly the same throughout the many show trials of Czechoslovakia when they were at their height between 1950 and 1954. The Communist Party first outlined a list of deviations that the perpetrator could commit ranging from plotting with Western enemies via post or radio to "retelling" stories of national heroes of historical times. Secondly, the list is crafted and distributed through the StB chain often linking and creating groups and a center who represented one or more crimes that could serve as a symbol to the society. This list is then given to the Communist run newspapers to be printed for the society to view, demonize, and incriminate those who have been indicated in atrocities against the people's democracy. The citizens, in turn, immediately called for their arrest, demotion, or expulsion. The arrest is then made and highly publicized to which the individual or individuals are brought in for questioning to StB headquarters. Under interrogation, they were tortured and detained under cruel conditions to break their character and intimidate them into providing false confessions or implicating others in the state. They are detained while StB agents compile the group for public processing and determine which verdicts will be handed down. After this is established, a script is written by the panel of judges or agents to be given to the defendants to learn by heart. This is critical to

the show trial as the propaganda is broadcasted nationally via short wave radio, newspapers, and newsreels. During the trial, the defendant must renounce and confess to their “unlawful” activities and ask the public for their “just” punishment. The closing of the show trial would, at this junction, have the public in a frenzy calling for the most heinous of sentencing consequences. Either from fear of being seen as not supporting the Communist regime or out of personal conviction, the society was aware of the show trial’s sentences when they were handed down and embraced these verdicts thereby enabling distorted justice’s existence.

For those who did struggle with fundamental differences, StB agents could offer the public tangible examples of the consequences for those who failed to conform. To illustrate,

The accusations did not involve just ideological deviations; the defendants were charged with treason and conspiracy on behalf of capitalist enemies. The victims came from diverse backgrounds: some were old Communists now accused of having been Gestapo agents; some had fought against Franco, they were now “cosmopolitan” traitors; many were Jews, they were accused of being Zionist infiltrators; some were even Moscow-trained *apparatchiki*, they were now supposed to have betrayed the movement. The pattern of the Soviet purge of 1936-1938 was thus being closely imitated.

Brzezinski 81.

As Gottwald and his colleagues prepared to purge Czechoslovakia in 1949, StB agents began to list immediate “threats” toward the people’s democracy. Stalin and his satellite leaders strove to underscore his message of Soviet ownership and the price for political or social dissidence. For Czechoslovakia, these “dissidents” in the newly expanded USSR, Stalin believed, needed to be used as a political and social example to the diverse populace who continued to form cells of opposition. After the terror in Hungary and the success of a few minor show trials in 1947 devised by two Soviet propaganda ministers, the two were summoned to Prague to contrive a

new set of show trials in 1949. The goal was simple. The aim was to prepare a cultural revolution through the process of show trials to transform the public's opinion and create fear to shepherd the citizens into acceptance. In democratically-rooted Prague, this was a necessary mechanism to ultimately inflict vertical collectivism, authority, and order in a systematic means to terrorize the Czech population into unequivocal conformity. Czechoslovakia would and could not be spared – retreating from the putsch was not an option.

When it was decided to implement the show trial apparatus, leaders were certain of two things; purging the society of impurities and the byproduct which was the fear it would generate to reform the society. Out of all the countries in the newly formed U.S.S.R., Czechoslovakia was the most socially progressive and democratic in the Soviet bloc. Many leading democratic politicians who fled Hitler and Fascism returned from exile and restored their seats in the Czech Parliament in late 1945 and into 1946. Generals, military leaders, and Nazi resistance fighters were all hailed as heroes and heroines for defending their country. Artists, authors, musicians, and academics were instrumental in reflecting and restoring a culture in society. From cafés and universities to lecture houses and publishing houses, Prague was not culturally monotone nor could easily or wholly assimilate to any one occupation regardless of the nationalizing of institutions. From this aspect, many of the former politicians, intelligentsia, and prominent figures from diverse backgrounds understood the Communist threat and maintained their contacts abroad with former colleagues or strategic alliances. To this end, the appointed Czechoslovak Prime Minister Klement Gottwald planned to begin small scale purges to liquidate these individuals via show trials. The Party firstly had to begin the search for people who would serve as symbols and individuals that were high profile.

Perhaps the first show trial that shocked the country was the trial of World War II decorated General Heliodor Pika immediately after the February coup d'état. His trial was braided with other co-conspirators which further explains how the Communist Party and StB agents operated and processed individuals according to their societal value. If the achievements of Pika and others who were heralded as heroes of the Czech nation were tarnished and treated as acts of conspiracy against the country via Soviet and Communist propaganda, the transition of recreating and rewriting history for the people would be invaluable to the coup to dispose of Czech leading figures. The trial of General Pika and the co-defendants began in March of 1949 as traitors to the state who, on the contrary, had defended the Czech nation under Nazi occupation and strategically protected the country for a period while in exile in London. Notably, General Pika “had been active on both the Western and the Eastern fronts, commanding the most significant military operations. Once put on trial, he was denounced as a traitor to Czechoslovakia. He became the first executed victim of the newly established persecution machine” (Homerová 138). Although General Pika was the first victim in the Czechoslovak show trials, the historical role he played in ushering in a new system of justice is immeasurable. For example, the trial denounced the success and loyalty that Pika generated within the society and the sentiment of pro- Czech pride in their leaders. It was an attempt to rewrite history, plant a seed of treachery living amongst society, and forge baseless claims that Pika was, above all, conspiring with the “working class enemies against the state.” In a recent essay on apology and forgiveness, one author and political prisoner survivor reflects on the show trial of General Pika in 1949 by stating

It is impossible to forgive if you see how they treated [World War II hero] General Pika. They hanged him next to the rubbish. How they treated him before. If he needed to go to the toilet, he could not close the door. They were so insensitive. Somebody has to give them back their sensitivity. They were supposed to make contrition to wash this away. If there is a guilt that is not dealt with, the curse remains. The nation is cursed twice if they do not deal with those who were killed. Schools, courts, judges, even the constitutional court. We are the last ones who cry for this because the majority of us have already died.

Roman, Choi 363.

This passage illuminates the treatment and brutal verdict given to Pika and articulates the importance in modern day society to confront these atrocities and perversion of justice. It can be argued that his reputation and importance in Czech history was completely destroyed. His acts to save the nation were negated to ones of treachery in restating history under Communism until the restoration of democracy after the Velvet Revolution of 1989. Furthermore, researching the show trial of Pika marks the point in time where Czechoslovakia was being viewed on the continent as a totalitarian regime as demonstrated by the methods they were employing to instill the Communist agenda. In relationship to the February coup d'état, society did not endorse such methods of justice and did not subscribe to claims being made by the Communists concerning General Pika. The international outcry was felt deeply in the West with France holding a day of national mourning on the date when General Pika was executed but was a display of disagreement as opposed to intervention by the West on behalf of the Czech people. Lastly, documenting the show trial of General Pika is instrumental in indicating the genesis of the show trials and the Communist legal system being introduced the Czech society. The extent of the processes were not yet known and the bulk of terror was still yet to come.

Going forward into the height of Stalinism in Czechoslovakia from 1950-1954, many internal and external factors would play a role in systematically terrorizing the country and underlining the importance that show trials played. The West did not militarily involve themselves with the crimes against humanity being committed in the Soviet bloc due to the emergence of the Cold War and fear of a Third World War. Many international leaders shied away from involving themselves or allocating physical resources to involve themselves in Soviet matters. The only attempts that were made to quell the violent purges were to publically appeal for a convicted individual's clemency however that would prove too risky for it may escalate the penalty or implicate the individual with collaborating with the West. In short, involvement in the satellite states was almost void from foreign action and the inaction from Western actors was furthered by the Korean War.

For those behind the Iron Curtain and under the oppression of Communist totalitarianism, the violent terror and arrests unleashed throughout the country of Czechoslovakia would prove to last for the next decade. The StB was acquiring more power and public support as the grip on society intensified and the methods of propaganda became more sophisticated. Yet for a society who endured Nazism reluctance to accept the fate Czechs were now enduring at home was far too great to bear. Stalinists recognized this fact and orchestrated the most successful show trial that could captivate a society and revolutionize a culture. The plan to finally plunge the Czechs into complacency needed a social catalyst and an agent for change that would hinge the February coup to the future success of a Communist state. The person to be led into the show trial would have to be one that the public could relate to, empathize with, and who personified as many great traits that the Czechs viewed as

an enduring patriot. Selecting such a citizen would undoubtedly send a chilling effect over society. Furthermore, the individual would also have to be personally relatable and one that the public could identify with to ultimately bring out social change. Stalinists knew that the cultural transformation to publically stage for consumption could not be in the upper military or political echelon as the event would not be personalized by the viewer. As aforementioned, the show trial selection was calculated and determined by internal driving forces which reflected the social conditions of the time. The Communists planned for a revolutionary event to be heavily broadcasted as propaganda that would induce a culture into submission which ultimately established the commencement of climaxing Stalinism in Czechoslovakia.

According to Hungarian show trial survivor, Hodos states, “more than one hundred perished subsequently and tens of thousands were jailed or deported. More than 136,000 Czechs, communists, and non-communists, were victims in one way or another of the terror; these out of a total national population of 14 million” (Hodos 13). In actuality, however, the show trials in Czechoslovakia tried, condemned, and executed over 200 people. From this number, only one was female – Milada Horáková.

3

The Early Life of Milada Horáková and Emergence into the New Democracy

Born on December 25, 1901, Milada (Králová) Horáková entered into a middle class family in Prague's Vinohrady district at Náměstí Jiřího z Poděbrad. Second daughter of Mr. Čeněk Král, manager of a pencil factory and Czech political devotee, and Mrs. Anna Králová, a devoted mother, Milada spent her early years investigating the world around her with older sister Marta (b. 1899) and younger brother Jiří (b. 1908). She enjoyed long summer afternoons in her father's library inquiring about his papers and listening to his conversations with colleagues he had in the evenings on the latest developments of the coming Great War. Her father was an ardent follower of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk's Czech People's Party and its plight for independence from the Monarchy. As a dominant figure in the family, Milada was shaped by the ideals of her father and the political environment in her household. Undoubtedly, Milada's future career and endeavors drew upon these life experiences that would mold the woman she would become in Czech society. In 1914, however, both Marta and Jiří developed scarlet fever within days of each other and passed away. Milada was "deeply affected by what happened. She came to understand that life can be different from what she had experienced up to that point, and she learned pity for suffering" (Iggers 288). Soon, her mother gave birth to a third daughter, Věra, in 1915 much to the happiness of the family who had suffered two life-altering losses.

With the crumbling Austro-Hungarian monarchy around her, Milada participated in peace rallies at young age and would throw roses over the wall of a soldier's camp. Activities such as these were considered unpatriotic and provocative. On May 1, 1918, Horáková partook in an anti-War demonstration that led to her expulsion from Upper Secondary school in Vinohrady where she had been hitherto excelling. Her life would see more hardship before the Monarchy failed. Her mother, too, would pass away before the War's end leaving Milada to raise young Věra to help the now family of three. "Some authors attribute her later willingness to sacrifice herself for others when imprisoned to the experience of this family tragedy" (Provakotor 1). Through the personal and scholastic turmoil, it would not be until the War's conclusion that she would enroll in another school in Vinohrady and finish her final exams in 1921. As an apt student, she had shined in debate and the humanities yet her personal conviction and familial support backing those decisions appeared to have caused hardship in society. She was a free individual who did not act within the constraints of a society's especially Victorian beliefs and values emulating from Vienna. It would not be until the War's completion and creation of the Czechoslovak state that Milada would be given a stronger foothold to act on her ambitions. Through her inspiration to aid those in need in the years after the War's conclusion, Milada joined the Red Cross to assist her fellow citizens affected by the War. It was a new society that was influencing and sculpting the new state's political structure now granting the adult Milada the freedoms she never thought she would have had under the Monarchy. From this experience, she would guard and remember the lesson learned that it was possible for a society to form a socio-political climate that, in turn, granted the citizens the freedoms to shape individual destiny.

With the Czech democratic state now in place, the country of Czechoslovakia would offer promise and promote equal rights for women, specifically in education where women now could move out of mere lectures or audits and into disciplines such as medicine, law, or philosophy. As Feinberg notes, “Czechoslovak women enjoyed equal political rights, equal access to education, and (at least when single) relatively free access to employment and professional opportunities” (Feinberg 205). Horáková had the opportunity and seized it to enroll in the prestigious Charles University’s law program where women had been banned under the Habsburg’s reign from participating. Iggers writes though that “Milada wanted to study medicine, but her father, prejudiced against the medical profession after the death of his two children, persuaded her that she could also help the suffering if she studied law. She finally agreed, and hoped to devote herself to social work” (Iggers 289). Once enrolled at Charles University, her involvement in Czech politics and cultural events flourished. She studied the writings of Masaryk and learned the anatomy of her new country which was in stark contrast to the environment in which she was raised and educated as dictated by Vienna. In this new country, Milada was given options – something that women never could access. A woman could now assign value to their own individual lives without living as part of an extension of family or social life. During the last two years of her studies, she met Bohuslav Horák, an agricultural engineering student, and fell in love. In 1926, she earned her Ph.D. from Charles University and married in 1927. In the spring of the same year, she secured a position working in the Department of Social Welfare and Central Social Services Authority which allocated resources to assist women and children gain access to proper housing and healthcare. With the

chance of coming into her own as a modern woman, Milada searched for outlets to channel such lofty ambitions. It did not take long for her to find such a just and timely cause.

Dr. Horáková engaged and dedicated herself in the Women's Rights movement and served as one of the collaborators on the Women's National Council (WNC) in Prague (*Ženský Klub Český*) – the largest women's organization promoting gender equality in the country. At this time she already belonged to the Association of Women Lawyers in Prague that was aimed at propelling women professionally and serving justice to women without access to legal counsel. Dr. Horáková

. . . wanted full equality, but also a fully satisfying family life for women. They should be able to seek employment on the basis of their own decision, not to help their husbands support the family. Their education should not only be directed toward professional achievement, but also toward the education of their own children. If a woman wanted to devote herself totally to her role as a mother, she was to be provided with legal and social security.

Iggers 291.

With her involvement now in the WNC, she assisted in organizing lecture series, concerts, and discussion groups on women's issues. She pioneered gender equality as the country transitioned from monarchy to Czech democracy. She was also vital from a legal perspective in educating the members on what rights were guaranteed under the Czechoslovak state. Furthermore, dedicating time to empower women to embrace their freedom under the democratic state was also a process Dr. Horáková engaged in with the Women's National Council. Democracy and the right for women to believe in their own equality within society was one element Dr. Horáková was committed in achieving at the WNC.

The Women's Movement was not, however, perfected by the democratic wave as women still did not have rights like right to abortion or economic equality within the family unit. Of the many ways that women could express themselves within the new society to challenge such obstacles for women's social and public health needs was the right to vote. Women could now go to the ballot box to vote against center-right parties who romanticized the Habsburg ideals or traditions of what constituted a family and a woman's role within that structure. Dr. Horáková in this sense gave these women and, in many cases men, educational tools in which to introduce their modern family from Victorian-era traditions to a democratic social structure. A family could not progress or evolve without both members in the unit embracing this change. Her involvement challenged these individuals to think of themselves within that structure and what it ultimately meant for them personally. Did the displacement of the monarchy and insertion of a democracy affect their lives? Were women harming or believe that they were damaging the traditional role of the mother if she were to have access to employment? Was raising their family in a joint responsibility and, if so, how does the family cope with opponents to this mentality? For a country of fifteen million people who were just introduced to a democracy, Dr. Horáková was the one who could carry that burden and was familiar with the "old" and "new" system of society. Her upbringing with her astute father and familiarity with social policies and democratic texts gave her vivacity to stand for what was right and just. However, it would not be an effortless feat and in no way could she manage such a challenge alone. If Dr. Horáková wished to further the liberties of her fellow citizens and continue to transform a society through rights-based advocacy and education, she would need a strong, straightforward, and passionate partner in the movement. Fortunately for all pining

for continued social change in Czechoslovakia, Dr. Horáková met and formed a fond alliance with Czech feminist Senator Františka Plamínková in the 1920s.

A social liberator, defender of human rights, and straight-shooting pistol, Plamínková

. . . was a strong personality, whose authority in Czechoslovak public life was tremendous. The Women's Council became part of its international equivalent, with Plamínková as its second vice-chairperson, and a Czechoslovak delegate to the League of Nations. For Milada she was a source of new insights and a bridge to the rest of the world. Later they became close friends; Plamínková treated her as an equal partner.

Iggers 291.

Partnering with Plamínková, the experience at the WNC gave her a window to be not only politically active in law and social work but to further her public presence – both domestically and internationally. On this platform, Dr. Horáková addressed issues surrounding gender which was ultimately parlayed to the international community when she attended a Women's Council conference in The Hague in 1930. With her involvement in the Women's movement and her degree, she traveled outside of Czechoslovakia "to gain knowledge about how gender questions were dealt with in other countries. These activities led to further engagements when new Czech legislation concerning gender issues was discussed and put forward. She was also able to promote her ideas through public speaking and participating at conferences in various parts of the republic" (Svodboda 16). Dr. Horáková was warmly received by the international community and Western states. Alliances she formed to campaign for women's rights in a pan-European approach were admired. One writer explains when discussing her activities with the WNC, "The Council's primary political function was to resolve the contradictions between the constitutional principle of gender equality, enshrined in the Czechoslovak constitution of 1920,

and the laws inherited from the Austro-Hungarian Empire that discriminated against women” (Provakator 1). From the passage, we can view Dr. Horáková’s life as having strove to fulfill that vision. For example, she prepared “legislation to deal with the status of unmarried women and children born out of wedlock. She also drafted bills to improve the status of women in family law as well as in blue-collar professions and in public service jobs” (Doležalová 1). The end of the 1920s proved to be a major turning point in her personal, political, and vocational pursuits. Dr. Horáková’s experience dealing with social change and justice for the underserved facilitated her understanding of how the democratic state was running. Her grassroots efforts with the Women’s Movement and family services to change legislation brought her in close proximity to the prevailing politicians of the day. The relationship she was building between her work and its impact on politics was amounting to something bigger than what she had anticipated. Up until this point in her adult life, she had suffered no social fallout from promoting the beliefs and causes she held dear and funneled much energy to champion. A passage was beginning to reveal itself – one which was logical and found her as much as she sought it out. It would be a significant defining moment in the changing of the decades that would usher in a new chapter in her life and lend a branch of opportunity.

Perhaps the most significant junction that would facilitate change in Dr. Horáková’s future was applying for membership in the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party (CNSP or *Česká strana národně sociální - ČSNS*) in 1930. This political affiliation was provoking and timely for Dr. Horáková for it struggled to establish equality and fairness in the new republic. Established in 1897, the CNSP’s objectives were on the main social and economic issues of marginalized groups and lower income workers who were unfairly represented in Parliament. By joining the

CNSP, she could continue to advocate and impact legislation. Deciding to join a political party was a moment that she believed would not have occurred if the Austro-Hungarian Empire did not fall. In a relatively short amount of time she was unifying all aspects of her personal and professional career into one single thread. Chaired by Edvard Beneš since 1926 who was a close confidant of President Masaryk, the CNSP supported fostering the freedoms of its citizens, cooperating with other countries on the continent which was also relatively new after post-Monarchy rule, and outlining the sovereignty of the Czech people. For Dr. Horáková, CNSP was attractive for its political stance aligned with her desire to uphold these ideals in the application of law and social issues that she worked for relentlessly. Coincidentally, many of the objectives that she encapsulated were being spearheaded by leaders of the CNSP. By her own conviction and morals and partnering with many social figures in Czechoslovakia like Plamínková, joining the party was the most logical and strategic choice.

During this time of political association, Dr. Milada Horáková's career was rapidly mobilized as she commanded her practice as a lawyer with precision in the Prague City Council specializing in public housing, unemployment, and the welfare of unmarried and divorced mothers and their representation in government. Weaving the membership of the CNSP, Women's Council, employment, and social engagement together, one must question how Dr. Horáková managed to juggle the role of a wife during a socially transitory environment. Although Czechoslovak society was progressing, some still questioned the empowered role of the woman and what that meant for the overall identity of the family operating in the greater framework of a nation and its future. As it pertained to Dr. Horáková, as a newlywed and often times away from the home, Bohuslav Horák must have personified the newly constructed role

of the “modern man” as exemplified by his acceptance of his wife’s ambitions. As a woman who chose wisely in life, she found a life partner who would give her the freedom to follow her aspirations under an evolving time who was able to understand the passion she had toward advocacy. Such can be expounded upon because Horák “had full understanding for Milada’s aspirations and voluntarily stepped into the background, to allow Milada the freedom for her activities” (Iggers 291). It appears by the late 1920s and into the new decade that the modern man and modern woman found the ideal match.

As the 1930s continued onward for the couple, Horáková continued to be an advocate and legal pioneer for equal rights and struggled to provide voice to gender related issues and reduction of workers’ exploitation. As documented, she successfully married her political and professional career together to promote her human rights vision that she was drawn to as an early child growing up under a monarchy. She had translated her own personal experiences as a woman into the democratic state of Czechoslovakia yet was a realist and knew that effective change was a living social organism. It was an evolving, collective experience and goal. The work, she felt, was far from accomplished and she did not expect to solve all of her fellow citizens’ hardship during her lifetime as indicated in her personal letters. Dr. Milada Horáková was committed to forging the way for others in the next generation to follow the path she was pioneering to build on the foundation being erected for the people of Czechoslovakia. Passionate, apt, and knowledgeable on how critical a period her country was in history, Milada Horáková wore many hats yet in 1933 she would display a new one – that of a mother. Milada Horáková gave birth to a baby daughter, Jana, in 1933.

Figure 1: *Dr. Milada Horáková, Bohuslav Horák, and daughter Jana Horáková*

M. Horáková s dcerou a manželem ve vzácně chvíli odpočinku (zdroj: ABS)



4

The Rise of Hitler and the Nazi Occupation in Czechoslovakia

As Hitler rose to power in neighboring Germany and with the Munich Agreement signed annexing Czechoslovakia in 1938, Horáková swiftly used her legal talents and organizations to initiate humanitarian relief. In conjunction with the Women's National Council and Františka Plamínková and Sokol's chairwoman Marie Provazníková, they secured safe houses for refugees and their families in border regions now seized by Hitler. Together with her colleagues, Horáková managed to orchestrate routes from the borders to safely transport victims who were facing deportation to concentration camps or who were left homeless after their property was confiscated. She focused on both populations of Czech citizens and ethnic Germans in the Sudetenland and did not demonstrate prejudice during relief efforts. Horáková formed the Committee for the Assistance of Refugees which formed a structure around the operation and established policies and procedures in the mission. Her intuitive nature to prop up this organization was instrumental in saving the refugees once the Böhmen und Mähren Protectorate that annexed the rest of the Czech territories in 1939. It is during this time that she united with the Czech resistance movement and co-authored the *Charter of Czech Resistance*, which delineated the objectives and actions required to save the country from Fascism. In the Charter, it harked back to Masaryk's teachings and objective after the first war to defend the state against oppression or occupier. The aim was to work with the Czech Resistance members who were comprised of politicians, authors, artists, and humanitarians.

This was in response to the escalating violence in Czechoslovakia in hopes to overthrow figureheads and politicians, such as Nazi leader Heydrich who had begun to deport Jews, homosexuals, Communists, and other political and social “deviants” in Prague. Through her actions and engagements with the catastrophic circumstances to save her country and the people to whom it belonged, the Gestapo eventually found and arrested her and her husband on August 2, 1940.

In custody by the Czech and German Fascists, she was detained at the notorious prison at Pankrác on Charles Square (*Karlovo náměstí*) while they were waiting trial for their involvement in the Czech resistance. Jana Horáková was sent to live with her paternal grandparents who resided in Prague’s Vinohrady district until the War’s conclusion. After two years detention in Prague at Pankrác, they were deported to the concentration camp, Terezín (*Theresienstadt*) - just 40 miles northeast of Prague in 1942 to stand trial. She was detained in solitary confinement in cell number 8 – the same cell where Serbian revolutionist Gavrilo Princip was held after being imprisoned for the assassination of Franz Ferdinand in Sarajevo in 1914. It was at Terezín “where her husband was also imprisoned. Although they were unable to meet, they knew about each other and that gave them strength” (Doležalová 1). While in custody in Terezín, Milada was beaten and tortured during 36 interrogations and spent most of her time in solitary confinement. Later, Dr. Horáková would “express guilt at having caused her husband’s arrest through her public activities, but she did not quit the public sphere” (Provokator 2). While in custody, Horáková was said to have demonstrated extreme selflessness and determination not to let her character falter. One account detailing her interrogations claims

She had to undergo hard questioning and merciless torture during which she simulated faints and seizures. The investigating commissar stuck needles into her hands to see if she was actually unconscious. She had so much self-control that she did not even react to severe pain. Sometimes at night they locked her into a special small cell similar to a chimney. The fetters cut into her flesh and deepened open wounds, but the Gestapo found out nothing from her. She claimed some of the deeds of others for herself to avert suspicion from those who were still free.

Iggers 293.

This passage is significant for it exemplifies complete selflessness and determination not to let the Czech Resistance movement waver in their efforts to save the country. In addition, this experience would be vital in the years to come following the War and with the rise of the Communist Party. It is true that the underlying current in the passage highlights the hope she felt which cannot be paralleled by a sense of naiveté or underestimation of the circumstances but rather to subscribe to justice always prevailing. It is during this time of great adversity that Milada Horáková struggled to withstand the storm of Fascism, possessed immense courage, and did not compromise who she was. It is important to note that Dr. Horáková was said to have found God during the Second World War at Terezín and brought herself closer to faith to provide her the strength to endure for a greater purpose. Due to her forthright and resilient character she withstood two years of torture but it could not prevent the trial by the Gestapo in 1944 which led to her death sentence.

Although faced with an execution order, Milada Horáková refused to let her hope waver and did not concede to the enemy. She remained incorruptible. She began to draw upon her legal talents and ability to defend herself to assist the lawyers who represented her during a trial. She did not believe in the ad-hoc judicial system that the Nazis were operating and knew

if she was able to overrule her death sentence, it would be only a matter of time before she could be rescued. With her faith and contacts abroad, she focused on survival and hope. With her appeal accepted she was “was held in custody by the German People’s Court in prisons in Leipzig and Dresden before being sentenced to eight years’ hard labour on 23 October 1944” (Doležalová 1). For her husband, he “was sentenced by the same court to 5 years. It was in Aichbach, near Munich that she served her prison sentence, and here she was liberated by American troops at the end of the war” (Svodboda 2) in 1945. Upon her release, she returned to Prague on May 25, 1945 to her beloved daughter, sister Věra, and her country. She was finally united with her husband Bohuslav after her internment and the family joined under a freed country.

Milada Horáková’s imprisonment, trials, and extreme physical and emotional hardships she weathered in the 1940s would form the courageous woman she would become in the years following the War. The experiences would refocus her efforts on preventing such a disaster from occurring to her fellow countrymen, family, and colleagues. Her political life after her five-year hardship in German concentration camps upon her repatriation to liberated Czechoslovakia flourished. As one historian notes

On returning to the liberated republic of Czechoslovakia, Milada Horáková reentered public life, becoming a leading politician within the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party. She was a member of the temporary Czech Parliament, chairman of the Women’s National Council and co-founder of the Union of Political Prisoners and Survivors of Victims of Nazism. In the parliamentary election of 1946, she defended her seat, thus becoming one of the 55MP’s of the Czechoslovak National Social Party. The same year she was awarded two medals by President Beneš, in commemoration of her anti-Nazi activities during the war.

Svodboda 2.

Figure 2: Certificate given to Milada Horáková for the medal of the Czechoslovak Order of Merit, First Class. May 13, 1946. (Source: ABS)

Listina o udělení Čes. medaile Za zásluhy I. stupně M. Horákové ze dne 13. března 1946. Jde o kopii pořízenou z listin zabavených při domovní prohlídce, originály byly v roce 2007 předány doěži Janě Kánské (zdroj: ABS)

44



PRESIDENT

REPUBLIKY ČESKOSLOVENSKÉ

UDĚLIL

V UZNÁNÍ VYNIKAJÍCÍCH VOJENSKÝCH ČINŮ MIMO BOJ
JIMIŽ SE ZASLOUŽIL O ČESKOSLOVENSKOU ARMÁDU

JUDr. HORÁKOVÁ MILADA

poslane

ČESKOSLOVENSKOU MEDAILI ZA ZÁSLUHY
I. STUPNĚ

V Praze dne 30. března 1946.

Číslo medaile: 10.597

Figure 3: Certificate given to Milada Horáková for the medal of the Czechoslovak Military cross

March 8, 1946. (Source: ABS)

Listina o udělení Čes. válečného kříže 1939 M. Horákové ze dne
8. března 1946. Jde o kopii pořizenu z listin zachovaných při dosavad
prohlídce, originály byly v roce 2007 předány dceři Janě Káně
(adresy: ABS)

97



PRESIDENT
REPUBLIKY ČESKOSLOVENSKÉ

UDĚLIL

V UZNÁNÍ BOJOVÝCH ZÁSLUH, KTERÉ ZÍSKAL V BOJI
ZA OSVOBOZENÍ REPUBLIKY ČESKOSLOVENSKÉ
Z NEPŘÁTELSKÉHO OBSAZENÍ

JUDr. H O R Á K O V Ā M I L A D A

poslane

ČESKOSLOVENSKÝ VÁLEČNÝ KŘÍŽ 1939

V Praze dne 8. března 1946.

Číslo listiny: 16-637

This time, however, was marred by personal tragedy. Fellow colleague and advocate Františka Plamínková of the Women's National Council was apprehended and executed by the Nazis in 1942 for her involvement in politics and women's issues. Her absence left Milada Horáková to assume her seat in Parliament and head the WNC by 1946. She was welcomed and hailed as a national heroine of the country and a symbol for Czech freedom. Dr. Horáková's involvement with the organization for Survivors and Victims of Nazism was in part in honor of the assassination of Plamínková and her legacy in society after the War. In 1947, she joined as vice chairperson of the Union of Political Prisoners (*Svaz osvobozených politických vězňů*) dedicated to memorializing fellow countrymen like Plamínková who had fallen during the War due to their defending of democracy, civility, and defense of the rights of humankind. Although an active member in various organizations and publications from around the country, it would be her political affiliation that would bring her the most harm in the years following the liberation of Czechoslovakia and ultimately, the rise of communism.

5

A Sinking Democracy: Milada Horáková and the Communist Coup

Within Czech Parliament in 1946, the CNSP often clashed with the ideologues of the newly elected Communist Party thus leading to Horáková to publically criticize policies and rhetoric put forth by the Communists. Dr. Horáková was concerned that merging Czechoslovakia into one unit under the Soviets would alienate the country and dislocate Czech independent engagement on the continent. As she travelled the country, her political speeches centered on Czechoslovak foreign policies as well what she saw were the injustices by the Communists holding “People’s Courts” in the capital. The “People’s Courts” were established by the Communists to try suspected Nazi sympathizers which she believed was just a political tool to gain power and was not founded on evidence or jurisprudence yet rather hearsay and Communist ideology. According to the Provakator, “In December 1946, the Communists controlled secret police accused Horáková of ‘spreading untruthful reports’ abroad about how Communist-dominated People’s Courts immediately after the war had caused many citizens to be wrongfully convicted” (Provakator 2). Her intuition proved accurate for many individuals were tried and expelled or sentenced to death even with botched reports and falsified documents. The version of “justice” being exclusively applied by the Soviets as a means of propaganda disguised as bringing those to justice for War crimes could not have gone more against the principles Horáková and the National Socialists represented.

Much of the discourse surrounding the KSČ campaign pivoted on social issues that Dr. Horáková advanced and applied in the modern Czechoslovak state. Matters surrounding gender, minority rights, access to education, and Czech identity were all topics being circumvented and distorted by the communists. For example, many of the tactics used by the Communists campaigning were sharp, bilateral, and decisive. For women's issues, Dr. Horáková believed that the arguments claiming that the traditional role of the family generated the security of a nation. She continued to campaign for the CNSP and for women's rights around the country. In the image below, this magazine *Vlasta* shows Horáková with President Beneš, his wife, with other members of the Women's Council

Figure 4: *Vlasta* Cover

Vlasta, Volume 1, Issue 25, 1947



During the campaign, she continued to focus on the social rights of the Czech citizens against the formula argued by the Communists. For example, the conventional role of Czech women was that within the family the sole responsibility of the woman was taking on the identity of a mother. It was a backward, gendered argument that was either geared toward a collective vision on behalf of the state or individual rights – in this latter example, the role of the family unit or the rights of the woman. To compound matters for the women’s movement led by Milada Horáková, Zahra notes “in the revolutionary fervor of the postwar “national cleansing,” however, consensus among feminists quickly dissolved, as polarizing party politics divided supporters of the Communist Party from the National Socialists such as Horáková” (Zahra 3). Not only did women’s rights seem to be in peril, but political clout that shaped the social climate of the culture was being fervently contested around the country.

Questions surrounding protecting Czech identity in the wake of the Nazi Germanization that recollected the days of the Austrian rule in Czech society would lead one to believe that the country would vote pro-Czech – or pro-democracy. To a certain extent this was true. The country’s citizens were arguing for a patriotic, pro-Czech state yet the Communist campaign was exerting propaganda that called into question the power the Czechs had to protect their culture in the future. After all, the Red Army “saved” their country and the USSR would be a paramilitary mother to “protect” the country and culture from the Western threat. During this juncture, the case for pan-Slavism was introduced via aligning with the USSR that would unite “common” values or “traditions.” To this point, pan-Slavism called for fusing a multi-state

identity. Pan-Slavism within the framework of Western desertion proved to be a strong, productive argument for the KSČ. The abandonment the Czechs and eastern states felt after the Nazi invasion was misconstrued and exploited by the Communists to serve another purpose. Overall, the Czech attitude of distrust, insecurity, and skepticism of the West after the War was exceedingly useful as the country continued to hear the political parties' arguments.

On the political campaign trail, Milada Horáková publically defended returning President Beneš from his exile in London. He had been receiving criticism by the Czechs for the Munich Agreement in what some believed was the relinquishing of the country to Hitler to satisfy political needs. The KSČ drew on this public perception and distorted it to equate it as treachery, wishy-washiness, and anti-Czech involvement. The Communists also drew upon the citizens' outrage, who had to endure Nazi oppression, and painted a bourgeois picture of Beneš living comfortably in England during those challenging years. This opinion was not a collective stance as many others believed that the Munich Agreement had saved the country from being bombed like in neighboring Dresden or Budapest. Living in exile for Beneš also, they believed, was a way in which to keep Czechoslovakia functioning under the resistance and who was able to represent the state in closer proximity with Western allies' strategies. Furthermore, CNSP and other parties knew that without a political structure operating the country from 1939-1945, Czechoslovakia would have witnessed more devastation and casualties if the government had collapsed. With all arguments taking place around the country in cities like České Budějovice, Košice, and Brno amongst others, the citizens were now preparing for the vote to establish the new government and parliament in Prague.

The election of 1946 was to be the last free election until the late 20th century. After the votes were counted, the Communists had won the majority of seats in the Czech lands but not without competition from the second largest political body in Parliament: the CNSP. In the election

. . . over 40% voted for the Communists who considered the 16% Social Democrats as more or less their votes. With almost 24% of the vote, the National Socialists were the second strongest party; Milada was elected on the first ballot. The democratic politicians realized that the struggle for the democratic character of the Czechoslovak Republic was beginning.

Iggers 295.

In the post- War years, communism had gained support in the eastern states due to a lack of stability of former democracies. With the impact of the Red Army in these states and propaganda being driven by Stalinists, the state's democrats "felt and were internationally isolated, while the Czech Communists received direct and indirect support from the Communist super-power close at hand" (Duchacek 345). In Czechoslovakia where democracy had flourished and citizens were given rights not previously granted at the turn-of-the-century, the Communist Party strategically devised many routes to infiltrate the society after the political victory. However, Milada Horáková answered Communist calls to regress women in the Soviet system by penning an article entitled "Do we actually govern together?" which highlighted the absence of women in the newly elected government.

Figure 5: "Do we actually govern together?"

By Dr. Milada Horáková

Vlasta, Volume 1, Issue 2, 1947

Úvodní článek M. Horákové: „Spoluvládáme skutečně?“,
kritika nedostatečného zastoupení žen v poválečné
politice. Čas. Vlasta č. 2, 1. roc., 1947
(zdroj: archiv autorky)

SPOLUVLÁDNEME SKUTEČNĚ?

JUDr. Milada Horáková, předsedkyně Rady čs. žen

V celém světě to přímo vše novotami a událostmi. Každý z nás, i ten, který se brání, je do víru události stržen. Co se nás dotýkalo z politických událostí v minulém roce nejvíce? Přirozeně, naše volby do Ústavodárného Národního shromáždění. Ženy prokázaly při volbách plné pochopení svých občanských povinností a vykonaly je odpovědně. Voličky tedy uspokojily. Méně uspokojily strany, které poskytly ženám na kandidátkách do Ústavodárného Nár. shromáždění příliš malé zastoupení. Dvacet čtyři poslankyně při nadpoloviční většině žen voliček není jistě úměrná cifra. Také sestavení nové vlády ženy neuspokojilo. Při prohlašovaném zrovnoprávnění nemají ženy ani jediného ministra, ačkoliv by jistě každá strana mohla postavit vhodnou a schopnou kandidátku.

Stejně významné jako volby bylo rozhodnutí vlády a parlamentu o dvouletém hospodářském plánu. Ženy cítí odpovědnost k dvouletce a jsou rozhodnuty ji podepřít. Proto je nutno rychle provádět mechanizaci domácností, zejména zemědělských, pomáhat zdravotními a sociálními zařízeními ženě při výchově dětí a nejrůznějšími úlevami pomáhat rodinám, kde oba manželé pracují v zaměstnání.

Nový rok znamená v politických událostech celou kupu novinek. Na čem máme především zájem? Je to naše ústava. V ní chceme opravdu dosáhnouti nejen slavnostního prohlášení naší rovnoprávnosti, ale také skutečného zabezpečení hospodářských a sociálních podmínek. V ústavním výboru sněmovny, který připravuje osnovu ústavní listiny, máme jen dvě poslankyně. Chceme-li dosáhnouti splnění svých požadavků, musíme jim všechny pomáhat.

Máme před sebou dále řadu zákonů, které se budou silně dotýkati Ženina života. Národní pojištění, zákon o národní mobilisaci práce, zveřejnění péče o mládež, zákony na podporu populace, k tomu všemu máme jistě co říci.

Budeme se jednou odpovídati svým úcerám a jejich dětem. To nás zavazuje, abychom se o vše ve veřejném životě našeho státu staraly.

Naše „Vlasta“ zavedla pro řešení těchto otázek rubriku „Jak na to“. Spoléháme na vás, že svým živým zájmem o tuto rubriku prokážete svou činnost.



Figure 6: "Why Does the Czechoslovak Council Work for Our Women?"

By Dr. Milada Horáková

Vlasta, Volume 1, Issue 2, 1947

Programový text M. Horákové k ženské politice: „Proč pracuje Rada čs. žen pro naše ženy?“
ČSN. Vlasta, č. 2, 1. roč., 1947 (zdroj: archiv autorů)

PROČ pracuje Rada čs. žen pro naše ženy?

Když jsme znovu začaly v osvobozeném státě, domnívaly jsme se, že nebude potřeby zvláštních ženských organizací, které by bojovaly za rovnoprávnost a všeobecné zhodnocení práce žen. Vždyť rovnoprávnost nám zaručuje kollektivní vládní program a dvouletý plán vlády. Ženy jsou v politických stranách, přilhy jako vojáci v obou armádách a činnost našich žen v odboji domácím i zahraničním je všemi uznávána. Není to tedy jen theorie, ale hotová skutečnost. A přece máme ještě tolik práce s odstraňováním a napravováním křivd, kterými ženy trpí.

Proč naše rodinné právo nám nevyhovuje?

Je zastaralé, pozůstatek rakouské monarchie z r. 1811 a přece upravuje právní osudy žen. Ženy, které v životě občanském jako poslankyně, zástupkyně úřadů rozhodují o nejzávažnějších věcech veřejných, nemohou podle litery zákona rozhodovati o svých dětech. Je to tedy vždy muž, který přejímá právo rozhodování a právně i ve věcech majetkových jsou ženy ceněny trochu více než nezletilci. Ale to je již známá historie a již v první republice se ženy bránily a budou bránit proti trvání toho zákona, až jej odstraníme.

Proč je dosud nedostatečné hodnocení veřejných zaměstnankyň a pensistek?

Stále jsou na tom lépe muži. Mluví se o populaci a veřejným zaměstnankyním, které jdou na mateřskou dovolenou, se strhuje 20% z platu, ačkoliv by právě v té době potřebovaly příplatek. Ženy vdovy, které mají pensii po svém muži a chtějí svou práci zmírnit pracovní tíseň, jsou odměněny tím, že se jim pensie zkrátí nebo ponechá z ní jen díl, kterým se doplní její plat do částky 48.000 Kčs ročně, ať má kolik chce dětí.

Proč jsou na tom pensistky z tabákových továren hůře než muži?

V těchto továrnách, kde pracuje převážná většina žen, a jejichž hbité ruce jsou při výrobě kuřiva zvlášť ceněny,

nedostávají jako pensisté muži k pensii čtvrtletní přidělí naturálního kuřiva a přicházejí tak v penězích asi o 6.000 Kčs. Stejně i ženy v podnicích, kde muži mají jako součást své odměny zdarma používání elektrické energie nebo plynu pro svou domácnost, nemají ženy těchto výhod.

Proč nemáme okresní školní inspektorky?

Učitelky, které udržují bezesporu vysokou úroveň našeho školství, mají z několika set okresních školních inspektorů pouze tři ženy. Mezi osvětovými inspektory není jedna žena.

Proč nemáme dosud ženu - národní umělkyni?

Umělcům mužům dostalo se již mnoha cenných uznání, mezi ženami není však dosud ani jediná, která by byla národní umělkyní nebo byla poctěna zvláštním uznáním, ať jsou mezi nimi ženy vynikající.

Proč se to vše děje, když je zaručena rovnoprávnost žen vládním programem?

Všechna tato „proč“ musí být odstraněna. Základem těchto akcí je Rada čs. žen, která je také chce odstraňovat.

JUDr. Milada Horáková, předsedkyně Rady čs. žen

Jak pracujeme v Radě čs. žen **Místní Rady čs. žen**

Continuing, the Communists did not cease on these social arguments made by the CNSP and Horáková. One of the efforts to gain support was to fractionate the society and convince subgroups of the culture to support the Soviet rhetoric. The Communists anchored with ideologies such as the War's disaster was brought on by Western imperialism and classism. The Soviets also preyed upon the peasantry in the eastern part of the country and promises of a better life if the country aligned with a superpower that could help the diminutive country against all Western evils. Leading up to the elections and after the War, the KSČ succeeded in nationalizing the media that muted any democratic message from being heard around the country and abolish any plan for political debate. By altering how media was disseminated, Horáková believed this would undermine an individual's right to choose their own leaders or future pushes for social reform should the Party come into power at the next election to be held in 1948.

Dr. Horáková believed that moving from a Nazi homogenized mass to a Communist one was not in the best interest of her country as she sought to return to the fundamentals of her upbringing and after the First World War. Now with the Communists having won the majority of Czech Parliament, President Beneš was obligated to appoint a Prime Minister. Klement Gottwald, a longtime leader of the KSČ and former cabinet maker, was appointed to this position. In power, his focus would be to drive the Communist message to the people as the elections of 1946 were not a landslide and the KSČ still faced opposition from the CNSP. In order to prepare for the election in 1948 and divert any military intervention which surely

would not gain the public's support via force, the Communists used what Kubat refers to as "pressures from above" and "pressures from below." Pressures from above

. . . means simply the control of key positions in the government, for example, control of the Ministry of Agriculture, which permitted the institution of land redistribution and land reform, "proving land commissions," committees of "poor peasants," and similar measure to gain the support of the landless masses and the small farmers. Another pressure from above was control of the police and security forces (Ministry of the Interior) and selective enforcement of the "retribution decrees. Finally, the control of mass media and printing paper by the Ministry of Information provided the means of preventing anti-state propaganda.

Kubat 697.

Pressures from below were identified as being "the control of mass organizations" (Kubat 697). For Dr. Horáková, both of these pressures were on track to buckle society and the vision her party and colleagues set out to achieve. Czechoslovakia was a pressure-cooker and the vessels citizens sought for safety were slowly being removed from society. The organizations she was involved in such as the Women's National Council collapsed, for example, and property was seized to house officers of the Ministry of Interior.

As 1948 approached, the Communists could not guarantee another win should society take to the ballot box. The leaders of CNSP and other civic democratic parties remained in the country in hopes of winning the public's support back to the pre- War days which was, at this point, a decade ago for Czechs. The nation of Czechoslovakia had not given up nor had accepted the proposals or destiny offered by the Communists. In an effort to woo the powerful Dr. Horáková and head of the CNSP, they knew they wanted her to merge with their Party. However, "Milada Horáková never had any illusions about the Communists, and always opposed their activities in every way possible. Knowing about her influence in the women's

movement, [they] tried to gain her for their purposes. Some of her colleagues from the university and from the Council of Czechoslovak Women who had become sympathetic to the Communists also tried to pressure her to change her opinion” (Iggers 296). However, efforts would be in vain as Dr. Horáková was a woman of unwavering conviction. Knowing that the Communists could not absorb her on their political front and with other factors playing a hand, the Communists planned to overthrow the government and put forward a coup d’état before the free elections could take place.

Both parties understood what a failure in the spring 1948 election would mean for the people or for overall power respectively. Both parties were educated on the political climate and turmoil. Both had basic fundamental disagreements in how the country should operate going forward and the dignity the people were owed. CNSP called for early elections knowing that the KSČ was preparing something of a Communist coup that they, in hindsight, underestimated. However, the Communists turned down the offer to engage in early elections. As Pelikán explains, “the Czechoslovak Communist Party abandoned the opportunity for winning a real majority of the people for its specialist programme and adopted instead the Stalinist theory of intensified class struggle, which had as its logical consequence the labeling of all political adversaries as enemies, spies, and traitors, fit only to be liquidated” (Pelikán 16). With the coup scheduled to go forward in late winter of 1948, slowly and with disgust, members of Parliament handed in their resignations to President Beneš. Members of Parliament knew that the Soviet-backed Czech Communists would pose violence and ultimately resigning would perhaps guarantee their and their families’ safety. Milada met with President Beneš several times for counsel on how she should proceed and lead the party to victory but at

this point, his health was failing. The last meeting he “reassured her that if the worst came to worst he could use the army. She made an appointment to see him a short time after Gottwald had declared publically that the resignations had been accepted by the President. Beneš was in another room exhausted, and the doctor had ordered that he must not be disturbed” (Iggers 296-297). President Beneš and his party had lost.

On February 28, 1948, the government collapsed. The Communists and their sympathizers formed the new government and celebrated in the streets marking the event a holiday for years to come as “Victorious February.” They rallied for the “people’s democracy” and immediately started nationalizing all private property. Furthermore, the USSR was funneling money and military assistance to enable this newfound “freedom” in Czechoslovakia. The red momentum was growing. Many of the political leaders, authors, artists, and the intelligentsia lost their position in society. They were faced with the choice either to support the new Communist Czechoslovakia or to quit. Opponents who were stripped from their jobs and houses were left with no option but to flee the country and cross the border into West Germany. These citizens who would not be reduced to subject status did not have a foothold in society. For example, professors or editors were terminated as well as their activities and no longer could make a living for themselves. For most, fleeing the country was essential for survival. Prime Minister Gottwald was delivering speeches against those who had hitherto shaped the country with intellectual thought and evolving cultural contributions. In a speech aimed at eliminating “elitism” of these “traitors,” he exclaimed

There will be no question of degrading the intelligentsia . . . Now that we have thrown capitalism on to the dust-heap, we must throw away a lot of the morality

of the past too. Take for example the tendency of the intelligentsia towards exclusiveness, towards forming a separate caste . . . Where can there be any threat nowadays to their so-called “inner freedom” or “independence?” . . . I really cannot see why a culture catering for the delectation of some tens or hundreds of chosen individuals should be superior to one that heartens and illumines tens of thoughts and millions of their march towards the ideals of humanity.

Viney 468.

For Dr. Horáková, she declined to move or to immigrate to any country. When encouraged by friends who knew of her potential problems she could endure due to her public presence, she would reply, “My place is at home.” Her home was her country and in that country was her family, her father, and many citizens who she felt obliged to fight on their behalf. Although her colleagues who were escaping Czechoslovakia or going into hiding, they continued to urge her to leave for safety reasons, yet it continued to be of no use. With the suspicion surrounding the death of friend, confidant, and iconic son of the first President, Jan Masaryk on March 10, 1948 who was found dead below his office window, she publically resigned.

Dr. Horáková believed, from her experience with the Nazis, that the country would rise up, denounce the Communist political tide, and reject the Communist coup. The following day after the coup, she reported to the WNC regardless only to learn that she was no longer

. . . admitted into the room of the Council, and her correspondence was confiscated. The Communist-controlled press announced that Milada Horáková had been stripped of all her public functions. In fear even organizations of which she had never been a member renounced her, as did for example the association of social workers. However, there were also many people who were not intimidated by the Communist propaganda.

Iggers 297.

Banished from most public organizations, she began working tirelessly with the other CNSP leaders who went underground in the same fashion during the Czech Resistance. However, the application of a similar strategy in the case of the Communist putsch posed some obstacles. To illustrate

After the communists came to power in Czechoslovakia in 1948, some former representatives of non-communist parties (Christian Democratic, Social National and Social Democratic) attempted to resume their activities. They did not manage, however, to unite as one effective organized opposition force and instead often linked their hopes with a belief in change of the international political situation. The communist regime, however, became more repressive. Whereas in 1948, at least 1,643 people were given sentences in political trials, a year later more than 11,000 people were convicted of so-called political offences, of whom 57 were sentenced to death.

CTK 1.

Although with these hurdles in place and the swiftness of the Communists, she dedicated herself to plan meetings on the latest events that were transpiring on the streets of Czechoslovakia and planned escape routes and safe houses for people of her party. Horáková also

. . . decided to help the families of those who were the first to be arrested and to maintain links and exchange information with the émigré population just as naturally as she and her husband maintained contact with London during the War. She began working with the so-called “political six” (politická šestka), the illegal leadership of the National Socialists composed of Josef Nestával, František Račanský, Josef Čupera, Karel Šobr and František Dlouhý. She also participated in organising a meeting in the Prague district of Vinoř with representatives of the Social Democrats and the People’s Party as part of a covert opposition initiative.

Doležalová 1.

The movement strove to keep all former leaders and ministers of the CNSP together in an underground network on the happenings between the new government and Stalin. Horáková

was determined not to let another occupation - Habsburg, Nazi, or otherwise - pilfer her country and pervert the efforts made decades ago. The youth was critical in gaining support and indoctrinating them into a new Communist system of thought therefore, all professors and disciplines such as the arts and humanities were eliminated. The studies of sociology and cultural anthropology were banned. The theater which always served as Czech vessel for social commentary under the Monarchy was censored and radio, which had been nationalized since 1945, catered only to pro-Soviet rhetoric. The cultural spirit was being extinguished which still posed a threat to the Communists. She feverishly sought to restore authenticity, fortitude, and national identity over all Soviet threats in the Czech Resistance of 1948 but the tools in which to reach people were slowly falling out of reach. Dr. Horáková could not access the society who was living in constant fear of being incriminated against the new regime. Instead, she strove to locate her contacts from the former CNSP living in exile in England and Norway. She penned letters on the current climate of the “people’s democracy” in Czechoslovakia to keep them up-to-date. In a letter she authored to former CNSP colleague living outside the country she wrote, “It is sometimes very hard to live here. My husband has been out of work for a while, but I am still holding on. I think I still have a job to do here. Pray for me so that I may know in time [when to leave]” (Iggers 298). Although faced with hardship and in her words, she continued to hope that the citizens would not accept the Communist agenda and its existence would be fleeting. However, the StB soon received orders from Gottwald and Stalin to immediately arrest all those suspected on treacherous activities as conforming and subjugating the culture but this was not as simple as the Communists believed it would be.

For Milada Horáková, who was well known in society and identifiable as an agent of change, she was an immediate target. Bohuslav Horák was put under house arrest and was soon informed by a colleague that the StB were in pursuit to arrest Milada Horáková. Bohuslav Horák fled out of his bathroom window on September 27, 1949 when the StB arrived at the home and into the streets to alert his wife. Despite his efforts it was too late.

6

Prelude to the Show Trial

Milada Horáková was arrested in her office on September 27, 1949 on charges of conspiracy and espionage against the state. Although her husband tried to warn her after the two StB agents arrived at their home, it proved to be too late. In a rare interview given by her daughter Jana (Horáková) Kanská in 2007 and when asked about her being 15 years old on that fateful day and how hard it was, she answers

Definitely. Especially when they actually came to our house to arrest her. It was really hard for me, because while they were there my father left the house. He wanted to warn her that they were waiting for her. But it was already too late – she'd been arrested in her office that morning. So I was alone there with the housekeeper, she was a wonderful person. After awhile my aunt came. The whole apartment was under heavy surveillance. They started checking all the drawers, all the bookcases, you know. The next day I was allowed to go and live with my aunt and uncle.

Cesky Rozhlas 2.

Upon Horáková's arrest, she was transported to Ruzyně prison which was the chosen location since the Communist coup in 1948 to hold all those waiting judicial "processing" or to subject them to interrogation in hopes to break their character.

Figure 7: Report compiled by the StB of Milada Horáková's illegal activity

(Source: ABS)

**Zpráva o ilegální činnosti a perzekuci M. Horákové v době okupace,
z písemnosti zabavených při domovní prohlídce (zdroj: ABS)**

poslankyně ČNS JUDr. Milada Horáková,
Praha XVI., Zapova 3.

Zpráva o ilegální činnosti.

1. Podepsaná JUDr. Milada Horáková byla činná v domácí odboji od roku 1939, a to nejprve ve zvláštní polovnícké skupině, které bylo uloženo připravovat potřebný materiál právní pro odbojovou práci (Politická datědi) a později pro t. sv. ÚVOD (Ústřední vedení domácí odboje). Zde spolupracovala přímo a profesorem dr. H. Paškou z Prahy, Dr. K. Beným (popraveným v Brandenburku v únoru 1945) a dr. Vladimírem Korou, který zemřel ve vězení v r. 1944. Současné stala se členkou skupiny FVZ (fetišní výbor "Všichni zastupeme"). Byla zapojena přímo do datědi této skupiny jejím t. d. vedoucím prof. Jiřkem (Pichým). Často spolupracovala s těmito hlavními členy skupiny: Dr. K. Beným, Františkem Andrášem, doc. Dr. J. Jiřkem, prof. Jankovcem, učitelem Paškem, Annou Pollertovou, Vilma Lantníkovou st. V sítích sítích 1939-40 byla spojkou mezi skupinou FVZ a KČ a jako spojkou přímo se redaktorem Ant. Pašla a jeho prostřednictvím na doc. Dr. Krajínu. Byla účastna při tvoření t. sv. skupiny ÚVOD, která vznikla ze zastoupení skupiny KČ a FVZ a skupiny vojenské "Obrana národa". Spolupracovala na této sdružce na ideovém programu domácí odboje, který vyšel ze osvobození v brožuře "Za svobodu".

V této době se do svého zatčení organizovala prostřednictvím klubu Ženské národní rady síť odbojových pracovníků v různých místech Čech a Moravy, sociální pomoc rodinám zatčených odbojových pracovníků a letců a prováděla ji ve spolupráci s různými odbojovými skupinami, hlavně se skupinou Ivy Šmakalové, Dr. Šmakala, Růženy Felantové, Tomy Kleinerové a jiných.

Dne 1. VIII. 1940 byla gestapem zatčena i se svým manželem a byla ve vyšetřovací vazbě gestapa až do 21. VI. 1941, v těchto věznicích: od 2. 8. 1940 - 20. 8. 1941 věznice Pankrác, od 20. 8. 1941 - 11. 6. 1942 věznice Karlovo nám., od 11. 6. 1942 do 22. 3. 1944 Malá pevnost Terezín. Od 22. 6. 1944 byla v soudní vazbě německého Volkgerichtu, sest. VI., a to ve věznici v Lipsku, později v Drážďanech. Dne 23. X. 1944 byla odsouzena (po návrhu trestu smrti) k 8 letům vězení a 8. 12. 1944 přemístěna do lenké věznice v Aichachu v Horním Slavkovu, kde byla až do července americkou armádou do 21. 4. 1945. Z Německa vrátila se do Prahy dne 20. 5. 45

Živí svědkové této činnosti.

Prof. JUDr. Zdeněk Peška, Praha-Podolí, Doudova 11. Číslo osob. průkazů
Dr. K. J. Beneš, spisovatel, Praha XII, Vítězné nám. 10.
Jan Heryška, odb. přednost MĚMO, Praha XVI, Na Václavce 15.
Dr. Jan Černoš, člen ZNV, Praha XII., Stalinova 170.
Františka Tauferová, úřednice min. informací, Praha-Kobylisy, Na Vrších 32.
Ing. Dr. František Kostíuk, člen rady ZNV, Praha XIX, Táboritáká 10.

Prohlášení svědků o chování vs. vězení

JUDr. Milada Horáková byla s námi jako vězeň od roku 1940 do r. 1945. Je celou dobu vězení jednala jako řádná Češka a její chování bylo bezvadné. Svým spoluvězňům snažila se vždy pomáhat.

Číslo osob. průkazů

Františka Tauferová, Praha-Kobylisy, Na Vrších 32.
Františka Švarcová, Praha III., Petřínská 10.
Běla Krausová, Praha II., Pštrossova 5

Doklady o ilegální činnosti

- a) Publikace "Za svobodu" - knižnice Nové Svobody, Praha 1945.
- b) Archiv skupiny (je uložen a sestřehován u K. J. Beneše a Mada svařajšň).

V Praze dne 14. března 1947

JUDr. Milada Horáková
poslankyně ČNS
Praha XVI., Zapova 3

This declassified report first states her involvement with the Czech Resistance movement under the Nazi occupation. As aforementioned, those involved with the movement were seen as potential social threats to the new Communist government as those involved were perceived as national heroes or heroines. The first paragraph outlines her role as the bridge between individuals and the groups she founded. It goes on to state that she was the chief organizer of the "home" resistance movement. The second paragraph details her involvement with the Women's movement and implicates others such as Tomy Kleinerová. Furthermore, it does not demonize her but states that she aided the families of people who were arrested during the War. The final paragraph details her arrest and that of her husband Bohuslav and their imprisonment throughout Czechoslovakia and Germany. It notes that she was given the death sentence and other details surrounding her War death sentence. The mid-section of the document lists witnesses who could testify to her acts of bravery under the Nazi oppression who also were arrested or mysteriously vanished after the Communist coup. On the right hand side under inspection, their identification numbers have been removed by the StB in this document. Lastly, the witness statement beneath goes on to note that she tried to help her fellow prisoners whilst imprisoned and how she exemplified her patriotism during such hardship. All these activities were perceived as a threat to the regime but also underscores how incriminating a heroine such as Horáková to the society would be in producing a catalyst for change. If those who believed she was such a figure that could not be blemished and could be brainwashed into thinking she was an enemy of the state then the value to do so would be immeasurable.

Figure 8: Interrogation record of Dr. Horáková, March 14, 1950, p. 2.

(Source: ABS)

Výslechový protokol M. Horákové ze dne 14. března 1950, str. 2.
Jde o ukázkou tzv. otázkového protokolu. Na manipulativní otázky
odpovídá vyšetřovaná stylem, který jí je cizí, zčásti používá
„státně bezpečnostní terminologii“ (zdroj: ABS)

- 2 -

Pokračování v zápise o výpovědi s Dr. Horákovou ³³⁰⁹ ⁴⁹

leží v jednotné informaci členských kádru býv. strany nár. soc. Dále jsem jej požádala, aby mi vyšetřil složení nového krajského vedení strany čsl. soc., obsazení sekretariátu a vztah býv. členu strany nár. soc. k Dr. Neumannovi. Bouda mi slýbil spolupráci a žádané informace mne později při našich schůzkách sdělil. Sešli jsme se do září 1949 ještě asi 2 x, nebo 3 x, přenáš se nepamatuji, v kavárně Represantačního domu v Praze.

Informovala jste Boudu na schůzkách o Vašem zapojení na zahraničí ?

Na dalších schůzkách jsem Boudu informovala o zahraniční situaci i situaci vnitřní, tak jak jsem jí znala ze zpráv které jsem dostávala. Neříkala jsem však Boudovi jakým způsobem jsem se zahraničím spojila a od koho zprávy dostávám. Také jsem Boudu informovala o obsahu dopisu Dr. Zenkla, který jsem dostala po jeho útěku do zahraničí.

Co bylo v dalším předmětem Vašeho jednání na schůzkách s Boudou ?

Bouda mi podával informace o členstvu strany nár. soc., že je poměrně v malém počtu činně ve straně čsl. soc., že situace Dr. Neumanna v kraji není dobrá, že sekretariát má nové obsazení a že mezi členy není již ta důvěra, jako byla dříve. Sdělil mně, že býv. krajský tajemník Zink, který byl také mým informátorem, zamířil ileg. do zahraničí a že se členové domívají, že hrál dvojí úlohu, mezi mnou a Dr. Neumannem. Dále mně říkal že informuje členy býv. strany nár. soc v tom směru jak jsem jej žádala a že je ve styku s některými členy v Českých Budějovicích i okrese, které však nejmenoval.

Já jsem Boudovi sdělila, že podobné informace, které žádám od něho také dostáváme od informátorů s jiných krajů. Naznačila jsem mu, že pracuji s některými členy strany v ileg. činnosti, ale s kým pracuji a v čem tato spolupráce záleží jsem mu neřekla.

Použila jste informace od Boudy k Vaší protistát. činnosti ?

Ano, tyto informace použila jsem při informování členů své ileg. skupiny.

Kdo spolupracoval s Dr. Hejčou na hospodářském elaborátu, který jste chtěla použít k informaci zrádné emigraci ? Doplňte svoji výpověď na str. 14.

This page is referred to by StB agents as a “questioning protocol.” Here, they document that she answers in a “manipulating” fashion on questions posed by the state by using “national security terminology.” They indicate that her answers are “unnatural.”

Milada Horáková's well-publicized arrest initiated the transformation of public opinion on those who saved their country which, consequently, would shift support back to the Red Army and Moscow. Hence, her arrest was pivotal on that September day in 1949.

Figure 9: *Prison photograph of Milada Horáková (source: ABS)*

Vazební fotografie M. Horákové (zdroj: ABS)



Under confinement, the conditions were brutal and methods such as sleep deprivation and constant questioning were utilized. Women were not treated differently than men. Female prisoners did not escape the treatment that the StB applied to the “enemies of the state.” For example, Tomy Kleinerová was beaten by notorious Karel Šváb “in the face until it bled, and screamed at her that the sentences had already been decided on, regardless whether she admitted anything or not . . . For whole days, the investigators rehearsed questions and

answers with the accrued. After every deviation from the prescribed scenario there followed further torture” (Iggers 299). Horáková was seen as a symbol of the First Republic and of democracy. Her arrest was instrumental in the first push of the Communist coup and was heavily publicized in the media according to the formula the Soviets and Czech Communists outlined.

Milada Horáková’s arrest stunned and paralyzed the resistance movement and the common unbelievers of the nation. Dr. Horáková was critical in the transfer of information between individuals and non-party members both inside and outside the state. Her criminal activity was published in more than 18 newspapers organized under the Ministry of Information based in Prague and led by notorious propagandist Gustav Bareš. The arrest was a commencement to transform the doubting common citizen and the propaganda apparatus began to operate. To illustrate, “First, the Communist machinery develops an attack against the democratic forces. This would usually include a campaign against one of the democratic groups, devised in such a way as to isolate it from the others. Furthermore, there would be an attempt to deprive democratic groups of their leaders or of their strength. Attempts on the lives of democratic leaders . . . would fall into this category” (Duchacek 517). Milada Horáková was strategically targeted in this first high profile fashion and cog of propaganda. Moreover, other Holocaust survivors and those who had lived through the Nazi occupation and were outspoken vocal critics like Horáková were also arrested in what they believed to be a second wave of an occupying force. “This democratic faith in constitutional methods,” Duchacek states, “the formal resignation of the government, free elections, and a new government – were in sharp contrast to the organized, extra-parliamentary, and anti-constitutional display of

Communist strength” (522). Milada Horáková was swept up in this liquidization of non-conformers. By withholding her correspondence with those abroad, this was perceived as an act of espionage and grounds for treachery to be prosecuted under the new penal code.

The newly implemented Soviet judicial system, the trials and otherwise, was a skillfully mastered machine. On discussing the great purges in Prague in relationship to neighboring satellite countries such as Poland or Hungary, author Brzezinski notes “The most extensive violent purge swept the leadership of the Czechoslovak party. The purge gradually gained momentum between the years 1950 and 1952. Individual leaders were dropped from their high posts; others then accused them of treason. In turn the accusers were dropped and accused . . .” (Brzezinski 82). In the case of show proceedings in Prague and with Milada Horáková, the protocols for the trials were put into place before the trial began. The Czechoslovak show trials included on scandalous, well-publicized arrest after the Communists released to the media what the accused were committed of doing. For Dr. Horáková, it was published that she was conspiring with the Western enemy and was planning to overthrow the Communist government. Internationally, the news of her arrest soon began to travel outside the closed borders of the Czech lands with figures such as Albert Einstein, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Winston Churchill pleading for her immediate release. However, those detained like Horáková could not be released by security officials for they shared the view that any such release would damage the public faith of the Communists. The arrest would grant a turning point. As one Czechoslovak report from 1968 states

. . . the victim gets into the hands of the Security Service – after which he must, sooner or later, and with greater or less coercion, confess to his crimes. Security

officials hold the view that an arrested man cannot be released, since that would shake public confidence in their organization. Some of the victims confess because they believe they are helping the Party, others because of promises that they will be spared if they do so; some just cannot stand the physical ordeal. Those who have the strength to resist are tried in camera and held longest in prison.

Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party 26.

The paranoia was wide-spread in the Ministry of Justice who often bugged the cells, like Milada Horáková's, with wires to tape any conversations she would have with family or others. While she was in custody, they placed secret StB agents posing as inmates in Horáková's cell hoping she would begin to talk or confess to criminal activity. With all these instruments in place, Horáková never broke nor conceded to the perverted system of justice.

Next, "When the 'confessions' have been extracted, the scenario of the trial is composed, a 'group' or 'centre' is put together, the depositions are suitably adapted, and all – including the witnesses – learn their parts by role" (Pelikan 26). While the Communists prepared what exactly they could try Milada Horáková, she was tortured mercilessly. Survivors of both Nazi and Communist regimes note that treatment of inmates was virtually the same. "The interrogations of detainees were inhuman," one survivor would state. Needless to say, all those accused agreed entirely to confess to the fabricated crimes, except Milada Horáková. She was offered clemency for a false confession but she refused. František Preucil states, "After seven months in Ruzyně prison I was willing to put my signature on any document, even one stating that I murdered my own grandmother." Preucil also described his account at the trial with Milada Horáková, "Her eyes! Her look wasn't any more her look. It wasn't her anymore standing in front of me" (Svodoba 23).

Figure 10: Page 1 from Horáková's personal statement of defense from Ruzyně

November 9, 1949.

(Source: ABS)

[Translated from the Czech]

To clear up my political and private view on today's state of affairs, I admit that after February 1948, and by my own choice, I gave up all my political functions and all my public activities I was involved in. I placed myself in my previous work at the Constitutional National Committee in the capital city of Prague, where I worked at "referat" for the education of arts and sciences. Naturally, my previous sector in political life and political activities impelled interest about today's political situations in my own country as well as in the world's questions. Besides this, I was still searched out by my previous colleagues from politics and other people who searched out my point of view on the standings of today's events and layout of the current political situation. I must admit that I looked at the reality from a critical perspective as I always look at the world because it would be detrimental not to look at it as such. This is why I was involved not from a negative way but with positive energy to create proposals and suggestions after February's events. I am firmly against so-called illegal or underground activity since I did not know that it was illegal and I publically discussed it.

With the former Chairman of ČNS, Dr. Zenekal, whom I have known for many years and whom I cooperated with (worked together) and even in the days after February before he escaped abroad I was in contact with him and I often visited him and his wife with the Ministry of Interior's notice. I thought this for myself because I did not want to impose on him our long

personal relationship. At that time, the main object of our conversation was about February's events rather than the personal aspects of Dr. Zenekal's family. I did not know anything about his intentions to escape or plans to coordinate such an escape

[Statement truncates]

Výslechový protokol M. Horákové ze dne 9. listopadu 1949.
Ukázka tzv. „prvotní výpovědi“, v níž se vyšetřovaná vyjadřuje
pro ni velmi typickým způsobem a obhajuje své názory a stanoviska
(zdroj: ABS)

2441
Pokračováno v protokole s Dr. Miladou H o r á k o v o u dne 38
9.11.1949 v 17.30 hod.

Abych objasnila svůj politický a osobní postoj za dnešní
státoprávní situace, uvádím následující. Po únoru 1948 vzda-
la jsem se dobrovolně poslaneckého mandátu a rovněž i ostatní
veřejné činnosti. Zařadila jsem se do práce v býv. svém
působišti v ústředním národním výboru hl. města Prahy, kde
jsem pracovala v referátě pro školství vědy a umění. Přiro-
zeně mě bývalé veřejné působení a politická činnost nutila mě
abych se zajímala o otázky současného politického života
jak domácího tak světového. Kromě toho byla jsem stále vyhle-
dávana, jednak svými býv. přísl. strany, jednak i jinými oso-
bami a dotazována na svůj názor a postoj k dnešním událostem
a k dnešnímu uspořádání poměrů. Musím prohlásit, že zaují-
mala jsem k některým skutečnostem kritické stanovisko, ale
hájila jsem názor, že celá dnešní situace je součástí situace
světové a že její konečné řešení závisí přirozeně také od
vyřešení světového. Mým přesvědčením je, že bylo by na škodu
národu i lidu, kdyby trvale část jeho kladných sil byla
ze součinnosti vyřazena. Proto bylo mým přesvědčením, že jest
potřebí tuto součinnost posilovat a nikoliv negativně, ale
positivně vystoupiti s návrhy a náměty, které by vedly k při-
blížení těch, kdož po únorových událostech stojí stranou
a nestvít zbytečně kladné síly do pasivity. Byla jsem zcela
otevřeně proti jakékoliv t. zv. ilegální či podzemní činnosti
jelikož jsem neviděla její účel a také jsem se v tomto směru
otevřeně vůči všem vyjadřovala.

S býv. předsedou strany ČSN s Dr. Z e n k l e m znala jsem
se dlouhá léta a spolupracovala jsem s ním a proto i ve
dnech po únoru, než došlo k jeho útěku do ciziny jsem byla,
s ním ve styku a navštěvovala jsem jej a jeho ženu s vědo-
mím orgánů min. vnitra. Považovala jsem toto věc za svoji
samozřejmou povinnost vzhledem k dlouholetým osobním vzta-
hům. V té době hlavním předmětem našich rozhovorů byly udá-
losti únorové a pak osobní a rodinné skutečnosti Dr. Z e n -
k l a se týkající. Po jeho úmyslu uprchnouti do ciziny
jsem nebyla zpravena a také nevím nic o způsobu jak byl
proveden jeho únik. Považuji to za samozřejmost, že mě Dr.

Marie Šolc

Furthermore, during the preparation for the show trial, "*The Trial of Milada Horáková et al*," Horáková was given a script by the StB to memorize for her time in court. As a lawyer and with experience in democratic laws, one can assume how horrid this experience proved. Cornered and muted, she would not be allowed to defend herself, provide any form of explanation, and be subservient to the Soviet law. It is often claimed that Gottwald and his advisors crafted this script line by line to set a precedent for the population to provide evidence for Stalin that the Czechoslovak Communists were dedicated to the motherland and for their first show trial. Gottwald not only had the trial outlined and finalized, the sentences were also decided before the trial even began. "The trial script," Pelikán writes, "is studied and endorsed by the Party leadership, which also decides (before the trial) on the sentences – even, as in the Slánský trial, about the appeal procedure and the rejection of any plea for clemency" (Pelikán 27). Shockingly, "the dress rehearsal of the trial, with the interrogators playing the role of the judges, was tape recorded to be used in the event, however improbable, that at the public performance, and defendant might retract his confession. The tape was played back, a couple of days before the trial, to an audience consisting of Gottwald and chosen members of the party leadership, an act of cynicism unparalleled even in the annals of Stalinist justice" (Hodos 82). During the preparation, Horáková often deviated from the script and would inject a double meaning in many of the questions she answered.

The StB and Party leaders agreed that having the radio broadcast live would prove far too risky in the Horáková case. Her trial and what it would symbolize was precious to the propaganda. "Aware of the tide of dissent, the regime sought to instill fresh fear in the public. A woman's execution would be suitably chilling. . ." (Provakotor 2) and, as such, would be

instrumental in challenging the mentality of the Czech citizens. As she awaited trial the citizens of Czechoslovakia awaited feverishly. The trial and the media surrounding her criminal activity stirred a frenzy amongst the population. It is documented that

“The daily press carried articles full of hatred for the accused even before they were convicted, and after conviction their ‘evil deeds’ were recalled again and again. During the big trials the press campaign was stepped up, subjecting people to even greater pressure, confusing them with false information and urging redoubled efforts to find the still lurking ‘enemies.’ This propaganda yielded its fruits in a universal psychosis of mistrust, and in calls for the severest punishment. Thousands of resolutions on these lines were received by the courts, the Party and the Government leaders, especially during the trials of Dr. Horáková and others.

Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party 60.

Milada Horáková awaited her trial and her moment in court and was not dissuaded by the severity facing her. Czech historian Karel Kaplan notes upon finding unique reports from Horáková’s cell, “the reports prove that Horáková suffered immensely, being tormented both physically and psychologically in custody, but despite that she kept a level head and her firm conviction. The informers testimony also indicates that Horáková was able to analyze the situation clearly as she allegedly said her trial would be of a historical importance and that she would be sentenced to death” (Czech News Agency 1). Her show trial would be the rehearsal for what was yet to come in mid-century Czechoslovakia. The nation had never before experienced this process or type of propaganda. It would be a landmark case and one which would set a precedent for others to follow. The show trial of Milada Horáková *et al* would mark the beginning of the climax of Stalinism in Czechoslovakia as executions, arrests, and violence ensued. Horáková’s trial would usher in social reform and revolution. She was selected to be

the “leader” or “ring” of the trial and the others that stood as co-defendants were modern cultural and political leaders as well as Nazi Holocaust survivors. For example

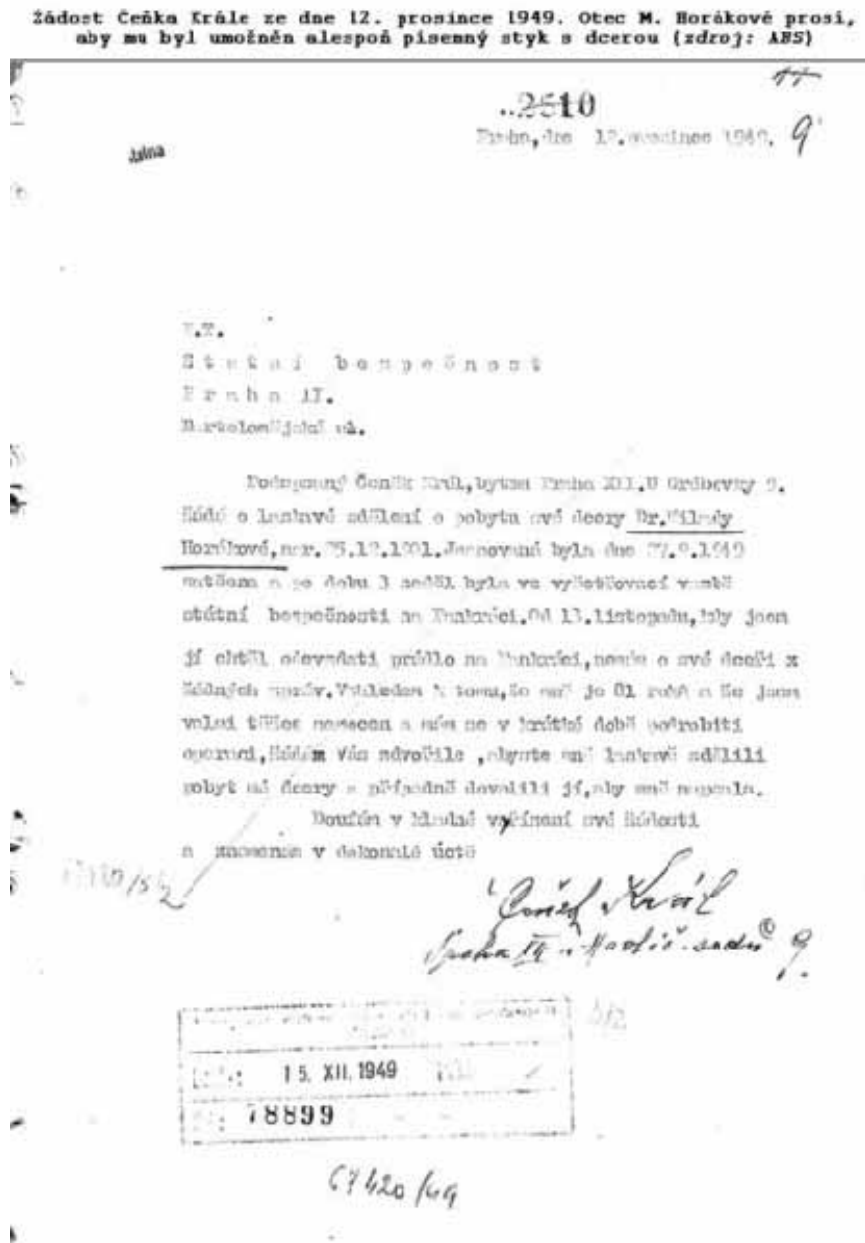
The accused comprised people of various political hues: Milada Horáková, Josef Nestával, Fráňa Zemínová, Antonie Kleinerová, František Přeučil and Jiří Hejda belonged to the leadership of the National Socialists, Zdeněk Peška and Vojtěch Dunder were Social Democrats, Bedřich Hostička and Jiří Křížek were with the People’s Party. Závist Kalandra was a “Trotskyite,” Oldřich Pecl was a supporter of the National Socialists, and finally, there was also Jan Buchal, a rank-and-file member of the National Socialists who was accused of being 'the leader of a terrorist gang in the Ostravsko region.'

Doležalová 1.

The country became paralyzed with fear as civil codes were being rewritten and no one wished to deviate from the new “norm.” So much was banned or viewed as illegal activity that it caused citizens to “shut down” or accept society ‘*as is*’ without questioning this new normalcy. As the trial date loomed, Horáková focused on what she believed in and what she had stood for her country, family, colleagues, and faith regardless of what fate would bring. She was not permitted to see family or colleagues but remained isolated in confinement from September 1949 until the scheduled trial date of May 31, 1950. Mr. Král, her 81-year-old father and now caretaker of daughter Jana, petitioned and pleaded with the government to allow Jana Horáková permission to have written communication with her mother however, such efforts would prove fruitless.

Figure 11: Letter from Čeněk Král dated December 12, 1949

(Source: ABS)



While she waited trial with the other co-defendants on trumped up indictments of treason and espionage, she demonstrated great courage, conviction, and unfaltering faith in a greater purpose that could not be identified nor explained at that time.

7

The Show Trial of Milada Horáková *et al*, 31 May – 8 June. 1950

“When timber is felled, chips begin to fly” – Stalin

In the trial of Milada Horáková, the show trial would be the first in Czechoslovakia – complete with a daily radio broadcast, filmed, and pictures for the newspapers. The defendants were transferred to the courtroom to uproarious hatred and Communist fanfare. The courtroom was decorated with swastikas, guns, and all other symbols of treachery and evils. The trial was completely staged to be the most sophisticated arm of propaganda at the time. It was led by five judges - Josef Urválek, Juraj Vieska, Jiří Kepák, Antonín Havelka and Ludmila Brožová - who were seated in a line at a long bench. In the center of the courtroom was a platform with microphones adhered to the banister. The courtroom was filled with Czech citizens from around the country from “factories, offices, and even schools where people got tickets to enter the courtroom, working people were taken there by buses. The trial was extraordinary also for its public acceptance” (PoliticalPrisoners.eu 1). Outside of Prague, the show trial of Milada Horáková *et al* was equally on display for mass consumption. As one citizen notes, “Here in Pardubice they ran the monster processes in the Grand Hotel. That doesn’t exist anymore but it was the biggest hall in the town for 400 or 500 people. They were giving us tickets to that. People used to go watch the processes and they were so fanatic that they would really see criminals in those victims” (PoliticalPrisoners.eu 1). The hysteria being

generated in Prague proved equally important transforming the minds to citizens throughout the country. The show trial of Milada Horáková was important for the Communists for it reached and directly approached the citizens. The defendants were not held in an upper echelon that would have a dismissive public but would assert attention from the average citizen because they could see themselves in their shoes. For example, Kusin notes that “it is at this lower level that the second motive of political prosecution becomes predominant: intimidation and suppression of potential spreading of dissent. Every political trial, of a Slánský or the simple man-in-the-street, has the effect of scaring off others, although not every political trial is a trial of real or hypothetical challenger to the power-holders” (Kusin 625). Conducting a trial behind closed doors, in effect, would not generate the fear required to revolutionize a country into conformity nor would it be able to possess the power to intimidate. Dr. Horáková’s show trial was broadcasted to the nation with unwavering authority and mastery.

Milada Horáková was the first to take the stand on May 31, 1950. During the questioning, she was asked about her involvement in plotting to overthrow the government. She was addressed by the judges as “Mrs. Accused” and was drilled by the five judges for hours. In an excerpt from the newsreel on May 31, 1950, the dialogue contained

Court: Mrs. Accused Dr. Horáková, you heard the charge. Have you understood the contents?

MH: Yes.

Court: So you know what is laid to charge?

MH: Yes.

Court: Do you feel guilty for the acts that are parts of the charge and are laid to you by charge?

MH: I feel guilty for acts I confessed and that are the facts of the case according to valid laws nowadays.

Court: These acts which are considered as high treason and espionage?

MH: Yes. Although I have my own notes for some deductions of Attorney-General.

Court: Yes, we'll get there later. Mrs. Accused, do not use juristic formulations. Tell us if you feel guilty because you worked in a subversive and criminal way against the People's Democratic Socialist Czechoslovak Republic?

MH: Yes, I feel guilty for that.

Court: That's clear speech! Mrs. Accused, you said that according to nowadays laws you feel guilty. I'm asking you now if the high treason or the espionage charge before the valid law are not illegal?

MH: There are, but . . .

Court: Thank, you, that's all!



Figure 12: *Dr. Horáková facing her judges (Source: ABS)*

Although given a strict script to follow, that was not the case with Milada Horáková who often deviated from what she was supposed to answer – often times, putting much of the truth in the

middle of a scripted answer. This might be attributed to her experience in Nazi courts during the War and in the jails where she often was interrogated under both regimes. Milada Horáková did defend herself on the stand to a small degree but posited greater emphasis on absorbing other acts of “subversion” by her co-defendants on herself.

By day three, the Communists prepared a new factor. The courtroom’s soldiers entered with letters supposedly from around the country calling for the most extreme of punishments for those accused. “Artificially created mass hysteria was very much in evidence. In the court room there appeared baskets of almost 6,300 resolutions demanding . . . that the heads of the leaders of the terrorist group should fall . . . as the radio spoke of the accused as of the worst criminals” (Iggers 300). The state had broadcasted that they were seeking from the population what the sentences should be and to submit their “recommendations to the state.” In one letter written by schoolgirls, they penned

When well even we are still young, we follow the reports diffused by the radio on the thirteen shown for treason of our Republic. We learn that they prepared a new war. We know at which point the war is cruel and how much it costs in human lives. We remember the air raids on Pardubice. We do not want a new war. As we ask you as all the traitors severely and be precisely punished.

Pelikán 39.

This push for mass hysteria from the Soviet court to the people rendered sentences such as “the just punishment” or “the extreme punishment for the extreme criminals.” “The fanfare which accompanied this trial (and that of Dr. Horáková and others),” he states, “played its part in whipping up spy mania, convincing the public that the accused were guilty, and encouraging the idea that there must be still more plots waiting to be discovered” (Pelikan 87). The international community continued to follow her trial daily with Albert Einstein and Eleanor

Roosevelt continuing their appeals to the Czechoslovak Communists. The BBC monitoring service managed to pick up the closed Czechoslovak radio signal that kept the global community up-to-date with the latest news. Journalists attempted to cover the proceedings but could not relay the entire story to the print media. As Dowling explains, “the transcripts of the case were a valuable source of news, as only two western press correspondents were invited to attend the trial, and everything they wrote was subject to the Czechoslovak Communist censorship” (Dowling 231). Despite these calls by leaders and advocates to end the trial and allow those accused to leave the country, the trial of Horáková’ *et al* continued to go ahead for the next few days and continued to be relentless on all those who stood accused.

As the days continued the language used by the prosecution grew fiercer. In one broadcast, an excerpt goes on to reveal the climate of the courtroom. For example “Here, facing the working people, on the bench of the accused are those who followed the shameful road of the bourgeoisie, of the criminals who joined against the people of this republic in order to thrust a dagger in their back. The traitors of the republic sit here fully unmasked” (Beran 1). As a Czech patriot, lawyer, politician, human rights advocate, concentration camp survivor, mother, and wife, the short show trial’s judges would refer to her and the other defendants as “the traitors of the republic,” “the criminals who joined against the people of the republic in order to thrust a dagger in their back,” “terrorists,” “the rats plotting from sewers against the working class,” “professional agents of the American, English, or French imperialists,” and “the little Hitlers” (Provakator 5). Upping the rhetoric was undeniably engineered to reach a fever pitch for anyone who dared to doubt the merits of the Community regime. One passage by pro-Party member Beran from the courtroom warned

We advise the traitors at home and abroad: keep your hands off the republic . . . I call on the working people to ever be watchful. May they learn from this case . . . to recognize the enemy, those . . . who prepare the new war, the servants of the aggressors. The people of our republic are not only building paradise on earth; they also will defend this paradise against the forces of the old, mean world which is condemned to destruction.

Beran 1.



Figure 13: *Dr. Horáková facing her judges (Source: ABS)*

Horáková faced her accusations and accusers and appeared stoic despite the indictments she was being prosecuted for. One of her statements was

I have declared to the State Police that I remain faithful to my convictions, and that the reason I remain faithful to them is because I adhere to their ideas, the opinion and beliefs of those who are figures of authority to me. And among them are two people who remain the most important figures to me, two people who made an enormous impression me throughout my life. Those people are Tomas Garrigue Masaryk and Edvard Benes. And I want to say something to those who were also inspired by those two men when forming their own

convictions and their ideas. I want to say this: no one in this country should be made to die for their beliefs. And no one should go to prison for them.

Throughout her short trial Horáková faced the charges with courage and some stated that her eyes spoke of an unshaken woman. While being examined by the judges, Horáková lifted her head and stated

We lengthily discussed what is called the “Conviction.” Because it is by my conviction that my acts were justified. I must say that the Security of the State and the bodies expressed more patience to convince me, whereas me, I was much less patient, after February 48, to convince itself that violence and the injustices which were at the origin of my acts were real or momentary. I would lie by saying that I changed, that I am very different, that my conviction changed. That would be neither true, nor honest.



Figure 14: *Dr. Milada Horáková facing her accusers (Source: ABS)*

On the morning of June 8, 1950, the accused were handed their sentences; four life imprisonments, five sentences from 15-28 years, and four death sentences. Milada Horáková was given an execution order: death by hanging. Jan Buchal, Dr. Oldřich Pecl, and Zaviš Kalandra also were given the death sentence. Upon receiving her death sentence, she was forced to state for the court that this was the “just verdict, in the name of the people” for her “just crime.” One judge, Ludmila Brožová-Polednová, after reading her verdict finished by stating to the court, “While the woman who diligently and dedicatedly works in the Kontony textile factory in Beroun, filling her quota and more on the automatic machines to help build and strengthen our Republic, the defendant Horáková was underground putting together a enemy gangs who will later destroy our great Republic” (Ceský Televize).

Figure 15: *The arraignment of Milada Horáková and the conclusion, p. 18. (Source: ABS)*

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hranice. Spojení s uprchlími zrádci Zenklem a Ripkou, k nimž se později také připojila Růžena Pelantová, bylo jedním z úkolů Horákové. Podávala jim hospodářské i politické zprávy špionážního obsahu, jakož i zprávy o činnosti své ilegální organizace. Nejdůležitější zprávy, obsahující podrobné údaje o obchodních stycích ČSR a SSSR získala od F. Přeučila, sama zpracovávala politickou část zpráv a používala při jejich dodávání smluveného kódu. Jiné zprávy se týkaly dvouletky, předpokladu pětiletky a církevních poměrů v ČSR. Všechny tyto zprávy byly určeny pro anglo-americké imperialisty. Spojení se Zenklem, Ripkou a Pelantovou udržovala různými cestami, zejména také přes uprchlíci Kvapilovou v Norsko, francouzskou státní občanku Essertier a Nora Andersona. Od Zenkla a Ripky dostávala zpět pokyny k další protistátní činnosti, které sdělovala členům podzemí.

Figure 16: The arraignment of Milada Horáková and her twelve co-defendants (Source: ABS)

Obžaloba M. Horákové a jejich společníků, str. 42; právní kvalifikace
trestných činů včetně zločinu velezrady a vyzvědačství (zdroj: ABS)

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T í n s p á c h a l i

I. Všichni obvinění zločin velezrady podle § 1,
odst.2 /odst.1, lit. c/ zákona č. 231/48 Sb.
a podle § 1, odst. 3. lit.b/cit. zákona,
Fr. Zemínová, Fr. Přeučil a Jan Buchal mi-
moto též podle § 1, odst. 3., lit.c/zákona
č. 231/48 Sb.

II. Všichni obvinění zločin vyzvědačství podle
§ 5, odst.1, 2, lit. c/zákona č. 231/48 Sb.
Dr. Milada Horáková, dr. Josef Nestával, dr.
Jiří Hejda, Fr. Přeučil, Ant. Kleinerová,
dr. Oldřich Pecl a Závěš Kalandra též podle
§ 5, odst.2, lit.d/, lit.e/cit.zákona.
Dr. Jiří Hejda mimoto též podle § 5, odst.2,
lit. b/cit.zákona

a.buďtež na to všichni potrestáni
podle § 5, odst.2, zákona čís.231/48 Sb.
s použitím § 34 tr. zákona. U všech obviněných
navrhují použití ustanovení §§ 47, 48 a 52
zákona č. 231/48 Sb.

n a v r h u j i, aby

Figure 17: The official document containing Dr. Horáková's sentence. Her verdict is listed under number 1: "JUDr. Milada Horáková k trestu smrti." JUDr. Milada Horáková is sentenced to death. (Source: ABS)

- 3 -

zvidati státní tajemství,

- b) Dr. Milada Horáková, Dr. Josef Nestával, Dr. Jiří Hejda, František Přeučil, Antonie Kleinerová, Dr. Oldřich Pecl a Závěš Kalandra dopouštěli se vyzvědačství delší dobu, ve značném rozsahu a způsobem zvláště nebezpečným a vyzvědali státní tajemství zvláště důležité,
- c) Dr. Jiřímu Hejdovi byla povinnost uchovávat státní tajemství výslovně uložena.

T í m s p á d h a l i

- I) všichni zločín velezrady podle § 1 odst. 2 (odst. 1 lit. a, c/) zák. č. 231/48 Sb. a podle § 1 odst. 2 lit. b/ téhož zákona,

Františka Zemínová, František Přeučil a Jan Buchal mimo to též podle § 1 odst. 3, lit. c/ téhož zákona,

- II) všichni zločín vyzvědačství podle § 5 odst. 1, odst. 2, lit. c/ zák. č. 231/48 Sb.,

Dr. Milada Horáková, Dr. Josef Nestával, Dr. Jiří Hejda, František Přeučil, Antonie Kleinerová, Dr. Oldřich Pecl a Závěš Kalandra též podle § 5 odst. 2, lit. c, e/ cit. zák.,

Dr. Jiří Hejda mimo to též podle § 5 odst. 2, lit. b/ téhož zákona, a

o d s u z u j í s e

za to všichni podle § 1 odst. 3 zák. č. 231/48 Sb. se zřetelom na ustanovení § 34 tr. z.:

- 1) JUDr. Milada Horáková k trestu s m r t i ,
- 2) Jan Buchal k trestu s m r t i ,
- 3) JUDr. Oldřich Pecl k trestu s m r t i ,
- 4) Závěš Kalandra k trestu s m r t i ,
- 5) JUDr. Josef Nestával s použitím ustanovení § 113 odst. 1 zák. č. 319/48 Sb. k trestu těžkého žaláře na d o ž i v o t í ,
- 6) JUDr. Jiří Hejda s použitím ustanovení § 113 zák. č. 319/48 Sb. k trestu těžkého žaláře na d o ž i v o t í ,

In the days after her verdict, daughter Jana Horáková petitioned Gottwald for her mother's pardon but her efforts were in vain. All appealed their verdicts and all were dismissed. The sentence would hold. Gottwald signed her verdict and penalty on June 24, 1950. Days before her execution, Milada Horáková wrote letters to her husband, daughter, and family about her life, the lessons she wanted to live on, and the love she had for them all. Milada wrote for her family about the courage one must possess to live one's life and how to live with decisions one must take. She discussed the value of life and the reality one must live in – that it would not cater or mother anyone. In the letters, her song was one of an unceasing, unbroken mother, wife, and woman. In one letter addressed to her family, she writes, "I go with my head held high. One also has to know how to lose. That is no disgrace. An enemy also does not lose honor if she is truthful and honorable. One falls in battle; what is life other than a struggle?" Milada Horáková openly wrote about love and offered guidance and advice to her daughter who would grow up without a mother. On the evening before her execution, she was allowed fifteen minutes with her daughter, younger sister Věra, and brother-in-law in the boiler room of Pankrác prison. Milada learned that her husband had managed to escape to Western Germany and was alive. She tried to hold and kiss Jana one final time but the policeman would not allow her to do so and the final minutes between Milada and her family had expired. Her final words to her family were ones of love and that she acted with her heart and chosen a life rightly.

On the morning of June 27, 1950, the four were led to the inner circle of the prison at 4:30 in the morning. Milada was selected to go last and she looked onward as her fellow countrymen were executed. Finally, the guard turned to Milada and ushered her to the

platform. Her last words were, "I'm falling, falling. I lost this battle. I leave honorably. I love this land, I love these people, build prosperity for them. I leave without hatred for you. I wish you this, I wish you . . ."

At 5 o'clock and 35 minutes, Milada Horáková's life ended.

She was 48 years old.

8

Indoctrination of the New Society

Although her show trial ended in 1950, the trials continued to terrorize the country of Czechoslovakia over the next decade although began to decline in 1954. The show trial of Milada Horáková marked the beginning of Stalinism in the land and served as a catalyst for change. Throughout the late 1940s, many Czechs resisted the emergence of the Communist Party and did not subscribe to their agenda as can be witnessed by the many who fled the country or went underground to form a resistance movement. With the arrest of Milada Horáková and the heavily publicized trial in 1950, it sent a clear message to the citizens of the country: deviate and die. The trial was the first of its kind in the country and created the foundation for more arrests, more trials, and a media frenzy that captivated a country. The trial led to over 600 CNSP members of her party to be imprisoned or executed. This is data that was recorded. However the actual number of forced disappearances, suspicious deaths, or private trials conducted by the StB is not reflected in this number. According to information from the Czech Office for Documentation of Crimes of Communism (UDV), “there were 350 executions carried out in Czechoslovakia from 1948 – 1958, of which most were of people convicted of political crimes such as treason, espionage and sabotage” (CTK 1). Over that ten year time, we can extract the amount of violence and perversion of justice in the land. However, upon close examination by a report filed in 1968, the carnage reached its apex following the show trial of Horáková *et al.* To illustrate

The figure for death sentences was also high: between October 1948 and the end of 1952 the State Court imposed 233 sentences of death, of which 178 were carried out. The number of death sentences pending was so great that early in 1951 the Ministry of Justice gave the following reason for a delay in bringing cases to court: 'Earlier convictions in all these cases are impossible, because we should have death sentences accumulating in too short a space of time.'

Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party 56.

In comparing data from 1948 – 1958 in the context of the year 1948-1952, we can see that the death toll by the Communists had reached a climax – especially in the year following her execution.

The social consequences and impact of the show trial were felt throughout the country and were instrumental in shaping a society in how they remembered the trial of Milada Horáková in formative Communist years. During the mid-century, Czechoslovak society was stunned by her trial and became a chronicle of oral tradition outside the country by those who managed to escape. From a “judicial” standpoint, Milada Horáková’s trial served as the impetus to the show trial of Rudolf Slánský and his fellow Communist colleagues in 1951-1952. Others trial victims such as Slánský and Husák would also be historically remembered for their lives in 1968 and the charges dismissed a decade after their executions. Cases and show trials such as Slánský, Kadar, and Husák’s were widely known and discussed in journals throughout the second half of the 20th century underscoring one blatant question – why was the case of Milada Horáková excluded from judicial and human rights documentation? Arguably, many scholars have overlooked her case and have not researched the impact of the case until now. Male-dominated research studies throughout the mid-century highlights a gendered approach in how history is remembered. Studies focusing on Czechoslovakia during this time center on

economic and political elements but do not weave in the feminine narrative or sociological studies surrounding women in general. Moreover, feminist, cultural, and anthropological studies were not introduced in the region until after the Velvet Revolution of 1989. Lastly, her exclusion is indisputably attributed in part to an overall disinterest in the region as displayed by Western European dominance in the research and academic forums.

Although these cases are important in uncovering the past and establishing Communist judicial patterns or recreating a collective historical foundation, one is left with the sense of wonder why her case has not been academically braided into the research up until now? This is a question that further research should approach going forward addressing the general question of gender in relationship to remembrance in the region by the West. Slánský's show trial was heavily studied in Czechoslovakia outside the country and throughout the following decades. Interestingly, many studies during those tumultuous years conducted on the Czechoslovak purges in the early 1950s surrounded Slánský without regard to Horáková. As aforementioned, the amount of research conducted on the show trial of Milada Horáková has been exceedingly slim to none which may be attributed in part to masculine traditions of academic research which, hitherto, had focused on traditional masculine research topics in Czechoslovakia. Research during the mid-century was heavily dominated by male researchers who were conducting studies on topics that did not highlight the injustice or the commencement of the trials led by Horáková. Through this, we can deduce that research and the act of remembrance in Central Europe was male-oriented, biased, and chauvinist. Perhaps the only piece penned on the execution of Milada Horáková as it relates to feminism and

human rights were by Eleanor Roosevelt on October 24, 1950 in the St. Petersburg Times. In it, she wrote

Dr. Horáková admitted to the crime of wanting free elections under international supervision and of wanting to change the present rule of terror in Czechoslovakia. Her last words were that she was content to die for what she had done. Women's organizations all over the world protested the sentence and execution, but protests of that kind are not heard very loudly in some countries. A spirit like that of Dr. Horáková, however, will live on and inspire other people to fight for things in which they believe. When these things are freedom, justice, and fundamental human rights, they must in the end win out.

Roosevelt 1.

This missing piece in socio-historical research exposes a gap in academic studies that has not been allocated to women's issues and gender strife. Modern studies which take into account the show trial of Slánský with regard to the social value and importance Horáková's trial served may adjust Slánský hypotheses and arguments surrounding the Czechoslovak show trial.

Dr. Milada Horáková's trial was a social vehicle for reform in all capacities of the country. The trials that followed from 1950-1954 were not just specific to political members, but encompassed social or religious dissidents such as Catholics, Jews, professors, and homosexuals. In one report, "there was a time when the Ministry of Justice was forced to request a breathing-space because the accumulated death sentences could not technically be carried out. And this happened in a country with democratic traditions, an advanced industrial economy, and a high level of culture" (Pelikan 27). The carnage and terror in Prague through propaganda like the show trials would eventually prevail and was not specifically allocated to political liquidation as exemplified by Horáková. For example

The individual citizen could no longer defend his rights, even over what seemed minor breaches of the law; later, he found he had been deprived of his rights in trials where his life was at stake. The lawlessness was indiscriminate: ordinary citizens holding no official position and men prominent in public life were equally vulnerable. It can be said that the monster trials had their origins in the first occasion that the law was violated in a 'minor case.'

Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party 144.

Furthermore, due to the fact that the original Czech penal code was dismissed and the Soviet laws in place, there were no such protocols or protection for minorities, people of "subversion," or indicted individuals to contest their charges or file an appeal thus paving the way for the horrific show trials to occur. For Horáková, an experienced lawyer and leading women's rights advocate, she did not have a fair or fighting chance against the dictatorship.

Milada Horáková was an agent of social change throughout her life and pioneered rights for minorities, refugees, underrepresented citizens in society, and for women. Such examples can be witnessed by viewing her body of work in the Women's National Council, achievement in academia, prominence in Parliament, engagement with political powerhouses in and outside of Czechoslovakia, and advocacy for human rights in her country. She was the embodiment of the democratic values outlined by Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk in the First Republic in 1918 for a modern and free Czechoslovakia. The Communists believed that she did not possess the "feminine" character of self-sacrifice or subservience to a maternal role in the family. Women possessing an independent mind and rights were discouraged and grounds for treachery as holding "Western" ideals. After the trial of Horáková, in 1950

. . . to the end of Communist rule, the ideal 'socialist woman' was a good worker and competent professional, a caring mother and wife, and an enthusiastic comrade. A woman was complete only if all these roles were filled. Women

were perceived as having a 'maternal role', a 'worker role', and a 'family role', multiple demands which had no male equivalents. In addition, the ideal of a socialist family – democratic and collectivist – ignored women's burden of unpaid domestic work. Women were under tremendous pressure to justify their choices, whether they chose to work or to stay at home with children.

Occhipinti 14.

After the February coup d'état in 1948 and the execution of Milada Horáková, women were discouraged from continuing a life emulating hers. Her execution marked the end of the Czech women's movement and gender equality progression. Under Czechoslovak Communism, women were instructed to return to the traditional role of the mother and homemaker as a fixture to uphold the strong working-class Communist family. In short, emphasis on being a mother equated to being a contributing member of society as much as employment.

Horáková belonged to the principles set forth by Masaryk (1918-1935) and virtues in the Second Republic (1940-1945 (*in exile*), 1945-1948) under Edvard Beneš -- she was, in other words, what the Communists referred to as "modern" and "bourgeois" -- both politically and culturally speaking. By the elimination of such values combined with her public execution, the moment marked a turning point in Czech society as acceptance and moving citizens to subject status that was against all fundamental principles at that time. While the newly appointed leaders in the Czech Communist Cabinet were eager to prove themselves to Stalin and have communism in Czechoslovakia succeed, the aging dictator focused his final years on collective agriculturalism and economics in the satellite states but also the instilment of Stalinist cultural values such as the role of the family, a woman's role, and atheism. This was crucial in the creation of a Communist state and arguably was a battle to convince the country to fortify Moscow. Czechoslovakia was known for its independent thinking, intelligentsia, and was the

most developed country by the time of the February 1948 putsch. Dr. Horáková's show trial and execution was the catalyst that ignited social change and was the ultimate piece of propaganda for subjugation and conformity via fear. The show trial was completely novel and served as an uncharted vessel into the Czechoslovak psychological minds that impacted and revolutionized Czech history. It was a moment in a culture where criticism was completely void. Her show trial rocked and continued to ripple the society in all facets ranging from the arts to academics in the years immediately following. Some have called the immediate aftermath of her show trial in Czechoslovak history as a social "rebirth" and "reevaluation" (Viney 466). As Viney notes in 1953, "sometimes the connections between political and artistic purges are clear enough, but the decisive discussions are never public, and the weight of personal conflict and intrigue has often to be gauged *a posteriori*" (Viney 466). A show trial was used a tool to terrorize and systematically control the Czechoslovak society and the role the populace played in the perverted system of justice was equally as important. For example, the involvement of that the community endorsed -- from either busing in people to watch the trial, issuing tickets for the courtroom, having citizens write in their "punishments" for Horáková, and the short wave radio/television -- these were all propaganda surrounding the central figure (Horáková) that was the catalyst in social change.

The show trial was propaganda but the role the community served within that cog was almost brought to a fever pitch in 1950. It was hysteria. A frenzy. As politics were established, the social aspect of change under Stalinism in Czechoslovakia was successful mainly because of the execution of Milada Horáková. Her murder was to serve as a visual and physical consequence for all those who wished to follow her "fate," or pursuits in life. Purging

her from society would otherwise eliminate any societal forces that would have otherwise challenged Sovietization at the apex of Stalinism in Czechoslovakia. I believe Milada Horáková was the catalyst in being the element of social change in Czechoslovakia and, without her show trial, Communism would have failed in the otherwise democratic state earlier than 1989 and would have not been as successful as it was in overhauling popular opinion. If the trial and related terror had not transformed the society, the protests and revolution in Hungary in 1956 would have garnered the attention and action in neighboring Czechoslovakia who would have also risen up against the persecution. In 1949, student protests were also occurring throughout universities in Prague and Brno resulting in arrests and murders. With these arrests coupled with the trials and application of Soviet justice, social dissidence began to wane. The publicized execution of Milada Horáková was the catalyst to mark the climax of Stalinism and was the event that changed the society from 1950 onward. Her death would grant public passivity via fear, ultimately giving Czech Communist leaders praise, and would play into the machine that saw the satellite state submerged into four decades of brutal occupation.

By the 1960s, conformity was the norm and the Sovietization was complete, less a small fraction led by artists and authors such as Václav Havel of underground movements that would emerge during Prague Spring in 1968. Although the country fell into darkness and behind the Iron Curtain for four decades, the spirit and the legacy people like Milada Horáková bestowed to her citizens would not be forgotten after the Velvet Revolution. Although many of the materials and information surrounding her trial remain classified, some information has been illuminated by scholars, historians, and advocates. In 2005, Czech Radio's Marek Janac explains his journey into the audio recordings that he gained access to. He states

I was struck by the fact that the original broadcast by Czechoslovak Radio only 'summed up' Mrs. Horáková's final statements. I became curious over what had happened to the original recording. In contact with the National Archive we found out about the existence of three old boxes of dusty magnetic tape . . . there are several differences: in the official version sentences or parts of sentences were completely cut. For example, an answer ends mid-sentence where Mrs. Horáková talks about Czechoslovakia's first presidents . . . and how for her they had always been an inspiration. The Communists of course weren't happy about it and they couldn't use it. On the tape, Milada Horáková stands by her principles.

Velinger 1.

From his experience, we are discovering more information to weave into the current research taking place and to build on or explain the foundation that currently exists. Most of these entries and studies can be found in the Czech language and furthermore, only a fraction of these have been translated into the English language. As indicated by Velinger, much of the information still remains classified or "missing" perhaps due to the censorship by the Communists. As he prepares for a multimedia project, he discloses that "the three reels we have found when they went into unmarked boxes at the National Archive that were handed over by the Justice Ministry after 1989 – we've got tapes labeled 23-25 which means 22 are still missing – plus two reels on which the verdicts were recorded" (Velinger 1).

Conducting an interview in August 2009 with the president of the Czech Confederation of Political Prisoners, MUDr. Naděžda Kavalírová indicated to me that these unmarked boxes were deliberate – people working at the Justice Ministry knew of the significance and hid and spread the tapes throughout the vaults. She continued to explain that had the boxes containing the comprehensive trial been marked or the reels labeled, they would have been destroyed immediately after 1989 for the implications of those involved would have been too great.

Twenty years later this also seems to be in the case. In June of 2009, the current Communist party, a small percentage in the Czech political forum, fought against a Czech program that was to air a documentary on the show trial. This may be due to the fact that many of the Communists involved in the case are still alive and/or active in the party either directly or indirectly. Speaking in a letter addressed to the program, Vojtěch Filip, leader of the current Communist Party (KSČM) stated that “the programme is very likely not to be objective . . . also adheres to the past and encourages primitive anti-Communism” (Czech News Agency 1). Despite corresponding reports and documentation not being released in its entirety, her sentence was rehabilitated in 1968 and Horáková was fully acquitted in 1990.

It is important that research into the show trials is collective rather than selective if one is to compile a comprehensive understanding of the cultural Communist climate and plight for democracy and most importantly, not to take away the significance of marginalized narratives such as Horáková’s. With that said, cases such as Slánský’s, Husák’s, and Horáková’s are just a fraction of the histories still being discovered as the Czechs and Slovaks sift through the information available of the tumultuous 20th century history. In 2007-present, a case was brought to trial to try former prosecutor Ludmila Brožová-Polednová for her involvement with the trial and execution of Milada Horáková. After many court proceedings and appeals on the grounds of failing health, a jury convicted and sentenced her for her involvement in the 1950 trial in Prague. Brožová-Polednová is currently serving out her sentence yet continues to apply for an appeal. This is a step forward and a watershed moment in Czech jurisprudence but it is also shadowed by a genderized approach in prosecuting crimes under the Communist regime. For example, in 2003, the police attempted to prosecute the chief investigator of the StB

Moucka in the Horáková case but the attorney's office halted the prosecution that same year and ultimately withdrew from indicting him in his involvement (CTK 2). This leaves one almost incapable of divorcing the gender aspect for both Moucka and Brožová-Polednová were involved in the case but the latter was the only individual brought to justice. Going forward, this is also an element that needs further exploration in uncovering perhaps a gender bias in Czech judicial proceedings and assigning accountability.

Although much is still left to be researched and chronicled on the Czech and international stage, one can deduce regardless of the sources available that the Czechoslovak show trials in the 1950s to satiate Stalin and Gottwald were an abhorrent period in history that rivals, if not mirrors, Nazism. As the countries under Stalin continue to emerge and come to terms with their troubled past, as well as society for their role in the show trials, it surely will be a long, arduous path yet one that is needed to reconcile in order to ultimately move forward. Remembering and recounting the legacy Milada Horáková pioneered is one part of the social vessel to return to the ideals of a robust, free democratic society and progressing as a country in post-Communist times.

9

Singing the Silenced Song

Václav Havel once wrote, “Hope is a state of mind, not of the world. Hope, in this deep and powerful sense is not the same as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously heading for success, but rather an ability to work for something because it is good.” This excerpt he wrote in *The Power of the Powerless* can be associated with the life, dedication, and work that Dr. Milada Horáková created during her short time on this earth. As a woman, politician, advocate, and above all, a Czech, she followed hope and fought for what it stood for to the bitter end and ultimately, her death. She devoted herself tirelessly to causes she believed in or what was “good” for her country, family, and victims of tyranny. Although she had lived under the confines and social restrictions of the Habsburg monarchy, the Nazis, and the Communist occupation, the sheer volume of work and legislation she put into place is magnanimous. Through steadfast adversity, she was able to propel the Czech women’s rights movement, refugee aid programs, and organizations to rehabilitate victims of the Second World War. With the rise of Communism, however, many of these organizations with which she was affiliated were shut down and extinguished. The Women’s National Council’s office was seized and nationalized to the state the same year she was arrested by the StB. It would sit dormant until 1989 when clubs and associations struggled to reclaim their property with the fall of Communism.

As the Czechs continue their journey in contemporary society, the life and legacy of Milada Horáková is being illuminated and pondered by the younger generation and their quest

to find the truth. Currently, the younger generation is searching and probing the formative, although bleak, time period before their era to understand their Czech history, identity, family narrative, and to ultimately alter their future so that history does not repeat itself. In Prague, there is a sense of urgency amongst young adults, professors, and historians to release the information of their Communist past in hopes to advance and heal the Czech mentality of their surviving elders. In addition, their call to bring the show trials and the historical consequences of life under Communism to light is a timely objective as the Czech political sphere continues to campaign against the Communist Party (KSČM) in Parliament. Milada Horáková's legacy is one of historical, enduring importance that should the public collectively take into consideration and learn from, would transcend any rise in Czech Communist politics in contemporary society.

Milada Horáková's life, although ended more than half a century ago, currently continues to influence and restore the women's rights movement in the Czech Republic after the fall of communism. Her presence in politics and socio-historical memory endures. Her narrative guides inclusive human rights visions of Czech advocates and political prisoners of the 21st century. As a beacon of democracy and fearlessness, the heroic account of Milada Horáková is a significant piece in this mosaic. It is through her enduring determination, resilience, and contribution to history that has made her one of the foremost symbols of what one person can achieve in the face of extreme adversity. Understanding and learning of Milada Horáková's life, spirit, and vision is a voyage into the very heart and essence of courage leading every one of us who learn of her story to strive to obtain the bravery she possessed in fulfilling our own destiny that is free from those who wish to harm us, void of the powers that wish to silence us, and provide the strength to ultimately allow us to live in a world of hope.

Don't feel sorry for me! I lived a beautiful life. I accept my punishment with resignation and submit to it humbly. My conscience is clear and I hope and believe and pray that I shall also pass the test of the highest court, of God.

The last letter of Milada Horáková to her family

scribbled just moments before her execution,

June 27, 1950.

End Notes

The last letters Milada Horáková wrote in prison were never delivered to their addresses. The recipients included her husband, mother-in-law, daughter, and sister Věra. Instead, they were seized by the Communists and were finally published in 1990, proving too late for all but one – daughter Jana.

During the time her mother was in prison and after her death, Jana Horáková was stigmatized by the Communists and was put under surveillance. The Party requested that her classmates and friends report on any suspicious activity or information. She was followed daily.

In December 1949, Bohuslav Horák managed to escape the StB to West Germany. Mr. Horák never saw Milada Horáková in Pankrác Prison. He immigrated to the United States and never publically discussed the trial of Milada Horáková.

Milada Horáková's body was never recovered or buried. Years after her execution, it has been reported, the Communists placed her ashes in a mass, unmarked grave on the city lines. In Prague, the famous Vyšehrad Cemetery has erected a monument and commemorates annually the day of her execution with a memorial service.

On 27 June 2004, on an anniversary of her execution, it was announced that the day would be made a memorial day going forward for the “Commemoration day of the victims of the Communist regime.”

In 2005, Czech filmmaker Martin Vadaš was given access to the uncensored original recording of the show trial of Milada Horáková which he plans on creating a movie based on the events of her life.

In 2006, daughter Jana (Horáková) Kanská was given the honorable Medal of Freedom by the city of Prague in regards to the individuals and organizations who were opposed to tyranny in all its forms.

In 2007, surviving prosecutor and Judge Ludmila Brožová-Polednová, 86 years old, was arrested and charged with capital murder of the execution of Milada Horáková. After partaking in the show trial, it is reported that she willfully and freely attended her execution and remarked, “Suffocate the bitch, and make sure her neck doesn’t snap when you drop her.” She is currently, and ironically, serving her 6 year sentence at Pankrác Prison in Prague. Her appeal

was heard on grounds of her failing health and following orders, but lost her appeal. She began her sentence in March 2009.

In March 2010, Brožová-Polednová appealed again under grounds of presidential amnesty which would protect against her actions under Communism. A verdict has not been reached.

In 2008, the opera “Zitra se bude. . .” (*Tomorrow, it will be . . .*) premiered at the Prague Opera House on the life of Milada Horáková and received praising acclaim. It was written by Aleš Brežina.

Currently, the Women’s National Council’s building has not been returned to the organization. Members have held rallies outside the building and have submitted petitions to the government yet all requests have been denied. Today, officers from the Prague City Council reside in the building. It is currently being contested in court. It is located at Ve Smečkách 26/594, Prague 1.

Today, visitors and citizens can visit renamed streets and squares throughout the country that have been dedicated to the life, memory, and legacy of Milada Horáková.

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Oral Histories

Interview conducted with MUDr. Naděžda Kavalírová

August 13, 2009

Director of the Confederation of Czechoslovak Political Prisoners

Konfederace politických vězňů České republiky

Prague, Czech Republic

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Interview conducted with Mr. Zdeněk Mareš

August 3-5, 2009

České Budějovice, Czech Republic

Author Biography

Adam Watkins earned his Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Southern Connecticut State University in 2002. With a minor in French, the author studied at Université de Bourgogne in Dijon, France in 2001 where he enrolled in the Centre International d'Études Françaises. Upon finishing his degree and certificate, Watkins earned his teaching certificate in Prague, Czech Republic in 2004. While living in Prague, he served as an English educator in the capital city until 2006 when he departed to pursue graduate studies in the United States. He completed his Master of Science degree in International and Area studies with a focus on Central Europe from Central Connecticut State University in the spring of 2010. Watkins intends on earning a Doctor of Philosophy degree in comparative history of Central, Southeastern and Eastern Europe.

Adam Watkins is currently embarking on his research study entitled, "Dualism and Non-Belonging: *The Projection of Homosexual Identity in Czechoslovak Art, 1948 -1989.*"