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THE COUNTY OF SOUND

AMBIGUITY AND CONFLICT IN THE CZECH UNDERGROUND CULTURE



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Historical Context -Czech Underground Culture

- The term "Czech Underground Culture " means an unofficial cultural dimension introduced into society after the Second World War as a literary movement.
- In the seventies, the movement is renewed through a "beat" generation and we start to speak about "alternative cultural practices”.
- In 1976 started the fictional process against members of musical groups.



- On the basis of the claim of human rights and on the occasion of the process of the bands comes the most important initiative of Czechoslovak dissent called **Charter 77**.
- The greatest exponent is **Václav Havel**, who later became the president of the Czech Republic.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

1. INTERVIEWS WITH INFORMANTS

structured and unstructured interviews.

2. THE STUDY OF MATERIALS

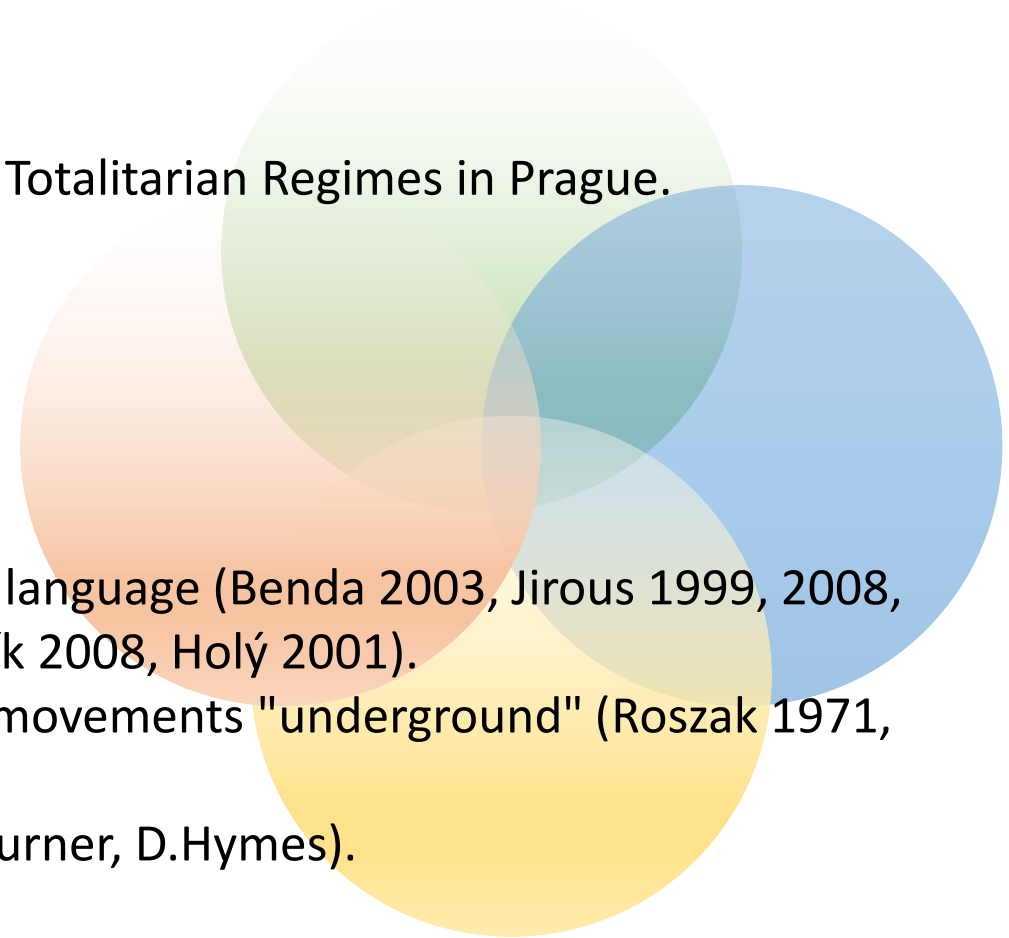
left by the Secret Police available in The Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes in Prague.

3. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

in cultural events, commemorative concerts.

4. ANALYTICAL TOOLS -three types of references:

1. The main literature references for this specific topic in Czech language (Benda 2003, Jirous 1999, 2008, Pilař 1999, Stárek 2011, Machovec 1980, Kohák 2010, Krystlík 2008, Holý 2001).
2. The literature of the international dynamics of the so-called movements "underground" (Roszak 1971, Maffi 1974, McKay 2000).
3. Anthropological Analytical tools (C.Lévi-Strauss, C.Geertz, V.Turner, D.Hymes).



Interviews with informants

PAVEL ZAJÍČEK

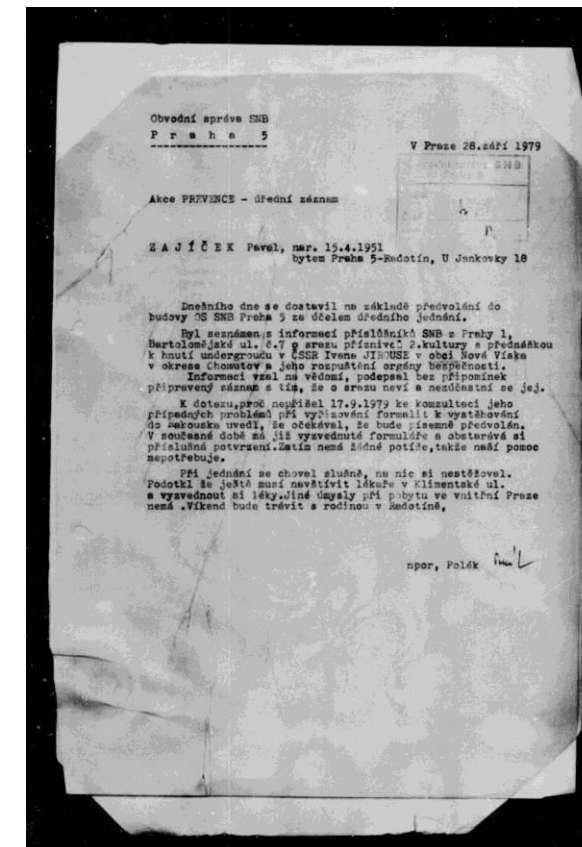
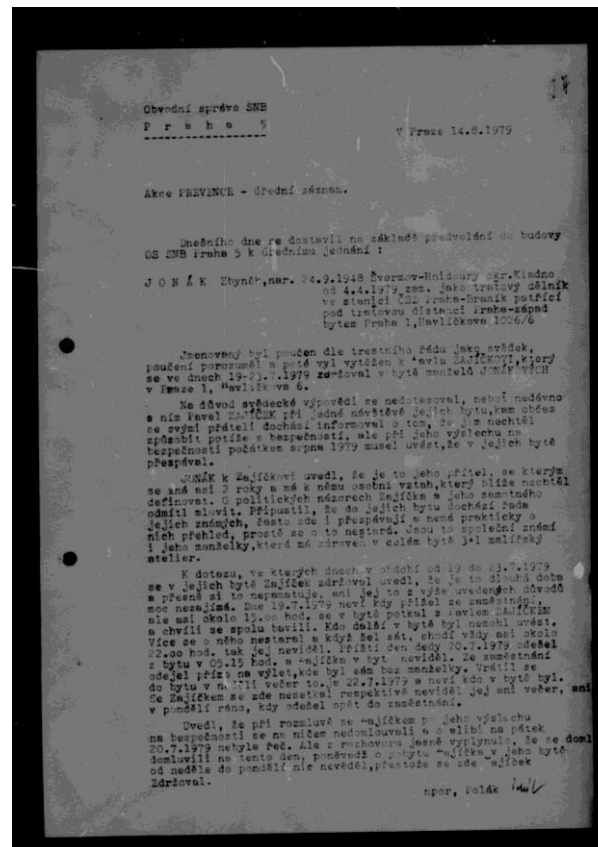
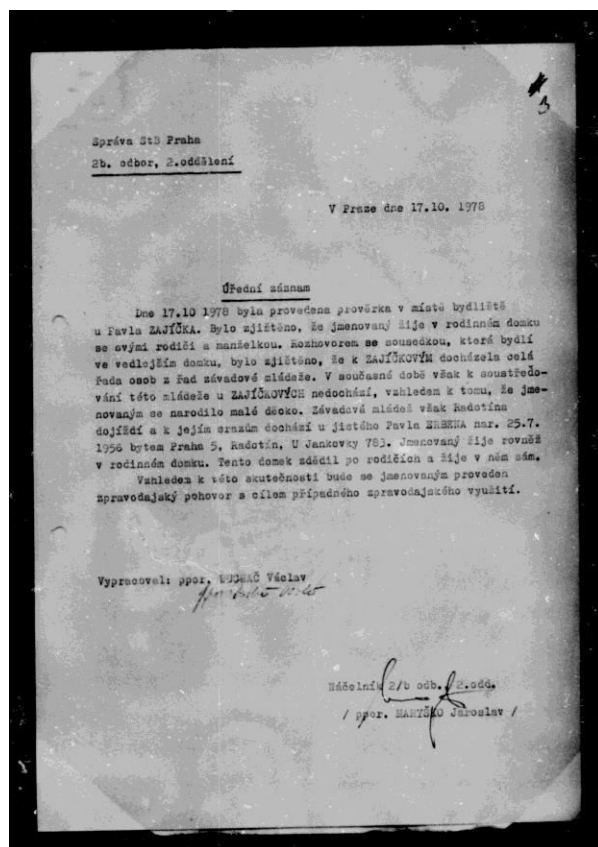


FRANTIŠEK STÁREK

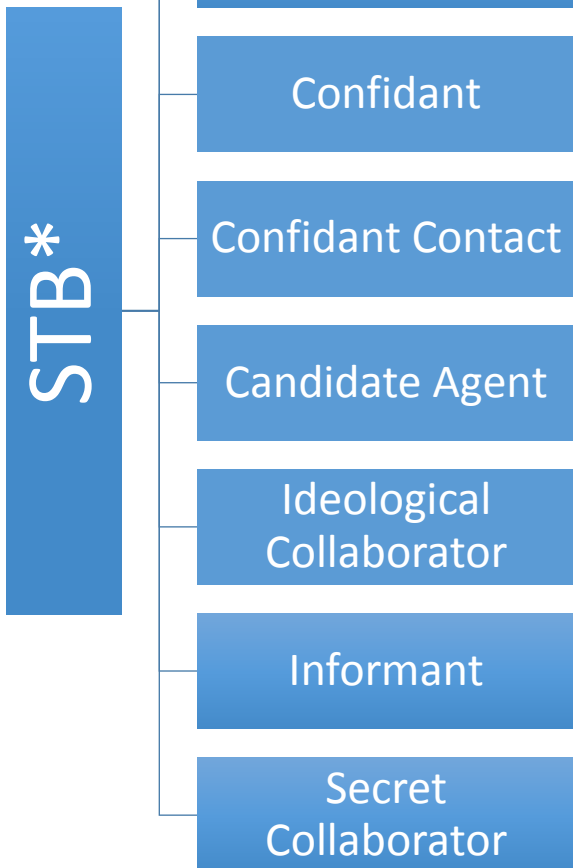
The Archive of the Secret Security

The Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes

www.ustrcr.cz/en



TERMINOLOGY-COLLABORATORS



State Secret Security



Main Building of ex STB, today Ministry of the Interior (Czech Republic)

- Secret Political Police is responsible for hundreds of lives, thousands of people in prison, destruction of entire generation.
- Without the secret informers the State Secret Security was blind and deaf.

- The significance of this criminal reality is not fully known in the Czech society, because the facts were mystified or disguised as an ideology that people considered "enough normal".

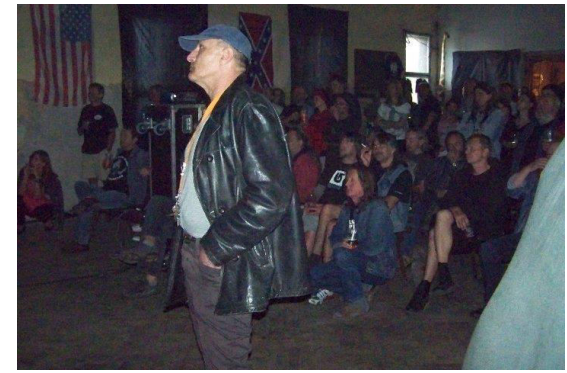


COMMEMORATIVE CONCERTS

- All the commemorative concerts had a common characteristic: **to revive in the present the past** as a particular experience.
- The repetitiveness implies a sort of **continuity with the past**.
- Company's transmission of memory, but **reified memory**, made by some memories and not others.
- A memory of "resistance" against the totalitarian system is **New Myth** in the society.
- If we want to reflect seriously on the past, we cannot hide the fact that many people should play also **diametrically opposed roles**.

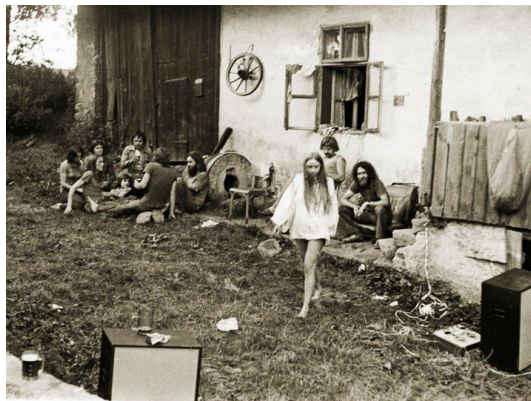
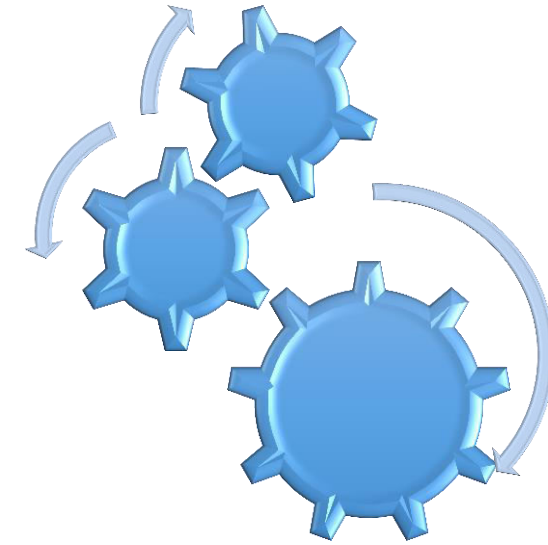


- The disappeared musician was an Agent of the Secret Police, known by the nickname as a “Guitarist”.
- What kind of remembrance these commemorative rites want to propose?



AMBIGUITY AND CONFLICT

- People, who from one side attended *underground* environment and on the other side had **collaborated with the secret police.**
- Sometimes people have collaborated only because they were threatened by power, but this does not detract from the circumstance, that **many other people have refused to cooperate paying for this a very high price.**



CONCLUSION

- According to Foucault the meaning of a "counterculture" loses its meaning, in the measure in which we believe that the counterculture excludes the forces of power.
- The weight of a **society that has not recognized the victims** of the totalitarian regime has created an atmosphere of **mistrust**.
- Mary Douglas confirms that the attribution of fault is a politicized process relating to the **political uses of the crime**.
- The political hatred is the essential source of energy without which the cruel practices of the secret police would not be possible. Their program chose terror and hatred as a methods of persuasion. In the end what we call the social structure are the plots of polymorphic hate, and hatred always finds its object of application.
- The recent form that is born from the union of the *underground* with the domain normalising of dissent leaves the particular sign inside the Czech society.
- Endures the possibility that beyond all changes that have marked the passage from the totalitarian system to the post-totalitarian one, there is a substantial continuity in the deep dynamics.



“As for the regime gone by, I’d say that I beat that one. As for the regime now, unlike the last one, I have no idea how to fight it. I think all this pseudo capitalism, this global domination of money and stupidity, this pseudo culture of so-called celebrities and all-pervasive beastliness is an assault on anyone’s senses. I can’t say I’ve lost against this regime, because I’m not fighting it, but I think it has beaten us all”.

Martin Jirous (1944-2011)

CONTACTS

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