

Stanislava Vodičková*

Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů (Republika Česka)

THE ESTABLISHMENT AND BROADCASTS OF THE CZECH SECTION OF VATICAN RADIO 1947–1989

After World War II, Czechoslovakia found itself in the sphere of influence of the Soviet Union. Already during the war, Communists were actively getting ready for seizing the power in the country and changing the political system. After the election in 1948, Klement Gottwald¹ became the prime minister in the government. Furthermore, the Communists held the following ministries: ministry of the interior, information, finance, inner trade, protection and labour, and social care.

The Catholic Church in Bohemia and Moravia was recovering from the Nazi occupation and was trying to restore its dilapidated structure. In November 1946, Josef Beran² was appointed and a month later consecrated as Archbishop of Prague and Primate of Bohemia. In February 1947 he arrived in Rome on his first official visit and during a private audience with Pope Pius XII he pleaded with him to extend the broadcasts of Vatican Radio (VR) and add programmes in the Czech and Slovak languages. He emphasised forebodings of persecution of the church sparked by threatening signs in the country's political life. The Pope

* Stanislava Vodičková – pracuje w Instytucie Badania Reżimów Totalitarnych; jest autorką monografii *Uzavírám vás do svého srdce. Životopis Josefa kardinála Berana* oraz kuratorką wystawy poświęconej życiu kard. Berana Milovat dobro a odporovat zlu.

¹ Klement Gottwald (23rd November 1896 – 14th March 1953), Communist politician and president. In the 1920s he acted as a functionary of the communist party in Slovakia and worked as its reporter for the press. In the years 1926-1929 he worked in the Prague-based secretariat of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPC). In February 1929, at the session of the 5th CPC congress Gottwald became member of the CPC's leadership and its general secretary. In September and October 1938 he belonged among the main representatives of the opposition to the Munich Diktat. In November 1938 he emigrated to the USSR. He returned to Prague on 10th May 1945 as deputy-prime minister and chairman of the National Front (NF). From 1945 he acted as CPC's chairman. On 2nd July 1946 he became prime minister and on 14th August president.

² Josef Beran (29th December 1888 – 17th May 1969), for more about him, see S. Vodičková, *Uzavírám vás do svého srdce, Životopis Josefa kardinála Beran*, ÚSTR – CDK, Praha – Brno 2009; S. Vodičková, *Kardynál Josef Beran – dobrý pasterz i patriota*, "Fides, Ratio et Patria. Studia Toruńskie" 2015, nr 2, s. 161–180.

granted his request and as soon as April 1947 at the occasion of the beginning of jubilee celebrations of Adalbert of Prague a trial broadcast was launched.

Fr. Josef Olšr SJ³, professor at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, together with seminarians at the Pontifical College of St. John Nepomuk (Nepomucenum)⁴ prepared the pilot programme from Rome, which was opened by the St. Adalbert Chorale "Lord, Have Mercy on Me": *After the introductory words about the importance of Christian faith and our saints for the nation and the cultural life of our peoples and about the meaning of the 950th anniversary of St. Adalbert's martyr's death, an ecclesiastical letter by Pius XII "Nono ac dimidio a S. Adalberti obitu exeunte saeculo..." was read, which the Pope had sent to the Czechoslovak episcopate. The programme was closed by the Pontifical Anthem sung by the Nepomucena seminarians.*⁵

Regular broadcasts of the Czechoslovak section were originally scheduled to start on 22nd December 1947; however, due to low intensity of electrical energy it was postponed to Christmas Eve of the same year.⁶ The official launch began with Christmas reflections in the Czech language containing excerpts from the Christmas message by Pius XII, followed by part of the encyclical *Optatissima Pax* in the Slovak language and the broadcast closed with Czech and Slovak carols.

On the second day, Pius XII's Christmas message was broadcast in the Czech language at 4.15 pm followed by Slovak broadcast at 5 pm. The following day, already regular programs were broadcast, this time containing reflections on St. Stephen and continuation of the encyclical *Optatissima Pax*⁷ accompanied by carols.

The broadcast continued on Monday 29th December when it introduced Pius XII monthly intention for January 1948 which was dedicated to the subject of oppressed Church; after that news about the life of the Church around the world was read. The last day of the year fell on a Wednesday, and the programme was

³ Josef Olšr SJ (9th January 1913 – 3rd July 1984), in 1929 entered the noviciate of the Society of Jesus, ten years later was ordained as a priest following the eastern rite. He continued his studies at the Pontifical Oriental Institute, where he later worked as a professor.

⁴ From 1929, the Pontifical College of St. John Nepomuk served as a seminary for Czech and Slovak theologians in Rome. After 1948, students from Czechoslovakia were prohibited to travel to Rome and at the same time, the graduates were not allowed to return to their homeland.

⁵ *Archive of Vatican Radio (ARaV) Czech section of Vatican Radio, Remembering the beginnings of Vatican Radio*, pages (pp.) 1 and 2.

⁶ *ARaV, f. (collection) Czech section of Vatican Radio, Remembering the beginnings of Vatican Radio*; V. Feřt, J. Koláček, *Z historie českého vysílání Vatikánského rozhlasu. Typescript*, s. 1.

⁷ On 18 December 1947 Pope Pius XII issued the encyclical *Optatissima Pax* in which he called for peace between the nations and social reconciliation in society.

dedicated to the subject of the end of the laymen's year, a report on Pius XII's speech to the diplomatic corps and it was concluded by world news.

The Secretariat of State as the leading body of the Roman Curia had ordered joint broadcasts for Czechs and Slovaks starting from the year 1948 on two days a week but in the end broadcasts began right away on three days – Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 7 pm, regularly on two short waves 31.06 m a 50.26 m. The duration of a live broadcast was 14 minutes. The national principal was strictly enforced from the beginning – with Czech and Slovak alternating and the announcers switching after seven minutes.

On Mondays and Fridays the first 10 minutes was devoted to reflections or interviews on a topical issue in religious life. In the remaining four minutes news from the Catholic world was read in the two languages. Wednesdays were given over to a weekly overview of church news and current affairs. It soon became clear that the quarter-hour was insufficient so the Secretariat of State decided to extend broadcasting time to 30 minutes, i.e. two 15-minute shows.⁸

The first permanent presenters on the Czechoslovak broadcasts⁹ were members of the Society of Jesus¹⁰ – the Czech Fr. Václav Feřt SJ¹¹ and the Slovak Fr. Pavol Bajan SJ¹². The beginnings were not easy. None of the radio pioneers had voice training and all broadcasting was live, with no opportunity to pre-record. It was some years before a recorded programme went out, first on records and later on magnetic tape and cassettes, bringing to an end the stress of live broadcasting and the impossibility of making corrections. The broadcasting booths had been made for one person and it was difficult for two to fit.

⁸ J. Škarvada, *Svedl jsi mě, Hospodine. Jaroslav Škarvada v rozhovoru s Bohumilem Svobodou*. "Karmelitánské nakladatelství" 2002, s. 60.

⁹ Initially, Fr. Alojz Litva SJ (20th June 1912 – 2nd November 1998) worked at the Slovak section. He was in Rome at that time for post-graduate studies in dogmatic theology.

¹⁰ Pope Pius XI put the Society of Jesus in charge of VR from the beginning. To this day directors, staff and the majority of editors-in-chief of national sections come from its ranks. A member of the order has always held the post of editor-in-chief of the Czech section.

¹¹ Václav Feřt SJ (23rd December 1903 – 4th April 1986) entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus in September 1925 and was ordained a priest on 24 August 1933. He became spiritual of the Nepomucena College in October 1945. From 1947 to 1953 he headed the Czechoslovak and later Czech section of VR. In 1954 he left for Montreal, where he set up a Czech mission. In 1965 he returned to Rome and again began working at VR's Czech section. In 1970 he became vice-provincial of the Czech province for members living abroad.

¹² Pavol Bajan SJ (1st December 1912 – 10th August 1978) entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus in 1930 and was ordained a priest on 16th July 1946. In 1948 he went to Rome and became a permanent editor first at the Czechoslovak section of VR and then the Slovak section. In 1950 he entered the pastoral service in Cleveland where he ministered to the Slovak community. Three years later he moved to Africa as a missionary.

In addition, all of the editors had other work. Fr. Feřt SJ had since 1945 been spiritual of Nepomucena, where he was responsible for the seminarians' spiritual guidance. In February 1948, the Czech section tried for the first time to broadcast live from Nepomucena during which one of the newly ordained priests sent a blessing to his home, Moravia. Two previous broadcasts, therefore, were devoted to the importance of priesthood and the clerical vocation. In the first one, Mons. Josef Bezdíček¹³ spoke about the "most beautiful occupation" and the second one was an interview with Giuseppe Pizzardo¹⁴, the then prefect of the saint congregation for seminars and universities. *I do not remember now how it was; our technicians were all self-taught amateurs but we all felt like a family and we all shared the love for the common work*,¹⁵ the editor-in-chief of the Czech section Fr. Feřt SJ noted in his memoirs.

Despite all the difficulties, enthusiasm reined in the department: *Everybody was convinced of the immense significance of Czech and Slovak broadcasts for Catholics in Czechoslovakia. In 1947 the Ministry of Information was already in Communist hands and Catholic broadcasting on domestic radio was impossible. Despite all the difficulties, the work was done with enthusiasm, which helped to overcome all the hurdles*.¹⁶

Changes in broadcast after February 1948

The Communists took over power in the country in February 1948. They adopted a relatively conciliatory position toward the Catholic Church and did not preclude in advance the possibility of joint treaties. Their primary aim was to create a national church, split the Czechoslovak College of Bishops¹⁷ from the Vatican and transform them into levers of their Church policies, thus exercise control of the "masses of believers". *This was also seen in their treatment of diplomats from*

¹³ Josef Bezdíček (28th October 1902 – 4th December 1972), was ordained a priest on 12th March 1927 in Rome, became vice-rector of the Nepomucenum college and canon of the Roman temple of Santa Maria Maggiore.

¹⁴ Giuseppe Pizzardo (13th July 1877 – 1st August 1970) Italian priest, who acted as secretary of the Holy See between 1951-1959. He was promoted to cardinal in 1937.

¹⁵ ARaV, f. Czech section of Vatican Radio, V. Feřt, J. Koláček, *Z historie českého vysílání Vatikánského rozhlasu*. Typescript, s. 2.

¹⁶ ARaV, V. Feřt, J. Koláček, *Z historie českého vysílání Vatikánského rozhlasu*, Typescript, s. 2.

¹⁷ At that time the College of Bishops comprised: Prague archbishop Josef Beran, Olomouc archbishop Josef Karel Matocha, bishops Karel Skoupý of Brno, Josef Hlouch of České Budějovice, Štěpán Trochta of Litoměřice, Mořic Pícha of Hradec Králové, Pavol Peter Gojdič of Prešov, Eduard Nécsey of Nitra, Ján Vojtašák of Spiš, Jozef Čársky of Košice, Ondrej Škrábik of Banská Bystrica, Róbert Pobožný of Rožňava and apostolic administrators Ambróz Lazík of Trnava and František Onderek of Český Těšín.

*the Holy See, who put a lot of energy into ensuring they were not excluded from negotiations on relations between church and state in Czechoslovakia and that, on the contrary, papal diplomats had the main say, not local bishops.*¹⁸ However, the efforts of chargé d'affaires Mons. Gennaro Verolino¹⁹ to raise negotiations to the level of Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Secretariat of State proved fruitless. At the request of the Czechoslovak government Mons. Verolino was recalled from Prague and on 12th July 1949 secretary of the internunciature Fr. Ottavio de Liva²⁰ became the Holy See's temporary representative.

The tense relations between Czechoslovakia and the Vatican also left their mark on the work of Vatican Radio's Czechoslovak section. The Secretariat of State responded to the situation following the Communist takeover when after nationalisation and centralisation the party controlled the entire media, thereby acquiring a monopoly on information and a platform for indoctrination, introducing daily broadcasts beginning at 3 pm. However, there were also concerns that overly critical programming might become a pretext to breaking off fragile diplomatic ties, leading the Secretariat of State to introduce provisional censorship.

This greatly complicated the work of Fr. Feřta SJ. He was forced to prepare his daily programme, spanning three or four pages, translate it into Italian, then take it to the Secretariat of State to be approved by Fr. Corrado Bafile²¹ defend pointed formulations and sometimes have his texts censored before going to the studio in the Vatican gardens to broadcast the show.

From the very beginning, conflicts between the two nations were felt, which were mostly a result of their different war experience. While after the breakup of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, part of Bohemia and Moravia became a German protectorate, Slovakia became an independent country for the first time in its history, though subordinated to the Third Reich. After the end of the war the two nations were reunited and the original pre-Munich borders of Czechoslovakia

¹⁸ F. Halas, *Fenomén Vatikán. Idea, dějiny a současnost papežství, diplomacie Svatého stolce, České země a Vatikán*. Brno, CDK 2004, s. 596.

¹⁹ Gennaro Verolino (3rd November 1906 – 17th November 2005), Italian priest, after being ordained a priest in 1928 he worked in the diplomatic services. As secretary of the nunciature in Hungary (1944) he helped save 30,000 Jews from deportation to the concentration camps. In February 1948 he replaced the sick nuncio Saverio Ritter (24th January 1884–21st April 1951) in Prague. However, he was expelled from Czechoslovakia in November of that year.

²⁰ Ottavio de Liva (10th June 1911–23rd August 1965), Italian priest, after being ordained a priest in 1934 he worked in the diplomatic services. He was expelled from Czechoslovakia in March 1950.

²¹ Corrado Bafile (4th July 1903 – 3rd February 2005), Italian priest, after being ordained a priest in 1936 he worked in the diplomatic services from 1939. He became an expert on relations with Eastern Europe.

re-established (excluding the Subcarpathian Ruthenia, which was annexed by the USSR). The Slovak exile, primarily in America, strived to establish an independent Slovakia, creating thus a new independent state citing the nation's right to self-determination. According to the then editor Mons. Jaroslav Škarvada, these attempts were chiefly fanned by Slovakia's former ambassador to the Holy See Karol Sidor²².

According to theologian Fr. František Sočufka SJ, it was Fr. Bajan SJ, who deserved most credit for setting up the independent Slovak section. *At his suggestion, the then director of programme Fr. Perez SJ issued new guidelines to the effect that formally the broadcast should remain united – for Czechoslovakia – but from 2nd February 1949 the two programmes were to be independent on one another. However, they were not separated by the main tune Christuts vincit, but a hymn to Mary.*²³

Mons. Jaroslav Škarvada described the complicated situation between the two sections in the following words: *Back then the director of Vatican Radio was some Spanish Jesuit who by some sixth sense understood our relations. So when we were discussing the tune which should separate the two languages, he said that the best would be to use the sound of a cannon blast.*²⁴

While the Slovaks argued an independent broadcast should be based on the language, Czechs traditionally gave preference to the unity of the state. Both views on the understanding of national identity were legitimate.

Eventually, on the urgings of the Slovak party and interventions of the general superior of the Piarists Vincent Tomek²⁵ in the Secretariat of State, the Czechoslovak section was divided into Czech and Slovak sections. The Czech section had to give in and cease to identify itself based on the state, but announced the broadcast according to the mother tongue.

Despite all this discord, a degree of cooperation continued as it was expected that Czechoslovak listeners would tune in to both. The content of programmes

²² Karol Sidor (16th July 1901 – 20th October 1953) was a Slovak journalist and politician. He was a leading ideologist of Hlinka's Slovak People's Party and its deputy in the National Assembly (NA). From December 1938 to March 1939 he represented Slovakia in the Czech-Slovak government and from 11th to 14th March 1939 was prime minister of an autonomous Slovak government. In that function he rejected the declaration of the Slovak state, which was promoted by the Germans. After the declaration of the Slovak state by the Slovak Assembly on 14th March 1939 he first served as Minister of the Interior and was soon sent as ambassador to the Vatican. From 1945 he lived in exile, first in Italy and later in Canada. After February 1948 he set up and chaired the Slovak National Council abroad. In 1947 he was sentenced in his absence to 20 years in jail by a National Court.

²³ F. Sočufka, *Diakonia slova v slovenskom vysielaní Vatikánskeho rozhlasu*. Dobrá kniha, Bratislav 2004, s. 31.

²⁴ J. Škarvada, s. 60

²⁵ Vincent Tomek (9th November 1892 – 18th April 1986), Slovak priest, from 1909 a member of the order of Piarists. In September 1947 he was elected the general superior of Piarists.

was therefore coordinated to ensure the same subjects were not featured on one day. The broadcasts were based in large degree on the *Radiogiornale* bulletin published in Italian, from which editors from national sections selected information according to their importance for their target territory. Addresses by the pope, which Vatican Radio received in advance, were a primary element of the broadcasts from the start.

Responses to Church persecution in broadcasts

Harsh persecution of the Catholic Church began in Czechoslovakia from the middle of 1949 in connection with the atheisation of the country. The so-called church laws of October 1949 ushered in fundamental change. The most significant were a law on the establishment of a State Office for Church Affairs and a law on the financial protection of churches and religious societies by the state. Pursuant to Act No. 218/49 Coll., on Providing Economic Support to Churches and Religious Societies by State, the state paid wages to the clergymen who worked in religious administration, church administration or in institutions for education of the clergy, following a state consent. State authorities could deprive priests and bishops of the state consent anytime, without stating a reason and without a trial, disciplinary proceedings or a possibility to appeal. Those who disregarded the ban and continued in the religious work were prosecuted for “obstructing the state’s supervision over Churches”. In the 1950s this offence qualified as high treason.

The laws did away with the autonomy of the Catholic Church as guaranteed by the *Modus vivendi* of 1928 and placed it under state control. On 16th March 1950 the Communist government declared Ottavio de Liva *persona non grata* and amid a huge propaganda campaign forced him to quit Czechoslovakia within three days. His replacement was not granted an entry visa, which effectively meant the interruption of diplomatic relations with the Vatican for decades.

Large-scale church trials and the liquidation of male religious orders under operation “K” (for kláštery, monasteries)²⁶ and subsequently female orders²⁷ were

²⁶ Operation “K” was carried out in two stages. The first began on the night of 13th – 14th April 1950, the second a week later. Units from the Ministry of the Interior, StB and People’s Militia jointly took part. They placed the superiors of the orders in the Želiv internment monastery. Novices and young monks were sent to auxiliary tank battalions. They transported the remainder of the monks, including the infirm and the elderly, to centralised monasteries in Osek, Králíky, Bohosudov, Hejnice and Broumov. The interned monks were placed there for an indefinite period, without court order, solely on the basis of a National Committees’ decision. They were subject to a harsh prison regime and the arbitrariness of individual camp commanders. For more see V. Vlček, *Perzekuce mužských řádů a kongregací komunistickým režimem 1948–1964*. Olomouc 2004.

²⁷ For more see V. Vlček (ed.): *Ženské řehole za komunismu 1989–1948*, Matice cyrilometodějská, Olomouc 2003.

key elements in the battle against religion. From May 1949, bishops were gradually interned and for many years disappeared to various unknown places in remote corners of Czechoslovakia.

An extensive amnesty declared in 1960 took in the majority of priests and monks. The paradox is that this was just at the time a large trial of Jesuits was taking place. A year later it was the turn of the Redemptorists.²⁸

The year 1968 brought a brief liberalisation, to which the church responded to with a burst of activity; this ended with the invasion Warsaw Pact armies and the subsequent start of the normalisation, when everything returned to how it had been before.

An operation entitled “Reduction” was launched against church activities in 1979 and other anti-church operations followed. The so-called illegal activities of orders was monitored and prosecuted – Operation “Whirlpool” was launched against the Franciscans in 1983, operation “Shadow” against the Jesuits the next year and subsequently operation “Concert” against the Salesians, etc.

The editors of the Czech section of VR responded to all of these events. In the wake of the expulsion of the secretary of the Prague internunciature de Liva, obligatory provisional censorship was lifted and responsibility for the impact of broadcasts was transferred in full to the editors-in-chief of national sections. Diplomats from the Secretariat of State’s Eastern European section would only recommend an appropriate approach in sensitive cases and did not issue directives.

The exhausting, tension-filled work took its toll on Fr. Feřt SJ, who after roughly a year at the section suffered a nervous collapse.²⁹ Colleague Fr. Alois Kořínek³⁰ SJ filled in for him but the department didn’t get a permanent editor-in-chief until 1953. This was Fr. Petr Ovečka SJ³¹, who headed the department for 17 years.

In that period the flow of information from home dried up. Jesuit Superior Fr. P. František Šilhan SJ³², who had supplied the department with reliable in-

²⁸ In that period sentences for “espionage” and “high treason” ranged from four to 15 years.

²⁹ *Author’s Archive (AA)*, author’s interview with Fr. Josef Koláček SJ, 26th July 2012.

³⁰ Alois Kořínek SJ (16th April 1914 – 15th July 1969) entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus in 1932. Along with other Jesuits he was arrested by the Gestapo in June 1944, sentenced and sent to prison in Bernau, Bavaria. After his return he was ordained on 29th June 1945. In 1946 he went abroad to study and after 1948 the authorities barred him from returning to Czechoslovakia. He began working at VR. Following the arrival of new editor-in-chief Fr. Ovečka SJ in 1953 he joined the Gregorian University as a professor.

³¹ Petr Ovečka SJ (8th October 1922 – 22nd December 2009) entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus on 7th September 1940. He was ordained in Maastricht on 22nd August 1950. He served in Rome from 1953 to 2002 before returning to his homeland.

³² František Šilhan SJ (7th January 1905 – 13th February 1985) joined the order in 1923 and was ordained in the Netherlands in 1933. In November 1945 he became provincial of the Czech province. During a show trial in 1950 he was sentenced to 25 years, serving time

formation, was imprisoned in March 1950. Another source of information was political refugees from Czechoslovakia. Editors had to handle information from them very sensitively when making it public so as not to reveal the sources; who had “leaked” the information could have been deduced from one careless word, leading to the arrest or at least persecution of their relatives and friends.

The golden rule for the entire period of broadcasting, tried and tested during WWII, was to work with agency reports and information from the foreign media that confirmed reports of church persecution from home; the editor could then refer to reports in renowned dailies and circulated by agencies or radio and television stations. This also helped avoid the inadvertent disclosure of sources.

Information also came from Czech expatriates working in the foreign media, in particular from Radio Free Europe religious programmes by Alexandr Heidler, Karel Fořt, Friedrich Osuský, Felix Mikula and from Voice of America by Ivan Medek, etc.

Another popular source was the official Czechoslovak media. Editors entered into polemics with their reports, spotlighting wilfully distorted information, fabricated reports and downright lies. Czech department editors scrutinised and commented on all the public show trials and anti-church propaganda brochures, as well as speeches by “progressive priests” such as Josef Plojhar.³³

In the 1950s the Catholic Church was in a very similar position in the Eastern Bloc states. Moscow issued commands regarding its treatment, meaning we can observe in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia (but also for instance in China) the same efforts to foster schisms, conduct of a class struggle between priests and their bishops, attacks on monks, subjugation of the church to the state, show trials, atheisation of education, confinement of church activities to church buildings and their gradual move towards “the trapdoor of history”. Editors didn’t need to describe the situation in Czechoslovak in detail; it was sufficient to speak about

in the Valdice, Leopoldov and Ostrava jails. He was released under a 1965 amnesty and unlawfully interned in Radvanov. He began working actively in the Prague Spring period. In 1971 he resigned from the posts of provincial and eight years later received permission to move from Radvanov to Moravec. There he was charged with obstruction of the state supervision of churches.

³³ Josef Plojhar (2nd March 1902–5th November 1981) was ordained in 1925. He was arrested by the Gestapo on 1st September 1939 as part of operation Albrecht I, imprisoned in Linz and in September 1939 transported to Buchenwald concentration camp. From there he was transferred to Dachau in May 1942, where he was eventually liberated. In 1945–1948 he was a member of the leadership of the Czechoslovak People’s Party (CPP). After the Communist takeover in February 1948 he worked closely with the party, becoming a member of the Central Action Committee of the National Front. In 1948–1951 he was deputy chairman of the CPP, becoming chairman in 1968 and later honorary chairman. In 1951–1968 he chaired the National Peace Movement of Catholic Clergy. From 1952 he was deputy chairman of the Union of Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship.

the Communist regime's treatment of monks in neighbouring Poland to bring to mind the fate of Czech religious orders.

The Communists regarded Vatican Radio as a "seditious station" and jammed the signal.³⁴ Fr. Ovečka SJ determined to get around that barrier. He took charge of Latin broadcasts too and via this channel all important news from the Catholic world, papal homilies and encyclicals and the documents of individual Roman congregations made their way behind the Iron Curtain. *The Communists didn't jam Latin broadcasts, probably assuming that, like them, nobody understood them anyway. However, at that time priests and many lay people knew Latin from grammar school while priests knew it from seminars and theological studies. So in the end all the news reached the right ears.*³⁵

Every day Fr. Ovečka SJ wrote the programme, translated it and broadcast it in Czech and Latin. But his work didn't end there. From 1967 he edited the monthly *Nový život* (*New Life*)³⁶ and became secretary of the Christian Academy in Rome³⁷. On Sundays and holidays he helped out at the Roman parish of San Giovanni de Rossi, where he heard confessions and led preparations for baptism, marriage and the teaching of the catechism.

Ostpolitik and the Czech section

The 1960s brought a number of conciliatory steps toward the Vatican on the part of the Soviet Union: In 1961 Nikita Khrushchev wished Pope John XXIII a happy 80th birthday; selected bishops from Eastern Bloc states were allowed to attend the Second Vatican Council (1962–1965); and in February 1963 Josif Slipyj³⁸, the Lviv metropolitan of the Greek Catholic Church, was released from the Gulag on condition that he go into exile. The pope recommended that his

³⁴ M. Bárta, *Přestaňte okamžitě rušit modré. Konec rušení Rádía Svobodná Evropa v roce 1968*, "Paměť a dějiny" 2012, yr. 6, no. 3, s. 45–54.

³⁵ See <http://www.jesuit.cz/clanek.php?id=492> (quoted as of 10th March 2014).

³⁶ The religious, theological and cultural monthly was set up in London in July 1949 as the *Journal of the Cyril and Methodius Academic League, a Czechoslovak exile group of Catholic students and intellectuals*. In January 1950 it was renamed *Nový život* (*Vita Nuova/New Life*). In February 1950 the magazine was taken over the Christian Academy in Rome, which published it until 2001, when it was discontinued.

³⁷ The Christian Academy Rome was founded in Germany in May 1950 as the information, study, documentation and publishing institute of the Cyril and Methodius Academic League. A year later its activities were transferred to the Nepomucenum in Rome. In 1969 it became part of the Czech religious centre Velehrad in Rome, which supported financially and organisationally its publishing work, including the issuing of for instance the *Studium*, *Vigilie* and *Skála* editions, the monthly *Nový život*, bi-monthly *Studie* and the circular *Vinculum*.

³⁸ Josif Slipyj (17th February 1892–7th September 1984)? Ukrainian Greek Catholic priest, who was imprisoned by the Soviet regime in the 1930s. He was appointed cardinal in 1965.

diplomats foster an atmosphere of trust, speak the truth in a way that did not cause offence and not lose patience. The Vatican's new diplomacy, adapted to the demands of the age, was most visible in relations with Eastern Bloc states and was dubbed Ostpolitik.

Negotiations between the Czechoslovak state and the Holy See were renewed in May 1963. Vatican diplomacy was represented by the Holy See's pro-secretary of state Mons. Agostino Casaroli³⁹. Leading the Czechoslovak team was the head of department for ecclesiastical matters at the Ministry of Education and Culture, Karel Hruža⁴⁰, and Lieut. Col. Miroslav Košnar⁴¹, commander of the Third and from January 1964 the Second Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior. The Holy See entered the negotiations with demands for the resolution of regular diocesan administration and the release and reinstatement of interned bishops, including Archbishop Beran. The state's aim was to gain as much as possible while ideally conceding nothing.

Broadcasts by the Czech section of Vatican Radio, which the Communist government branded an obstacle to the establishment of good church-state relations, were central to all the talks. In his memoirs, Casaroli wrote: *Here too ostentatious politeness toward me but strong reservations regarding that which was hinted at or*

³⁹ Agostino Casaroli (24th November 1914–9th June 1998) was ordained a priest in May 1937. From 1940 to 1961 he worked as a clerk at the Secretariat of State. In 1961 John XXIII appointed him deputy secretary of the Congregation for Extraordinary Ecclesiastical Affairs; six years later he became secretary. In 1967 he was made a bishop. As a leading figure in the Vatican's diplomatic service he led talks between the Holy See and numerous countries. He played a key role in shaping the policies of Paul VI and John Paul II toward Eastern Bloc states. He served as secretary of state in 1979–1990. John Paul II promoted him to cardinal in 1979.

⁴⁰ Karel Hruža (13th June 1921–?), member of the Communist Party from 1945, original profession labourer. 1947–1949 secretary of the district party committee in Kolin, 1950–1953 head of the personnel department at the Ministry of Information, 1953–1956 head of the personnel department at the Ministry of Education and Culture, 1956–1968 and 1969–1971 head of the State Office for Ecclesiastical Affairs, from 1971 worked at Office of the Leadership of the Government.

⁴¹ Miroslav Košnar (5th January 1926–28th February 1973), original profession labourer, was a member of the Communist Party from 1945 and began working in party apparatus in 1948. In 1954–1957 he studied at the Party University under the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the USSR in Moscow. From 1963 he worked at the Ministry of the Interior as commander of the Third Directorate of the SNB (National Security Corps) and from 1st January 1964 as commander of the Second Directorate of the SNB. He requested to leave post on 31st March 1968 and was removed on 26.7.1968. From 1st February 1969 he served as deputy commander of the Central Directorate of the StB. During the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact forces he was a member of the steering staff and took part in repression of "counterrevolutionary elements" in the Czech lands. On 22nd September 1969 he became deputy minister of the interior. He was removed from position on 31st August 1973. *Biografický slovník ředitelů ministerstva vnitra v letech 1948–1989. Ministři a jejich náměstci*, ed. J. Kalous, ÚSTR, Prague s. 96–97.

*mentioned in a conversation the previous evening: the anti-Czechoslovakia campaign that since a particular time has customarily been waged by the radio station Radio Vaticana, Czech and Slovak exile communities...*⁴²

Mons. Casaroli wished to hear the specific objections of the Communist government. The most significant accusations included the broadcasting of information about *interned bishops and the priests and hundreds of lay persons who had been imprisoned, false discrimination against Catholics and their children in schools and this several months after the actual events in question with a clear aim: to denigrate the good name of the CSSR*.⁴³ The Communists called on the Vatican diplomats to have Fr. Ovečka SJ thrown out of Vatican Radio and barred from Rome, making further talks on church-state relations conditional on the fulfilment of these demands.

In 1970 the director of Vatican Radio received a directive from the Secretariat of State stating that Fr. Ovečka SJ must leave the section. In addition the Superior General of the Jesuits was ordered to expel him from Rome. However, Superior Fr. O'Neill SJ was defiant: *What is the Secretariat of State to give me orders as to who I may or should have in our home? Fr. Ovečka is a Jesuit, he's staying here, and that's that!*⁴⁴

So Fr. Ovečka SJ remained in the home of the Jesuits and began working as a librarian at the Historical Institute while also serving as a chaplain at the San Giovanni de Rossi parish. He had an office at Nepomucenum where he worked as secretariat of the Christian Academy and headed the editorial department of *Nový život*. As editor-in-chief of the monthly (1957–2001) he regularly visited the Czech section of Vatican Radio on Wednesdays and Saturdays, picking up copies of reports or programmes he drew on for news stories and reports in the magazine. On those visits he provided help to Fr. Josef Koláček SJ⁴⁵, who was just starting out as an editor and presenter.⁴⁶ The programme scheme changed at this time: Monday was given over to philosophy, theology and culture; Tuesday to catechesis of various age categories; Wednesday to papal addresses during

⁴² A. Casaroli, *Trýzeň trpělivosti. Svatý stolec a komunistické země (1963–1989)*, “Karmelitánské nakladatelství” 2001, s. 178–179.

⁴³ See <http://www.jesuit.cz/clanek.php?id=492> (quoted as of 10th March 2014).

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Josef Koláček SJ (1st September 1929) entered the novitiate of the Society of Jesus in 1948. Under operation “K” he was arrested with other Jesuits and transported to the centralised monastery at Bohosudov and later Osek. After his release from internment he was sent to an auxiliary tank regiment. He later worked as an assistant labourer while secretly studying theology. In 1968 he left for Innsbruck, where he completed his theology studies. Since 1970 he has been living in Rome. From 1971 to 2001 he headed the Czech section of VR.

⁴⁶ AA, author's interview with Fr. Josef Koláček SJ, 26th July 2012.

general audiences; Thursday to information on currents of thought in individual countries; and Friday (from 1957) to the programmes of Cardinal Tomáš Špidlík SJ⁴⁷, on Eastern spirituality and series on homiletics, dogmatic theology, history and morality. Saturday's shows were devoted wholly to youth while Sunday belonged to the programme *The Church and the World*, supplemented by a papal speech before the Angelus. Reports from the homeland took a back seat in line with Vatican diplomacy.

Over the years editors as well as priests and monks from Czechoslovakia who were in Rome while on their way to other missions passed through the station, as did those who were forbidden from returning home after 1948 and some who went into exile in the 1960s. Among external collaborators we find numerous significant figures in the exile Czech clerical community; alongside the aforementioned Jaroslav Škarvad and Cardinal Tomáš Špidlík these included Karel Skalický, Jaroslav Polc, František Planner, Karel Vrána, Jesuits Karel Říha, Jiří Novotný, Petr Kolář, Josef Pazderka, Josef Čupr, etc. Broadcasting would have been extremely difficult without their involvement.

The pontificate of John Paul II

In the wake of the installation of Pope John Paul II the Vatican's Ostpolitik acquired the adjective "fierce". The pontiff's call for the courage to protect faith as one aspect of human rights spurred many Catholics to action and gave courage to official church representatives. In Czechoslovakia church life gradually began to develop, visible in Marian pilgrimages and a revival of the cult of national patron saints. Such pilgrimages were an expression not just of solidarity with the church community but also a demonstration of public opposition to the Communist authorities. Turning points included a festival at Velehrad in July 1985 when 200,000 pilgrims whistled down official speakers representing the state; the declaration of a decade of spiritual renewal of the nation in November 1987; and the January 1987 petition drive *Catholic initiatives to resolve the situation of citizens of faith*, which in a short period was signed by around 550,000 people. The climax of church activities was the canonisation of St. Agnes of Bohemia at

⁴⁷ Tomáš Špidlík SJ (17th December 1919 – 16th April 2010), in 1940 entered novitiate and in years 1942-1945 read philosophical studies in Velehrad and theology in Maastricht, the Netherlands. He was ordained a priest on 22nd August 1949. He worked and lived in Italy. In 1951 he started to regularly contribute to the broadcasts of Vatican Radio and remained doing so until the end of his life. For more than 38 he worked as a spiritual in Nepomucenum in Rome. In 1955 he began his scientific work as well as working as university professor. He became a leading specialist in Eastern Christian spirituality within the whole ecumene. In October 2003 he was promoted to cardinal.

St. Peter's Basilica in Rome on 12 November 1989. Vatican Radio was present at all those events, accompanied by its listeners.

Listenership

Naturally the letters that arrived at the Czech and Slovak departments were in the main written by Czechoslovak listeners for whom the religious broadcasting was an important connection to the worldwide church. In view of the censorship of mail, writing directly to the station was not advisable. Letters and postcards were addressed to Nepomucenum. Correspondents for the most part sent them from places to which Czechoslovak citizens were permitted to travel on holiday or work trips – East Germany, Romania, Poland, Bulgaria, etc.⁴⁸ Reaction from home chiefly helped develop programmes and subjects that met with listeners' interest.

Listenership was not monitored as closely then as it is today and Vatican Radio acted on the conviction that an independent source of information was important to society, and not only behind the Iron Curtain. In addition it was essentially impossible to acquire data for accurate empirical research in a closed society, and not only because VR figured on a list of Czechoslovakia's "enemies".

It was attempted in the 1980s by Radio Free Europe, which, using the quantitative method, carried out several internal surveys of the listenership of foreign radio stations. One question in the questionnaire asked tourists from Czechoslovakia⁴⁹ whether they tuned in to Vatican Radio. The responses provided them with approximate data on listenership; in the case of Vatican Radio the number of listeners was put at around 600,000.⁵⁰

Senior state representatives too wished to ascertain the approximate number of citizens who tuned in to the "seditious station" and to learn about their preferences among foreign radio stations. They assigned the task to the Institute for Public Opinion Research, which produced information on the structure of listeners of Western radio stations in the CSSR, several indicators of listenership of those stations and the views of the public on foreign broadcasts.⁵¹

⁴⁸ *Security Service Archive (ABS)*, f. (coll.) I. správa SNB (Ist Directorate of the SNB), svazek (file) r. č. (ref. no.) 10442, podsvazek (sub-file) 172, Vatican Radio.

⁴⁹ The representative sample comprised 1,539 respondents and the survey was carried out from June 1987 to March 1988. See P. Tomek, „*This is the Voice of America*”. *Československa redakce statni rozhlasove stanice Spojenych statů amerických Hlas Ameriky* w: „*Paměť a dějiny*” 2014, nr 1, s. 16.

⁵⁰ AA, author's interview with Fr. Josef Koláček SJ, 26th July 2012.

⁵¹ There were 1,752 respondents (aged 15 and over). See Poslechovost štvavých vysílaček. *Protestant. Nezávislý evangelický měsíčník*, 2006, no. 6, <http://protestant.evangelnet.cz/poslechovost-stvavych-vysilacek> (quoted as of 10th March 2014).

The researchers did not just interpret the data gathered but also compared them with the results of a similar survey carried out in 1978, so it was demonstrated that while in 1978 10 percent of the population followed a foreign radio station (respondents most frequently mentioned the BBC, Voice of America, Radio Free Europe, Deutschland Funk and Vatican Radio) at least once a week, four years later it was 24 percent, meaning around 2.9 million persons. A total of 36 percent of citizens had tuned into a foreign station. Frequent listening (i.e., daily or almost daily, in some cases 1 to 3x weekly) of a foreign radio station increased in comparison to 1978 in all socio-demographic groups, though most among respondents with university education.⁵²

Also noteworthy were the motives people gave for listening to foreign stations: the supplementing and comparison of information, learning about the other side's views and more objective, true information.

Reliably estimating today the number of listeners Vatican Radio had is extremely difficult. However, we can state with certainty that its broadcasts were always a controversial subject in talks between representatives of the Communist state and the Holy See. In his memoirs Mons. Casaroli makes repeated reference to the significance the Communists gave VR broadcasts and how they "stuck in their craw". This suggests that the station's listener numbers were not insignificant.

Broadcasts from Rome and the State Security

Vatican Radio predominantly employed Jesuits, making it virtually impossible for the Czechoslovak State Security (StB) to infiltrate it and acquire detailed information about the station. However in the 1970s and 1980s it did use a number of "reliable" clerics who on work trips to Rome made contact with the Czech and Slovak sections and on their return collaborated with the Communist security services. The StB also recruited atheists who they trained and then allowed to make "illegal" trips to Rome, where their mission was to enter the seminary and infiltrate the exile clerical community. Illustrating this are the cases of Karel Simandl⁵³,

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Karel Simandl (born 14th August 1955) was recruited by the StB as an agent under the codename "Jab" on 1st July 1975. This followed a letter he wrote to the Ministry of the Interior expressing interest in cooperating with the CS intelligence service. The first task he completed was "uncovering" secret monastic studies in Prague and divinity studies in Brno. After being sent to Rome he successfully graduated from the seminary and in 1982 was ordained a priest. In the following year his collaboration with the StB "deteriorated" and in April 1983 he submitted a letter to his handlers refusing to carry on the collaboration. However, after five years he renewed it under the codename "Aster". He received financial and material payment for his work for the intelligence service. The last recorded meeting with him took place on 27. 12. 1989. ABS, f. I. správa SNB, svazek r. č. 46428.

Jindřich Holeček⁵⁴ and Jozef Král⁵⁵. According to Ministry of the Interior archives they posed as “seminarian volunteers” and got into the Czech and Slovak sections of VR, where they helped prepare programmes while also fulfilling their StB mission.

The main body of surviving agency reports on the activities of Vatican Radio from the collection of the 1st Directorate of the National Security Corps stem from the 1970s and 1980s and detailed research into them is still in the initial phase. The preserved reports chiefly focus on the daily work of the editors at both sections. The StB obtained the most information from meetings with their secret collaborator Jozef Král, an editor in the Slovak department. It suggests that the section chiefly prepared news from the bulletins of *Radiogiornale*, while liturgical and theological texts were provided by collaborators among the clerical exile community. The department regularly receives bulletins from Radio Free Europe

⁵⁴ Jindřich Holeček OM (born 8th March 1954) a member of the Order of Minims (OM), religious name František of Paula, StB collaborator: category agent, codename “Čeřich” and later “Juvan”. He studied archival science and history at Prague’s Charles University (1973–1978). After entering military service he was from September 1979 used as collaborator of the VKR (military counterintelligence): category confidant. In July 1980 he put his signature to collaboration with the StB and was deployed as a “convert” among the members of the underground church. His activities led to a raid on an “illegal” printer operated by Dominican nuns in *Kadaň*. In 1982 he was sent to study in Rome, tasked with infiltrating the clerical exile community. In 1984–1987 he studied philosophy and later theology at the Pontifical Lateran University. His studies were complicated by his expulsion from the Nepomuk seminary for disciplinary reasons in 1985. In order to continue his studies and work as an agent he joined the Order of Minims. He was ordained a priest in Brno in 1993. He received financial and material payment for his work for the intelligence service. The last recorded meeting between him and his case officer took place on 6.11.1989. ABS, f. I. správa SNB, svazek r. č. 47468.

⁵⁵ Jozef Král (born 9th August 1938) was recruited as an agent for the StB on 8th June 1958, codename “Magnus”, by the Third Dept. of the former Regional Directorate–Ministry of the Interior Nitra. He took part in the liquidation of a “secret lay apostolate” and caused the imprisonment of two members. After entering military service he became a collaborator of the VKR. After being demobbed (1960) he collaborated with the Ministry of the Interior in Prievidza and from May 1961 with the 1st Department of the Regional Directorate–Ministry of the Interior Banská Bystrica. He was assessed as an enterprising collaborator who conscientiously fulfilled all his handlers’ orders. In 1962 he was sent abroad as an agent of the Czechoslovak intelligence tasked with infiltrating the Vatican’s Czech clerical exile community. He was ordained a priest in Rome in February 1971. From 1977–2001 he was an assistant editor at VR’s Slovak section (1994–1995 editor-in-chief). In 1976 he headed pastoral care for young refugees. He had contacts with the Slovak clerical exile community. According to a collaboration assessment of 23rd January 1989 he provided valuable operative information on the VR building and persons working there full-time and externally. He received financial and material payment from the intelligence service for his information. The last recorded meeting with him took place on 24th November 1989; he failed to arrive at the next one, set for 29.12.1989. ABS, f. I. správa SNB, svazek r. č. 43094.

and the Catholic agencies KATH PRESS, ANSA, FRANCE PRESSE and KIPA.⁵⁶ Král informed the StB about security measures at the entrance to the building, the location of both sections at the central building on Piazza Pia and customs surrounding visits by guests to the stations premises. *The Slovak section is on the first floor, right beside the Czech one. The Polish and Hungarian ones are opposite. From the corridor individual nationalities are marked by cards. Broadcasting studios, where programmes are recorded, are located on the fourth floor.*⁵⁷

The StB paid great attention to cooperation between Vatican Radio and Radio Free Europe. It therefore tasked “Magnus” (Král) to look into the suspicion that RFE bulletins were also to be found at VR’s central documentation centre, which would evidently have proven close cooperation between the stations.

Naturally the focus of attention was on the broadcasts themselves and their composition. The Czech evening show was broadcast daily from 7.30 pm and repeated at 5.15 am in the morning. Slovak broadcasts followed those 15-minute programmes. In 1985, for instance, the programme featured information on the pope’s activities (pastoral visits, general and private audiences, the publication of major documents and encyclicals), from the life of the Catholic Church (sessions of senior Catholic bodies, congresses, various meetings) and on important events in the worldwide Catholic Church on the life of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia.

The reaction to programmes that editors targeted at young listeners unsettled the StB. The response to a survey initiated by Karel Simandl in 1978 also attracted attention. Fr. Kolář SJ remarked of it: *One time we prepared a campaign asking listeners to send us postcards from individual places of pilgrimage. A large number of them reached us and we used them to create a statistical overview, that they listen to us, go on pilgrimages, how many people and from where.*⁵⁸

Today we will probably never learn whether it was Simandl’s idea or a task from the StB officer overseeing him. In his report on the matter “Jab” stated that of around 350 responses 80 were signed. The section sent those listeners a diploma with the pope’s signature.⁵⁹ He also referred to the reaction of Vatican Radio management to the innovative campaign: *The general executive of R[adio] V[aticana] even praised the programme as novel and enterprising. In reaction to the*

⁵⁶ ABS, f. I. správa SNB, svazek r. č. 10442, podsvazek 175, objekt VLÁDCE – sub-object RV – findings on report A – MAGNUS, 17th December 1986, p. 4.

⁵⁷ Ibid., podsvazek 172, krycí jméno Rádio Vatikán (Code name Vatican Radio), Příloha k záznamu ze schůzky s (Supplement to record of meeting with) A – MAGNUS, 19.8.1979 – vytěžení (extract), p. 12.

⁵⁸ AA, author’s interview with Fr. Josef Kolář SJ, 26th July 2012.

⁵⁹ ABS, f. I. správa SNB, svazek r. č. 10442, podsvazek 172, krycí jméno Rádio Vatikán, Příloha k záznamu ze schůzky s A – JAB – vytěžení, 27th December 1979, p. 16.

*broadcast many letters reached RV from the CSSR, either signed or written under a fictitious symbol. The department then reacts to all responses.*⁶⁰

Both sections built on the success of the survey and continued with various listeners' competitions and quizzes. According to the Slovak department, around 5,000 responses came from Slovakia alone to one quiz in May 1979. The StB tried to obtain the addresses of all listeners who replied to these surveys. However, they ran into a problem at the Czech section: *Breaking with the normal custom, the superior [Fr. Josef Koláček SJ] does not live at the order's building on Via dei Penitenzieri, like all the other Jesuits from VR, as he has a flat within the Vatican City. There he keeps all work materials, including a filing cabinet providing an overview of correspondence from listeners from the CSSR.*⁶¹

While Fr. P. Koláček SJ kept all confidential materials at home where secret collaborators of the Czechoslovak intelligence couldn't get at them, most of the letters with return addresses sent to the Slovak section were either shredded or ended up in a filing cabinet at the department. It was believed to contain around 150 addresses, of which 10 were of interest to the StB: *In any case the source ["Magnus"] had the chance to obtain them, even though he had to go through the entire filing cabinet because they are only ordered alphabetically.*⁶²

A situational report of 24th May 1985 bore the further disquieting information that the Czech section of VR was acquiring reports on the situation of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia not only from foreign news agencies *but is also receiving up-to-date information whose channels, despite efforts, it has not been possible to identify.*⁶³

On the basis of the preserved archival materials it can be stated that the Communist intelligence's targeting of Vatican Radio required a great deal of energy and financial resources. The intelligence that the spies of the 1st Directorate of the National Security Corps managed to get their hands on was mainly used in official talks between Czechoslovakia and the Vatican. Those materials helped Czechoslovak representatives achieve considerable success in the diplomatic arena.

Importance of the broadcasts

The persecution of the church in Czechoslovakia robbed Catholics of virtually all means of evangelising and connecting with the worldwide church. Through the entire period of Communist rule the Czech section of Vatican Radio did

⁶⁰ Ibid., Příloha k záznamu ze schůzky s A – JAB – výtěžení, 16th July 1979, p. 10.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Ibid., Příloha k záznamu ze schůzky s A – MAGNUS – dotěžení, 5th October 1979, 9. 15.

⁶³ Ibid., The Czech department of Vatican Radio – situational report 24th 1985, p. 36.

its best to fill that vacuum. Though other foreign stations also carried religious programming, in which they devoted attention to the Catholic Church as a key part of society (relaying for instance important liturgical celebrations, carrying reports on the persecution of the domestic church, etc.), they were unable in view of its very nature to compete with Vatican Radio and were not aiming to do so.

Vatican Radio still serves its function as “the pope’s station” today. After Fr. Kolářek, who still helps out at the department, Fr. Milan Glaser SJ took charge. His team also comprises two editors, Johana Bronková and Jana Grubertová. The Czech department’s goal remains the same – the free, credible, reliable and effective profession of the message of Christianity. Since 2001 the Czech section has also had a website with an up-to-date archive of its shows.

In 2011 cooperation was agreed between the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes and Vatican Radio allowing for the digitisation of the archive of the Czech section from the period 1950–1992. At the end of 2013 a presentation of the archive of broadcasts by Vatican Radio’s Czech department was launched on the Institute’s⁶⁴ website, while this year an edition of selected documents relating to reactions to the persecution of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia during the Communist regime is being prepared. Work is also underway on the publication of the Slovak part of the broadcast archive from 1949–1992. Making both archives public will allow interested parties to get to know past shows attesting to the uniqueness of this current of thought.

Streszczenie

Powstanie i działalność czeskiej sekcji Radia Watykańskiego w latach 1947–1989

Inspiratorem Sekcji Czechosłowackiej Radia Watykańskiego był metropolita praski abp Josef Beran. Pierwsze audycje przeznaczone dla całej Czechosłowacji nadano 22 kwietnia 1947 roku. Od 24 grudnia 1947 r. zostały zarezerwowane dla Czechosłowacji trzy regularne programy w tygodniu. W marcu 1948 r. uruchomiono regularne audycje codzienne w językach czeskim i słowackim. Nadawanie Czechosłowackiej Sekcji Radia Watykańskiego podobnie jak dla wielu innych narodów Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej miało ogromne znaczenie, zwłaszcza w okresie rządów komunistycznych w latach pięćdziesiątych. Informacje podane w radiu stanowiły niemal jedyne źródło informacji o wydarzeniach w Kościele światowym i pozwoliły poczuć czeskim i słowackim katolikom solidarność z chrześcijanami na całym świecie.

⁶⁴ See <https://www.ustrcr.cz/cs/archiv-vysilani-ceske-redakce-radia-vatikan> (quoted as of 14th March 2014).

Bibliography

Archives

Archive of Vatican Radio (ARaV) Czech section of Vatican Radio, *Remembering the beginnings of Vatican Radio*.

Security Service Archive (ABS), f. (coll.) I. správa SNB (Ist Directorate of the SNB), svazek (file) r. č. (ref. no.) 10442, podsvazek (sub-file) 172, Vatican Radio.

Studies

Bárta M., *Přestaňte okamžitě rušit modré. Konec rušení Rádía Svobodná Evropa v roce 1968*, "Paměť a dějiny" 2012, yr. 6, no. 3.

Biografický slovník ředitelů ministerstva vnitra v letech 1948–1989. Ministři a jejich náměstci, ed. J. Kalous, ÚSTR, Prague 2010.

Casaroli A., *Trýzeň trpělivosti. Svatý stolec a komunistické země (1963–1989)*, "Karmelitánské nakladatelství" 2001.

Halas F., *Fenoméni Vatikán. Idea, dějiny a současnost papežství, diplomacie Svatého stolce, České země a Vatikán*. Brno 2004.

Tomek P., „This is the Voice of America”. *Československá redakce statni rozhlasove stanice Spojených statů amerických Hlas Ameriky*, "Paměť a dějiny" 2014, nr 1.

Škarvada J., *Svedl jsi mě, Hospodine. Jaroslav Škarvada v rozhovoru s Bohumilem Svobodou*. "Karmelitánské nakladatelství" 2002.

Sočufka F., *Diakonia slova v slovenskom vysielaní Vatikánskoho rozhlasu*, Bratislav 2004.

Vlček V., *Perzekuce mužských řádů a kongregací komunistickým režimem 1948–1964*. Olomouc 2004.

Vlček V., (ed.): *Ženské řehole za komunismu 1989–1948*, Matice cyrilometodějská, Olomouc 2003.

Vodičková Stanislava, *Uzavírám vás do svého srdce, Životopis Josefa kardinála Beran*, ÚSTR – CDK, Praha – Brno 2009.

Vodičková Stanislava, *Kardynal Josef Beran – dobrý pasterz i patriota*, "Fides, Ratio et Patria. Studia Toruńskie" 2015, nr 2.

Internet

<http://www.jesuit.cz/clanek.php?id=492> [quoted as of 10th March 2014].

Protestant. Nezávislý evangelický měsíčník, 2006, no. 6, <http://protestant.evangelnet.cz/poslecho-vost-stvavych-vysilacek> (quoted as of 10th March 2014).

<https://www.ustrcr.cz/cs/archiv-vysilani-ceske-redakce-radia-vatikan>.