

ously appraised as having historical value) by and large reflect intense citizen-state interactions. Court records, asylum records, secret service files, and church discipline registers all document interactions with people who are considered to be out of step with social norms.

However, theories are not step-by-step procedures, and appraisal is still a subjective assessment as to which records best reflect the societal image. Several of the essays use files that might be thought to document routine interactions with “normal” people. Shipping crew agreements and Mothers’ Allowance case files might seem to be poor mirrors of society given their routine, administrative nature; however, these files amplify the voices of the people behind the files in a way that policy and program records cannot. The ability to hear the voices of marginalized people – indeed the ability to recognize that someone *is* marginalized – is in the eyes and ears of the beholder. This has affected which records are saved. It is not surprising that Margaret Little had difficulty finding significant runs of Mothers’ Allowance files, or that the majority of shipping crew agreements were scheduled for destruction by the British PRO before being rescued by the Maritime Archive in Newfoundland.

Apart from the theoretical issues, both historical and archival, which the book raises, it is also worth reading because it tells interesting stories about dead people, to paraphrase the title of Karen Dubinsky’s afterword. Case files, she says, “grant us admission to the historical party” (p. 361).

Carolyn Heald

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The Prague Spring 1968, A National Security Archive Documents Reader. JAROMIR NAVRATIL, chief ed. & comp. Budapest: Central European University Press, 1998. 596 p. ISBN 963-9116-15-7.

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 was one of the pivotal events in modern history. Scholars interested in tracing one of the significant roots of this collapse should closely examine the epic events of the year 1968 in Czechoslovakia, which would bear later on the Velvet Revolution of 1989–1990 and the collapse of communism in Central and Eastern Europe. The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 had significant international repercussions and led to defections from the international communist movement, including many from the Communist Party of Canada. Events in 1968 generated genuine patriotism and heroism among Czechs and Slovaks, but at the same time revealed examples of dishonour and humiliation.

For many years, the causes and effects of these events were shrouded in mystery. It was only recently, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, that archives were opened to researchers and this material, along with the memoirs

and interviews of the important participants, was able to shed new light on the events of 1968. This includes insights from both sides of the Iron Curtain. As the year recedes into history, a determined effort was made in the Czech Republic to recapture some of the spirit and significance of that period. The new information now available was discussed at an academic conference held in Prague in 1994, which brought together scholars from many countries including Canada. Co-sponsored by the National Security Archive, the conference was part of a long process of research and enquiry by a commission of Czech and Slovak historians appointed by President Vaclav Havel to study the events of 1967–1970, and led to the publication of this volume of historical documents.

The book is organized into seven parts, providing a progressive exposition of the unfolding of the 1968 crisis. Part One deals with the prelude to the Prague Spring of 1968. The 140 documents in the book begin in this section with minutes and reports of meetings of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, speeches by Alexander Dubcek, remarks by Leonid Brezhnev, memoirs, and various additional reports. Part Two centres on the period from January to April, 1968 when a series of communications, contacts, and meetings occurred, the resulting documentation exposing how the Soviets and the other Warsaw Pact countries attempted to control the political reform movement in Czechoslovakia. Part Three covers the period from April to June, 1968. The efforts of the Soviets to negate the Czechoslovak liberal reforms are presented in the form of cables, letters, reports, minutes of meetings, and speeches. Part Four focusses on the events of July 1968 when the Soviets made additional determined efforts to stop the Czechoslovak reform movement. These documents include top secret reports from Kremlin Politburo meetings, transcripts of KGB-recorded telephone conversations between Alexander Dubcek and Leonid Brezhnev, and Warsaw Pact discussions which led to the decision to invade Czechoslovakia. The covert, but indecisive actions and roles of anti-reform Czechs and Slovaks within the Czechoslovak Communist Party were nonetheless important contributing factors within the ongoing negotiations.

The Soviet invasion in August 1968 is documented in Part Five. Reports, statements, declarations, cables, and transcripts of telephone conversations provide a day-by-day, even hourly account of the invasion and the reactions of the Czechs and Slovaks. Part Six deals with the immediate aftermath of the invasion and the desperate attempts by Dubcek and the reform leadership to salvage aspects of the reform movement, countered by equally determined Soviet efforts to replace the reform leadership with “healthy forces” within the Czechoslovak Communist Party and to eliminate any vestige of the movement. Part Seven concludes with a documentary epilogue which includes an analysis of the effects on Czechoslovakia of Mikhail Gorbachev’s 1989 reforms, and ends with the Soviet and Warsaw Pact apologies to Czechoslovakia in December 1989.

Accompanying the documents is a preface by President Vaclav Havel and a perceptive foreword by H. Gordon Skilling. The editors have prepared essays to introduce each section and to provide historical and political context. Additional, highly classified documents from the CIA and other intelligence agencies in the United States are found throughout the book. A map of Czechoslovakia is included on the inside front cover with information on the invasion, and there is a small section of relevant photographs. The book concludes with a descriptive list of the "Main Actors" and "Selected Organizations," and a thorough bibliography. Each document is identified with a number, document title, date, and source, and is introduced with a short note. When necessary, footnotes are included to provide explanatory notes and additional information. The documents were translated into English from various languages, including Russian, Czech, and Slovak. Except for a few instances of grammatical awkwardness, the translations are clear and easy to read. The editors and compilers deserve the highest acclaim for their efforts to locate the relevant documents in various archival repositories; they also indicate where they were unable, in some cases, to obtain certain records.

This volume is a rare and unique resource of primary documents on the Prague Spring and the Soviet invasion. It will provide future historians and researchers with an "insider's" view of the discussions and decisions at the highest political levels in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. For example, we learn how a secret treaty between Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union to store nuclear weapons on the territory of Czechoslovakia led some political and military leaders in Prague to reassess and question their fundamental communist political convictions and the merits of the Warsaw Pact. As well, from the reports of the multilateral sessions of the Warsaw Pact, it is evident that the leadership of the neighbouring countries subscribed to their own kind of "Domino Theory" wherein the collapse of communism in Czechoslovakia would lead to the collapse of political regimes in Poland, Hungary, and the German Democratic Republic, threatening even the Soviet Union's stability. This view no doubt contributed to the formulation of the "Brezhnev Doctrine." Throughout the documents, there is also frequent evidence of the underlying theme of Czech and Slovak tensions, which would eventually lead to the breakup of Czechoslovakia.

This publication is part of the National Security Archive program, which draws on multinational cooperation to publish documents from various national archives on historic events in eastern Europe. *Prague Spring 1968* has certainly established a high standard for this ambitious series. However, research in archival repositories, translation of documents, and editing and publication will require a vast investment in time and financial resources. It is doubtful if only one institution, even a government-funded agency, can successfully undertake and complete this elaborate project. Similar future projects will succeed only with the cooperation of various governments and

institutions at all levels and the same determination, as in this case, to present “a closer understanding of the dramatic events that the then Czechoslovakia lived through three decades ago.”

Myron Momryk

National Archives of Canada

Justice : les archives contemporaines de l'administration centrale. Guide de recherche. FRANÇOISE BANAT-BERGER, dir. Paris, ministère de la Justice, Direction de l'Administration générale et de l'Équipement, Service des Archives, 1997. 312 p.

Le ministère de la Justice de France a toujours porté une attention certaine aux archives qu'il a produit. Depuis le début du XIX^e siècle ce ministère verse ses documents aux Archives nationales. Les versements aux Archives sont alors traités et forment aujourd'hui les volumineuses parties de la série BB. Pour les historiens, ces milliers de dossiers sont le reflet idéal de l'évolution politique, sociale et économique d'une société toujours en train de se construire.

Le 20 juillet 1997, le Premier ministre de France annonce une modification de la loi du 3 janvier 1979 sur les archives afin que l'accès de celles-ci soit facilité. Par cette exigence, le ministère et les Archives nationales décident de produire un guide ou un outil de recherches des archives judiciaires contemporaines de l'administration centrale. Il souhaite porter à la connaissance des professionnels de la justice et de la communauté scientifique l'ensemble des dossiers du ministère de la Justice archivés depuis l'après-guerre et conservés au Centre des archives contemporaines de Fontainebleau. Sont inscrites dans ces archives les missions régaliennes du ministère c'est-à-dire, la responsabilité de la législation générale, les règles de fonctionnement des juridictions, l'animation et le contrôle de l'exercice de la politique pénale et de l'action publique. Ce guide s'inscrit d'une part, dans la lignée des parutions des « États des versements » par les missions d'archives implantées dans les différents départements ministériels français et est, d'autre part, le prolongement du premier guide et ouvrage publié en 1988 sous le titre *Guide des archives judiciaires et pénitentiaires, 1800–1958* de Jean-Claude Farcy.

Sont recensés dans cet ouvrage les dossiers postérieurs aux années 1960 conservés dans leur grande majorité au Centre des archives contemporaines de Fontainebleau et au ministère de la Justice. Ainsi, ces archives sont la continuité directe de la série BB conservée au Centre historique de Paris. Étant donné la complexité de certains fonds et de leur répartition entre le Centre de Fontainebleau et le ministère de la Justice, il présente les grandes catégories de dossiers (dispenses pour mariage, changements de noms, naturalisations, professions juridiques et judiciaires, magistrats, greffiers, action publique,