

The Czech Republic: From the Center of Christendom to the Most Atheist Nation of the 21st Century. Part 1. The Persecuted Church: The Clandestine Catholic Church (Ecclesia Silentii) in Czechoslovakia During Communism 1948-1991

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**THE CZECH REPUBLIC:
FROM THE CENTER OF CHRISTENDOM
TO THE MOST ATHEIST NATION OF THE 21st CENTURY**

PART I.

**THE PERSECUTED CHURCH:
THE CLANDESTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH (*ECCLESIA SILENTII*)
IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA DURING COMMUNISM 1948 – 1991**

By Scott Vitkovic

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Abstract

This research examines the most important historical, political, economic, social, cultural, and religious factors before, during, and after the reign of Communism in Czechoslovakia from 1918 to 2021 and their effect on the extreme increase in atheism and decrease in Christianity, particularly Roman Catholicism, in the present-day Czech Republic. It devotes special attention to the role of the Clandestine Catholic Church (*Ecclesia Silentii*) and the changing policies of the Holy See vis-à-vis this Church, examining these policies' impact on the continuing decline of Roman Catholicism in the Czech Republic after the collapse of Communism. The article also deals with Pope Pius XII's Secret Mandates of 1948-1950, the Second Vatican Council, and the Holy See's *Ostpolitik*. Scholars, who previously relied only on the views of the Czechs, blame the unprecedented drop in Christianity, the near-total destruction of the Catholic Church, and the rise in atheism on the Czechoslovak communist government's four decades of totalitarianism. Although the increase in atheism and decrease in Christianity were substantial during the era of

¹ This research utilized the author's scholarly knowledge and personal experience as a member of the Clandestine Catholic Church (*Ecclesia Silentii*) during communism in former Czechoslovakia. The author was secretly educated and served in the Clandestine Roman Catholic Church from 1984 to 1991. Additionally, he was a signatory of Charta 77, a freelance journalist from behind the Iron Curtain, the founder of the Independent Student Movement that commenced the 1989 Velvet Revolution, the youngest co-founder of the Civic Forum that formed the first post-communist government in Czechoslovakia, and advisor to the first post-communist president of Czechoslovakia. Since the fall of communism in 1989, it took the Czech Republic some 30 years to recognize him formally as a resistance fighter against the communist dictatorship. However, when he turned 18, it took the Czechoslovak communist government and its Military Counterintelligence only weeks to accuse him of 'high treason' and 'espionage' and to nearly murder him. Moreover, it took the Czechoslovak State Secret Police (StB) only 48 hours to accuse him of 'writing, producing, and distributing religious press (*samizdat*) and raid his study room.' What is more, most of those who sacrificed everything and were murdered by the Czechoslovak government agents and informants before the 1989 collapse of communism, as well as those who survived this persecution but were left medically disabled in extreme poverty and met their untimely death after the 1989 collapse of communism in Czechoslovakia, are conveniently forgotten today. Since they cannot bear witness to the brutal crimes perpetrated against humanity and God, this study is dedicated to their memory.

Communism from 1948 to 1989, our data indicate that the decline in Christianity, particularly the historically predominating Roman Catholicism, did not commence with the 1948 communist coup d'état but traces its origins to the breakdown of the Austro-Hungarian Empire after the conclusion of WWI and the establishment of Czechoslovakia on October 28, 1918. What's more, this research shows that the most significant and unprecedented steep deterioration of the Christian Faith, namely Roman Catholicism, did not occur during the era of Communism but only after the Czechoslovak communist government collapsed in 1989. This massive decay did not happen even during the most extraordinary communist persecution of the Catholic Church during the era of Stalinism in Czechoslovakia. This research further finds that the Holy See's ill-advised policies and systematic, sustained, and prevalent failures in leadership, guidance, and teachings are responsible for the near destruction of the Roman Catholic Church and especially the end destruction of the Clandestine Catholic Church (*Ecclesia Silentii*), in the Czech and Slovak Republics after the fall of Communism. These failures furthermore contributed to the Czech Republic, the historical lands of Bohemia and Moravia that once were in the center of Christendom, degenerating into the most atheist country in Europe and the world today.

KEYWORDS

Atheism, Catholic Church, Christianity, Cold War, Communism, Czech Republic, Ostpolitik, Vatican.

Introduction

In 2020, the majority of the world's population was religious. Christianity is the most prevalent religion, with about one-third of the world's population. The *Annuario Pontificio*² of 2019 states that Catholicism is the largest branch of Christianity, with 1.35 billion adherents in total. Atheism, agnosticism, secularism, and non-religiosity account for only 15.6% of the world's population. On the other hand, in 2021, the Czech Republic was about 78.4% atheist and 11.7% Christian.³ These numbers are in very sharp contrast to Czechoslovakia a hundred years ago. In 1921, Czechoslovakia

² *Annuario Pontificio* is of the Catholic Church Directory the Holy See. It lists the popes in chronological order and all officials of the Holy See's departments and provides names and contact information for all cardinals and bishops, the dioceses, the departments of the Roman Curia, the Holy See's diplomatic missions abroad, the embassies accredited to the Holy See, the headquarters of religious institutes, certain academic institutions, and other information. *Annuario Pontificio* is compiled by the Central Office of Church Statistics and published annually in Italian by *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*.

³ Comparison [percentage] between Atheist and Christian populations in former Czechoslovakia (1921), the Czech Republic (2021), and Worldwide (2021).

ATHEISM AND CHRISTIAN POPULATIONS IN FORMER CZECHOSLOVAKIA (1921), THE CZECH REPUBLIC (2021), AND WORLDWIDE (2021)			
	<i>Czechoslovakia (1921)</i>	<i>Czech Rep. (2021)</i>	<i>Worldwide (2021)</i>
Population [total]	10.0 M	10.5 M	7.93 B
ATHEISM, AGNOSTICISM, SECULARISM	7.3 %	78.4 %	15.6 %
SPIRITUAL BUT NOT RELIGIOUS	0.0 %	9.0 %	15.6 %
CHRISTIAN	91.5 %	11.7 %	32 %
Catholic	82.1 %	9.3 %	17 %
Roman Catholic	82.0 %	7.0 %	17 %
Protestant	9.1 %	0.6 %	12 %

was 91.5% Christian and 7.3% atheist.⁴ Today, the Czech Republic is the most atheist country⁵ in the European Union and the world, surpassing even communist North Korea and China.⁶

Many Czechs blame the steep decline of their faith and the rise of atheism on the 1948 - 1989 Czechoslovak communist government. It is undoubtedly true that the 41 years of the Czechoslovak communists' systematic efforts to replace all religious beliefs with materialistic atheism, accompanied by sustained determinations to uproot and destroy all remnants of the Christian Church, account for the rise in atheism and decline in Christianity in general and the Catholic Church in particular. However, the Czechoslovak communist government's four decades of totalitarianism do not fully explain these phenomena.

This research shows that:

1. The decline of religious faith, especially the predominant Roman Catholicism in Czechoslovakia, did not commence with the 1948 communist coup d'état but traces its origins to the breakdown of the Austro-Hungarian Empire *after* the conclusion of WWI and the establishment of Czechoslovakia on October 28, 1918.⁷
2. The most significant decrease in religious faith, namely the predominant Roman Catholicism in Czechoslovakia, did not occur during the era of Communism (1948-1989) but *after* the 1989 Velvet Revolution and the collapse of the Czechoslovak communist government.
3. Other Eastern European countries, including the former USSR - the center of Communism - lived under the rule of communist governments. Yet, the available statistics do not indicate that they became the most atheist nations in Europe or globally. Moldova (92%), Georgia (89%), Armenia (89%), and Romania

⁴ Czech Statistical Office www.czso.cz.

⁵ In the context of the post-modern Czech Republic, it is necessary to distinguish between 'pure atheism' and 'anti institutionalism.' Owing to the Nazi and Communist forced ideological indoctrination of all strata of society, some Czechs are distrustful towards organized movements and institutions, including organized religions and their ecclesiastical structures. Thus, it is possible that the Czechs, who did not state their religious affiliations in the post-communist Czech national census of 1991, 2001, 2011, and 2021, are not truly 'atheist' but actually are distrustful of the Czech government. Since no quantitative data exist to objectively measure the number of "distrustful" Czechs, this research included another separate category titled "Spiritual but not Religious," which consisted of about 9% of Czechs in 2021, who do *not* identify with institutional religions but do *not* consider themselves pure atheists and acknowledge the existence of "a higher power."

⁶ Pew Research Center, November 10, 2020.

⁷ The independence of Czechoslovakia was officially proclaimed on October 28, 1918, in Prague. On September 10, 1919, the Treaty of Saint-Germain-en-Laye (French: *Traité de Saint-Germain-en-Laye*), signed by the Republic of Germany-Austria and victorious Allies of World War I, formally recognized Czechoslovakia.

(86%) have the highest percentages of Orthodox Christians, and Poland (87%), Croatia (84%), Lithuania (75%), and Hungary (56%) have the highest percentages of Roman Catholics in their populations.⁸

This research, published in Part I. and Part II addresses the following questions:⁹

1. What major historical, political, economic, social, cultural, and religious factors are responsible for the rise of atheism and the continuing decline of the Christian faith, particularly Roman Catholicism, in the Czech Republic?
2. What moral leadership failures of the Catholic Church enabled the Czechoslovak government to annihilate the Catholic Church and its clergy and seize the Church properties in Czechoslovakia?
3. During Communism, the Clandestine Catholic Church (*Ecclesia Silentii*) in Czechoslovakia, established by Pope Pius XII's *Secret Mandates* of 1948-1950, successfully rebuilt all ecclesiastical structures, including the Episcopate, theological university education, priestly and religious formations, as well as the press and publications of books and periodicals. This Church, sanctified by the blood of its martyrs murdered by the Czechoslovak communist officials, remained nearly uncompromised and pure. After the Velvet Revolution and the collapse of the Czechoslovak communist government in November 1989, the majority of the Czechoslovak population, Catholic and secular, hailed this Clandestine Catholic Church as the victorious heroic martyr for the greatest causes of humanity and God and held it in the highest esteems. Why, after the 1989 collapse of Communism in Czechoslovakia, did the Clandestine Catholic Church not become the unifying center of spiritual and moral healing and the much-needed foundation for the renewal of faith?
4. How did the changing policies of the Holy See vis-à-vis the Clandestine Catholic Church (*Ecclesia Silentii*), since the beginning of the Second Vatican Council and after the 1989 fall of Communism in Czechoslovakia, contribute to the decline in Christian faith, especially Roman Catholicism?

⁸ Pew Research Center, May 10, 2017; See: Further Research Recommendations.

⁹ Due to the length of this manuscript, it is printed in two parts. Part I. titled, "The Persecuted Church: The Clandestine Catholic Church (*Ecclesia Silentii*) in Czechoslovakia *during* Communism 1948 – 1991," consists of the Abstract, Keywords, Introduction, and Methods. Part II. titled, "The Martyred Church: The Clandestine Catholic Church (*Ecclesia Silentii*) in Czechoslovakia *after* Communism 1991- 2021," consists of the Results, Discussion, Conclusion, References, and Attachment. The above-mentioned questions are addressed in the Part II, Discussion and Conclusion.

5. Is the Holy See or the Czechoslovak communist government more responsible for the Czech Republic, formerly the lands of Bohemia and Moravia that once were the center of Christendom in Europe, decaying into the most atheist nation in the world?¹⁰

Literature Review

In 1957, Dr. Manfred Kierein began reconstructing the apostolic succession of the Clandestine Catholic Church (*Ecclesia Silentii*)¹¹ in Eastern European countries. After that, his data were synthesized by the Austrian Catholic journalist Franz Hummer (Hummer, 1981) under the title, "*Bischöfe für den Untergrund: Zur Praxis der Geheimbischofe in der Katholische Kirche*," published by Herold Verlag in Wien-München in 1981. In September 1982, another essential piece of research put out during the era of Normalization was that of Secretary to Cardinal Trochta, at the time Bishop of Litoměřice, Josef Rabas (Rabas, 1982), whom the Czechoslovak communist government deported to Bavaria Germany after WWII, due to his family's German ancestry. His work, titled "*The Roman Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia*," was published in the *Occasional Papers on Religion in Eastern Europe*, Vol. 2, Issue 6, Article 2, and served as a foundation for other scholarly inquiries.

After the collapse of the Czechoslovak communist government in November 1989, Hummer's Austrian colleague, Franz Gansrigler (Gansrigler, 1991), building on the previously mentioned scholarship, published his title, "*Jeder war ein Papst: Geheimkirchen in Osteuropa*" via Müller Verlag in Salzburg, Austria, in 1991. Gansrigler focused on Bohemia and Moravia, adding shorter sections on Slovakia, Romania, Ukraine, Hungary, and China. For the first time, this book revealed detailed information previously known only to a select few from the Clandestine Catholic Church and the Vatican. It generated a massive tumult among the Austrian and Czechoslovak Catholic Church officials.¹² The Czech historians Petr Fiala and Jiří Hanuš (Fiala P.

¹⁰ See: Footnote #4.

¹¹ Latin: *Ecclesia Silentii*, English: Underground or Clandestine Catholic Church, Czech: *Skrytá nebo tajná církev*.

¹² Gansrigler's book "*Jeder war ein Papst: Geheimkirchen in Osteuropa*" about the Clandestine Catholic Church criticizes the post-communist Catholic Church officials for their collaboration with the communists. Condemnation of the book followed from several clerics who accepted positions in the post-communist Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia. Miloslav Vlk, the Archbishop of Prague, who succeeded Cardinal František Tomášek in 1991, came to be the most outspoken attacker. Vlk stated that the book contains "many untrue and half-true statements" and supports "unhealthy tendencies." Also critical was Tomáš Halík, who worked as an alcohol and drug addiction psychotherapist during communism and was secretly ordained as a Catholic priest in Erfurt, East Germany on 21 August 1978. Both Vlk and Halík alluded to numerous unspecified "inaccuracies" in the book. However, their focal unspoken concern was that the bishops of the *Ecclesia Silentii* ordained married men to the episcopate and priesthood, and several women to the diaconate and priesthood, which Vlk and Halík perceived as an attack on the official Roman Catholic Church authority that they now aspired to represent (Halík seems to have changed his public views when he considered running for the

a., 1999), following Gansrigler, compiled, verified, and systematized documents and explored the history of the Church in Czechoslovakia from 1948 till the present, particularly in the publication titled, *"Skrytá Církev: Felix M. Davídek a Společenství Koinótés."* Another book of crucial historical value is that of Ondřej Liška (Liška, 2003) titled, *"Jede Zeit ist Gottes Zeit. Die Untergrundkirche in der Tschechoslowakei,"* published by St. Benno Verlag in Leipzig, Germany, in 2003. In 2009, Werner Kaltefleiter, in *"Mein Gewissen ist die Wahrheit. Kirchenkampf in der Tschechoslowakei Stasi-Dokumente und Zeitzeugen aus den Jahre des kommunistischen Regimes,"* completed a collection of testimonies procured by Erwin Koller, Hans Küng, and Peter Križan (Koller, 2011), who published it under the title, *"Die verratene Prophetie, Die tschechoslowakische Untergrundkirche zwischen Vatikan und Kommunismus"* in Luzern, Switzerland in 2011. Today, it still is one of the most critical documents of contemporary history printed after the 1989 collapse of Communism in Czechoslovakia. The subject of this book is the Clandestine Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia under the leadership of Bishop Felix M. Davídek, and the destruction of this Church, not by the Communist State Secret Police but by the Vatican after the 1989 fall of the Czechoslovak communist government. The following quote from Dušan Špiner, Bishop of the Clandestine Catholic Church, sums up the book's main point, *"We were also called the Silent Church [Ecclesia Silentii]. But it was not the communists who silenced us. It was the Vatican!"* On April 2, 2011, in Vienna, the Herbert Haag Foundation awarded the Clandestine Catholic Church of Czechoslovakia the *"Prize for Freedom in the Church,"* partially thanks to the revelations brought out in this book.

Among the most recent publications deserving attention is that of a young Czech scholar Eva Vybíralová who successfully defended her dissertation titled *"Untergrundkirche und geheime Weihen. Eine kirchenrechtliche Untersuchung der Situation in der Tschechoslowakei 1948-1989"* (Vybíralová, 2019) at the Catholic Theological Faculty of Charles University, Prague in 2017, and two years later published it as a book under the same title. The work reviews the history of the Clandestine Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia, including the Pope Pius XII Special Faculties for Czechoslovakia. It examines the Clandestine Catholic Church ecclesiastical ordinations, especially

President of the Czech Republic in the 2018 elections). Although the Vatican has been well aware of these matters for several decades, with Pope John Paul II himself ordaining married men to the priesthood, these now open revelations brought the Holy See to address the Clandestine Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia. However, the subsequent policies of the Holy See vis-à-vis the *Ecclesia Silentii* in Czechoslovakia only attempted to silence, excommunicate, dispose of, and forever bury this Church sanctified by the blood of its martyrs. Where the Czechoslovak communist government and its State Secret Security (StB) agents previously failed in destroying this Church, the Holy See now succeeded.

these of the Jesuit bishops and Bishop Davídek, carried out according to the 1917 Canon Law, and the re-examination of these ordinations after the 1989 fall of Communism in Czechoslovakia carried out according to the new Canon Law of 1983.

Furthermore, several periodicals devoted themselves to the topic of the Clandestine Catholic Church (*Ecclesia Silentii*). A critical one is "*Religion in Communist Lands*," published by Keston College, UK. Perhaps the most noteworthy *RCL* article is Karel Kaplan's three-part series, "*Church and State in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1956 (I-III)*." It was published in Vol. 14, No. 1, 2, and 3 (Kaplan, Church and State in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1956 (Part I), 1986), (Kaplan, Church and State in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1956 (Part II), 1986), and (Kaplan, Church and State in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1956 (Part III), 1986). Part I deals with the relationship between the Catholic Church and the Czechoslovak communist government from 1948 to 1956. This era consists of two periods. The first period dates from the February 1948 communist coup d'état to June 1949, during which the government attempted to split the Church by setting up a regime-controlled priests' movement, *Catholic Action*, but failed, and the Church attempted to negotiate with the communists. The second period dates from June 1949 to 1956, during which an open conflict unfolded. Between March and September 1950, the Communist State Secret Police (StB) arrested and imprisoned many priests and laity connected with the bishops. Consequently, the bishops became isolated from the clergy and the population. Part II discusses further measures taken by the communist government to diminish the life of the Catholic Church and, specifically, to liquidate the Eastern-rite Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia. Part III discusses the Czechoslovak communist government's liquidation of the Episcopate, monastic orders, and religious communities, the political show trials that followed, and the management of the Church by the Czechoslovak communist government's Office for Religious Affairs.

Other periodicals dealing with the subject of the Clandestine Catholic Church were the French "*Catacombs*" managed by the Romanian theologian and former political prisoner Sergiu Grossu, the Italian "*L'Altra Europa*" from Milan-Seriate, and the "*Pro Fratribus*" (later title: "*Pro Deo et Fratribus*") directed by Bishop Pavol Maria Hnilica, S.J. from Rome, Italy who was consecrated to the Episcopate by the Clandestine Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia. Several priests, such as Fr. Werenfried van Straaten (1913-2003) and Richard Wurmbrand (1909 – 2001), also published articles about the *Ecclesia Silentii*.

BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

THE COMMUNIST PERIOD IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The Communist Coup D'état of 1948, the Cold War, the Iron Curtain, and the Era of Stalinism

As per the February 4-11, 1945, Yalta Conference, Czechoslovakia was included under the Soviet sphere of influence. The Iron Curtain¹³ permanently sealed borders in 1946 and divided Europe between the East and the West. In February 1948, the Czechoslovak Communist Party orchestrated a coup d'état, took power, and



commenced its repressions. The Communist secret police purged all suspected dissent from society, including from the Roman Catholic Church. It arrested thousands of clergy members, politicians, veteran military officers, professors, scientists, writers, and artists, along with their family members and children, and tried them in secret courts on charges of "conspiracy against the people's democratic order," "high treason," and "espionage" and imposed upon them life sentences in forced labor camps in uranium mines,¹⁴ or immediately murdered them. The principles of Marxism-Leninism and socialist realism became the only accepted official ideologies. The Czechoslovak Communist Party government established central economic planning, nationalized all privately owned companies, farms, and lands, and abolished private ownership. In 1955, Czechoslovakia became one of the founding members of the Warsaw Pact.¹⁵

¹³ *The Iron Curtain* (and the *Berlin Wall*) were 7000 km-long barriers of fences, walls, minefields, and watchtowers guarded by the Czechoslovak military special border guard units and other Warsaw Pact armies from 1945 to 1991.

¹⁴ Mining uranium camps near Jáchymov, Czechoslovakia, were administered directly by Soviet advisors because the uranium extracted was immediately shipped to the USSR and used in the making the first Soviet atomic bomb. See: *Tajný Prostor Jáchymov*, (Karel Kaplan, 1993).

¹⁵ The Warsaw Pact, officially the *Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance*, was a collective defense treaty signed in Warsaw, Poland, between the Soviet Union and seven other Eastern Bloc socialist republics of Central and Eastern Europe in May 1955, during the Cold War. The Warsaw Pact, led by the Soviet Union, was established as a counterweight

The Era of Normalization (1968 – 1989), Velvet Revolution (1989), and Dissolution of Czechoslovakia (1993)

The 1970s and 1980s' *Normalization Era* sought the restoration of continuity with the pre-reform Stalinist Era of the 1950s and 1960s and started new purges of the 1968 reformists. From the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion and Soviet military occupation of Czechoslovakia to 1970, 7000 Czechoslovak military officers were discharged from service. From 1970 to 1971, the Faculty of Philosophy at Charles University in Prague expelled 20 professors, 15 associate professors, and approximately 7 percent of lecturers. By April 1972, about 1200 journalists (40 percent of the total membership of the Union of Journalists) were barred from journalism. In 1973, some 500 out of 3500 Roman Catholic priests were forbidden to exercise their ministry. By 1975, 145 historians were dismissed from their positions.¹⁶ Political, economic, social, and cultural life stagnated.



On January 06, 1977, *Charta 77*,¹⁷ an informal manifest of independent thinkers, was published. It criticized the Czechoslovak government for failing to implement previously ratified basic human rights standards,¹⁸ specifically the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE).¹⁹ The Czechoslovak Communist State Secret Police (StB) ordered public denunciations and repressions of *Charta 77* signatories, resulting in the establishment of the

¹⁶ "White Paper on Czechoslovakia," published by the International Committee for the Support of Charter 77 in Czechoslovakia, p. 39.

¹⁷ *Charta 77* was a civic initiative in Czechoslovakia from January 1977 to November 1989. *Charta 77* original document (English tr.): web.archive.org/web/20070121161327/http://libpro.cts.cuni.cz/charta/docs/declaration_of_charter_77.pdf.

¹⁸ One paragraph of *Charta 77* is devoted to religious persecution. After the official release of the *Charta 77* on January 06, 1977, several clergymen who became the *Charta 77* signatories published an open letter in a *samizdat* titled, "Our Attitude to the Statements of Charter 77." They stated, "Even though Charter 77 does not speak about God or God's kingdom, it is fighting for freedom in religious matters, and in this it serves God's purposes. It calls attention to acute problems in our society and sees them in all their breadth and urgency. In this we glimpse the future universality of Christ's kingdom, to which countless people of all generations of the earth shall belong ... We believe that Christians in our country and all over the world will support our efforts by prayer and action."

Prof. Jan Patočka (June 01, 1907 – March 13, 1977), *Charta 77* Speaker, and Student of Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, wrote in his Last Will: "The international pacts signed as a result of the Helsinki Conference did bring something new, giving fresh hope to mankind ... We are convinced that there is no one in the world who does not know that the Helsinki accords must be accepted if we are to escape a future of major wars and minor conflicts. But it is only now that we have come to realize just how terribly long a road it is going to be, and we know it thanks to the *Charta 77*." ("Last Will of Czech Civil Rights Leader Defends Charter 77 Campaign," *The Times*, March 15, 1977, p. 8).

¹⁹ The Holy See participated in the drafting of the Final Act of the *Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe* (CSCE).

Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted (Czech: *Výbor na obranu nespravedlivě stíhaných – VONS*) that sought to publicize the fate of those persecuted by the Czechoslovak government. Despite the persecution, Charta 77 had approximately a thousand signatories by November 17, 1989, Velvet Revolution, when it merged into the Civic Forum on November 20, 1989 leadership of the Velvet Revolution. Then it replaced the collapsed Czechoslovak communist government with Václav Havel as the interim president of Czechoslovakia on December 29, 1989. Czechoslovakia ceased to exist by splitting into the Czech and Slovak Republics on January 01, 1993.

THE PERSECUTED AND MARTYRED CHURCH: THE CLANDESTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH (*ECCLESIA SILENTII*) IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA DURING COMMUNISM 1948 – 1991

The Czechoslovak Government's Persecution and Destruction of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia after the Communist Coup d'état in 1948

In 1948, Czechoslovakia had 13 dioceses, 13 theological seminaries, about 6000 priests, and nearly 1000 monasteries. After the February 1948 communist coup d'état, the communists considered the Catholic Church as the last and most dangerous enemy that threatened the communist monopoly of power, with the Vatican as an instrument of world imperialism (Kaplan, *Church and State in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1956 (Part I)*, 1986). The Church became the primary target of the communist purges. Church dignitaries were interned, religious organizations, schools, seminaries, and monasteries closed, religious orders dissolved, and religious education in schools forbidden. The Czechoslovak communist government established a State Office for Church Affairs and asked Soviet security advisers²⁰ to prepare the trials for clergy who refused to cooperate with the communist government. Following this Stalinist model, the Czechoslovak security apparatus established a system aimed at total control and eventual destruction of the Catholic Church.²¹

Its objectives were:

²⁰ The Soviet advisors were assigned to the Czechoslovak government and Czechoslovak Communist Party after the end of WWII until 1956. After 1956, they were replaced by diplomatic personnel or worked under a cover of civilian assignments and were embedded in the Warsaw Pact, the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), the Soviet Embassy, the Czechoslovak military, intelligence, secret police, and other places, and coordinated communication and cooperation between Prague and Moscow. Their activity was most visible in the Czechoslovak communist secret police political proceedings during the 1950's, but even after that period, their impact continued to be felt throughout the Ministries of the Czechoslovak government. See: (Kaplan, *Sovětsští poradci v Československu 1949-1956*, 1993).

²¹ "We must see the Church as an enemy. We must not lose our nerve; we will fight the fight in such a way that the tactics will be determined by ourselves, not by them." (The first communist president, Klement Gottwald, April 1949)

1. To break diplomatic relations between Czechoslovakia and the Vatican, cut all formal and informal contacts and communication between the Czechoslovak Catholic Church and the Holy See, and establish a national church serving the interests of the state (Kaplan, *Church and State in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1956 (Part I)*, 1986);
2. To isolate the bishops from the clergy and the clergy from the believers and society, and replace the existing church hierarchy with one vetted by the state (Kaplan, *Church and State in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1956 (Part I)*, 1986);
3. To abolish the Eastern-rite Catholic (Uniate) Church and replace it with the Russian Orthodox.²² Outlaw all religious orders and establish total control over the Roman Catholic Church by the Czechoslovak communist government and its security apparatus (Rabas, 1982); Isolate the Church and restrict its activity and influence (Kaplan, *Church and state in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1956 (Part II)*, 1986).

This Czechoslovak communist government strategy had the following three stages:

1. To expose the church hierarchy as the servant of a foreign power—the Vatican, prepare legislation concerning the churches and prosecute all attempts to contravene this government policy.
2. To cut off the church hierarchy, disrupt the unity of the clergy, and create new representative bodies of the church, called the Associations of Czech and Slovak Catholics, with the participation of the priests whom the government assigns as church representatives.
3. To establish both the Associations and the newly created national Catholic Church independent of Rome with religious services conducted in the Czech and Slovak languages, not in Latin, as official religious institutions; take over the church properties and ordinations of new bishops and clergy (Kaplan, *Church and State in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1956 (Part I)*, 1986).

On March 21, 1948, the Czechoslovak government extrajudicially confiscated all the Catholic Church properties and forced all Catholic publications to close by the end of the year. On April 25, 1949, the Czechoslovak Communist Party Central Committee adopted the Church

²² During August and September 1949, the Czechoslovak National Front and the Russian Orthodox hierarchy prepared the liquidation of the Eastern-rite Catholic (Uniate) Church that was to begin after the return of Exarch Yeleverfi from Moscow. In December 1949, a press campaign began persuading the Uniates to convert to the Russian Orthodoxy. Following the visit of Metropolitan Nikolai in Slovakia, so-called *Committees for the Return to the Russian Orthodox Church* formed from among communist functionaries and those loyal to them. The delegates from these Committees convened a conference, which proclaimed the transition from the Eastern Catholic to the Russian Orthodox Church and resulted in the imprisonment of Bishops Gojdič and Hopka, and the leading clergy of the Eastern-rite Catholic Church. Riots erupted. The communist regime mobilized about three thousand communists to vote for the full liquidation of the Eastern-rite Catholic Church on April 28, 1950 (Kaplan, *Church and State in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1956 (Part II)*, 1986).

Liquidation Plan and presented it for implementation at the IX Congress of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (ÚV KSČ) on May 25 - 29, 1949. After that, on October 14, 1949, the Czechoslovak Parliament passed a series of laws (Rabas, 1982).²³ These new laws gave the Czechoslovak communist government and its security apparatus, including the Senate for Church Penalties²⁴ established within the judiciary, complete control over the remnants of the Catholic Church and legitimized all future government repression of the Church in Czechoslovakia. It granted or rescinded clerical ordinations and appointments for a specific person, location, and time, with about half of the Czechoslovak parishes having no clergy. A 1950 report from the Religious Affairs Office to the Central Committee of the Communist Party Presidium titled "The elimination of the Present Hierarchy as a Concrete Short-Term Aim" called for the appointment of bishops not by the Holy See but by Czechoslovak's Communist Government.²⁵ Pastoral activities carried out without government permission became crimes of "obstructing state supervision of religion" and resulted in severe judicial and extrajudicial punishments (Rabas, 1982). Criminal penalties included life sentences for the clergy in forced labor camps and many years of imprisonment for all other lay participants and their families. Since the Communists had previously

²³ Law #217/49 (SB.) of October 14, 1949, established the *Czechoslovak Government Office for Religious Affairs* that existed until 1956, and thereafter was transformed into the *Secretariat for Church Affairs of the Government Presidium*, under the Ministry of Culture. Its responsibilities included "all church and religious matters" (Par. 3). Law #218/49 (SB.) titled '*Law and Government Regulation to Ensure the Economic Security of Churches and Religious Groups*,' and Law #219/49 (SB) titled '*Law to Ensure the Economic Security of the Catholic Church*,' both of October 14, 1949, greatly limited the pastoral activity of all priests and bishops. These laws authorized the communist Czechoslovak government to arbitrarily establish or dismiss any member of the clergy and totally monitor and control the Church and provided for the following: "In order to exercise one's pastoral vocation in a parish or in a church office, one must obtain approval by the State, as well as be accepted by election or appointment. State appointments fill vacated church positions if the office in question has not filled it in accordance with this law. A priest may only serve in a parish for which he has obtained approval; this goes for bishops as well, who are only allowed to perform sacraments and other official acts in the diocese for which they are approved by the government. Consequently, only three of 13 Catholic dioceses in Czechoslovakia have their own diocesan bishop: Prague in Bohemia, and Nitra and Banská Bystrica in Slovakia. Two dioceses are administered by an administrator apostolicus with bishop's rank, namely Olomouc in Moravia and Trnava in Slovakia, while all the other dioceses are controlled by chapter vicar, which in reality means one chosen by the Communist Secretariat." The following statistic demonstrates the catastrophic proportions: In 1950, the Archbishopric of Prague, 227 out of 576 parish congregations are without clergy. In the Archbishopric of Olomouc, which includes 731 parishes, 245 are without clergy. In the Hradec Králove Diocese with its 477 parishes, 245 have no clergy. For the Litoměřice Diocese, there are only 144 clergy available for 433 parishes. In the Bishopric of České Budějovice, only 213 priests can provide pastoral care for the 419 existing parishes. Only in the Bishopric of Brno is the number of available priests in excess of the number of congregations; here there are 464 priests for 450 parishes. Furthermore, through most of the 1980s, for example, in Slovakia, 50 priests were dying per year, while only 30 new priests were being ordained. Whereas Bratislava had 160 Catholic priests for 150,000 inhabitants in 1948, it had only 20 priests for 400,000 inhabitants in 1987 (Ramet, 1991).

Law #112/ 50 (SB.), titled '*Reordering of Catholic Theological Study*' of July 14, 1950, dissolved all seminaries and university departments of theology. Only two Catholic Theological Faculties continued their operations, one in Prague, which was moved to Litoměřice in 1952 – 1953 and one in Bratislava. These theological faculties were no longer under university jurisdictions but under the jurisdiction of the *Communist Church Secretariat of Czechoslovakia*, which appointed all professors and administrators. The Secretary of Church Affairs determined the admissions of students to the studies of theology.

²⁴ The task of the *Senate for Church Penalties* was assessing penalties for ecclesiastical "infractions" of the newly enacted laws.

²⁵ According to the 1950 report from the *Office for Religious Affairs* to the presidium of the central committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia titled, '*The elimination of the Present Hierarchy as a Concrete Short-Term Aim*.'

extrajudicially confiscated all Church properties, the clergy depended on the government's salary, which was insufficient or nonexistent. In this manner, the Czechoslovak communist government's highest representatives openly announced that the fight against religious faith and religious communities, including bishops, priests, religious orders, and church members, was to eliminate every human expression of religiosity. According to this agenda, the ruling communists must completely wipe out all faith in God and replace it with a belief in Marxism-Leninism, with its materialistic worldview, which is not atheistic according to the Communist Party (Rabas, 1982), for the socialist individual to exclusively support the communist social elites.²⁶

The Communist Destruction of Monastic Orders in Czechoslovakia

In February 1948, just before the communist coup d'état in Czechoslovakia, the country had about 5845 priests, and 258 male and 720 female monasteries and communities (Birtz, 2011), with 12,570 members, of which 1910 were friars and 10,660 nuns.²⁷ However, from 1950 to 1989, the Czechoslovak communist government closed all monasteries, forbade accepting new members,²⁸ and outlawed monastic orders and religious communities. The liquidation of religious orders also had economic and cultural aspects. It became the most significant extrajudicial government property theft since the 1946 - 1948 deportation of the Czechoslovak citizens of German ancestry from the Sudetenland and the 1948 Communist Nationalization of Agriculture and Industries in Czechoslovakia.²⁹

On Thursday night of April 13-14, 1950, the Czechoslovak secret police, supported by the military, attacked male religious communities and monasteries,³⁰ declared the monasteries' real estate and other

²⁶ "Therefore we say quite openly and honestly that, in the interest of the further development of socialism, we cannot do without finding ways to achieve the conscious elimination of the remains of religion." (The Director of the Secretariat for Church Affairs in the Government Presidium in Prague, Karel Hruža, Party Organ of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, *Rudé Právo*, 23 Feb. 1977). The ruling Communist Party viewed atheism as a political prerequisite to the establishment of a complete cultural, social, and institutional domination. Since the communist regime feared that the churches might serve as institutional foci for rival loyalties, the communist officials considered it as political necessity to break the peoples' allegiance to the Church and God (Ramet, 1991).

²⁷ The 1977 Memorandum from the superiors of monastic orders in Czechoslovakia to Cardinal Tomášek (Studie No. 54, VI/1977, pp.485-8, RCL Bibliography ref. CZ/1977/ROM/6) and (Kalinovska, Czechoslovakia Ten Years After, 1978).

²⁸ Despite this ban, some orders, the Jesuits, Franciscans, Benedictines, Dominicans, Premonstratensians, Redemptorists, Salesians, Piarists, Society of St. Francis de Sales, and others, and several female orders and religious congregations secretly accepted new young members during communism, from 1950 to 1989.

²⁹ In addition to the real estate, the Czechoslovak communist government stole from the monasteries 1.8 million books, 629 paintings and 247 sculptures that it placed in the National Gallery, and 1100 objects of art that it placed in the Museum of Crafts and Applied Arts. From the monasteries in Olomouc, Strahov, and Velehrad, the communists thieved more than 2000 valuable historical objects. A considerable quantity of objects of historical and cultural value was completely destroyed.

³⁰ Action K (Czech: *Akce K*), The Czechoslovak Secret Police plan to destroy and outlaw all male monasteries, monastic orders and religious communities, especially the Jesuits and the Knights of the Cross.

properties to belong to the communist Czechoslovak government, and interned all the monks to forced labor camps under the pretext of a re-education (Rabas, 1982). Several months later, the communist secret police perpetrated the same atrocities against the remaining female religious communities and monasteries³¹ but discovered that replacing them was difficult since they managed and worked in medical and social institutions (Kaplan, Church and State in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1956 (Part II), 1986).

Superiors of male religious orders, including Machalka, Tajovský, Silhan, Braitto, Mastilak, Kajpr, Mikulášek, Blasik, Urban, and Bartak, were imprisoned, tortured, convicted, and condemned in a show trial to 25 years to life imprisonment. Additionally, about 2,000 priests and 8,264 members of religious orders were sentenced to a cumulative 42,736 years in prisons and internment in forced labor camps or immediately executed. However, at the beginning of the 1960s, some still surviving nuns, monks, priests, and bishops were released, while others remained imprisoned until 1967. From 1948 to 1968, the number of Catholic priests declined by fifty percent, half of whom were over sixty years of age. In addition, the Catholic Church had lost a substantial number of clergy due to the Czechoslovak government's expulsion of over 3 million Sudeten Germans between 1946 - 1948, who were Czechoslovak citizens of German heritage, and who amounted to about 1/3 of the total population of Czechoslovakia.

The Communist Destruction of the Catholic Episcopate in Czechoslovakia

During January and February of 1950, the Communist Czechoslovak government ordered priests to take the loyalty oath to the communist regime. In Bohemia and Moravia, 2916 priests out of 3214 were called to do so. Only 16 refused and were imprisoned (Kaplan, Church and State in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1956 (Part II), 1986). After that, the Communist officials destroyed the Episcopate and individual bishops and unleashed a TV, press, and radio propaganda campaign against the Holy See. This campaign culminated with the Ministry of Information Declaration against the Church and its Clergy (Rabas, 1982) titled "Conspiracy against the Republic" (Czech: *'Spiknutí proti republice'*) and "The Vatican in the Service of American Reaction" (Czech: *'Vatican ve službě americké reakce'*).

³¹ Action Ř (Czech: *Akce Ř*), The Czechoslovak Secret Police plan to destroy and outlaw all female monasteries, monastic orders and religious communities.

The State Secret Police arrested several prominent bishops,³² including Bishops Vojtaššák, Gojdič, Hopko, Buzalka, and Zela, subjected them to a propaganda show trial,³³ and sentenced them to life imprisonment in forced labor camps in the uranium mines of Jáchimov and other prisons.³⁴ After that, it expelled others from their diocese and moved them to house arrests outside their bishopric in small villages and uninhabited regions of Czechoslovakia. On March 12, 1951, the Czechoslovak government's Office for Religious Affairs replaced the imprisoned bishops with those who took the loyalty oath to the communist regime and appointed them to the Episcopate as "bishops." Archbishop Beran of Prague, who refused to resign or recognize the legitimacy of the Czechoslovak Communist coup d'état of February 1948 and defended the Church against the Czechoslovak communist regime's violations, was placed under house arrest and more than a decade later exiled to Rome on February 17, 1965.



H.E. Cardinal Josef Beran, Th.D., Archbishop of Prague, Cardinal-Priest, Servant of God

After the communist state security's internment of Archbishop Josef Beran in 1949, Bishop Štěpán Trochta's mission climaxed with the release of his Pastoral Letter on June 15, 1949, titled "The Voice of the Czechoslovak Bishops in the Hour of Great Trial," which denounced the Communist Catholic Action as a schismatic movement whose organizers and followers deserved excommunication. Consequently, the Czechoslovak State Secret Police (StB) tried to prevent the priests from reading this Letter in churches and subjected Trochta to house arrest in July 1950.



Cardinal Štěpán M. Trochta, SDB, Th.D., Bishop of Litoměřice (26 March 1905, Francova Lhota, Austro-Hungarian Empire – 6 April 1974, Litoměřice, Czechoslovakia)

³² In February 1950, the Czechoslovak communist president Gottwald proclaimed, "Another problem which appears to me to be ripening is the problem of the episcopate. ... We must count on the necessity of radical action." He emphasized the class aspect of the differences between church and state, and deduced "the necessity of dealing with, and finishing off, the episcopate as a class enemy."

³³ In Czech, the trials started on November 27, 1950, and in Slovakia on January 10, 1951. Further trials of the so-called bishops' confidants began in February 1951.

³⁴ The bishops who were secretly ordained on instructions of Pope Pius XII, namely Bishops Tomášek, Hlad and Otčenášek, were soon discovered. Hlad and Otčenášek were imprisoned. Tomášek was interned outside Prague but later approved as a parish pastor in the Olomouc bishopric, and thereafter as an Administrator Apostolicus of the Prague Bishopric after the expulsion and exile of Archbishop Beran.

On June 20, 1952, those who championed a radical solution to the Episcopate finished their fabrication about the "criminal activity" of bishops, namely Matocha, Lazik, and Trochta, and a separate case against Fr. Oto Mádr and others. All were

P. OTO MADR, Th.D., Prison File Photos, 1952



charged with espionage for the Vatican. On January 17, 1953, the State Secret Security (StB) arrested Trochta and his two associates. In July 1954, they were sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment. Yet, Trochta still secretly consecrated new bishops, including Fr. Jindřich Pešek, SDB, Th.D., and others. Finally, Bishop Štěpán Trochta was martyred during a secret police interrogation in 1974.

With the removal of the bishops, the Secret Police also eliminated their staff.³⁵ The Roman Catholic Church lost its leadership, and the Greek Catholic Church was altogether dissolved in Czechoslovakia. The Greek Catholic Bishops, Diocesan Bishop Gojdič and Suffragan Bishop Hopko, were incarcerated for long periods. Bishop Gojdič died in the Leopoldov concentration camp. His Suffragan Bishop and only a handful of others who survived the imprisonment were released about 15 years later during the Prague Spring's general amnesty. Still, they were not permitted to resume their pastoral duties.

The Czechoslovak government and its security apparatus considered the destruction of the Episcopate a success because the Church had no further say in administering its affairs, and all Church authority rested with the communist government. Out of 17 bishops, 13 were imprisoned, two were forbidden to carry out their ecclesiastical ministries, one was put under house arrest, and only one auxiliary bishop was still performing his functions. With the bishops eliminated, the Episcopate, as such, ceased to exist.

After the Warsaw invasion and Soviet military occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968, the Roman Catholic Church, under Bishop František Tomášek,³⁶ Apostolic Administrator of Prague, was once more the principal target of the communist secret police. New anti-religious laws³⁷ were issued

³⁵ In 1951, 74 clergy were tried and convicted; in 1953, 73; in 1954, 60, and in 1955 a further 46 (Kaplan, Church and State in Czechoslovakia from 1948 to 1956 (Part III), 1986).

³⁶ František Tomášek became a Cardinal (*in pectore*) on May 24, 1976, publicly announced on June 27, 1977. Tomášek became appointed the Archbishop of Prague on December 30, 1977 and installed on January 11, 1978. He retired on March 27, 1991, and died on August 04, 1992, at the age of 93. He was born on June 30, 1899.

³⁷ 4812/22.XI.1970; 11.513/31.VIII.1971.

with the same restrictive measures as those in 1949. Once again, in 1981, the Czechoslovak minister of culture required priests to appear before him and take the loyalty oath to the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and its Communist Party. From 1968 to mid-1980, the Czechoslovak regime prohibited some 500 Roman Catholic priests from ministry and ordered them to perform life-threatening manual labor.³⁸

The Communist Party's "Peace Committee of the Catholic Clergy in Czechoslovakia"

Four months after the February 1948 communist coup d'état in Czechoslovakia, in June 1948, the Communist Party promoted a slogan, "Turn away from Rome, towards a national Church." On June 10, 1949, it created a new *Catholic Action*. On June 20, 1949, the Holy See excommunicated it,³⁹ and on June 27, 1949, the bishops of Czechoslovakia condemned it in their Pastoral Letter titled "*The Dangers of the Present Time*." Since most clergymen did not join the new communist *Catholic Action*, the Czechoslovak government reconstructed it in 1950 (Birtz, 2011). The communists consolidated the remaining clergy,⁴⁰ who became loyal to their dictates and joined the ranks of secret informants and agents of the communist regime, into an association called "*The Peace Committee of the Catholic Clergy in Czechoslovakia*." After that, it promoted these clergy to ecclesiastical offices, including positions of canon, vicar-capitular, and vicar-general in nearly all dioceses, enforcing the government's domination over the Church.⁴¹ The Vatican reacted by issuing a decree of excommunication for those involved with "*The Peace Committee of the Catholic Clergy in Czechoslovakia*."⁴² Shortly after that, the Vatican issued another ruling that excommunicated members of any communist party anywhere in the world. At the end of 1966, "*The Peace Committee of the Catholic Clergy in Czechoslovakia*" changed its name to "*The Peace Movement of the Catholic Clergy*."⁴³ During the Prague Spring, the "*Peace Movement*" was dissolved but quickly resurrected by the new Communist Party leadership in the post-1968 Era of

³⁸ See: (Pius XII, 1951).

³⁹ See: (Suprema Sacra Congregacio S. Office, 1949).

⁴⁰ "If religion was to be tolerated, provisionally, then the [Communist] state must have a monopoly on it. Having excluded men of intelligence, talent, and zeal from the priesthood, it would pay the mediocre residue and confine them to the rectory." (Vítězslav Gardavský, Czech communist philosopher).

⁴¹ Yet, even the *Office for Religious Affairs* found it difficult to control these "patriotic" priests, which was not due to their lack of loyalty to the regime but due to their lack of moral and intellectual abilities, and their incessant complaints and informing against each other, motivated by envy, greed, and jealousy in their struggle for more profitable positions. However, due to their effectiveness as a highly destructive element within the Church, the communist government retained them and continued to support them.

⁴² See: (Sacra Congregatio Consistorialis, 1951).

⁴³ The president of this association, Catholic priest Josef Plojhar joined the Communist government as Minister of Health in 1948 and remained in this office until 1968, against the explicit prohibition of then Prague Archbishop Dr. Beran. For this reason, he was excommunicated and expelled by the Church from ordained ministry.

Normalization. On August 31, 1971, the organization changed its name for a second time to "*The Union of Catholic Clergy Pacem in Terris of Czechoslovakia*." Its program remained the same, namely, the subjugation of the Catholic Church to the service of Communist Czechoslovakia under the dictates of the Soviet Union, which now permanently militarily occupied Czechoslovakia. On March 06, 1982, the Pope again renewed the '*Pacem in Terris*' ban (Sacra Congregatio pro Clericis, 1982) and excommunicated its members.⁴⁴ The *Pacem in Terris* finally dissolved on December 12, 1989, about one month after the fall of Communism in Czechoslovakia.

Condemnation of Communism, the Metz Meeting of Cardinal Tisserant, the Second Vatican Council, and the Holy See's *Ostpolitik*⁴⁵

The first to condemn communism "as being opposed to the very natural law"⁴⁶ was Pope Pius IX in his November 09, 1846, Encyclical "*Qui Pluribus*." Pope Leo XIII issued two encyclicals, "*Quod Apostolici Muneris*," on December 28, 1878, and "*Rerum Novarum*" on May 15, 1891, which condemned both "the toxicity of socialist ideas" and "the wild capitalism." On June 20, 1888, he also delivered another important encyclical concerning "true human liberty" titled "*Libertas Praestantissimum*." Furthermore, the *Code of Canon Law* 1917 through canons 2331, §1,2; 2333; 2345; 2346; and 2390 punishes with excommunication anyone who conspires against the Pope and legitimate ecclesiastical hierarchy, impedes the Holy See documents from arriving at their destinations, usurps ecclesiastical goods, and obstructs the free elections or nominations to the offices of the Catholic Church. On March 19, 1937, Pope Pius XI, in his Encyclical "*Divini Redemptoris*," condemned Communism and communist doctrines as "intrinsically perverse."

As communist persecution of the Catholic Church in Eastern Europe intensified, on June 29, 1948, the Holy See issued a decree, "*De nominatione substitutorum*," with amendments dating to July 29, 1948, granting special faculties to Catholic ordinaries in cases of necessity (Birtz, 2011). Among others, they included:

⁴⁴ *L'Ossevatore Romano*, March 8-9, 1982.

⁴⁵ The Vatican initiated contacts with the Bolsheviks, who later formed the Communist Party, from the moment they murdered the Russian monarchy and seized power in 1917. It naively hoped to reach an agreement favorable to the Church, which never materialized (Stehle, *The Eastern politics of the Vatican, 1917-1979* (translated by Sandra Smith), 1981).

⁴⁶ Encyclical "*Qui Pluribus*," §16.

- a) The decree of excommunication, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* (AAS) 1949, 41, 333, issued by the Pope on July 01, 1949, announced the excommunication of communists, those who joined communist parties, and those who consciously participated in communist propaganda (Suprema Sacra Congregatio S. Officii, 1949). Catholic faithful were advised not to vote for communist candidates (Suprema Sacra Congregatio S. Officii, 1959).
- b) The Decree of the Holy Office of July 01, 1949, regarding matrimony with communists, considered the prohibition of receiving the Sacraments by the Communists and discussed whether this prohibition applies to marriages. The Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office announced that regarding the sacrament of marriage, the bride and groom are the contracting parties. Therefore, as a witness *ex officio*, a priest can preside over marriage with a communist while observing the Canon Law requirements (Suprema Sacra Congregatio S. Officii, 1949).
- c) *Dubium* AAS 1959, 51, 271-272, issued by the Pope on April 04, 1959, upheld previous provisions against the communists (Suprema Sacra Congregatio S. Officii, 1959).
- d) Decree AAS 1950, 42, 601-602, issued by the Congregation for Councils on July 29, 1950, prohibits the acceptance of Church offices, functions, or benefits from illegitimate ecclesiastical authorities, including national governments, state security services, and communist parties (Sacra Congregatio Concilii, 1950).

While the communist governments remained indifferent to the Vatican's canonical sanctions, the Catholic masses, whom the communists sought to conquer, noticed. Nonetheless, the Catholic Church's positions diametrically changed after the August 1962 "Metz Agreement" (Birtz, 2011). The Agreement was arranged by a Russian scholar, Dr. Sergius (Serge) Nikolaevich Bolshakoff, on behalf of Cardinal Eugène Tisserant, the chief power-breaker behind the Catholic Church's *Ostpolitik* during the Second Vatican Council, who requested to meet with Orthodox Metropolitan Nikodim Rotov of Leningrad (Chiron, 1993) in Metz, France. Tisserant and Nikodim already knew each other from their previous appointments in Jerusalem. Cardinal Tisserant communicated via Metropolitan Nikodim to the Soviet communist government officials, "Vatican authorities and the Roman Curia accept 'the peaceful coexistence between the Communists and Catholic Church,' do no longer condemn nor critique Communism, and the Second Vatican Council will only address

religious and not political issues."⁴⁷ Again, on August 22, 1962, Cardinal Tisserant confirmed in a letter to Bolshakoff, "The Council will not address politics directly or indirectly. The Church has always benefitted when she has remained within her territory, not in politics."

THE METZ AGREEMENT OF AUGUST 1962



These matters came to the forefront when a petition signed by more than 400 Catholic priests and bishops who represented 86 countries demanded a mention of Communism in the conciliar Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* but was rejected without ever making it to the assembly hall. Even Bishop Karol Wojtyła, who later became Pope John Paul II, then a bishop of the Council, rejected the petition, along with Pope Paul VI, John XXIII's successor, who was well aware of the "the non-condemnation of Communism," the underlying secret policy of the Second Vatican Council.⁴⁸

Cardinal Giacomo Biffi wrote in his autobiography *"Memorie e digressioni di un italiano cardinale"*⁴⁹

Communism was undoubtedly the most imposing, lasting, and overpowering historical phenomenon of the 20th century. However, the [Second Vatican] Council, which had even proposed a Constitution on the Church and the contemporary world, does not talk about it. ... Communism, for the first time in the history of human folly, had virtually imposed atheism on the subjected people, as a sort of official philosophy and a paradoxical 'state religion.' The Council, although it speaks about atheism, does not speak of it. **In the same year that the Ecumenical Council was held, the communist prisons were still inflicting**

⁴⁷ Tadeusz Kaluźny, *Nikodim. Una ecclesiologia vissuta*, Rome, 1995, Pont. Istituto Orientale, p. 258-256; Franco Bellegrandi, "Nichtaroncalli, Controvita di un papa", Rome, 1994, ed. International Files; Idem, "Il portone di piombo, Il Vaticano della riforma montiniana", Milano, 1975, ed. SugarCo.; Cavaterra, Emilio, "Il Prefetto del Sant'Uffizio. Le opere e i giorni del cardinale Ottavini", Milano, 1990, ed. Mursia; Villa Luigi, "Paolo VI beato", Brescia, 1998, ed. Civiltà; Idem, "John XXIII 'Blessed too'", Brescia 2001, Chiesa Viva.

⁴⁸ Paul VI memo of November 15, 1965 explicitly mentions, *"The commitments of the Council, including that of not talking about communism (1962)."* The date in this last sentence penned by Paul VI refers directly to the *Metz Agreement* of Cardinal Tisserant.

⁴⁹ Giacomo Biffi, *"Memorie e digressioni di un italiano cardinale,"* Cantagalli, Siena, 2010.

unspeakable suffering and humiliation upon numerous 'witnesses of the faith' (bishops, priests, laypeople, believers in Christ), and the Council did not speak of it. At the same time, some members of the Council are preoccupied with supposed silence towards the aberrations of Nazism, criticizing Pius XII!⁵⁰ (Biffi, 2010)

From then on, the Vatican's doctrinal defense against Communism ceased, and religious persecution of Catholics by the communist regimes became more insidious.

Archbishop Agostino Casaroli,⁵¹ as the State Secretary of the Holy See, and C. Achille Silvestrini,⁵² Casaroli's closest associate and successor as Secretary for the Public Relations Council of the Church,⁵³ started promoting the new *Ostpolitik* and proclaimed peaceful coexistence with the communist regimes.⁵⁴ Casaroli actively cooperated with the Eastern European communist governments and sacrificed the official bishops who still resisted the communist destruction of the Catholic Church.⁵⁵ In my opinion, these actions played one of the most sinister roles in the Catholic Church's spiritual, moral, and dogmatic declines and the Church's actual self-destruction, which is so apparent in today's world in general and in the Czech Republic in particular.

Fr. Josef Zvěřina, S.I., Th.D.,⁵⁶ in his 1976 "*Letter to Prof. Herbert Vorgrimler*," correctly observed that the Church must not neglect moral principles and transcendental values, even in politics, pointing to the *Ostpolitik* hypocrisy. Furthermore, Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani,⁵⁷ Secretary of the Holy

⁵⁰ Cardinal Tisserant, acting on behalf of the Zionist regime, covertly facilitated the Council's denunciations of Pope Pius XII, to bring about Vatican's wider support for Zionism and its military occupation of Palestine and further the Zionist control of the Church.

⁵¹ Agostino Casaroli (Nov. 24, 1914 – June 09, 1998), ordained priest in 1937, worked in the Roman Curia. On July 16, 1967, he became the titular Archbishop of Carthage, Pro-Secretary of the Roman Curia, and president of Apostolic Patrimonial Administration in 1979. On June 30, 1979, he was promoted to a cardinal. From 1979 to 1990, he served as the State Secretary.

⁵² Another proponent of the *Ostpolitik* was Achille Silvestrini (October 25, 1923 – August 29, 2019). He was ordained priest in 1946, worked in the Roman Curia, became titular Archbp. of Novaliciana on May 27, 1979, cardinal in 1988, Prefect of the Apostolic Signature in 1988, and Prefect of the Oriental Congregation from 1991 – 2000. He was an Italian cardinal who served in the Vatican diplomatic corps, in Rome and abroad, from 1953 to 1990, and later as *Prefect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches* from 1991 to 2000. In 1971, he traveled to Moscow with Archbishop Agostino Casaroli, secretary of the council, to deliver the instrument of adhesion of the Holy See to the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*.

⁵³ The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Roman Curia.

⁵⁴ See: Encyclicals "*Mater et Magistra*" of May 15, 1961, and "*Pacem in Terris*" of April 11, 1963.

⁵⁵ The communists exiled Metropolitan Slipyi, Cardinals Beran, Mindszenty, and others and replaced them with the communists' own approved clergy. Neither the communists nor Casaroli ever consulted the clergy at the top of ecclesiastical hierarchies of the respective countries during their meetings, agreements, or negotiations.

⁵⁶ Fr. Josef Zvěřina, S.J., Th.D. (May 03, 1913, Střítež, Bohemia – August 08, 1990, Nettuno, Italy), imprisoned by Nazis from 1942 to 1945, and from 1952 to 1965 imprisoned by the communists. He is a signatory of Charta 77, who together with Fr. Oto Mádr, Th.D., was a *Theological Texts* editor and advisor to Cardinal Tomášek. Fr. Zvěřina is one of the most important theologians of the Clandestine Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia.

⁵⁷ Alfredo Ottaviani, Th.D., Ph.D., JCD (Oct. 29, 1890 – Aug. 03, 1979) was an Italian whom Pope Pius XII named cardinal in 1953. He served as secretary of the Holy Office in the Roman Curia from 1959 to 1966. When that dicastery was reorganized as the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, he became its Pro-prefect until 1968 (the pope held the title of "Prefect" until 1968). On Sept. 25, 1969, Ottaviani and Cardinal Antonio Bacci wrote a letter to Pope Paul VI in support of the theologians who under the direction of Archbishop Marcel Lefebvre criticized the *Novus Ordo Missae*, and the new *Institutio Generalis*, the two revisions of the Roman Missal promulgated on April 03, 1969, that appeared in full in 1970. This letter is known as the "*Ottaviani Intervention*."

Office in the Roman Curia (later pro-prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith), strongly opposed the *Ostpolitik* of Casaroli, claiming that the communist regimes would sooner or later collapse economically, an assessment supported by prominent figures from Eastern Europe, such as Cardinals Beran, Mindszenty, Wyszyński, and others (Birtz, 2011). History indeed proved them correct.

The Foundations of the Clandestine Catholic Church⁵⁸ (*Ecclesia Silentii*) after the 1948 Communist Coup D'état in Czechoslovakia

After the 1948 Communist Coup D'état in Czechoslovakia, and the communist's brutal persecution and near-total destruction of the Catholic Church, Papal Nuncio Archbishop Gennaro Verolino (Gansrigler, 1991),⁵⁹ originally of Napoli, Italy, met with and delivered a secret decree from Pope Pius XII to Bishop Štěpán Trochta, Th.D. of Litoměřice, and other bishops, and was therefore subsequently expelled from Czechoslovakia in 1949.

Fearing that the Czechoslovak communist government may make communication between the Holy See and the Catholic ordinaries impossible, these secret papal decrees transferred certain authorities of the Pope and Curia directly to the bishops of Czechoslovakia.⁶⁰ In turn, the bishops delegated some of their powers to their vicar generals and other ecclesiastical superiors and, in cases that did not require episcopal ordinations, to the priests. The priests then were authorized to transfer some of their authority, which did not require ordination, to the Catholic laity. Most importantly, in 1950, supplementary secret papal letters to Czechoslovak ordinaries⁶¹ further

⁵⁸ British Isles, Mexico, Slovakia, Romania, Ukraine, Hungary, China, and Russia had Clandestine Catholic Churches (Stehle, op. cit. and Antoine Wenger, *Rome et Moscou, 1900 - 1950*, Desclee de Brouwer, Paris, 1987). The model of Mexico, by which Pope Pius XI established a *provisional hierarchy* after the arrests and deportations of the early 1920s, became the blueprint for the *Ecclesia Silentii* in Czechoslovakia.

⁵⁹ Stehle, op. cit., pp. 273. Secret Bishop Stanislav Krátký confirmed these events to Gansrigler; op. cit., pp. 68. Fr. Leo Kuchař, a secretly ordained priest who later immigrated to Austria, also provided testimonies to Gansrigler that Verolino left behind a document passing on these faculties, op. cit., pp. 78.

⁶⁰ See: MANDATUM SPECIALE de reservatione causarum et exceptione, Mons. STEPHANI TROCHTA, Th.D., Episcopi Litomericensis, Litomericii, die 24 Iulii 1949 AD, Lat. tr.: Special Measures reserved for exceptional cases, Mons. Štěpán Trochta, Th.D., Bishop of Litoměřice, July 24, 1949, and August 11, 1949; EXPOSITIO INTENTIONALIS, Mons. STEPHANI TROCHTA, Th.D., Ordinarii Litomericensis, IULIO 1949, Lat. tr. Intentional Explanation, Štěpán Trochta, Th.D., Ordinary of Litoměřice, July 1949; NORMAE IN CONCESSIONE FACULTATUM AB OMNIBUS NECESSARIO SERVANDAE, Lat. tr. Standards in the grant of faculties required to be kept all; STATUTUM DE CONSTITUTIONE ET SUCCESSIONE IN OFFICIO VICARII GENERALIS, Mons. STEPHANI TROCHTA, Th.D., Episcopi Litomericensis, Litomericii, Iulio 1949 AD, Lat. tr. Statute of the constitution and succession of the vicar general office; 11/08/1949 - PER LA DIREZIONE DELLA DIOCESI DI LITOMĚŘICE /CECOSLOVACCHIA/ FU PROVVISATO DAL L'ORDINARIO IN QUESTA MANIERA, It. tr. 11 August 1949 - For the Directorate of the Diocese of Litoměřice /Czechoslovakia/, the Ordinary is established in the following manner: Source: The Pontificate of Pope Pius XII (1939-1958), THE VATICAN ARCHIVES. See also: The CZ Republic Security Services Archives (Archiv bezpečnostních složek, ABS), Bishops, Štěpán Trochta (V2309MV), Karel Otčenášek (V1192HK), Ladislav Hlad (V4888MV), Fr. Vojtěch Kodera (V353 Liberec).

⁶¹ LITTERA SUB SECRETO PONTIFICIO, 29 Octobris 1949, Ex Mons. Octavium De Liva, Negotiorum Sanctas Sedis Gestorem, Enim Mons. Carolo Skoupý, Episcopo Brunensi, Nuntiatura Apostolica No. 7953, Lat. tr. Secret Pontifical Letter, 29 October 1949, From Mons. Octavium De Liva, Representative of the Holy See, For Mons. Carolo

mandated a consecration of an additional bishop and a line of priests, in case a bishop could not be consecrated, who would succeed the original bishop in each diocese if the Czechoslovak Communist Secret Police arrested, imprisoned, exiled, or murdered him. These Special Papal Faculties also authorized clerics to serve both the Eastern and Latin Rites, in any place and time, with or without the necessary liturgical instruments, openly or covertly; to administer certain ecclesiastical judicial judgments that generally require the permission of the Holy See, and for priests to administer judicial decisions that need the consent of their bishops; to preside over marriages with or without witnesses; to temporarily or permanently laicize members of monastic orders and religious congregations, establish secret churches, seminaries, universities, monastic and religious communities; to use, profit from or dispose of church properties, and many others. The Holy See mandated these Special Faculties to ensure the Catholic Church's survival in Czechoslovakia. They were modeled on similar ones established for Mexico during the 1920s and extensions of existing Special Faculties instituted during the Second World War in Europe.

As a result of the Pope Pius XII Mandates, a series of secret episcopal ordinations of Kajetán Matoušek of Prague, František Tomášek⁶² of Olomouc, and Stefan Barnas of Spiš in 1949, and in 1950, Ladislav Hlad of Prague, Karel Otčenášek of Hradec Králove, and Antonin Richter of Bratislava followed. These newly ordained bishops began secretly ordaining other deacons, priests, and bishops, forming the first foundations of the Clandestine Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia (Vaško, 1990).⁶³ Pavol Hnilica, SJ, then age 29, and Jan Korec, SJ,⁶⁴ then age 27,

Skoupý, Bishop of Brno, Apostolic Nunciature [Prague] No. 7953; LITTERA SUB SECRETO PONTIFICIO, EX SEDIBUS VATICANIS, Martii 1950, Dominik Tardini, Secretaria di Stato, di Sua Santità, n. 2438/50, LOCORUM CECOSLOVACCHIAE ORDINARIIS, Lat.tr. Secret Pontifical Letter of March 1950 from the Vatican See, Dominik Tardini, Secretary of State, His Holiness, No. 2438/50, to the Local Ordinaries in Czechoslovakia; Copia allegati I. ad lit. N. 2438/50 ex Martio 1950, INSTRUCTIONES pro dioecesium regimine et potestatis jurisdictionis continuitate tuen Idis in peculiaribus adiunctis, It. tr. Copy to Letter I., No. 2438/50 of March 1950, INSTRUCTIONS for maintaining the continuity of diocesan governance and jurisdiction in special circumstances; Source: The Pontificate of Pope Pius XII (1939-1958), THE VATICAN ARCHIVES.

See also: The CZ Republic Security Services Archives (Archiv bezpečnostních složek, ABS), Bishops, Štěpán Trochta (V2309MV), Karel Otčenášek (V1192HK), Ladislav Hlad (V4888MV), Fr. Vojtěch Koderá (V353 Liberec).

⁶² Cardinal František Tomášek in the Czech and Eastern Rite Bishop Vasil' Hopko in Slovakia also conducted a number of secret episcopate (and priestly) consecrations. Other secret ordinations took place in Germany and Poland. Stefan Wyszyński of Warsaw-Gniezno, Archb. Franciszek Macharski of Krakow, Cardinal Joachim Meisner of Cologne, then Bishop of Berlin, Bishop Gerhard Schaffran from Gorlitz, and Bishop Josef Stimfle of Augsburg carried out ordinations for the Clandestine Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia. In 1989, after the collapse of communism in Czechoslovakia, Pope John Paul II stated that he had secretly ordained 12 married men from Czechoslovakia as dual-rite priests when he was an Archbishop of Krakow, and some of these priests subsequently received a secret episcopalian consecration in the clandestine Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia. (Gansrigler 1991, 22, 26; Fiala and Hanus 2004, 76-79; Kaltefleiter 2009, 122-123.)

⁶³ Vaclav Vasko, "Neumlčená, Kronika Katolické Církve v Československu po Druhé Světové Válce," (Prague, Zvon: 1990), Vol. 11, pp. 111.

⁶⁴ In Bratislava on 24 August 1951, Jan Korec, S.I., who became a cardinal in 1991, stated, "I had already received the instruction directly from Rome that there should always be two bishops - *uno nascosto, uno attivo* [one hidden, one active]."

received episcopal consecration in Slovakia in 1951, and the latter was the youngest Catholic bishop globally.⁶⁵ In 1955, Korec consecrated his fellow Jesuit, Dominic Kalata, and continued ordaining many priests and deacons. He used his Jesuit network to facilitate future priests' spiritual formation and theological education, sometimes even in prison. In 1961 in Prague, Kalata ordained Peter Dubovský, another Jesuit, into the Episcopate. In 1967 in Augsburg, West Germany, Dubovský consecrated Jan Bláha. The same year, Bláha consecrated Fr. Felix Maria Davídek.

These ordinations attracted the attention of the Czechoslovak communist authorities. The State Secret Security (StB) discovered the Episcopal ordination of Otčenášek only a few months later, in 1950, and arrested him. He spent ten years in prison. In 1951, the StB discovered Hnilica and Korec only a few months after their episcopal ordination. Both spent long years in prison, although Korec was not arrested until 1960. The State Secret Security (StB) imprisoned Davídek as a priest from September 06, 1950, to 1964 but did not discover his Episcopate until 1972. In 1962, one year after his ordination, the Secret Police learned about Dubovský. He spent the next six years in prison. Kalata escaped from Czechoslovakia and immigrated to the Vatican. Matoušek's ordination remained secret because he temporarily ceased his episcopal office. Furthermore, shortly after the 1948 Communist coup d'état, on June 19, 1949, the secret police agents arrested Archbishop Beran of Prague, placed him under house arrest, and deprived him of his freedom to exercise his duties as archbishop. Finally, on February 17, 1965, they exiled him to the Vatican. Due to these clandestine bishops' arrests and imprisonments, Pope Paul VI mandated in 1967, during his visit with Bishop Bláha in Rome, that bishops Bláha and Davídek establish the clandestine Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia under much greater secrecy than so far practiced and continue their ministry (Gansrigler, 1991).⁶⁶

Bishop Felix Maria Davídek, Ph.D., the Clandestine Catholic Church and *Koinótés*⁶⁷

Fr. Felix Maria Davídek, Ph.D., was born on January 12, 1921, in Brno-Chrlice and ordained priest by Assistant Bishop Stanislav Zela of Olomouc on July 24, 1945, in Brno. After his ordination, he commenced medical study, but when he could not continue, he entered the

(Address to Aid to the Church in Need, Conference in Schonstatt, Germany, March 1990, included in *The Catholic Church in Eastern Europe: Persecution, Freedom and Rebirth, Aid to the Church in Need*, Königstein, 1990, pp. 22).

⁶⁵ Décès du cardinal Korec, figure de "l'Église du silence", Radio Vatican.

www.archivioradiovaticana.va/storico/2015/10/24/d%C3%A8c%C3%A8s_du_cardinal_korec_figure_de_l%C3%A9glise_du_silence/fr-1181821

⁶⁶ Gansrigler, op. cit, pp. 123-4.

⁶⁷ κοινότης (noun) = parish; κοινότητες = communities.

University of Economics in Bratislava. After completing a thesis comparing the similarities between the homeostasis of the human body and the economic system, he earned a master's degree in Economics in 1971, followed by a Ph.D. in Psychology. Additionally, due to his diligent studies, he mastered research proficiency in Latin, Ancient Greek (Koine), and Biblical Hebrew, and was fluent in French, English, German, Spanish, Polish, and Russian. He also wrote poetry⁶⁸ and music. Fr. Davídek's pastoral models were St. Paul the Apostle, Pope Pius XII, Pope John XXIII, St. John Vianney, and St. Pius of Pietrelcina. He also looked up to the martyrs of Communism, such as Fr. Josef Toufar and Fr. Bula. Furthermore, Fr. Davídek studied Orthodox theology, namely Vladimir Soloviov, Sergei Bulgakov, and French Jesuit Teilhard de Chardin. Liturgically, he was equally knowledgeable and skilled in celebrating the Byzantine and Latin Rites and especially loved the Latin Tridentine Liturgies and Latin language.⁶⁹ Recently, some academics who never knew or met Davídek tried to portray him as a 'modernist' because they misunderstood his motto "*In Extremis Omnia Licita Sunt*," which Davídek perceived as an "*absolute pastoral necessity*" and for which he found dogmatic and traditional precedents throughout the history of the Catholic Church, both Occidental and Oriental. Yet, he never espoused "*modernism*," "*liberalism*," or "*feminism*."⁷⁰



Fr. Felix Maria Davídek, Ph.D., Bishop
Clandestine Roman Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia

Fr. Davídek believed that all seminarians should acquire comprehensive university education, and besides philosophy and theology, they should have a wide-ranging background in the humanities, arts, and social and physical sciences. This extensive academic background was essential for those who demonstrated multi-disciplinary intellectual talents and superior spiritual

⁶⁸ Václav Ara (pseudonym of Fr. Felix M. Davídek): *Ke dnu mé touhy* (To the Day of my Desire) Chrlice, 1940; Václav Ara: *Tvar života* (The Shape of Life), In: Václav Ara: *Tvar života*, Ivan Stránecký: *Z noci na den* (From Night to Day), Olomouc, Stylos, January 1942; Václav Ara: *Z pramene noci* (From the Source of Night), Vysočina (edice Hořec).

⁶⁹ Koller-Küng-Křižan 2011, 21-22; Fiala-Hanuš 2004, 134.

⁷⁰ Some researchers pointed to Fr. Davídek's ordinations of married priests and bishops as well as the diaconate and priestly ordination of women as a proof of his 'modernism,' 'liberalism,' or 'feminism.' However, Fr. Davídek secretly ordained married men as priests and one married man as a bishop because they escaped the attention of the communist police, and cited, for example, the historical precedent of the family of St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia. Indeed, Fr. Davídek consecrated only *one* married priest to the episcopate, Mons. Karel Chytil. Davídek did not consecrate Bishop Fridolin Zahradník and other married bishops. Fr. Davídek showed that both the Byzantine and Latin Catholic Church traditions did previously ordain women to the diaconate. Regarding the ordination of women to the priesthood, Bishop Davídek realized it as a traditional rather than dogmatic precept of the Catholic Church.

and human qualities and became potential future candidates for episcopal consecrations. The Clandestine Catholic Church required that each member could re-establish the Church with its institutions without any external guidance and support, in any time and place, in or out of Czechoslovakia, and in any situation, however secluded, hostile, or prohibitive it may be.

Fr. Davídek set up an underground academic pre-theology program called "*Athenaeum*" in *Horní Štěpánov* in Moravia, where he served after his priestly ordination. *Athenaeum* was open to men and women who could not complete their secondary school studies during the WWII German occupation of Czechoslovakia and whom the Communist regime prohibited from finishing their education. Furthermore, in 1950, Fr. Davídek established a secret Catholic university with the help of several professors from the Philosophical Faculty of Olomouc University. They officially admitted Davídek's students to Olomouc University but allowed them to study under Fr. Davídek in Horní Štěpánov.

After the Communist Party's takeover of the Czechoslovak government in February 1948, as the communist persecution of the Catholic Church intensified, Fr. Davídek and several of his students attempted to flee Czechoslovakia during the Easter time of 1950. However, on April 22, 1950, the State Secret Security (StB) captured them at the Zebetov station, took Fr. Davídek to Boskovice, and detained him in a local school building, where he escaped. With the help of his friends, he attempted to run away from Czechoslovakia again. However, the State Secret Security (StB) again arrested him near Břeclav when crossing the River Dyje to Austria on the night of 05 - 06 September 1950. Consequently, the Czechoslovak communist judiciary sentenced him to 25 years in prison⁷¹ in the forced labor uranium mine at Jáchymov and other harsh prisons for political prisoners, including Mírov. Fr. Davídek intrepidly continued his priestly ministry, pastoral care, and writing during his imprisonment.⁷² He established seminary formation and philosophical and theological curriculum⁷³ for fellow prisoners and did not cease his struggle for the survival of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia, even in prison.⁷⁴

⁷¹ The communist prison authorities ordered Fr. Davídek to compose and enter his autobiography into the forms. He wrote, "The important events of my life are that I was born, became a Roman Catholic priest, and was imprisoned by the Communist State Secret Security (StB). The last two experiences allowed me to comprehend many things. I do not expect or want anything from you. I am ready to embrace martyrdom anytime." (Davídek's autobiography, prison documents, 1960)

⁷² In prisons, Fr. Davídek administered all the Church sacraments, including priestly and episcopal consecrations.

⁷³ Thanks to smuggled books from abroad, he studied and taught the works of Karl Rahner, Yves Congar, Henri de Lubac, and other well-known theologians of the time. In the prison, Fr. Davídek had written several books, including Czech History, History of Philosophy, and Study of Existentialism, and directed fellow prisoners to write more books for the secret seminary philosophy and theology curriculum. Seminary Prof. Josef Hájek wrote General Ecclesiastical History, Vašíček of the Jesuit Order wrote Aquinas' Logic, Ontology, Ethics, and Cosmology, Reginald Dacík of the Dominican Order wrote Fundamental Theology, Dogmatic Theology and Ascetic Theology, Vileirán Zavarský of the Jesuit Order wrote Art History, Bárta wrote Introduction to Christian Philosophy and Introduction to Christian Theology.

⁷⁴ Witness testimonies of fellow prisoners, such as Bishop Otčenášek, Fr. Oto Mádr, and Mr. Václav Vaško.

Although the Czechoslovak communist regime released some priests and bishops from prisons during the late 1950s and early 1960s, Davídek remained a political prisoner until 1964.

After his release from prison in February 1964, the communist government forced him to work as a sanitation laborer in the Brno children's hospital. However, Fr. Davídek returned to his secret ecclesiastical ministry at night. He composed a text titled "Specific Spiritual Works" (in Czech: "*Konkrétní spirituální práce*"), which set the foundations of his clandestine seminary and university studies of theology, sociology, psychology, and literature in the society. Fr. Davídek's secret university lectures presented academic themes not as isolated phenomena but as syntheses and continua of a general theory. The lessons usually started with a mass, followed by a short discussion of the latest events and a particular academic topic that concluded with a summary of the main points. Students formed small groups and met secretly during evenings, nights, and weekends in Brno or Kobeřice u Brna, as well as in Prague, Košice, Prešov, Poprad, Spišská Nová Ves, and other locations. In this manner, Fr. Davídek created a clandestine university education, holy orders formation, and Catholic Church that existed without even the slightest compromises with the communist regime.

Fr. Davídek and his student Fr. Jan Bláha, who also lived in Brno, sought an episcopal ordination from the Slovak Jesuit Bishop Peter Dubovský, S.J., who received his secret consecration in 1961. Dubovský considered Davídek unsuitable but consecrated Bláha in Augsburg, West Germany, in 1967, with the approval of local Bishop Josef Stimpfle. Immediately, Bláha consecrated Davídek on October 29, 1967. Davídek became the most prolific bishop of the Clandestine Church in Czechoslovakia. From his Episcopal consecration in 1967 to his death in 1988, he secretly formed, educated, and ordained countless deacons, 18 of them were women (Fiala P. a., 2004), about 300 celibate and married priests,⁷⁵ including three female priests,⁷⁶ and some 20 bishops.⁷⁷



⁷⁵ Fr. Oto Mádr, Th.D., Th.D. H.C.

⁷⁶ Hermann Herder, who met Mme. Ludmila Javorová, said that the secret ordination of women was validly binding but invalidated by the Vatican after the fall of the communist regime in the 1990's (Herder, Hermann (2006). *Fährmann zwischen den Ufern*. Freiburg: Verlag Herder. pp. 246. ISBN 978-3-451-29080-0). Archb. John Bukovský described the secret ordinations of women as 'illicit' but 'valid' (Christa Pongratz-Lippitt, 11 April 2011, "Czechoslovakia's Secret Church").

⁷⁷ Following the historical example of St. Basil the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, Bp. Davídek consecrated only one married person as bishop, Msgr. Karel Chytil (Bp. Nikodem Krett, OSBM was a Basilitan monk, and Bp. Fridolin Zahradník was consecrated by Bp. Bedřich Provazník). No woman was ever ordained to the Clandestine Catholic Church Episcopate.

Bishop Davídek's Sanctification of the Whole World: '*Consecratio Mundi*'

While the matter of the married men's ordination was generally agreed upon because it became a good cover for the clandestine priests and bishops, not an effort to abolish the discipline of celibacy or reform the existing Catholic Church, the ordination of women was a controversial question for some, but not for Bishop Davídek. His personal experience taught him that while the imprisoned priests and bishops could confer all the sacraments of the Catholic Church and minister to their fellow political prisoners in the forced labor camps, the women political prisoners had no access to the sacraments and remained utterly cut off from the Church.⁷⁸ On December 25 and 26, 1970, Davídek organized an Extraordinary Pastoral Synod of about 60 secret members, both lay and clerics, at the Kobeřice rectory, Southeast of Brno, which he divided into small groups for security reasons, to discuss women's role in the Clandestine Catholic Church. He stated,

Today, humanity needs and is awaiting the ordination of women. The Church should not oppose it. This matter is the reason why we have gathered here. This fact leads us to the need for prayer and the necessity for the sacrament, nothing else. Society needs the service of women. If we characterize it psychologically, we recognize that society is missing something. It requires the service of women as a special instrument for **the sanctification of the second half of humankind**. As matters stand, the contemporary sanctification of the world is insufficient. We want "CONSECRATIO MUNDI," **the consecration of the whole world.**⁷⁹

Nevertheless, the ordination of women met with silence or disapproval from about half of the attending members. Even though women's ordination, according to Davídek, was a traditional and not dogmatic matter, since women were previously ordained and served in the Church, three bishops, Josef Dvořák, Jiří Pojer, and Bedřich Provazník, split from Bishop Davídek and attempted to secure the support of Dubovský. Nevertheless, on December 28, 1970, Davídek ordained the first woman, Mme. Ludmila Javorová. Later, he also ordained three other women to the diaconate and priesthood and another 18 women to the permanent diaconate. Bishop Nikodem M. Krett, OSBM⁸⁰ (who was married and ordained to the Episcopate by Bishop Zahradník, who was also married), secretly consecrated to the Diaconate and Presbyterate three other women in Slovakia. Their sole purpose was ministering to

⁷⁸ Historians Fiala and Hanuš correctly understand that the secretly ordained women had a very specific task in the clandestine Catholic Church, namely, to minister to other women in communist prisons and forced labor camps.

⁷⁹ Bolded by the author for emphasis.

⁸⁰ Krett and another 11 men were ordained to the priesthood as dual-rite priests by Pope John Paul II when he was an Archbishop of Krakow because they were already married.

fellow women prisoners in the communist women's forced labor camps and prisons.⁸¹ These women's ordinations were very strictly concealed, even though all who ever participated in secret ordinations were already required to keep an "absolute silence on the matter" under the penalty of expulsion.⁸²

The Clandestine Catholic Church and *Koinótés* during the Era of Normalization in Czechoslovakia

While many believed that the 1968 Prague Spring would bring new freedoms for the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia, Fr. Davídek remained skeptical due to his experience and continued his ministry secretly. He understood that Communism could not and would not change and prepared for a time when the Secret Police agents would round up all the priests and bishops and intern them in the forced labor camps in Siberia, as happened in 1920s Russia.⁸³ When during the night of 20-21 August 1968, the Warsaw Pact armies, led by the USSR, invaded and began permanently occupying Czechoslovakia, his prudent judgment proved fully justified. During the next few days, Fr. Davídek secretly consecrated several bishops and countless priests (Gansrigler, 1991).⁸⁴

Most of Davídek's new clergy were from his native Moravia, but eventually, he created a network covering Czechoslovakia. Per the request of the Pope, Davídek organized the Church as a fully functioning system that consisted of separate but self-sufficient and mutually complementary individual cells. Most superiors did not know other officials or fellow priests, and most students did

⁸¹ Fr. Davídek deeply understood both the divinity and humanity of Christ, and in extension, of the priesthood. When survival of the Church required it, he had no difficulties abandoning Church traditions in favor of the Gospels. He realized the ordination of women, for the purpose of service to fellow women in the worst places (women's prisons and labor camps) where male clergy had no access, as a matter of the changing times that he, as a bishop of the Clandestine Catholic Church, faced. Thus, Fr. Davídek did not evade but resolve this pressing issue by ordaining women and completing the sanctification of the *whole* world.

⁸² Some argue that this "absolute silence" only applied during the existence of the Clandestine Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia, while others hold that it is valid for all places and times.

⁸³ Immediately after the conclusion of WWII in Europe, Moscow started the persecution of the Catholic Church in Western Ukraine, Yugoslavia, and Albania. In 1945, the communist State Secret Security arrested Metropolitan Joseph Slipyi. Thereafter, on March 10, 1946, the communists organized a fake-synod in Lvov that dissolved the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church and incorporated it under the Orthodox Church. All bishops and priests who refused to submit to the communist dictates were arrested, murdered or sent to labor camps in Siberia. On November 01, 1947, Karpatho-Ukraine Bishop Theodore Romža was assassinated. On August 25, 1949, another fake synod in Munkačevo took place and affirmed the conclusions of the previous fake synod in Lvov. In Hungary and Romania, the communists also adopted antireligious laws against the Greek-Catholic Church. Following the Soviet persecution style, the Greek Catholic bishops were all arrested and imprisoned without trials. Many of them died in prisons. On December 26, 1948, the communists arrested Cardinal Joseph Mindszenty. Thereafter, in 1949, they arrested and imprisoned all the Catholic bishops in Romania. The show trial of Cardinal Mindszenty in February 1949 became a pattern for other Catholic show-trials in Romania, Bulgaria, and Poland. These included the show-trial of the Apostolic Nunciature in Romania in 1950, Bp. Pacha in 1951, Bps. Dragomir-Todea in 1952, and Bp. Alexander Rusu, Bp. Ioan Chertes and Bp. Ioan Ploscaru in 1956-1958. In Bulgaria, the communists orchestrated show trials with Bp. Bossilkov and other priests and then executed them in 1952. In Hungary, they arrested Archbishop Grösz and eliminated all opponents in 1950-1951. In Poland, the communists staged a show trial of Bp. Czeslaw Kaczmarek from Kielce on September 28, 1953, and imprisoned Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński until 1956.

⁸⁴ Gansrigler, op. cit., pp. 58.

not know each other, even in the same cell, except when necessary. If a bishop was arrested and imprisoned or died, Davídek installed an existing alternate and ordained a new bishop or incorporated that cell into another. Some cells were concerned with theological education and formations, others with research, publishing, and press distribution, and others with consecrations. Few, apart from himself, had any information about the structure and hierarchy of the Clandestine Catholic Church. The only persons aware of Fr. Davídek's works were his Vicar Generals, one of whom was Mme. Ludmila Javorova, ordained to the Deaconate and Presbyterate by Davídek.⁸⁵

The *Ostpolitik* of Cardinal Agostino Casaroli of the Vatican's Curia

In 1972, the Czechoslovak State Secret Police (StB) learned from Cardinal Agostino Casaroli that Davídek was a bishop and arrested and interrogated Fr. Davídek and Javorová but did not imprison them. Instead, they tried to use Davídek to discredit the Clandestine Church by creating and spreading rumors that Fr. Davídek became "mentally ill" and exhibited "schismatic tendencies" within the Catholic Church to create mistrust between the Vatican clergy loyal to the Clandestine Catholic Church and the clergy loyal to the communist government of Czechoslovakia. The Vatican's envoy Fr. John Bukovský, supported by Cardinal Agostino Casaroli and some other members of the Curia, aided this communist plot by further spreading this slander in the Vatican after the Czechoslovak Secret Police granted him an entry visa to visit Fr. Davídek and Javorová on August 26, 1976.

Moreover, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, the brains behind the *Vatican's Ostpolitik*,⁸⁶ continued his deals with the Czechoslovak communist government. In March 1973, he officially ordained three Czechoslovak communist government handpicked priests as bishops in Nitra, Slovakia, and another one in Olomouc, Moravia, some being excommunicated members of the Communist *Pacem in Terris*.⁸⁷ Bishop Felix Maria Davídek viewed these events with great alarm, perceiving them as irrefutable truths that the communists infiltrated the Vatican's Curia. Davídek's assessment and apprehension again proved correct. Two decades later, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli played a decisive

⁸⁵ Ludmila Javorová, born January 31, 1932, in Brno, Czechoslovakia, secretly received her deaconate and presbyterate ordinations from Bishop Felix M. Davídek on December 29, 1970, during the early years of Soviet occupation of the country after the Prague Spring. She had served as his Vicar General, and after his release from prison in 1963, gradually took over important tasks in organizing the formation and education of seminarians and priests in the Clandestine Church.

⁸⁶ In Vatican, Cardinal Alfredo Ottaviani and his group, supported by prominent figures from East Europe, strongly opposed the *Ostpolitik* of Casaroli, claiming that the communist regimes will sooner or later collapse economically (which is what happened), but Casaroli prevailed and managed to destroy the Church where the communists failed.

⁸⁷ The Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia had 13 official dioceses total, from which 11 had no official bishop.

role in finally silencing the Clandestine Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia and officially replacing it with the one created by the communists during the Era of Stalinism and Normalization.

The Demise of Bishop Felix Maria Davídek

From 1983, Fr. Davídek's health deteriorated. He gradually became bedridden and unable to raise the chalice during a mass. However, he did not cease his ministry. Before the 1100th demise anniversary of St. Methodius, Patron of Moravia,⁸⁸ at Velehrad in July 1985, Fr. Davídek secured the Cherubim Order's support and asked Miroslav Richter, who headed a secret secular institute, to begin promoting that event. Ultimately, his efforts turned out to be more successful than he imagined. The celebrations became the most prominent religious gathering that called for the freedom of faith since the communists took power in Czechoslovakia 37 years before. About one hundred thousand people, mostly youths, attended these celebrations in Czechoslovakia, led by František Cardinal Tomášek,⁸⁹ with whom Fr. Davídek closely cooperated.⁹⁰ At the same time, throughout his entire ministry of secret ordinations and pastoral leadership of the Clandestine Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia, Fr. Davídek maintained contacts with and received repeated assurances and recognition from Pope John Paul II (and previously Pope Paul IV).⁹¹

In 1987, with Soviet President Gorbachev's liberalizations under the slogan of "*Perestroika and Glasnost*," Fr. Davídek set to work on his last outstanding achievement, the *Analysis of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia*. He strongly condemned the *Pacem in Terris* clergy, the traitors of the Catholic Church, who turned into collaborators and informants of the communist government in Czechoslovakia. By the end of 1987, he completed the *Analysis* and provided them to Cardinal Tomášek, who quoted from them in his *Pastoral Letter* of April 1988.⁹² In 1988, he also sent them to Cardinals Groer in Vienna, Kuharič in Zagreb, Gulbinowicz in Wroclaw, Willebrands in Utrecht,

⁸⁸ St. Cyril (b. in Constantine in 826–869 AD) and St. Methodius (b. in Thessalonica in 815–885 AD) were brothers and Byzantine Christian theologians who devised the Glagolitic alphabet used to transcribe Old Church Slavonic, and translated the Gospels and necessary liturgical books, and brought them to Moravia. The Church Slavonic is still used as a liturgical language in some Orthodox and Eastern Catholic Churches. In 1980, Pope John Paul II established St. Cyril and St. Methodius co-patron saints of Europe, together with St. Benedict of Nursia.

⁸⁹ Initially, during the 1970s, Cardinal Tomášek was reluctant to openly oppose the Czechoslovak communist government. However, with the spiritual guidance of Fr. Josef Zvěřina, S.J., Fr. Oto Mádr, and Bishop Davídek, he gradually came to support both the Clandestine Catholic Church and public protests against the communist regime.

⁹⁰ Fr. Davídek also maintained close contacts with Mons. Josef Zvěřina, S.J., Th.D., and Mons. Oto Mádr, Th.D.

⁹¹ Via Fr. Kamil Maris Vanco.

⁹² When Cardinal Tomášek was later asked why he spoke up so decisively in his *Letter*, he replied that it was not the petition, which by then contained more than half a million signatures, but Fr. Davídek's sound *Analysis* that inspired him.




Meisner in Berlin, Lubachivsky in Rome, and the Pope but received no replies. However, the *Analysis* became a popular petition that gained over half a million signatures from the Czechoslovak public.


Fr. Davídek did not live to see the 1989 Velvet Revolution and the fall of the Czechoslovak communist government. He died of heart failure on August 16, 1988, in Brno, Czechoslovakia, at age 67, and was buried in Brno, Tuřany. After his demise, Fr. Davídek's *Koinótés* was led and administered by Bishop Jan Bláha, SJ, and Bishop Davídek's Vicar, General Ludmila Javorová.

METHODS

Not many scholars have written about the initial establishment and later destruction of the Clandestine Catholic Church (*Ecclesia Silentii*) by the Holy See and the subsequent decay of the Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia, which in turn contributed to the ongoing secularization of the Czech Republic in the absence of uncompromised unifying moral forces necessary for the healing of the social, psychological, and spiritual trauma inflicted upon the Czechs during much of the 20th century. This research explains this subject's significance, offers new evidence and interpretation, and addresses existing gaps.

1. Primary sources: The author utilized his memories, information, and materials as a survivor of the Czechoslovak communist government's religious and political persecution during the 1980s and as a member of the *Clandestine Catholic Church (Ecclesia Silentii)*. Also, he was a signatory of *Charta 77*, a freelance journalist from behind the *Iron Curtain*, the founder of the *Independent Student Movement* that commenced the 1989 *Velvet Revolution*, the youngest co-founder of the *Civic Forum*, which formed the leadership of the 1989 Velvet Revolution and the first post-communist government in Czechoslovakia in 1990, and advisor of the first post-communist president of Czechoslovakia. The author was secretly educated and served in the Clandestine Catholic Church (*Ecclesia Silentii*) in Czechoslovakia during Communism under the following ecclesiastical hierarchy:

Name and Title	Position and Apostolic Succession	Born - Died	Government Persecution
<p>Cardinal František Tomášek, Th.D.</p> 	<p>The 34th Archbishop of Prague, Council Father I-IV.</p> <p>Apostolic Succession: Archb. Josef Karel Matocha, Archbishop of <i>Olomouc</i>. Archbishop Josef Beran, Archbishop of <i>Prague</i>. Archbishop Saverio Ritter.</p>	<p>He was born on June 30, 1899, in <i>Studénka</i>, Moravia, the Austrian Empire, and died on August 04, 1992, in <i>Prague</i>, Czechoslovakia.</p>	<p>Imprisoned in the Czechoslovak communist concentration camp <i>Želiv</i> from July 22, 1951, to May 28, 1954.</p>
<p>Mons. Félix Maria Davídek, Ph.D.</p> 	<p>Theologian, Professor, Formation Director, Bishop of the Clandestine Catholic Church, Spiritual Advisor to Cardinal František Tomášek.</p> <p>Apostolic Succession: Bishop Jan Blaha. Bishop Peter Dubovský, SJ. Bishop Dominik Kalata, SJ. Bishop Ján Ch. Korec, SJ. Bish. Pavel Mária Hnilica, SJ; Bishop Robert Pobožný; Archb. Josef Karel Matocha; Archbishop Josef Beran;</p>	<p>He was born on January 12, 1921, in <i>Brno – Chrlice</i> and died on August 18, 1988, in <i>Brno</i>, Moravia, Czechoslovakia.</p>	<p>He was arrested by the CZ State Secret Security on April 22, 1950 and escaped. Re-arrested and imprisoned from September 6, 1950, to February 1964 in the CZ Communist forced labor uranium mine <i>Jáchymov</i> and other penitentiaries for political prisoners, including <i>Mírov</i>.</p>
<p>Mons. Josef Zvěřina, SI, Th.D., Th.D. H.C.</p> 	<p>Theologian and Professor, Clandestine Catholic Church.</p> <p>Spiritual Advisor to Cardinal František Tomášek, Th.D.</p>	<p>He was born on May 03, 1913, in <i>Střítež</i>, Moravia, in the Austrian Empire. He died on August 18, 1990, in <i>Nettuno</i>, Italy.</p>	<p>Arrested and interned by the Nazi Gestapo, 1942 - 1944 in <i>Zásmuky u Prahy</i>; Imprisoned by the CZ State Secret Security (StB), January 24, 1952 - Dec 1965 in the forced labor uranium mine <i>Jáchymov</i> and other penitentiaries for political prisoners, including <i>Mírov</i>, <i>Leopoldov</i>, and <i>Valdice</i>.</p>
<p>Mons. Oto Mádr,</p>	<p>Theologian, Professor, Formation Director, Clandestine Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia.</p> <p>Spiritual Advisor to Cardinal František Tomášek, Th.D.</p>	<p>He was born on February 15, 1917, in <i>Prague</i> and died on February 27, 2011, in <i>Prague</i>, Czech Republic.</p>	<p>Imprisoned by the Czechoslovak State Secret Security from May 1, 1951, to June 24, 1966, including in <i>Mírov</i> and <i>Valdice</i>.</p>

Th.D., Th.D. H.C.			
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Other primary sources included personal and official correspondence, memoirs, archivalia, newspaper articles, Holy See and government documents, and legal statutes.

2. Secondary sources: Previously published and unpublished scholarship (See: Literature Review and References).

3. Data analysis:

- a) Numeric data were collected from the Czech Statistical Office and Pew Research Center.
- b) Time series analysis and descriptive statistics were carried out using SPSS.
- c) Comparative Analysis was employed.
- d) Conclusions were reached.

ATTACHMENT

A partial list of ordained bishops in the Roman and Byzantine rites who served the Clandestine Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia (1951-1992) ⁹³						
NAME	DOB	OFFICE	CONSECRATED	CONSECRATOR	DIED	IMPRISONMENT
JOSEF BERAN, Th.D.	29 Dec. 1888	Cardinal-Priest of Santa Croce in Via Flaminia Archbishop of Prague Council Father (IV) Servant of God	8 Dec. 1946 Cardinal 28/03/60 in pectore	Archb. Saverio Ritter , Apostolic Nuncio Mořic Pícha , Bishop Anton Eltschkner	17 May 1969	1942 - 29/04/1945; 1949–1963; 1965 exiled
ŠTĚPÁN TROCHTA, SDB, Th.D.	26 March 1905	Cardinal-Priest of San Giovanni Bosco, Via Tuscolana Bishop of Litoměřice Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church	16/9/1947 Cardinal 28/04/69 in pectore	Card. Archb. S. Ritter , Apostolic Nuncio C. Josef Beran , Archb. Mořic Pícha , Bishop	6 April 1974	28/5/1942 to 29/04/1945 16 January 1953-1960

⁹³ The Apostolic Succession <www.apostolische-nachfolge.de/tschechoslowakei.htm>

KAJETÁN MATOUŠEK, Th.D.	7 Aug. 1910	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church Auxiliary Bishop of Prague Titular Bishop of Serigene <i>(published: 1949)</i>	17 Sept. 1949 ex-ante	Antonin Eltschkner Auxiliary Bishop of Prague, CZ	21 Oct. 1994	<i>Not in prison.</i>
FRANTIŠEK TOMÁŠEK, Th.D.	30 June 1899	Cardinal-Priest , Santi Vitale, Valeria, Gervasio e Protasio Archbishop of Prague Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church Auxiliary Bishop of Olomouc Titular Bishop of Butus Council Father (I-IV) Conclave Aug. 1978, Oct. 1978 <i>(published: 1949)</i>	13 Oct. 1949 ex-ante Cardinal 24/05/76 in pectore	Josef Karel Matocha Archbishop of Olomouc, CZ	4 Aug. 1992	1950 to 1953
ŠTEFAN BARNÁŠ, Th.D.	19 Jan. 1900	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church Aux. Bishop of Spiš, Slovakia Titular Bishop of Conana <i>(published: 1949)</i>	5 Nov. 1949 ex ante	Ján Vojtaššák Bishop of Spiš, Slovakia	16 April 1964	July 1950 to 1960
LADISLAV HLAD, Th.D.	3 Feb. 1908	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church Titular Bishop of Cediae <i>(published: 1950)</i>	26 March 1950 ex-ante	Štěpán Trochta, Kajetán Matoušek, Bishop, CZ Cland. Church Aux. Bishop , Prague, CZ	16 Dec. 1979	July 1950 to Dec. 1951 and 10 Sept. 1959 to 1966
ANTONÍN RICHTER, Th.D.	13 June 1899	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church Bishop of Bratislava, Slovakia <i>(not published)</i>	29 June 1950 ex-ante	Michal Buzalka Suffragan Bishop , Trnava, Slovakia	20 June 1975	<i>unknown</i>
KAREL OTČENÁŠEK, Th.D.	13 April 1920	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church Apost. Adm. H. Králové, CZ Titular Bishop , Chersonesus, Creta <i>(published: 1957)</i>	30 April 1950 ex-ante	Mořic Pícha Bishop of Hradec Králové, CZ	23 May 2011	1951 to 1962
Pavel Mária Hnilica, SJ	30/03 1921	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church Titular bishop of Rusadus <i>(published: 1964)</i>	2 Jan. 1951 ex-post	Robert Pobožný Apostolic Admin. Rožňava, Slovakia	8 Oct. 2006	Escaped CZ in 1953
Ján Chryzostom Korec, SJ	22 Jan. 1924	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church Bishop of Nitra, Slovakia <i>(published: 1990)</i>	24 Aug. 1951 ex-post	Pavol Hnilica Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	24 Oct. 2015	1958 to 1968
Dominik Kalata, SJ	19 May 1925	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church Titular Bishop of Semta <i>(published: 1985)</i>	9 Sept. 1955	Ján Chryzostom Korec Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	24 Aug. 2018	1960 to 1968 Escaped CZ in 1969
Peter Dubovsky, SJ	28 June 1921	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church Aux. Bishop B. Bystrica, Slovakia Titular Bishop of Carcabia <i>(published: 1991)</i>	18 May 1961 ex-ante	Dominik Kalata Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church	10 April 2008	14/04/1950 to 05/09/1950; 05/09/1950 to 30/12/1953 (PTP); 1962 to 1967
Jan Blaha, SJ	12 March 1938	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church <i>(not published)</i>	28 Oct. 1967	Peter Dubovský Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	13 Dec. 2012	Not in prison.
Félix Maria Davídek, PhD	21 Jan. 1921	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church <i>(not published)</i>	29 Oct. 1967 ex-ante	Jan Blaha, Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church	18 Aug. 1988	1950 to 1964
Ján Eugen Kočiš	25 June 1926	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church Titular Bishop of Abrittum <i>(not published)</i>	3/12/1967 reconsecrated sub-conditione 15/5/2004	Félix Maria Davídek Bishop, CZ Cland. Church Archb. M. S. Marusyn Ap. Exarch Serbia & Mont. Sec. Cong. E. Churches	4 Dec. 2019	1951–1953 (PTP) and 1958-1962
Ivan Ljavinec	18 April 1923	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church Titular Bishop of Acalissus <i>(not published)</i>	23/3/1968 reconsecrated sub-conditione 30/3/1996	Félix Maria Davídek Bishop, CZ Cland. Church Archb. Miroslav S. Marusyn Ap. Exarch Serbia & Mont. Sec. Cong. E. Churches	9 Dec. 2012	1955-1960
Ján Jiří Pojer	1934	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church <i>(not published)</i>	22. Aug. 1968	Félix Maria Davídek Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	2006	<i>unknown</i>
Dobroslav M. Kabelka	Un-known	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church <i>(not published)</i>	27. Aug. 1968	Félix Maria Davídek Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	Un-known	<i>unknown</i>
Stanislav Krátký	11 Nov. 1920	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church <i>(not published)</i>	27. Aug. 1968	Félix Maria Davídek Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	13 Nov. 2010	1958-1960
Josef Dvořák, OPræm	Un-known	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church <i>(not published)</i>	27 Aug. 1968	Félix Maria Davídek Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	Un-known	<i>unknown</i>

Josef Blahnik	1918	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	1970	Félix Maria Davídek Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	1989	1953-1960
Fridolin Zahradnik	16 Sept. 1935	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	24 Oct. 1970	Bedrich Provazník Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	19 Nov. 2015	1983-1988
Martin Hrbča, Th.D.	11 Sept. 1924	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	28 Nov. 1970	Félix Maria Davídek Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	29 Aug. 2002	Not in prison.
Jindřich Pešek, SDB, Th.D.	22 Apr. 1908	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	15. Aug. 1971	Félix Maria Davídek Bishop, CZ Cland. Church Stěpán Trochta, SDB, Th.D. Bishop of Litoměřice	21 Nov. 1980	1949-1955
Ján Krajňák	10 July 1924	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	1971	Bedrich Provazník Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	23 Feb. 2005	June 1952-1957
Oskar Formánek, SJ	7 Aug. 1915	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	Aug. 1972	Félix Maria Davídek Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	21 July 1991	3 April 1955 to May 1960
Marian Potáš, OSBM	2 March 1918	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	Aug. 1972	Félix Maria Davídek Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	24 Feb. 2006	1950-1954 and 1958-1960
Jiri Krpalek	6 Sept. 1931	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	2 March 1973	Félix Maria Davídek Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	6 Aug. 2017	1952-1954 (PTP)
Siard I. Klement, OPræm	1931	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	15 March 1973	Félix Maria Davídek Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	1997	unknown
Josef Jindra	Un-known	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	1973	Fridolin Zahradník (?) Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	Un-known	unknown
Nikodem M. Krett, OSBM	3 Oct. 1912	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	1975	Fridolin Zahradník Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	29 April 1983	1949 to 29 Sept. 1957
Bartolomej Urbanec	17 Aug. 1937	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	14 June 1975	Fridolin Zahradník and Nikodém Mikulaš Krett Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	Living	Not in prison.
Václav Razík	10 Sept. 1921	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	Dec. 1978	Félix Maria Davídek Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	6 Dec. 1984	July 1951 to 17 Dec. 1963
Dušan S. Špiner Th.MA., Ph.D.	7 Feb. 1950	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	6 Oct. 1979	Julius Gábriš Apostolic Adm. Trnava	Living	Not in prison.
Ondrej Fogaš	9 Dec. 1945	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	1981	Nikodém Mikulaš Krett Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	Living	unknown
Anton Novobilský	9 Feb. 1936	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	1981	Nikodém Mikulaš Krett Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	4 Feb. 2007	unknown
Jan Konzal	5 May 1935	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	29 May 1982	Fridolin Zahradník Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	16 Nov. 2021	1960–1963
Pavel Hájek	Un-known	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	29 May 1982	Fridolin Zahradník Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	Living	unknown
Josef Hinterhölzl, ThD	16 May 1915	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	4 Dec. 1984	Félix Maria Davídek Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	3 Aug. 2013	unknown
Karel Chytil	15 Sept. 1920	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	18 Dec. 1987	Félix Maria Davídek Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	15 Sept. 2002	unknown
Bedrich Provazník	31 May 1936	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	18 Dec. 1987	Ján Eugen Kočíš Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	4 Feb. 2007	unknown
Sergej Kovč	29 Aug. 1911	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	unknown	Fridolin Zahradník (?) Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	9 Nov. 2000	1953 to 9 May 1955
Antonín Liška CSsR, Th.D.	17 Sept. 1924	Bishop, CZ Clandestine Church (not published)	11 June 1988	C. Fran. Tomášek, Archb. C. Francesco Colasuonno, Apostolic Nuncio Kajetán Matoušek, Bishop, CZ Cland. Church	15 Oct. 2003	14/04/1950 to 05/09/1950 05/09/1950 to 30/12/1953 (PTP)

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