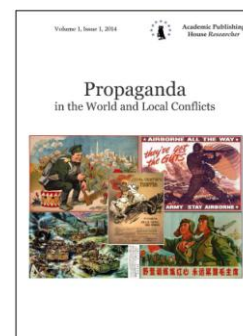


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Propaganda Raids of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in Slovakia (Czechoslovakia) in 1945–1946: Structure and Forms of Czechoslovak Resistance

Michal Smigel^{a,*}

^a Matej Bel University, Slovakia

Abstract

The Ukrainian insurgent army, which operated in western Ukraine and south-eastern Poland during the World War II – from 1942 onwards, continued in its actions during the post-war years but it slightly altered its mission. The leaders of the Ukrainian underground movement expected that a political conflict would start between the actors of the anti-Hitler coalition and that a new armed conflict would start between the West and the Soviet Union. This, they thought, would mark the end of the Soviet regime in Eastern Europe. In this situation the Ukrainian underground encouraged the Soviet Union republics and countries of middle and south-eastern Europe, to a united armed conflict against bolshevism. This was to be done in the so called: Front of Enslaved and Endangered Nations of Middle and Eastern Europe. To practically realize these aims the Ukrainian insurgent units undertook several propaganda raids during 1945–1950 into Belarus, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Romania and into the Baltic states (Lithuania). These raids were a new form of anti-Soviet activities and struggle of the Ukrainian insurgent army during the post-war years. Czechoslovakia was one of the main targets for these raids, which took place in three phases: August – September 1945, April 1946 (both in eastern Slovakia) and the so called: Great raid through the republic into the American zone in Germany during June – October/November 1947, which also had a profound international response. This paper focuses on first two raids of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army in Slovakia in 1945 – 1946, analyzes them from the viewpoint of forms and methods of the struggle and analyzes the structure and forms of the elimination by the Czechoslovak security forces.

Keywords: Ukrainian Insurgent Army, propaganda raids, anti-communist activities, anti-Soviet resistance, Czechoslovak army, Czechoslovak security organs, Czechoslovakia, Slovakia.

1. Introduction

According to newly formed (post-war) anti-Soviet conception of active resistance of the “Front of Enslaved and Endangered Nations”, formulated by the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council (*Ukrains’ka Holovna Vyzvol’na Rada – UHVR*)¹ – which framed the struggle of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (*Ukrains’ka Povstans’ka Armia – UPA*) and the civilian network the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (*Orhanizatsia Ukrainiiskykh Natsionalistiv – OUN*) in the Ukrainian ethnographic lands – the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe who had fallen under the “Bolshevik yoke of the USSR” were supposed to become strategic partners in the Ukrainian insurgents’ struggle to restore Ukrainian statehood. Specifically with regard to the liberation

* Corresponding author

E-mail addresses: michal.smigel@umb.sk (M. Smigel).

movements of these nations, the existing Bolshevik “imperialist state of affairs” was supposed to be destroyed, and a new international legal system based on the principle of national self-determination was to be established. Thus, during the course of the struggle against the Soviet system in the region, from 1945 the leaders of the Ukrainian liberation movement adopted the tactic of so-called propaganda raids. They dispatched specially trained UPA units into neighbouring countries, whose task was to organize various forms of political-propagandistic work among the local population (Szczęśniak – Szota, 1973: 320).

As Osyp Diakiv, one of the eminent ideologues of the Ukrainian liberation movement, writes, “In this way the UPA is providing information about the liberation struggle of the Ukrainian people and life in the USSR (mainly those nations that have not yet experienced the harshness of the Bolshevik regime), activating the revolutionary anti-Bolshevik forces of these nations, and lifting the anti-Bolshevik moods of the popular masses, creating the practical prerequisites for the concrete cooperation of these nations in a single anti-Bolshevik front” (Viatrovych, 2003: 144).

The practical steps of the above-mentioned goals took the form of raids carried out by Ukrainian insurgent detachments into Belarus, Poland, Romania, the Baltic states (Lithuania) and Slovakia (Czechoslovakia) between 1945 and 1950.

2. Materials and methods

The primary source base for the study of the activities of UPA detachments on the territory of Czechoslovakia (Czechoslovak Republic; CSR) in 1945–1947/48 is mostly concentrated in military and central (national) archives and the archival funds of the security organs of both republics.

A special place in the research on UPA activity in Slovakia is occupied by the documents stored in the collections of the Military Historical Archive in Bratislava, mainly in the collection called “Operation ‘Banderites’: Military Units Operating against the Banderites in 1945–1948”. This collection contains documents that were drawn up by anti-UPA military units in Slovakia, but there is no documentation by the army, which hunted down UPA members in Moravia in 1947. This material is thus incomplete and includes documents drawn up by only sixty army units that were deployed against the UPA in 1945–1947. Documents originating from other units either did not survive or were not archived. In addition, those documents that are extant are of a diverse nature. Some are comprehensive—minutes, series of orders, military diaries, agentura reports, etc.—while others exist only in the form of fragments. The historical value of this collection is unquestionably high, as it contains situational and intelligence reports that expose the strategy and activities of the UPA detachments in Slovakia. As well, they reveal not only yesterday’s perceptions of the UPA raids into Slovakia but also relations both in north-eastern Slovakia and south-eastern Poland, the situation of the Lemko population and its flight to Czechoslovak territory, and many other issues. From the large number of existing operational orders it is possible to make a detailed reconstruction of the progress of the combat actions that were aimed at eliminating UPA activity in the country, i.e., to trace the tactic of launching Czechoslovak military units into battle and their movements, as well as the reorganization of combat groups and their results.

Various collections in the Czech Archive of the State Security Service in Prague, above all fond 307 entitled “Banderites”, play a key role in the study of UPA activities in the CSR. The materials contained in this fond include mostly documents on the actions targeting UPA detachments on Czechoslovak territory from 1945 to 1948, which were undertaken by the organs of National Security (*Národní bezpečnost* – NB), the Corps of National Security (*Zbor národnej bezpečnosti* – ZNB) and State Security (*Štátna bezpečnosť* – ŠtB). The documents in this collection comprise a comparatively broad base of materials (a total of 111 archival cartons) consisting of a large number of reports on the presence of UPA units and their activities, as well as situational reports prepared by individual NB stations, part of the materials of the Regional Commands of the NB based in nearly every corner of Slovakia (only some from Moravia; documentary materials on the transit of some insurgents and smaller groups of the UPA through Moravia in 1947 are located in a branch of the Archive of the State Security Organs in Kanice, near Brno, specifically in fonds A–14 and A–15). In addition, the fond contains various types of documents that reveal the measures undertaken against the UPA: directives, orders, circulars, agentura announcements, teletype messages, statements of Czechoslovak citizens who had links with UPA members, personnel files, and minutes of interrogations of captured UPA soldiers and members of the OUN civilian network in Poland. The collection also contains organizational matters, administrative

(office) notes, photographs (of captured and killed UPA members) and graphic materials (maps, plans, and sketches), particularly with regard to the deployment of individual NB and ZNB units, border protection, etc. There are also documents issued by military commands and the Commission of Internal Affairs of the Slovak National Council (*Slovenská národná rada* – SNR) in the form of teletype announcements and situational reports about the location and movement of the UPA detachments, military intelligence, orders issued by the General Staff of the Ministry of National Defense in connection with the anti-UPA actions (copies of these documents are located in some archival collections stored at the central archives). In terms of quantity and quality, this is arguably the best developed collection on this topic.

Some documents of the state security and intelligence services connected to the UPA's activity on the territory of the CSR are housed in several other fonds of the Archive of the State Security Service, specifically in the "Fond of the Scholarly Institute", which contains materials on the activities of the Czechoslovak state security and intelligence services after 1945, as well as in the collections entitled "Main Directorate of Military Counterintelligence" (fond 302) and "Various Security Materials from 1945" (fond 304). These collections include materials on the activities of the intelligence services, documents concerning the investigations of individuals who crossed the border illegally, reports on the situation in the border area and on the actions that were launched against UPA units (agentura and daily reports, etc.).

In addition to documents from the archives of the army and the state security service, materials on the UPA's activity on the territory of postwar Czechoslovakia are also stored in the collections of the Slovak National Archives in Bratislava, especially in the fond "Commission of Internal Affairs of the SNR 1945–1948 (secretariat, security, circulars)", which contain mostly wide-ranging material in the form of situational reports and files. Similar documentation is housed in the National Archives in Prague, the collections of some central state bodies, especially "The Klement Gottwald Collection" and the fond entitled "Ministry of Internal Affairs—Secret".

An important part of the research on the heuristic base of the set of problems relating to the UPA's activities in the CSR is the regional archives of eastern Slovakia, particular those in Humenné, Svidník, Prešov, Vranov nad Topľou, et al. Since the issue here is the UPA's intense activity, these documents supplement the general picture in this region and often contain information that is missing in documents stored at the central archives.

In the process of solving of the researched problem have been used general scientific methods (analysis and synthesis, concretization, generalization) together with traditional methods of historical analysis and specific historical methods (direct/indirect method, structural analysis, typological method). We have mainly used the principle of historicism that supposes viewing of historical circumstances of researched period, relations and interconnection of events, understanding causes, phenomena and the whole context.

3. Discussion

Within the framework of the newly formed (post-war) anti-Soviet conception and active resistance of the "Front of Enslaved and Endangered Nations", the Ukrainian nationalist movement devoted special attention to the Czechoslovak Republic out of all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe; in particular, to the Slovak part of Czechoslovakia, which bordered on southeastern Poland and western Ukraine, and where the UPA was most active during the first years after the Second World War. From the Ukrainian standpoint, there were several reasons for this. First, the process of "Bolshevization", or "Sovietization", was being introduced at a comparatively slower pace in Slovakia. During the first post-war years (1945–1946) Slovakia was only loosely dependent on the Kremlin, and the Czechoslovak communists were still weak. Second, there was a tradition of cooperation between the Ukrainian nationalist movement and the CSR: during the interwar period émigré nationalist organizations were active here, newspapers were published, and Ukrainian educational and cultural-educational organizations, etc., were founded. Third, special attention was focused on the CSR, mainly Slovakia, because the leadership of the Ukrainian nationalists viewed the Slovaks as potential allies in the anti-Bolshevik resistance. This may be explained by the fact that Ukrainian-Slovak relations had never resulted in any harsh antagonism or acute misunderstandings, as may be seen in Ukrainian-Polish relations and, to a lesser degree, in Ukrainian-Romanian or Ukrainian-Hungarian relations. An important role was also played by the domestic political development of Slovakia, where a significant proportion of

Slovak society was distressed by the abolition of the independent Slovak state (1939–1945) and the restoration of the Czechoslovakia in 1945 year (Viatrovych, 2006: 167).

4. Results

The military and political conditions in the second half of 1945 were difficult for the UPA, yet comparatively encouraging because the insurgents were able to gain control over a large swath of territory in south-eastern Poland—the so-called Zakerzonnia region²—which comprised a nearly 500-kilometer-long segment of the Polish-Soviet border. Thus, the OUN and the UPA (UHVR) considered it crucial to organize propaganda raids into Slovakia, both in terms of their political and military-strategic interests. The Slovak historian Miroslav Kmet' writes: "The leadership of the [Ukrainian] resistance was interested in disseminating its views, concepts, and programs in the neighbouring country, to which part of the Ukrainian ethnic population was moving; at the same time, a real need for strategic rear line services was emerging for logistical reasons, especially for the purpose of acquiring allies and sympathizers" (Kmet', 2005: 163). Without a doubt, the main purpose behind the UPA operations on the territory of Slovakia in 1945–1946 was to gather intelligence, promote its movement, and explain its intentions—and especially to disseminate anti-Soviet and anti-communist propaganda. Another important consideration was the need for external self-promotion: to demonstrate the struggle of the UPA through the Czechoslovak and Western press, whose reactions were anticipated.

The first Slovak raid was organized by the UHVR and the leaders of Zakerzonnia: Vasyl' Halasa ("Orlan"), deputy krai leader and OUN krai responsible leader for propaganda, and Iaroslav-Dmytro Vitovs'kyi ("Andriienko"), commander of the 24th UPA Tactical Group (TH) "Makivka", who was concurrently appointed commander of the Slovak raid. Under their leadership, the UPA riflemen and OUN members who were selected to take part in the raid into eastern Slovakia received special training and political instruction on the territory of Ukrainian Galicia (Sambir area), starting in July 1945. It was decided that the following military units would take part in the actions in Slovakia: detachments of TH UPA "Chornyi lis" from the "Pidkarpats'kyi" Battalion (led by Pavlo Vatsyk—"Prut") within the companies "Zmii" (Company Commander Mykola Korzh—"Sokil") and "Zavedii" (Company Commander "Buria"; real name unknown), as well as Bulava Company under the command of Volodymyr Hoshko ("Myron") from TH UPA "Makivka". In addition, a women's UPA platoon, "Krylati", was to be seconded to the raiding group (Viatrovych, 2001: 62).

In early August 1945 the newly trained detachments were deployed to the forests near the village of Lopinka in the Lemko region³, located in south-eastern Poland. Before the raid, the UPA detachments based in the vicinity of Lopinka completed another two-week round of training, obtained their final instructions, and were issued weapons and ammunition as well as a supply of propaganda material for dissemination in Slovakia. After a brief rest, on the evening of 22 August 1945 the UPA raiders began to move into the territory of Slovakia. During the night of 22–23 August three reinforced UPA companies, consisting of approximately 450–500 soldiers and members of the civilian OUN network, crossed the border. This was the start of the first raid of UPA detachments into Slovakia (23 August–24 September 1945).

After reaching the northeastern districts of Slovakia, the UPA detachments began maneuvering practically out in the open. With the intention of covering the largest chunk of territory as possible, they divided into smaller groups and initially moved around the districts of Medzilaborce, Stropkov, and Giraltovec, where they visited individual villages. Later, they expanded their activities to the more outlying districts of eastern Slovakia. As a rule, they operated in keeping with a set plan. Toward evening, they would approach individual villages, which earlier had been surrounded by armed guards. They would first take over the local police station, if the village had one, detain its personnel, and assure them that the Ukrainian detachment would not use force because it was under strict orders not to harm the local population. At the police station they would hold a propaganda lecture describing the goals and reasons why they were fighting. Later, an assembly of the village's inhabitants would be announced or convened by a drummer, during which an UPA or OUN political worker would describe the activities of the Ukrainian insurgents. Meanwhile, other members of the detachment would be going from house to house holding conversations with the residents. At the same time, the raiders searched for lodgings for the night, where a hot meal could be prepared and more food supplies acquired. Late at night or at

dawn, the UPA detachment would leave the village, and after a brief trek, visit other (often outlying) villages, which led the population and the security organs to believe that there were huge numbers of Ukrainian insurgents operating in the region (see: Šmigel, 2007(a): 85-106; Viatrovych, 2001: 62-78).

The first official news about the penetration of UPA detachments into north-eastern Slovakia was disorganized and vague. Despite the fact that before the raid some information from the districts had warned that UPA detachments were becoming more active near the borders of Slovakia, it was underestimated by the Czechoslovak security agencies. This may be explained by their unfamiliarity with the real situation in south-eastern Poland and the fact that information about the UPA's activities as such in the Polish borderlands was practically non-existent. Thus, in the early days of the first UPA raid, local national committees, border agencies, and auxiliary army subunits in this region were poorly informed, which was reflected in their reports and orders. At first the UPA detachments were regarded, absurdly enough, as units of Vlasovites—who could not possibly have been in the area at this time—or members of smashed German detachments or armed bands. Misconceptions were also rife in regard to the numerical strength of the UPA detachments operating in the area: according to data gathered by the Slovak security forces, the army, and local inhabitants, there were between 1,200 and 2,000 Ukrainian insurgents, although certain reports assessed their numerical strength at around five or six thousand, and even more. (A report prepared for Edvard Beneš, the president of the Czechoslovak Republic, stated that 10,000 armed UPA soldiers had penetrated into the territory of Slovakia.) As the historian B. Chňoupek writes, “The assorted mixture of reports that were arriving about the first influx of the Banderites was inaccurate, contradictory, sometimes exaggerated, at other times intentionally diminished, and often completely chaotic. [...] In a word, the situation was unclear, and matters were contradictory. The only clear thing was that well armed bands had penetrated deep into our territory, and the weak security organs and financial guard were helpless against them” (Chňoupek, 1989: 285-286). The local Slovak and Rusyn population in the region was frightened and taken aback—a state of affairs that was documented by the commanders of the UPA raiding detachments in Slovakia (ABS-1).

It is very likely that the Czechoslovak authorities also knew nothing about the goal of the UPA's appearance in eastern Slovakia. At first, they believed that the UPA units in Poland had suffered a defeat and were therefore crossing over into Slovakia; or their goal was to secure supplies or strengthen their ranks by enlisting local residents. At the same time, it was suspected that the UPA was seeking to free German POWs from the camp in Kysak. It was only later—after a reassessment and analysis of the course of the UPA raid into Slovakia—that the Czechoslovak military and political structures clearly grasped the focused UPA action. Nevertheless, this new knowledge was deliberately distorted and misused for propagandistic, anti-Banderite goals.

The Slovak security organs' lack of preparedness in the border region and inability to confront the penetration of a foreign armed group, which was caused by the disbandment of the old police and gendarme structures of the First Slovak Republic of 1939–1946 and the formation of a new security structure for the CSR, unquestionably benefited the UPA, and this advantageous situation was generally reflected throughout the course of the first Slovak raid. The numerically weak and poorly organized borderland stations of the National Security (*Národná bezpečnosť* – NB)⁴ and the Financial Police (*Finančná stráž* – FS)⁵ both of which protected the border, mainly from contraband, were simply powerless against the UPA units (stations in border villages were staffed by a maximum of two or three people). For that reason they did not go up against the UPA raiding detachments and, logically, did not resist them. They focused their activities only on grouping and transmitting often unverified and contradictory information to their command or army organs, for which they were unjustifiably censured. This situation changed somewhat after the arrival of military reinforcements to the region during a later period. The inability to deal with the situation was also manifested in the structures of the Committee of Defense Security Information (*Obranné spravodajstvo* – OBZ), which was only being created and developed at this time.⁶

The only force that could have stopped the activity of the Ukrainian insurgents was the newly created Czechoslovak army. However, at this very time the army was grappling with post-war personnel and material shortcomings. Its formations, stationed in Slovakia, comprised the 4th Military District; its command was based in Bratislava,⁷ and its units were manned by Slovak soldiers and commanders.⁸ The stationing of the Czechoslovak army in 1945 primarily satisfied the

security needs of the republic's western and southern borders shared with the countries with which the CSR was in military conflict at the time (Germany, Austria, and Hungary) and from where it was possible to expect eventual threats to the country. At the time when the army was being organized, nothing was known about the UPA and its activities, and no threat from southeastern Poland was anticipated.

The southern borders of eastern Slovakia, from Turňa nad Bodvou to points farther east, were secured by the 10th Infantry Division with its command in Košice (commander: Artillery Colonel Emil Perko) with infantry troops from the 14th, 20th, and 32nd Regiments stationed in Prešov, Michalovce, and Košice. On the north-eastern sector of the Slovak border the 10th Infantry Division only had smaller border guard units (i.e., auxiliary stations assisting the NB and the FS) based in garrisons in the district cities of Humenné, Medzilaborce, Snina, Stropkov, et al.⁹ Initially pitted against the relatively numerous UPA detachments, which were extraordinarily mobile and experienced, masters at taking advantage of the forested and mountainous terrain of northeastern Slovakia, and highly skilled in the art of insurgent warfare, was the weak Combined "Samo" Battalion (commander: Infantry Captain Tibor Samo from the Michalovce Garrison), which consisted of two companies (the 14th and 20th companies from the Infantry Regiment, numbering 120 soldiers and officers).

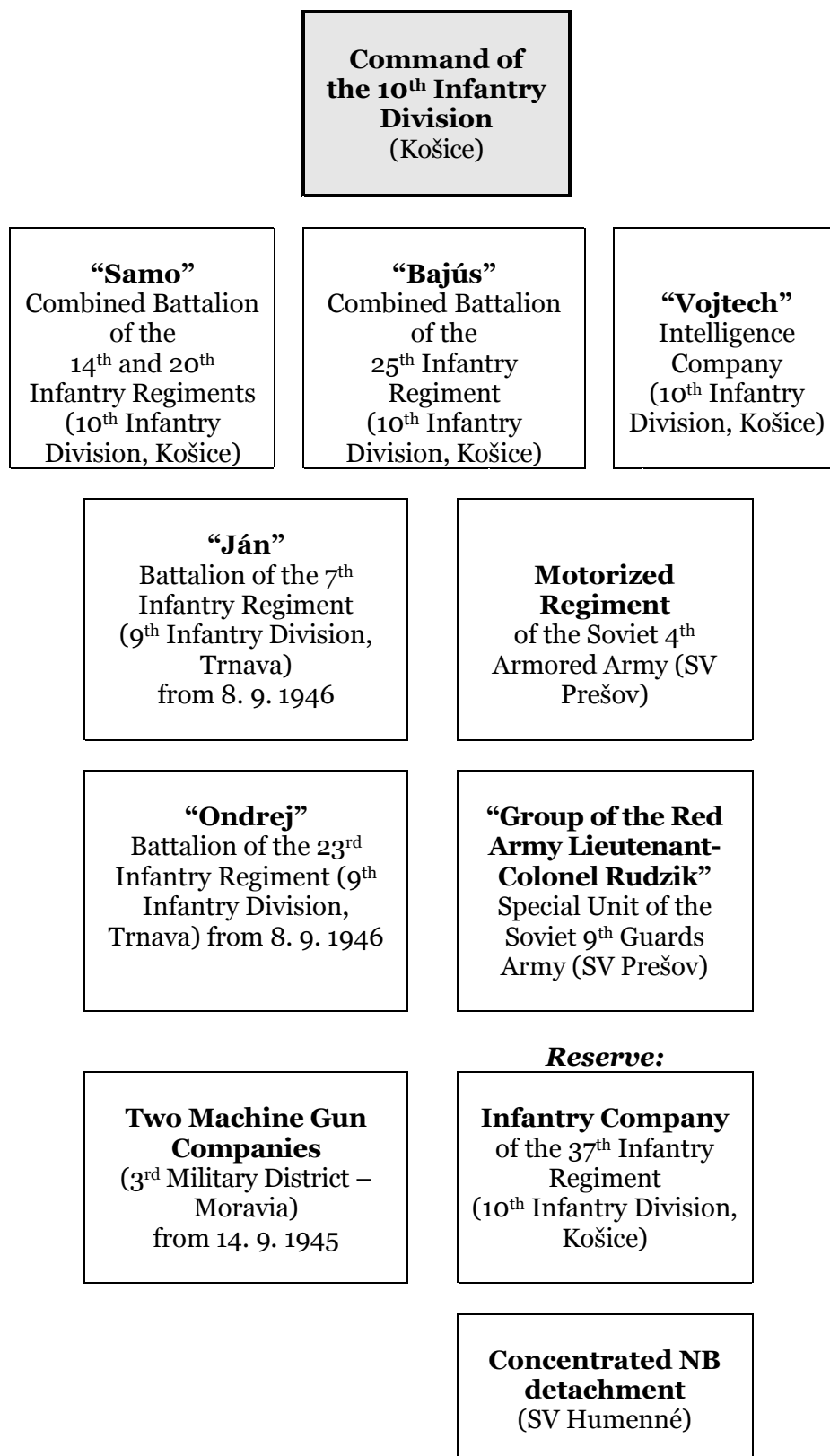
Following the penetration of the UPA into the country, on 26 August 1945 the battalion created the command of the 10th Infantry Division on its own initiative. Later, the auxiliary "Samo" Battalion was reinforced by soldiers from the guard detachments (of the 25th Infantry Regiment) in Snina and Medzilaborce (the garrison in Humenné was a reserve force), numbering approximately 110 men. Reinforcements from individual NB stations in the districts, which were subordinated to the army, could also be relied on to offer assistance. At first, these troops limited their operations to gathering accurate information about the movement of the UPA units, and patrolling and blockading important routes to prevent the deeper penetration of the UPA into the territory.

In early September 1945, in addition to the "Samo" Battalion, the 10th Infantry Division created the auxiliary "Bajús" Battalion (commander: Infantry Captain Michal Bajús) by merging the Guard detachments of the 25th Infantry Regiment. Also put into operation was a platoon from the Intelligence Company of the 10th Infantry Division: the "Vojtech" Group, which was activated on 6 September 1945. The reserve of this military formation was comprised of one company from the 37th Infantry Regiment (10th Infantry Division). Also in early September the Main Command of the NB at the Regional Command of the NB in Humenné issued an order creating the Concentrated Detachment of the NB as reinforcement for the army units.

On orders from the Ministry of National Defense of the CSR, the command of the 4th Military District deployed additional military reinforcements to eastern Slovakia: the "Ján" Group, a battalion of the 7th Infantry Regiment; and the "Ondrej" Group, a battalion of the 23rd Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division from Trnava, both of which were pressed into action against the UPA on 8 September 1945. By this time, cooperation had already been established with Soviet border subunits in Uzhhorod, and Lieutenant-Colonel Cherevinsky, a Red Army liaison officer, began to work in the command of the 10th Infantry Division.

The concrete engagement of Soviet troops in the operations to liquidate UPA activity in Slovakia has been mostly neglected by contemporary scholars, despite the fact that this is a key question. According to the Polish historian G. Motyka, information about the penetration of UPA detachments into Slovakia sparked alarm in Moscow, in none other than Lavrentii Beria himself. The Soviets' nervous reaction stemmed from lack of knowledge of the Ukrainian insurgents' plans and forces. The possibility was not excluded that the UPA detachments were seeking to break through to Zakarpattia (Transcarpathia) (Motyka, 2006: 592). For this reason, a motorized regiment from the 4th Armored Army (including 30 Armored Personnel Carriers/APCs/ and tanks) was deployed from Uzhhorod to Kapusany, near Prešov, together with a special-forces unit from the 9th Guards Army (possibly a raiding detachment of the Soviet army; in documents it is called the "Group of the Red Army Lieutenant-Colonel Rudzik", which arrived in Slovakia from Szombathely, Hungary, on 4 September 1945). Also enlisted in the struggle to eliminate UPA activity in Slovakia was a special group of Soviet NKVD officials, who monitored the situation with the aid of several of its units in eastern Slovakia. Additional Soviet reinforcements were consulted through the Soviet liaison officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Cherevinsky, and the participation of two more machine gun companies from the armies led by General Andrei Vedenin from Uzhhorod was also considered.

The Structure of Military Units Deployed against the UPA
(August–September 1945)



The Czechoslovak army's military operation, in concert with Soviet troops, to clear the area of north-eastern Slovakia of UPA detachments began only after the completion of military preparations on 11 September 1945. The start of the operation was delayed because at this time (10–11 September) two out of the three UPA raiding companies, including the commander of the "Andriienko" action, had already left the territory of Slovakia. On 28 August 1945 "Andriienko", the commander of the raid, received a dispatch from Ukraine ordering him to divide the raiding group into three sections. The first one, headed by him, departed for Galicia via Zakarpattia. The second section, commanded by "Prut", left for Zakerzonnia on 10 September 1945. The third group, "Myron's" Company, remained behind to continue the operation until 24 September 1945 (Viatrovych, 2001: 69). As of 11 September the concentrated Czechoslovak army units (to which Red Army officers were attached as liaisons and observers), in cooperation with Soviet subunits and reinforced detachments of the NB, were finally able to fight against only the third UPA company, led by V. Hoshko ("Myron").

Since the Czechoslovak organs also had at their disposal information about the departure of the two UPA companies to Zakarpattia and Poland, the command of the 10th Infantry Division began to regroup its forces. After the disbandment of the "Samo" Group on 15 September 1945, the task of combing through the terrain of the UPA's active operations, liquidating them, and pushing them across the border into the USSR was carried out by Soviet detachments concentrated in the group led by the Red Army Lieutenant-Colonel Rudzik, together with the "Bajús" Battalion and "Vojtech" Company, which were subordinated to the Soviet command. The arrival in Prešov of two machine gun companies from the 3rd Military District (in Moravia) on 14 September led to a further regrouping of forces and the creation of a new combat unit (commander: Infantry Major Jaroslav Fuks) under the joint name of the "Fuks Group" (comprising the two machine gun companies from Moravia and the "Bajús", "Ján" and "Ondrej" units), which joined the final stage of the anti-UPA operations on 20 September 1945.

The engagement of the Czechoslovak and Soviet forces did not impede the relatively peaceful departure on 24 September 1945 of "Myron's" Company to Poland, which concluded the UPA's first raid into Slovakia. From the UPA's point of view, the raid was totally successful: the political mission had been completed in full. It was also a victory from the military standpoint, as it had taken place in a favourable atmosphere, without clear-cut combat engagements or human losses (apart from a few desertions). The insurgents' return to their base territories was determined exclusively by the circumstance that their assignment in eastern Slovakia was completed. Thus, there is every reason to agree with B. Chňoupek, who states: "...Our operations influenced the withdrawal of the Banderites like last year's snow on the winter before last. If they had wanted to, they would have remained. They did not want to, so they left" (Chňoupek, 1989: 292).

According to the Main Department of Military Intelligence at the Ministry of National Defense of the CSR, the reason behind the feeble round of anti-Banderite actions was, first and foremost, "the insufficient willingness of the NB organs to put up an energetic stand; their stations supplied delayed information about the enemy, and the whole responsibility was dumped on the army units" (Fiala, 1994: 97). Another reason was the lack of preparation and weak organization of the army subunits (lack of ammunition, transport, and communications, etc.) – problems that were manifested in their vague actions and exclusively defensive strategy for carrying out what should have been a simple operation to push the UPA detachments back across the border (Syrný, 2005: 155-156).

Although earlier Czechoslovakian historiography states that during the first raid "ordinary criminal attacks and robberies, together with violence against the population did occur", an analysis of daily documents refutes this. During their campaign in eastern Slovakia in August–September 1945, the UPA raiding detachments conducted themselves in a disciplined fashion, and the only argument that can be used against them is that they obtained their food supplies at the expense of the local population, which was itself experiencing shortages. With regard to the murder of Michal Potoma from Breznica, Stropkov district, on 30 August 1945, in no way can the UPA be blamed for it because murder absolutely did not fit the purpose of the raid. Although one of the documents concerning the murder blames the Ukrainian insurgents, its objectivity is weakened by the subjectivity of the explanation that was given at the time (based on the testimony of only one witness). This event adds a minimal, at first glance, dimension to this set of questions; at the same time, it is an important issue.

The designation as “Banderite” (sometimes spelled “Benderite”) of every suspect individual (armed and/or in uniform) found in the forests and mountain massifs of Slovakia was a phenomenon that was instantly accepted by the post-war Slovak society, and it became prevalent during and after the UPA’s first raid. At the same time, a typical feature of the Slovak population during the first post-war years was the wearing of various uniforms and the illegal possession of firearms—the result of partisan warfare, border crossings, and battles that took place here—and many untrustworthy elements were hanging about in the forests.¹⁰ Poverty and hunger among the nationally-mixed inhabitants was felt most keenly in eastern Slovakia, which had suffered the greatest losses because of the war. Complex relations marked all spheres of public life, and favourable conditions for the formation of groups of smugglers and criminals were emerging here. These elements quickly understood that they could capitalize on the term “Banderite” for their own nefarious schemes or to mask their actions and misdeeds (not excluding criminal acts). The lack of reliable NB and FS personnel, inadequate military protection of the borders, organizational shortcomings of local national committees, corruption, and clientelism only exacerbated the situation. There is no question that, in addition to the UPA detachments on the territory of northeastern Slovakia, various armed, criminal, and even terrorist groups (SNA-1), both those from the nearby Polish and Transcarpathian border areas and domestically-based ones, were active here at this time. This activity worsened the situation and compromised the UPA.

Therefore, a much more complex aspect of the perception of the UPA’s activity in Slovakia is the period between the first and second UPA raids (October 1945–March 1946). At issue here, unquestionably, is the key later period because everything that took place then determined not only the anti-Banderite opposition, which was propagandistically directed and misused, but also formed—in the eyes of the top ranks of the government and security organs in Slovakia—the basis for the normalization of relations in the north-eastern border area and mobilized more diligent protection of the state borders, leading to more radical action against the UPA.

After the end of the first UPA raid into eastern Slovakia, the military units from the 9th Infantry Division and the 3rd Military District gradually began to withdraw from the region and return to their bases. During October 1945 Soviet units also returned to the USSR (by the end of that year all Soviet troops had been withdrawn from the CSR). Thus, from fall 1945 the protection of Slovakia’s borders was once again being maintained by FS units and border stations of the NB. Units of the 10th Infantry Division were discharged from the direct task of protecting the borders and in the future served as auxiliary detachments, carrying out the new tasks that had been formulated by the “Borderland Protection Service” (Zabezpečenia pohraničného územia – ZPÚ) (VHA-1): organizational measures aimed not at directly protecting the state borders but maintaining law and order in the borderland.¹¹ From Bardejov all the way to the borders of the USSR military assistance was provided by units from the 25th Infantry Regiment, placed at the disposal of the command of the 10th Infantry Division. They consisted of the “Bajús” Group and the “Group of the 25th Infantry Regiment”, as well as one battalion of the 20th Infantry Regiment.

After the military forces were scaled back in north-eastern Slovakia, domestic and foreign armed criminal groups began appearing, as well as soldiers of the Polish regular army and various Polish nationalistic elements, all of whom took advantage of the continuing weak border protection provided by the FS and the NB. From the end of 1945 these groups regularly staged attacks and robberies in Slovak border villages. Such attacks took place not only in northeastern Slovakia but all along the Polish border. In late October/early November 1945 robberies and attacks against the Slovak population spread to the districts of **Svidník**, Medzilaborce, and especially Snina.

The security situation was becoming exacerbated in the Medzilaborce districts, where, beginning in October 1945, smaller groups of refugees began arriving in the wake of the tragic events in south-eastern Poland, which were compounded by the forcible resettlement of the Lemko population to the USSR. Shortly afterwards unidentified armed groups began appearing in the area. It is impossible to determine exactly who they were because, for the most part, all the above-listed misdeeds were of a criminal nature; yet they were perceived as Banderite activities. An especially critical situation emerged in November–December 1945 in the Snina district, where attacks and robberies took place as well as several acts of violence and murders that claimed the lives of eighteen people, mostly Jews and communists, in the villages of Nová Sedlica, Ulič, and Kolbasov.¹² Once again, these crimes were attributed to UPA soldiers (see Šmigel, 2007c).

It is known that the UPA command in Zakerzonnia distanced itself from these murders. According to the Ukrainian historian V. Viatrovych, Czechoslovak historians deliberately ignored the fact “that these murders took place in December, i.e., at the time when there were simply no UPA units left on the territory of Slovakia”. Viatrovych emphasizes that Czechoslovak historians unjustly blamed the killings in the Snina district on the Ukrainian insurgents, knowingly alluding to them as an example of “Banderite terror” and clear-cut proof of the UPA’s anti-Semitism. Citing the US-based Ukrainian historian Lew Shankovsky, Viatrovych writes that in the fall of 1945 a special detachment designed along the lines of an NKVD agentura-provocateur special unit was organized in the Snina district. This pseudo-Banderite detachment, pretending to be the UPA, later carried out a number of attacks on the civilian population in the Snina district (Viatrovych, 2001: 75-76). This alternative theory is entirely plausible because the presence of Soviet army units and NKVD officials at this time and in this area has been confirmed. It is an established fact that in its struggle against the UPA the NKVD apparatus frequently resorted to false-flag, pseudo-Banderite detachments (using them regularly on the territory of western Ukraine and southeastern Poland) with the goal of terrorizing the civilian population by groups masquerading as the UPA. The use of such special units in northeastern Slovakia would have been viable and logical: at the outset of their operations, they would deprive the UPA not only of sympathy on the part of the local population but also of its rear line services in Slovakia, which the Ukrainian insurgents were seeking to establish.¹³

Out of all the possible explanations that have been discussed in Slovakia in recent years, the most plausible explanation is that the murders of the Jews were carried out in a targeted fashion, probably to order, with the goal of liquidating certain undesirable individuals in the region. Neither should one discount the possibility that the killers were members of a purely criminal Polish-Slovak group. A clear indication of this is the fact that the members of this group had knowledge of local relations and had exact information about the situation in the region, obviously obtained as a result of their cooperation with some local residents. The motives behind the killings were neither racial nor political, as they have been interpreted to this day, but economic; or it was a case of settling accounts. On the basis of facts concerning the situation that existed at the time in the Snina district, the web of suspicion surrounding those who ordered the murders of the Snina Jews may be expanded to include several officials of the local self-administration and members of the NB stations in the district.¹⁴

A document from the Prešov State Security, dated 1952, openly accuses an official from the District National Committee (Okresný národný výbor – ONV) in Snina, who was allegedly behind the 1945 murders of the Jews, and who had a special interest in liquidating the Jews of Kolbasov, above all (AMVSR). This is corroborated in particular by a document drawn up by the Commission of Internal Affairs in Bratislava, dated 20 March 1946, which confirms that in late 1945 there were no UPA detachments in the region. Nevertheless, “various groups of robbers and smugglers...masquerading as ‘Banderites’, terrorized, robbed, and also killed the inhabitants of the north-eastern corner of Slovakia. In certain cases, they were joined by criminal elements from the Snina district, especially because the local population here lives in very impoverished conditions and has no possibility to earn a living” (ABS-2).

The above statement of the Slovak Commission of Internal Affairs confirms the current theory that domestic criminal elements may have been behind the killings in the Snina district. *For example, several other documents (dated 1946) from the Commission of Internal Affairs in Bratislava confirmed the escalation of “various attacks, especially in the northern border area, where our people, pretending to be Banderites, are engaged in thefts” (SNA-2).* Later, in November 1947, during a joint session of a commission formed of representatives of the army and security service of the CSR, Division General B. Boček, the head of the General Staff of the Ministry of National Defense, summarized the anti-Banderite measures, declaring that “in many cases it was ascertained that units consisting of Czechoslovak citizens (poachers, smugglers, speculators, and various criminal elements) committed their crimes precisely masked as Banderites” (Demokraticeskii golos).

The difficult situation in the districts of Snina and Medzilaborce in November–December 1945 once again mobilized the Czechoslovak army and the NB in the northeastern corner of Slovakia. Thus, on 29 November 1945 the command of the 10th Infantry Division ordered the immediate deployment to Medzilaborce and Snina of the I/14th Battalion from Poprad (14th Infantry

Regiment), which was tasked with securing the north-eastern region, liquidating illegal groups, and preventing them from penetrating into Slovak territory. Its units arrived in the villages of the Snina district on 7 December 1945, i.e., shortly after the murders of the Jews in Ulič and Kolbasov.

The NB in eastern Slovakia once again became the target of criticism. In keeping with an order issued by the Main Command of the NB in Bratislava, on 11 December 1945 the regional commander of the NB Košice-II, Staff Captain Emil Krokavec, was dispatched to Humenné. Until his recall, his assignment was to take charge of all measures pertaining to the safety of the population and its property in the north-eastern districts and to establish contact with the highest command of the army units that were deployed by the headquarters of the 4th Military District. All the NB stations in the region were placed at his disposal, and NB units in Bardejov, Snina, and Michalovce were also mobilized (SNA-3). At the same time, the Main Command of the NB transferred to this area some of the NB personnel from the regional commands in Michalovce, Prešov and Košice. In addition, personnel changes were made at some unreliable NB stations (SNA-4).

On 14 December 1945 the situation in eastern Slovakia was discussed at a session of the Ruling Presidium of the Czechoslovak Republic in Prague, which ordered the Ministry of Defense to shore up the army units in the districts of Snina and Medzilaborce (VHA-2). In agreement with the General Staff of the Ministry of National Defense, Division General Michal Širica, the commander of the 4th Military District, issued an order on 13 December 1945 (one day before the Presidium's order) to create a special ZPÚ group for northeastern Slovakia (SNA-5). According to this order, the ZPÚ group, consisting of four battalions (the 4th Rapid-Response Division was the group's reserve), was tasked with securing the borders with Poland and the USSR from the village of Čertizné (Medzilaborce district) to the village of Ruský Hrabovec (Snina district) and, with the assistance of an agentura network consisting of reliable local residents, to obtain more accurate information about the UPA. Subordinate to the group's command were NB organs in the territory (the Regional Command of the NB in Košice was supposed to direct their activities) (Mičko, 2006: 203-204) and an FS liaison officer was assigned to the ZPÚ headquarters. Initially, the commander of the ZPÚ was Lieutenant Colonel Jaroslav Kmicikievič, commander of the Infantry Brigade of the 4th Rapid-Response Division (his command began using the codename "Jaroslav"). In mid-January 1946 he was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel of the General Staff Ján Stanek, commander of the 4th Rapid-Response Division (the ZPÚ command used the codename "Jánošík").

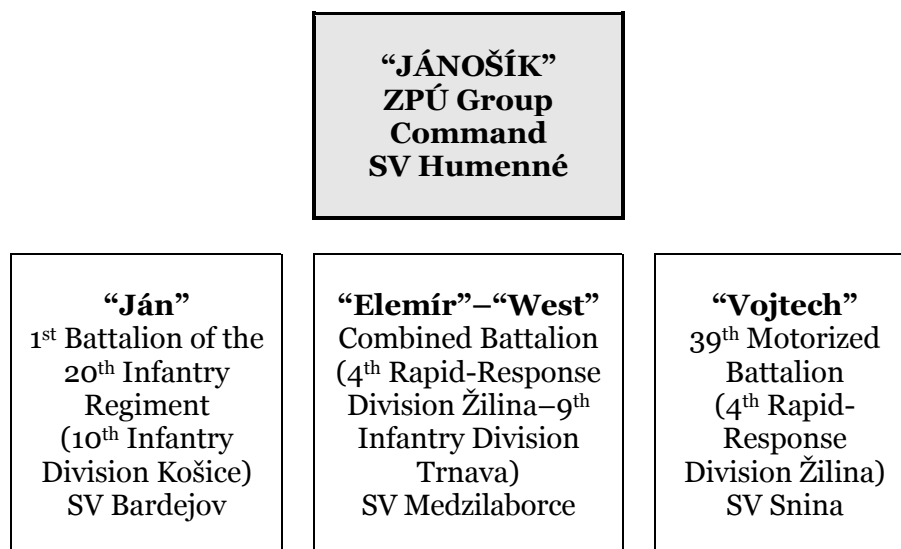
As ordered by the command of ZPÚ Group "Jánošík", three battalions directly assisted units of the NB and the FS in guarding the border, with one or two platoons or a company deployed to individual borderland settlements. The task of these army units was to seal the main border crossings, guard important routes, and maintain control over the population. On the initiative of the commander of ZPÚ "Jánošík", on 18 January 1946 an agreement of mutual cooperation on the search for and liquidation of UPA detachments was concluded with Colonel Kantorov, the commander of Soviet NKVD borderland units of Zakarpattia oblast (VHA-3). In addition to the establishment of communications and information exchange, the agreement opened up the possibility for mutual border crossings during anti-UPA actions in the borderland area, which, in the final result, never came to pass because in the first months of 1946 no UPA units crossed the Slovak border.

In January 1946 the OBZ structures in the north-eastern border area were reinforced. The Regional Security Department (*Oblasťný bezpečnostný referát* – OBR) in Humenné began to operate more energetically, and units of military intelligence were created at the command and in individual battalion groups of ZPÚ Group "Jánošík", where approximately forty members of the OBR began working (VHA-4). Once an agentura network of informers recruited from the local population was created, the process of obtaining data on the political situation, public security in the area bordering on Poland, and information on the UPA's activity in the region—so-called offensive (external) intelligence—was improved.

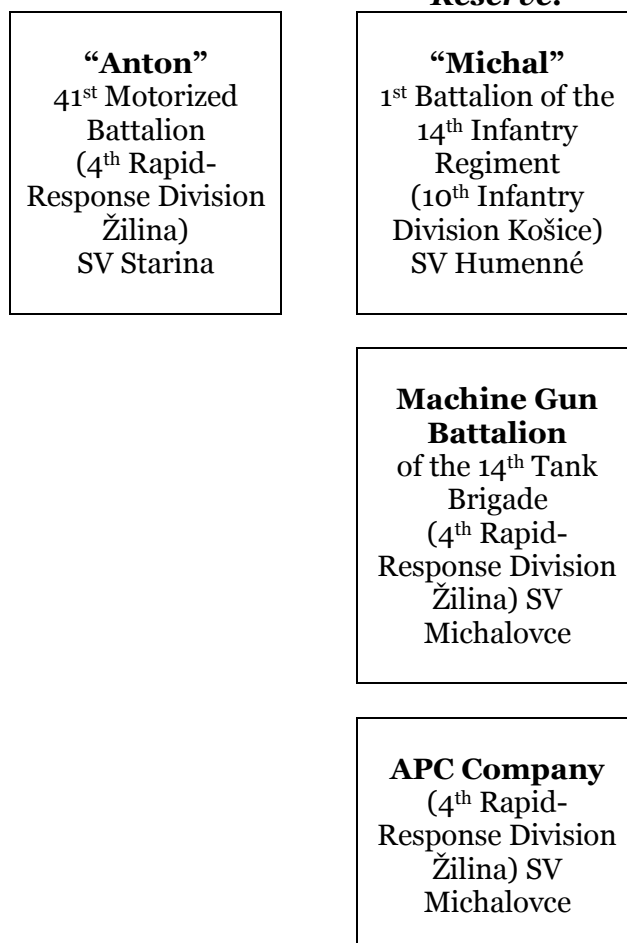
For a time, the security situation in north-eastern Slovakia seemed to stabilize. Everything stemmed from the situation in neighbouring south-eastern Poland, where in the early months of 1946 the Polish army launched an offensive, and the UPA detachments there put up strong resistance. At the same time, border crossings by the Lemko population were considered dangerous from the standpoint of the Czechoslovak organs. As a result of the worsening situation in southeastern Poland, beginning in early 1946 Lemkos began fleeing, at first individually and then en masse, to the territory of Slovakia (especially to the Medzilaborce district), where they were

detained by NB units and deported across the border. Since it was expected that UPA detachments would be moving into Slovak territory, the command of the 4th Military District reinforced the ZPÚ group with additional reserves from the 4th Rapid-Response Division; the entire formation now numbered 2,500 soldiers (Fiala, 1994: 67).

The Structure of ZPÚ Group “Jánošík”
(January–March 1946)



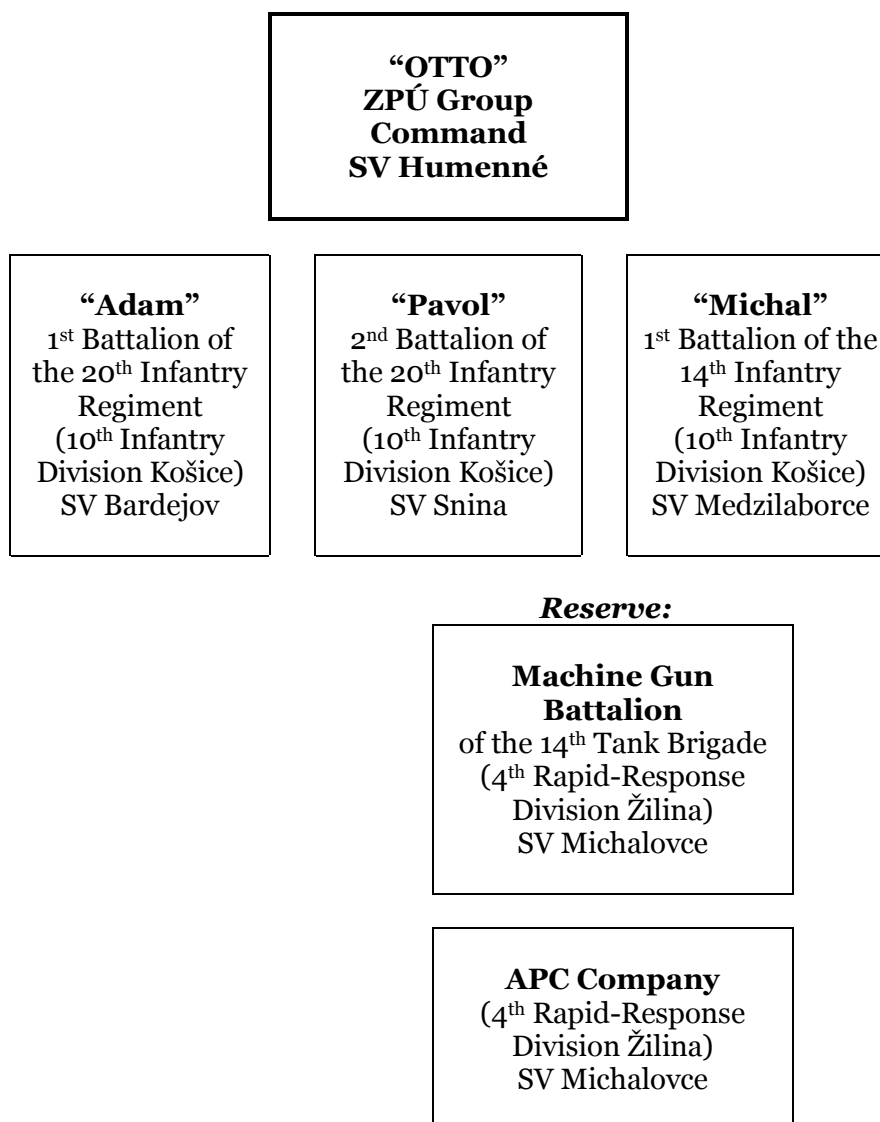
Reserve:



As a result of intelligence information that was obtained about the situation in southeastern Poland, and on the demand of the commander of ZPÚ “Jánošík”, in early February 1946 the Commission of Internal Affairs in Bratislava promulgated a series of extraordinary measures in the districts of eastern Slovakia (a proposal to declare a state of emergency was rejected) (SNA-6) and temporarily appointed Lieutenant Colonel J. Stanek commander of the NB, a post that he retained until 15 March 1946 (VHA-5).

Eventually, the military intelligence services reported that the UPA had purportedly suffered a number of defeats in Poland (this intelligence was inaccurate). Therefore, it was expected that the ultimate liquidation of the Ukrainian nationalist movement would be carried out by the Polish organs within a short period of time. For that reason, a number of Czechoslovak soldiers, who were concentrated in the northeastern region of Slovakia in anticipation of a possible conflict with the UPA, were transferred to the reserve. The numerical strength of ZPÚ Group “Jánošík” was thus reduced by half to 1,250 soldiers. On the proposal of the group’s commander, J. Stanek, the reorganization was carried out in the belief that the Banderite danger had now been reduced to a minimum. Therefore, the maintenance of security in the northeastern sector of the Slovak border once again became the responsibility of only part of the 10th Infantry Division, and the rest of the troops returned to their garrisons (VHA-6).

The Structure of ZPÚ Group “Otto”
(April 1946)



In late March 1946 the command of the 10th Infantry Division created “Otto”, a new ZPÚ army group in north-eastern Slovakia (commander: Lieutenant Colonel Otto Wágner of the 20th Infantry Regiment), whose three infantry battalions and reserve motorized units stationed in Michalovce replaced the recently deployed army units. They were tasked with guarding a 200-kilometer-long stretch of the border from the Poprad River all the way to the village of Ubl’a in the Snina district (VHA-7). This flawed military directive was issued on the eve of the second UPA raid into Slovakia.

The success of the UPA’s first Slovak raid in 1945 encouraged the UHVR and the OUN and UPA leadership in Zakerzonnia to organize a second raid into Slovakia. However, several factors had an impact on its realization. At the beginning of 1946 a number of changes had occurred in the international arena. Relations had now cooled between the USSR and its erstwhile allies in the anti-Nazi coalition, and the world was now divided into two hostile camps. This polarization sparked the hope that the West would provide effective assistance and support to the anti-Soviet and anti-communist resistance movements, and this hope led them to become more active. At the same time, an important domestic political event in Czechoslovakia was on the horizon: the May 1946 elections to the Legislative National Assemblies, which were supposed to define the political future of the country. Thus, through its operations in north-eastern Slovakia in the spring of 1946 the UPA entered the pre-election campaign fray between the communist and the democratic forces that would determine the future course of post-war Slovakia.

The preparations for the UPA’s second raid into the territory of the Czechoslovak Republic—specifically Slovakia—began in the winter of 1945–46. Just like the first raid, the second one was organized by Vasyl’ Halasa (“Orlan”) (Halasa, 2005: 84-85). Besides Halasa, other leading figures of the UPA and the OUN in Zakerzonnia took part in the preparations. Iaroslav Petsiv (“Vadym”) was responsible for political-propagandistic activity. Battalion commander Vasyl’ Mizernyi (“Ren”) was in charge of forming the detachments that would enter Slovakia. The okruha leader of the OUN, Myroslav Huk (“Hryhor”), was in charge of preparing propagandistic literature and leaflets in the Czech and Slovak languages. The leader of OUN nadraion “Beskyd”, Stepan Golash (“Mar”), was tasked with securing food supplies. The entire Slovak operation was placed under the command of V. Hoshko (“Myron”), a participant and the commander of one of the units that took part in the first UPA raid. Besides his company, companies led by Vasyl’ Shyshkanynets’ (“Bir”) and “Didyk” (real name unknown) were also preparing to leave for Slovakia; during the raid the command of the latter company was taken over by Commander “Karmeliuk” (real name unknown). At the same time, the companies were reinforced by propagandists from the civilian OUN network of Zakerzonnia (Viatrovych, 2001: 79-80). Approximately a thousand Ukrainian insurgents and members of the civilian OUN network worked on the preparation of the approaching operation. A set of “Brief Instructions for Those Who Are Going on the Raid into Slovakia”, prepared by “Orlan” for the insurgents assigned to the propaganda raid and which were to be used during the campaign, outlined the main conception and tactical assignments of the second UPA raid into eastern Slovakia (Viatrovych, 2001: 158-162, 169-173). Vasyl’ Halasa (“Orlan”) writes: “In keeping with the tactical instructions, the insurgents were to cover the largest chunk of territory possible without remaining long in one place; to avoid battles with Czechoslovak army units; immediately after their arrival, to distribute our leaflets among the villagers, explain that we are not going to be fighting against them; to provide information about the goals of our struggle, and to find sympathizers among the intelligentsia” (Halasa, 2005: 85).

The UPA detachments received their final instructions on 4–5 April 1946 in the village of Wola Wyzna, near the northeastern border of Slovakia. All three companies, numbering 400 insurgents, crossed the border without any difficulty on the evening of 6 April at the appointed time (after 21:00 hours) in the Medzilaborce segment of the border (near the village of Habura). Over the next few days the members of the three UPA detachments launched their propagandistic activities. They resorted to the tactic that had been tested during the first raid: once again they divided into smaller groups, thereby creating the impression of a large number of Ukrainian insurgents maneuvering throughout the region, and they sought to expand their activities in as large an area as possible (see: Viatrovych, 2001: 79-95; Šmigel’, 2007a: 128-157). Furthermore, they were well supplied with propaganda materials in the form of leaflets.

Despite its numerical strength, ZPÚ Group “Otto” was once again unable to protect the border in the north-eastern sector. Just like during the first raid, this situation acted in the Ukrainian insurgents’ favor. Even though the OBZ structures had improved their offensive

intelligence gathering, no UPA activity was noticed, and military intelligence did not have any information about the preparation of the raid, which again attests to the utmost conspiracy surrounding the plans of the Ukrainian insurgents.

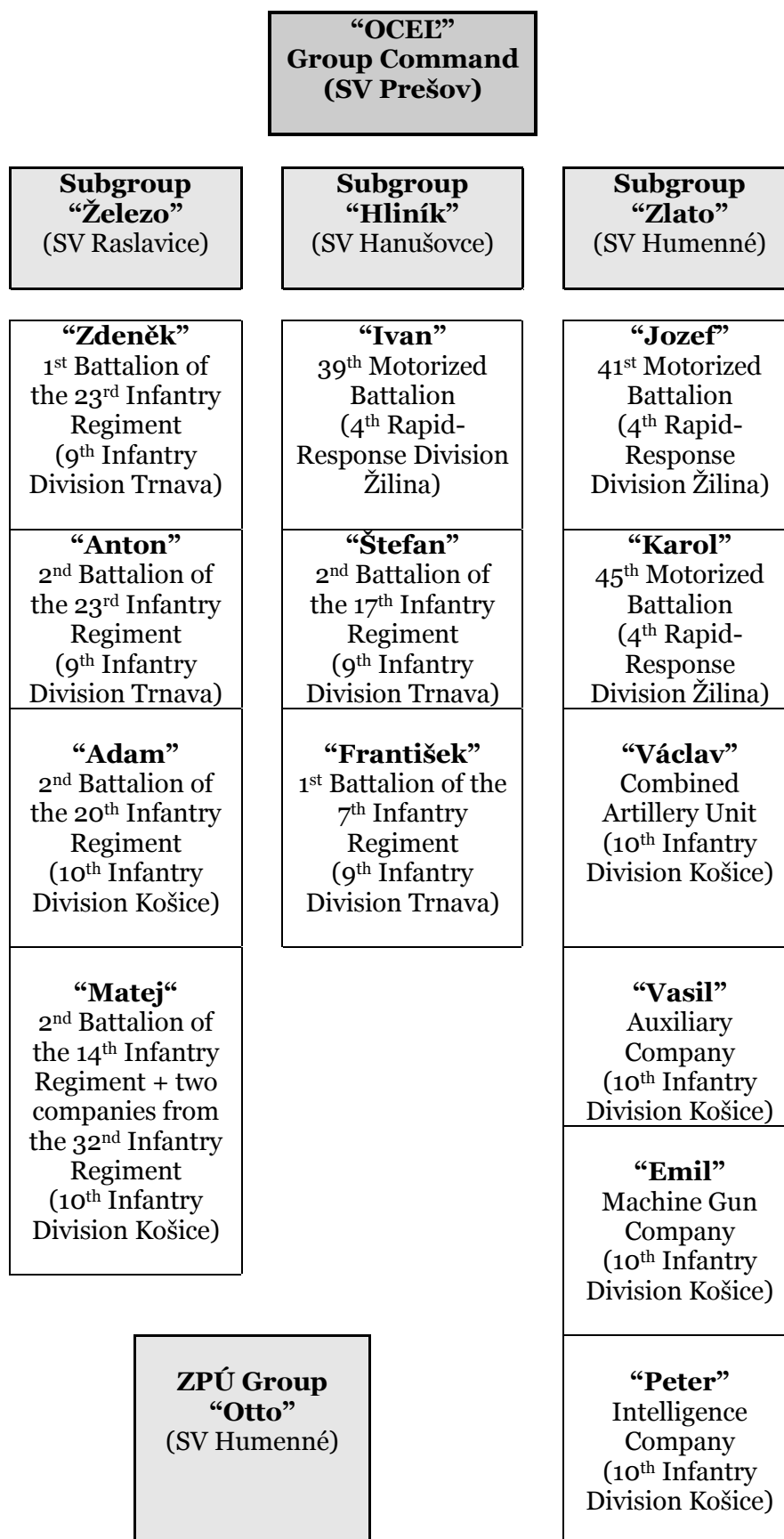
In agreement with the General Staff of the Czechoslovak army, on 14 April 1946 the command of the 4th Military District began shoring up its reinforcements and formed a special new group called “Ocel,” whose command was assigned to Colonel of the General Staff, Jan Heřman, deputy commander of the 4th Military District. Two days later, on 16 April, the Czechoslovak government discussed the situation in eastern Slovakia at its 51st session. It passed a resolution urging that anti-UPA actions be carried out with all available forces and that the defense and interior ministries of the CSR issue speedy directives—within two weeks—to ensure that the area was cleansed of the UPA and to normalize relations in the region. With this goal in mind, the government subordinated all the NB and FS units to the army command in Slovakia (SNA-7).

By 18 April 1946 the command of the 4th Military District and the General Staff of the Czechoslovak army quickly deployed to the area of UPA operations additional combat-ready army units (of the 2nd, 9th, and 10th Infantry Divisions and the 4th Rapid-Response Division), which were supplemented by two machine gun battalions of Czech tank brigades. By 21 April the following army formations were concentrated in eastern Slovakia: fourteen infantry, motorized, and machine gun battalions; one tank battalion; two artillery units; one APC company; a squadron of fighter planes; and several smaller units (companies) that were divided into the subgroups “Železo” (Iron), “Hliník” (Aluminum) and “Zlato” (Gold), with ZPÚ Group “Otto” subordinated to the latter subgroup. At the same time, all stations and regular NB units and FS sections were subordinated to the military formation “Ocel.” An additional three battalions were on alert in the Czech part of the country for possible use in north-eastern Slovakia. The Slovak Commission of Internal Affairs also issued an order proclaiming a state of emergency in the districts of eastern Slovakia (ABS-3).

Thus, approximately 7,000 soldiers supported by tanks, artillery, aviation, and auxiliary units of the NB and the FS were arrayed against three UPA companies. By 18 April 1946 army units had already occupied the valleys of the Cirocha, Topľa, and Sekčov rivers. They were deployed along the line of Brekov–Humenné–Sol’–Hanušovce–Bardejov, thus creating a position from which to launch the cleansing operation, later called “Wide Rakes” (Mičko, 2006: 203-204). Its essence lay in encircling the region where the UPA detachments operated and pushing them across the state border; afterwards it was to be reinforced and its inviolability secured. Nevertheless, the task of these army units was a difficult one. “Numerical strength alone was not sufficient to liquidate the UPA detachments that evaded direct clashes, moved constantly from one place to another, and which were scattered throughout mountainous and forested locales that provided hiding places and concealed movement”, writes J. Fiala (Fiala, 1994: 79-84).

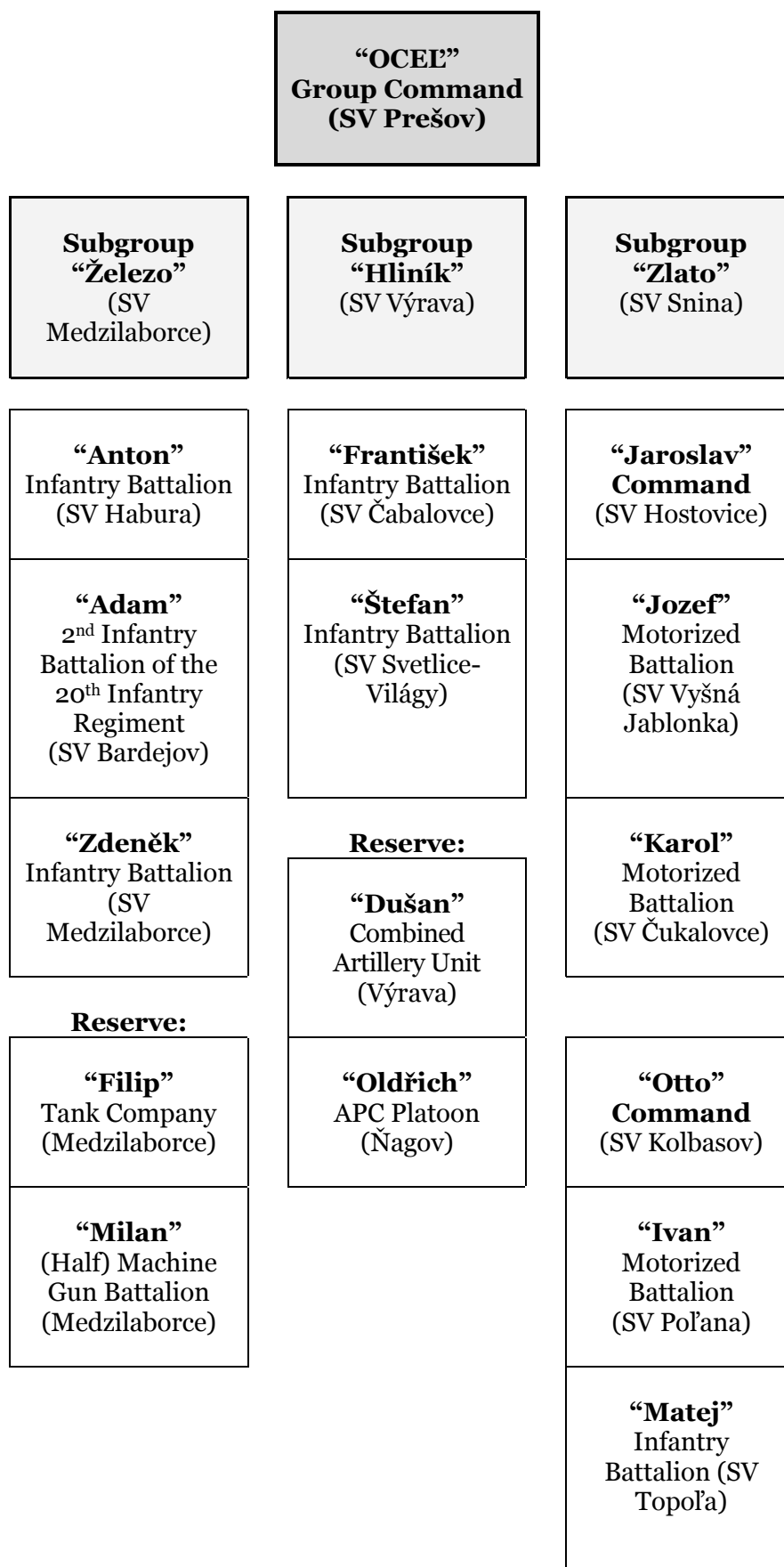
Once again, the commitment of Czechoslovak army and NB units came too late. The military operation launched on 21 April 1946 took place when the UPA detachments had already left Slovakia or were in the process of departing for their bases – because the raid was coming to an end (“Karmeliuk’s” Company crossed the Slovak-Polish border during the night of 18–19 April; “Bir’s” Company crossed on 22 April; and “Myron’s” Company, on 24 April). The “Ocel” Group continued combing the area, and by 29 April it had reached the Polish border, which it occupied and reinforced in the sector between Čertižné and Nová Sedlica.

The Structure of “Ocel” Group
(Up to 21 April 1946)



<p>“Pavol” 2nd Battalion of the 20th Infantry Regiment (10th Infantry Division Košice)</p>	<p><i>Reserve:</i></p>
<p>“Michal” 1st Battalion of the 14th Infantry Regiment (10th Infantry Division Košice)</p>	<p>“Filip” Tank Battalion of the 14th Tank Brigade (4th Rapid-Response Division Žilina)</p>
<p>“Milan” Machine Gun Battalion of the 14th Tank Brigade (4th Rapid- Response Division Žilina)</p>	<p>“Dušan” Combined Artillery Unit (2nd Infantry Division Banská Bystrica)</p>
<p>“Dávid” APC Company (4th Rapid- Response Division Žilina)</p>	<p>“Čechy” Machine Gun Battalion (1st Military District)</p>
	<p>“Morava” Machine Gun Battalion (3rd Military District)</p>
	<p>Squadron of fighter planes (Košice)</p>

*The Structure of “Ocel” Group
(22–29 April 1946)*



Subgroup “RUKA” from 10-13 May 1946 (SV Prešov)	“Pavol” Infantry Battalion (SV Zboj)
Reserve of “Ocel” Group:	
“Václav” Combined Artillery Unit (Hostovice)	Reserve:
“Čechy” Machine Gun Battalion (Zbudské Dlhé)	“Michal” Infantry Battalion (Snina)
“Morava” Machine Gun Battalion (Podčičva- Tovarné)	“Oldřich” APC Platoon (Snina)
“Filip II” Tank Company (Humenné)	
“Milan” (Half) Machine Gun Battalion (Humenné)	
“Oldřich” APC Platoon (Humenné)	

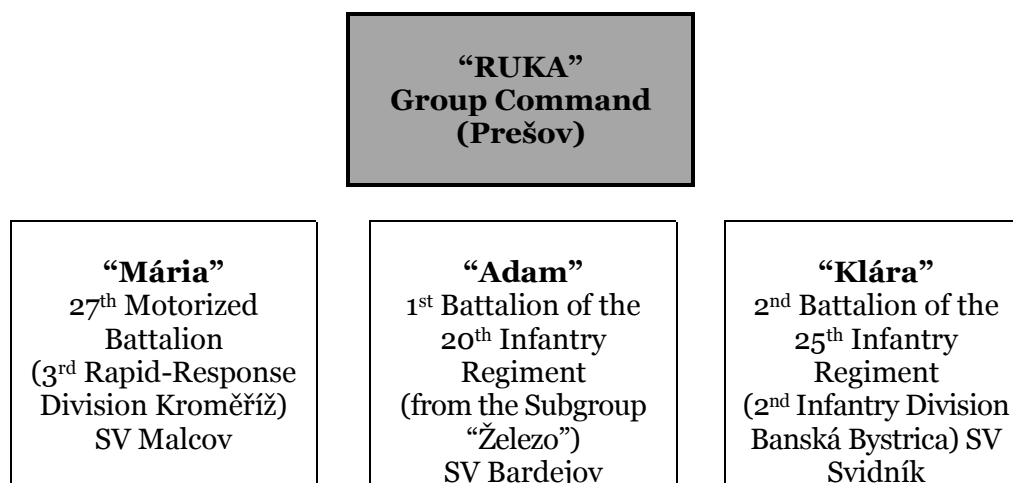
During the raid all three UPA companies maneuvered throughout Slovakia in keeping with a set plan. “Bir’s” Company moved along the Medzilaborce–Humenné–Vranov nad Topľou–Giraltovce–Stropkov Highway. The company spent sixteen days in north-eastern Slovakia, visiting thirty-one villages without encountering any major difficulties or military clashes. “Myron’s” Company moved along the Medzilaborce–Stropkov–Giraltovce–Bardejov–Prešov–Sabinov line, reaching the vicinity of Košice. It covered a total of 311 km and visited 49 villages. The third company, under “Karmeliuk’s” command, moved along the Medzilaborce–Giraltovce–Stropkov–Bardejov–Prešov–Vranov nad Topľou–Humenné–Michalovce Highway, visiting twenty-six villages in eastern Slovakia ([Litopys, 2001: 592-627](#)). Altogether, the members of the UPA detachments visited 106 villages in 10 districts, where they carried out their planned activities. They completed the tasks assigned by their leadership (the plan was to spend ten days in Slovakia, to a maximum of fourteen, only if the Czechoslovak units did not obstruct them). The second Slovak raid actually lasted until 24 April 1946, i.e., a total of

eighteen days (Viatrovych, 2001: 82). During this operation the UPA detachments did not encounter any resistance from the Czechoslovak armed forces and security organs (with the exception of two or three clashes). The Ukrainian insurgents suffered only minimal human losses – a few soldiers were wounded or disappeared without a trace (two wounded) – and they returned unmolested to their base field of operations in Poland. This time, too, the propaganda raid was a resounding success.

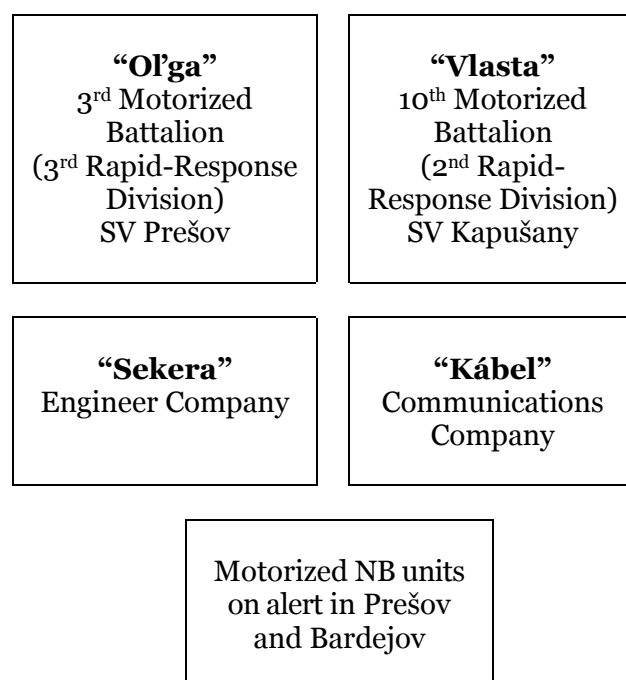
After occupying the north-eastern sector of the Slovak-Polish border, in May 1946 the army units of “Ocel” Group began carrying out ZPÚ functions. When the situation became exacerbated again in the adjacent Polish territory, the command of the 4th Military District deployed new reinforcements: a unit of the 3rd Rapid-Response Division from Moravia and one battalion of the 2nd Infantry Division. Together with the 1st Battalion of the 20th Infantry Regiment, these units were included in the newly created subgroup “Ruka” (commander: Colonel Jan Kolařík). It secured the state border west of the “Ocel” Group’s position—from Čertižné all the way to the Poprad River (with three battalions right on the border and two held in reserve). The subgroup “Ruka” occupied a special position within “Ocel” Group and operated in a more independent fashion (VHA-8).

The Structure of Subgroup “Ruka”

(From 10-13 May 1946)



Reserve:



As a result of the experience amassed by the Czechoslovak army and security services during the UPA's previous penetrations into Slovakia, cooperation with the Polish side was established for the first time.¹⁵ After joint talks involving government officials and the highest-ranking military representatives of both countries were held, on 26 April 1946 representatives of "Ocel" Group met at Dukla Pass with the Polish DGO operational group "Rzeszów", which had begun its anti-UPA operations in Poland earlier that month. Both sides exchanged information about their past and future operations against the UPA, and about the state of security maintenance on their borders. They came to an agreement about holding further meetings and establishing cooperation in the field of information exchange and coordination of their operations (Fiala, 1994: 85-86).

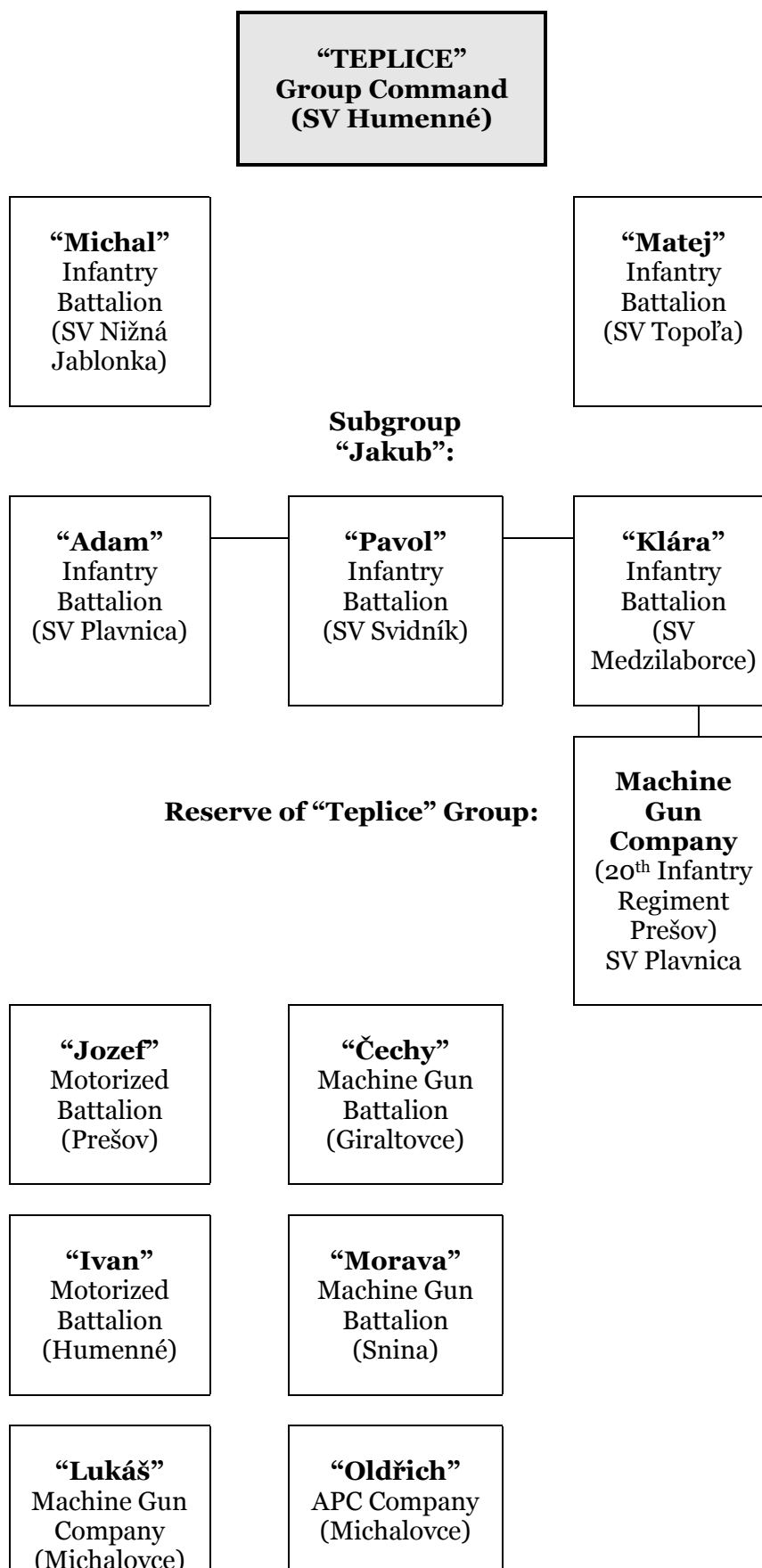
At the same time, both sides appointed liaison officers, who began to work in the commands of both groups as of 12 May 1946 ("Ocel" Group: Major of the General Staff Jan Konieczny; DGO "Rzeszów" Command: Staff Captain of the General Staff Jozef Musil). In addition, the Czechoslovak military command and the headquarters of Lieutenant Colonel J. Heřman renewed cooperation with the Soviet military command in Uzhhorod (during the second /April/ UPA raid some units of "Ocel" Group were already cooperating with NKVD border units, exchanging intelligence) (VHA-9). A Soviet liaison officer also began working in this group (AUPN). Several more rounds of joint talks between the military representatives of the CSR, Poland, and the USSR took place in the summer of 1946, in order to coordinate the anti-UPA operations of the three countries' armed forces.

With the exception of several skirmishes, during May–June 1946 a period of relative calm descended on the border. "Ocel" Group (approximate strength in June 1946: 11,000 soldiers) primarily ensured that the ZPÚ's tasks were being carried out in northeastern Slovakia. On the basis of information supplied by "Rzeszów", the group command periodically reinforced the border guard (the group's composition occasionally changed, depending on the situation) and, after the completion of the Polish operations, the army units of this group combed the state border area and its own borderland. Together with NB units, the group hunted down and deported Lemko refugees from Poland, who were fleeing the Polish operations and seeking refuge in Slovak territory (see Šmigel, 2007b). Thus, in late May 1946, more than 4,000 Lemko refugees were forcibly deported to Poland; later, other Lemko refugees were sent to a refugee camp located in Strážske. The search for and detention of suspect civilians were carried out by OBZ units and the so-called Special Group commanded by First Lieutenant Hugo Reisman (ABS-4), which was subordinated to the 6th Branch of the OBZ of the "Ocel" command (by 26 May 1946, 290 individuals were detained for collaborating with the UPA or other types of illegal activities) (Fiala, 1994: 90). At the same time, military intelligence continued to gather offensive intelligence with the help of an agentura network (VHA-10), to which border units of the NB were gradually enlisted to collect information about political-civic relations and UPA actions in the adjacent Polish territory.¹⁶ However, the intelligence that was obtained in this manner was often shoddy.

In July 1946 the composition of the forces that were assigned to protect the border, including the ZPÚ, was partially altered (the ZPÚ's method of operations had worked well, but it required a large number of forces and means). On the basis of an agreement concluded by the defense, interior and finance ministries of the CSR, the existing four-tiered state border security system (in keeping with an order issued by the Ministry of Defense on 31 August 1945) was changed to a three-tiered system (by combining the third and four tiers)¹⁷. At the same time, army garrisons and units deployed near the borders were assigned to "Border Security" during a period of real threat to the country's external security (Štaigl, 2000: 59).

The calm situation in the border areas facilitated the gradual reduction of forces needed to defend the border of north-eastern Slovakia and to reorganize ZPÚ Group "Ocel", which on 22 July 1946 changed its codename to "Teplice". The group command assessed the combined experience of defending the border and reviewed the anti-UPA operations. It proposed new ZPÚ methods based on methodical agentura border protection and the maneuvering of powerful, operational reserves. From mid-August 1946 some army units began returning to their garrisons (along with some Czech units), as a result of which the ZPÚ "Teplice" Group was scaled back to five infantry battalions and one machine gun company in the so-called informational tier, and two motorized battalions and two machine gun battalions, with machine gun companies and APCs in reserve. On 10 September 1946 the liaison officers were recalled from the headquarters of the "Teplice" and "Rzeszów" groups. At the end of that month the command of "Teplice" Group was taken over by Colonel Jozef Tlach, and Colonel J. Heřman returned to his previous post, the command of the 4th Military District (Fiala, 1994: 108-109).

The Structure of ZPÚ Group “Teplice”
(10 August–18 September 1946)



Between the end of the second April raid and late 1946/spring 1947 large UPA detachments practically did not appear on the territory of north-eastern Slovakia (with the exception of small groups, as a rule those that were crossing into Slovak territory in order to escape encirclement by the Poles and which then immediately returned to Poland). Units of the “Teplice” Group’s informational tier monitored the border area, changing the areas of their activities and border guard duties. Reserves of battalions and groups primarily engaged in training. Minor incidents occurred on the border only in late 1946. In the majority of cases, UPA detachments tried their utmost to avoid encountering units of the Czechoslovak army and had no interest in engaging in any military confrontations. As a result of the continuing calm, “Teplice” Group continued its reorganization and simultaneous reduction (as of 30 November 1946 the group numbered only 3,920 people).

5. Conclusion

In the first years after the end of the Second World War units of the UPA carried out a series of propaganda raids on the territory of Slovakia (Czechoslovakia). These raids, which had immense political and social significance, triggered the Czechoslovak army’s largest military operation in the postwar period. In certain aspects, these raids overwhelmed the security measures that were implemented in connection with the liquidation of the UPA’s operations in the CSR. The UPA’s penetration into Slovakia between spring 1945 and spring 1946 had an explicitly political goal and took the form of propaganda raids. Although the third round of UPA raids into the CSR in 1947 had a political subtext, it was primarily a military question, and the potential political impact on the domestic political development of Czechoslovakia gradually accrued to it. Because of mentioned reasons the analysis of the UPA activities in Czechoslovakia has a considerable historical value and is a valuable contribution to understanding several important aspects of the issue, mainly the aspects regarding forms and methods of the national liberation struggle led by the UPA, OUN, respectively UHVR on Ukrainian ethnic territories, especially in its military and political dimension.

The raids that were organized from southeastern Poland into the CSR by UPA detachments, whose goals were to conduct anti-Soviet and anti-communist propaganda, draw attention to the Ukrainian armed resistance movement and, later, cross the territory of Czechoslovakia to the American Zone of Occupation in Germany in 1947, are reflected in Czech and Slovak army and security service documents. Knowledge of the UPA raids in Slovakia in 1945 – 1946 fills the information gap essential for a complex reconstruction of the UPA activities in Eastern and Central Europe and related topics as well.

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Notes

¹The Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council (*Ukrains’ka Holovna Vyzvol’na Rada* – UHVR) was founded on a broad political base in July 1944 on the initiative of the UPA. This was an underground government whose task was to represent the Ukrainian nation, lead the liberation movement, and conduct a political and propagandistic-informational struggle against the Soviet regime in Ukraine. The Presidium of the UHVR consisted of the president, Kyrylo Os’mak; vice-presidents Vasyly’ Mudryi, Rev.- Dr. Ivan Hryniokh, and Ivan Vovchuk; general secretary Roman Shukhevych (the de facto head of the UHVR); a judge-general; and a general controller. Toward the end of 1944 some of the UHVR leaders immigrated to the West, where they established the External Representation of the Ukrainian Supreme Liberation Council (ZCh UHVR), headed by Rev.-Dr. I. Hryniokh. The General Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the UHVR, Mykola Lebed’, was responsible for foreign policy (UHVR).

²The Zakerzonnia region (*Zakerzons’kyi krai*) was the territory that lay west of the so-called Curzon Line in southeastern Poland, populated by Ukrainians and Rusyns, where an underground administrative network of the OUN(B) was created. This territory was divided into three OUN administrative okruhas: Okruha no. 1, comprising the Lemko and Peremyshl’ regions; Okruha no.

2, comprising the Iaroslav and Hrubeshiv areas; and Okruha no. 3, comprising the Kholm and Pidliashshia regions. Each okruha was subdivided into nadraions, raions, and kushches. The leadership of OUN in Zakerzonnia consisted of: krai leader Iaroslav Starukh (“Stiah”); responsible leader of the OUN Security Service and first deputy of the krai leader Petro Fedoriv (“Dal’nych”); responsible propaganda leader and second deputy of the krai leader Vasyl’ Halasa (“Orlan”); and responsible military leader and commander of the 6th UPA Military Okruha “Sian” Major Myroslav Onyshkevych (“Orest”). The OUN network functioned as a civilian administration and created the UPA’s rear line services.

³ The Lemko region (Lemkivshchyna) is located in southeastern Poland, near the Polish-Slovak border, parallel to northeastern Slovakia, whose eastern part borders on Ukraine. Until 1947 this territory was inhabited by Lemkos. Their neighbors in the west and north were Poles, and in the south—Slovaks, Slovak Ukrainians, and Rusyns, with whom they shared close ethnocultural ties. The people living in this region did not consider themselves members of a single ethnic group. In contrast to the western Lemkos, who considered themselves Rusyns, the eastern Lemkos considered themselves Ukrainians. The western and eastern parts of the Lemko region are divided by Dukla Pass.

⁴ On 23 February 1945 the Presidium of the Slovak National Council issued resolutions disbanding all existing formations of gendarmes and the police (of the First Slovak Republic), and an agency organized along military lines and called National Security (*Národná bezpečnosť* – NB) was created as part of the newly created Commission for Internal Affairs (renamed in January 1946 as the Commission of Internal Affairs) of the CSR. After some limited changes were made to the organizational structure of the NB in early May 1945, the new security agency consisted of: the Main Command of National Security (*Hlavné veliteľstvo Národnej bezpečnosti* – HVNB) in Bratislava; twenty Regional Commands; and local and borderland stations. General questions were dealt with by the 1st Section, while questions relating to the activities of the borderland control stations were dealt with by the 3rd Section of the 3rd Division (Security) of the Commission for Internal Affairs. Essentially, the national security service in Slovakia developed and carried out tasks independently of the security organs in the Czech-Moravian part of the CSR, where the Committee of National Security (*Zbor národnej bezpečnosti* – ZNB) was created by a resolution of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the CSR on 30 June 1945 and headed by the Main Command in Prague (ZNB 9600). The activities of both sections of the state security service were coordinated through negotiations between officials of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Commission for Internal Affairs, the ZNB, and the NB, the dispatching of liaison officers, etc. The Slovak NB became part of the ZNB only in the second half of 1947, following the passage of the Law on National Security, No. 149/1947, Collection of Laws (Štaigl, 2000: 56, 60).

⁵ The Financial Police (*Finančná stráž* – FS) – armed organs of the state financial administration (customs formations) whose task was to oversee and maintain state border crossings. From the summer of 1945 the leadership and implementation of day-to-day operations were provided by the 2nd Section of the 1st Division of the Commission of Finances of the Slovak National Council in Bratislava. The main organizational structure of the Financial Police was comprised of the main inspectorates, inspectors, and branches of the FS (Štaigl, 2000: 56).

⁶ The Committee of Defense Security Information (*Obranné zpravodajstvo* – OBZ) was founded in General Ludvik Svoboda’s 1st Czechoslovak Army Corps in the USSR as a military-defense intelligence service (on the direct orders of the Soviet NKVD and without the agreement of the Czechoslovak Ministry of National Defense). From the beginning of its existence, the OBZ operated both as an intelligence service and a security force (political police) and was the “long hand” of the NKVD in the country. During the period when the country was in a state of mobilization (until the end of 1945) and the army (Ministry of National Defense) acquired extraordinary rights, the OBZ became permanently entrenched in the military structures. It was tasked with maintaining internal security in the army (surveillance, control, and vetting of army personnel and officers (a priority task at the time) and external defense (liquidation of enemy agents, spies, and saboteurs; intelligence monitoring of the civilian population; the creation of agentura networks, etc.). During the postwar build-up of the Czechoslovak defense system, by early July 1945 the OBZ structure was being developed within individual army units and military districts. The OBZ was divided into the Main Directorate based at the General Staff of the Ministry of National Defense, regional OBZ directorates at district army commands, OBZ sections (within

the commands of army corps, divisions, and brigades, and in large garrisons and key locations), and OBZ officers (in regiments, battalions, garrison commands of medium-sized cities, district commands of reservists and other military units and institutions). The OBZ's operations were also partly channeled outside the army and intruded on the competence of other secret services, in particular the Department of Political Intelligence and the Intelligence Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the CSR; it also cooperated with the Soviet secret services. An order issued on 1 May 1946 by Division General Bohumil Boček, the head of the General Staff of the Ministry of National Defense, made the OBZ part of the structure of the General Staff as its 5th Division (Hanzlík, 2003: 20-28).

⁷ The so-called Provisional Peacetime Organization of the Czechoslovak Armed Forces began to function on 25 May 1945. The territory of the CSR was divided into four organizational and territorial parts—military districts—with an organizational structure similar to the army. The 4th Military District was created in Slovakia, with its command based in Bratislava (commander: Brigadier General **Mikuláš Markus**; on 20 October 1945 the command was handed over to Division General Michal Širica). The main organizational structure and composition of the stationed troops that were subordinated to the 4th Military District were comprised of two Army Corps (*Armádný zbor – AZ*), auxiliary units in the form of a tank brigade (Liptovský Mikuláš), four artillery brigades, one anti-aircraft artillery regiment, one aircraft division (command based in Trenčín), and military supply units. The organizational nucleus of the various corps consisted of infantry regiments. The command of the VII AZ in Trenčín (commander: Brigadier General M. Širica; from 20 October 1945 led by Brigadier General M. Markus) was subordinated to the 4th Division with its command headquarters based in Ružomberk (as of 10 October 1945 it was reorganized as the 4th Rapid-Response Division, with its command based in Žilina) and the 9th Division based in Nitra (later in Trnava). The 2nd Division, with its command in Banská Bystrica, and the 10th Division with its command in Košice, were subordinated to the command of the VIII AZ in Banská Bystrica (commander: Brigadier General Ján Imro; from October 1945, led by Colonel Pavol Kuna). The Enhanced Organization of the Czechoslovak Armed Forces began to function from 1 October 1945, and it significantly altered the organizational structure and deployment of troops in Slovakia (Štaigl, 2007: 136-137).

⁸ The agreement with the Košice government program (5 April 1945) called for the preservation of the national character of army units. Thus, army units deployed on the territory of Slovakia were comprised of soldiers and junior and senior officers mainly of Slovak nationality. The language of the command and the administration was Slovak.

⁹ Their task was to carry out intelligence and patrolling operations, prevent attempts at illegal crossings of the state borders and the movement of contraband, and provide armed assistance to state administrative bodies, above all to sections of the FS and the NB while carrying out various security tasks.

¹⁰ For example, persecuted and resettled Germans, former Hungarian soldiers, and people of other nationalities, who were returning from captivity, concentration camps, and other types of camps; motley groups of deserters, supporters of former military regimes, refugees, criminal elements, including smugglers, poachers, and others. Even some military reports from this period distinguished “Banderites” (it was assumed they were bandits, members of bands) from “UPA groups”—Ukrainian insurgents.

¹¹ As part of the new peacetime border protection system (according to the pre-war model) the Ministry of National Defense of the CSR resolved, after concluding an agreement with the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Finances of the CSR, to create a four-tiered border protection system (31 August 1945). The first tier consisted of the FS, which primarily controlled border crossings; the second tier consisted of NB (ZNB) border stations; the third tier consisted of auxiliary military units that were deployed to border areas; and the fourth tier consisted of rapid-response divisions from various military districts, to be used as reserves (Štaigl, 2000: 58).

¹² Some older writers claim that these events, which took place between October and December 1945, were the second UPA raid into eastern Slovakia. This claim is uncorroborated, as it is based on assumptions and inventions. This claim appears, e.g., in the works of Pavel Drška, who writes about the penetration into the Snina district of the “Brovko”, “Karmeliuk”, “Myron”, “Perih” and “Sokil” companies and “Horbovyi’s” platoon, numbering 500 men. This is utter nonsense. Equally ludicrous are the names of the companies: they did not exist in the UPA structure in

Zakerzonnia, with the exception of “Karmeliuk’s” Company, which was located far north of the Slovak border; “Myron” was briefly the commander of another company to which he was assigned (Drška, 1989: 100-101).

¹³ As the researcher of Banderite-related topics, B. Chňoupek, writes, “Although no one has ever uncovered any proof, I suspected that the killings in Nová Sedlica, Ulič, and Kolbasov were committed by” the UPA unit led by Commander “Bir.” He explains that “Bir’s” company was in the Polish border region closest to the Snina district (Chňoupek, 1989: 313). In its concluding report issued in February 1948, the commission that was formed to investigate the Banderite groups on the territory of Czechoslovakia confirmed the complete opposite. The report states that the killings in the Snina district were carried out by armed groups that arrived in the district from Transcarpathian Ukraine, to which they later returned (ABS-5). This report significantly bolsters the theory of the use of the pseudo-Banderite group that was created by the Soviet NKVD in Zakarpattia.

¹⁴ The murders of Jews and communists in the Snina district in November–December 1945 are being investigated by a group of Slovak historians, who have been studying this question since 2006. Some of the results of this research have already been published (Šmigel, 2007c; Šmigel, 2008). Research on this tragic episode is complicated by the fact that, with the exception of a few documents that have been uncovered (published in the second part of this volume), scholars working on this topic have not been able to uncover any comprehensive documentation on the investigation into these murders. The possibility cannot be excluded that if such documentation ever existed, it has not survived or was at some point deliberately destroyed.

¹⁵ In the first postwar years, Czechoslovak-Polish relations were quite strained. This was caused, among other things, by border disputes and both sides’ claims to certain territories that had belonged to pre-war Germany after the Polish-German border along the Oder-Neisse line was moved (primarily the Tesin (Teschen) region), as well as by the tense situation around Upper Orava and Northern Spiš (Štaigl, 2000: 55; Majeriková-Molitoris 2013).

¹⁶ After the restructuring of the Slovak Commission of Internal Affairs in 1946, the task of organizing the NB Directorate (including border stations) became part of the responsibility of the 1st Section of the 5th Division (state security and administrative police). In relation to their activities, other sections of the Commission of Internal Affairs, particularly the 6th Division (Information), which was renamed in the fall of 1946 as Department “Z” (state security and political information) also had certain responsibilities. In keeping with a decision handed down on 10 August 1946 by its head, Major R. Viktorín, the tasks of the NB border stations were expanded to offensive intelligence, i.e., the gathering of news from the border area as well as from inside those neighboring countries on whose borders their command posts were stationed (except for the USSR, against which all intelligence gathering was forbidden). This intelligence activity was supposed to be organized at a distance of 30 km beyond the Czechoslovak border, and its goal was to obtain information on the economic, political, social, and military issues of neighboring states (Štaigl, 2000: 59-60).

¹⁷ See notes No 11.

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