

# MAJOR ALOIS FRANK: CZECHOSLOVAK INTELLIGENCE OFFICER AND HIS ASSOCIATES IN NEUTRAL NETHERLANDS (1939–1940)<sup>1</sup>

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This paper examines the role of Czechoslovak Intelligence Officer Alois Frank (1897–1974) in the neutral Netherlands during the period of 1939–1940. Frank was a member of the Czechoslovak Intelligence Service, specifically the group led by Colonel František Moravec. In the Netherlands, Frank collaborated with agents and confidants who had previously worked with Czechoslovak intelligence from 1936 to 1939 at the Advanced Intelligence Centre “*Libuše*”. Additionally, he established new collaborations with Czechoslovak compatriots Karel Jelínek (1891–1943) and Eliška Hájková (1891–1943), both of whom were later executed by the Nazis. The research draws primarily on Czech, Dutch, and German sources housed in the Security Services Archive (Prague), the Military Central Archive – Military Historical Archive in Prague, the National Archives (Den Haag, London-Kew, Prague), and the Federal Archives (Berlin, Bern).

**Keywords:** Alois Frank (1897–1974), Netherlands (1939–1940), Second World War, Czechoslovak Military Intelligence Service

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## Introduction: the “intelligence eleven” of Colonel Moravec and the current state of research

In the spring of 2025, 86 years will have passed since the events that effectively launched the second Czechoslovak foreign resistance. On March 14, 1939, a group of eleven Czechoslovak intelligence officers – members of the intelligence department of the Czechoslovak General Staff – flew to Great Britain. The commander of the group, General Staff Col. František Moravec (1895–1966) took advantage of the offer of the British intelligence officer from MI6 Harold Gibson (1897–1960)<sup>2</sup> to escape with his closest associates from the Nazi occupation of Bohemia and Moravia, so that they could continue their intelligence work against Nazi Germany from Great Britain.

While the circumstances of the departure of the mythical “intelligence eleven” have already been elaborated on in the existing literature,<sup>3</sup> it is different with the individual protagonists of this air escape. Apart from František Moravec<sup>4</sup> himself, only five officers’

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<sup>2</sup> KREISINGER, Pavel. Britský zpravodajský důstojník Harold Gibson a československá vojenská zpravodajská služba. In: BINAR, Aleš et al.: *Ozbrojené síly a československý stát*. Univerzita obrany, Brno 2020, pp. 137–150.

<sup>3</sup> JEFFERY, Keith. *MI6. The History of the Secret Intelligence Service, 1909–1949*. Bloomsbury, London 2010, pp. 307–308.

<sup>4</sup> ŠOLC, Jiří. *Po boku prezidenta. Generál František Moravec a jeho zpravodajská služba ve světle archivních dokumentů*. Naše vojsko, Praha 2007. Moravec’s journalistic and radio activities, which have long been overlooked, have been newly highlighted by TOMEK, Prokop (ed.). „Mluví důstojník ministerstva národní obrany“: londýnské rozhlasové komentáře generála Františka Moravce. Euromedia, Praha 2023.

war and postwar fates have been at least partially treated so far: Oldřich Tichý (1898–1990),<sup>5</sup> Emil Strankmüller (1902–1988),<sup>6</sup> Josef Bartík (1897–1968),<sup>7</sup> Karel Paleček (1896–1962)<sup>8</sup> and František Fryč (1895–1963).<sup>9</sup> Most attention in recent years has been given to the then Staff Captain Alois Čáslavka (1899–1963), the so-to-speak “twelfth” member – although there was no room for him in the aircraft, he became a full member of Moravec’s group in 1939, when he managed a literal hussar stunt: together with his family, he managed to transport a group of ten wives of the intelligence officers and fourteen children from the occupied Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia to Great Britain.<sup>10</sup> As a member of a small resistance group codenamed *Tři konšelé* (*the Three Counsellors*; together with Staff Captain František Fárek (1894–1973)<sup>11</sup> and Staff Captain Antonín Longa (1898–1945)<sup>12</sup>), Čáslavka sought independence from *Obrana národa* (*Defence of the Nation*), the leading component of the Czechoslovak military resistance in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia, and represented Moravec’s “extended arm” in the occupied homeland.<sup>13</sup> Although the remaining five officers of Moravec’s group frequently appear in summary treatments<sup>14</sup> and partial thematic studies,<sup>15</sup> individually they have not received separate attention. These are four Staff Captains (Vladimír Cigna,<sup>16</sup> Václav Sláma, Josef Fořt, Jaroslav Tauer) and one Major (Alois Frank), whose activities in 1939–1940 are the focus of this study.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>5</sup> STANĚK, Radim. *Životní osudy zpravodajského důstojníka a vojenského diplomata brigádního generála Oldřicha Tichého (1898–1990)*. Master’s thesis, Faculty of Arts of the Palacký University, Olomouc 2015.

<sup>6</sup> For a brief account of his life see PREPSL, František. Emil Strankmüller – životní příběh československého zpravodajce. *Sborník Archivu bezpečnostních složek* (2017), issue 15, pp. 15–30.

<sup>7</sup> KREISINGER, Pavel. *Brigádní generál Josef Bartík. Zpravodajský důstojník a účastník prvního i druhého československého odboje*. Praha 2011.

<sup>8</sup> ŠOLC, Jiří. „Generál parašutistů.“ In: *Historie a vojenství* 45 (1996), issue 4, pp. 156–177; MATÚŠŮ, Marie. *Muži pro speciální operace*. Naše vojsko, Praha 2005.

<sup>9</sup> VAŠUT, Marek. „Babylon Istanbul. Československá zpravodajská expozitura v Turecku ve světle pracovní cesty Františka Fryče.“ In: *Moderní dějiny* 28 (2020), issue 1, pp. 159–183.

<sup>10</sup> STAŇKOVÁ, Klára. *Plukovník Alois Čáslavka: zpravodajský důstojník a vojenský diplomat*. Filozofická fakulta Univerzity Palackého, Olomouc 2020.

<sup>11</sup> VYHLÍDAL, Milan. „První ze Tři konšelů. Zpravodajský důstojník štábní kapitán František Fárek (1894–1973).“ In: *Vojenská historie* 23 (2019), issue 1, pp. 123–145.

<sup>12</sup> VYHLÍDAL, Milan. „Sokol, legionář a příslušník protinacistického odboje. Štábní kapitán Antonín Longa (1898–1945).“ In: *Vojenská historie* 23 (2019), issue 4, pp. 119–129.

<sup>13</sup> In summary and in a broader context VYHLÍDAL, Milan: *Vojenští zpravodajci proti nacistické okupaci: Odbojová skupina Tři konšelé*. Academia, Praha 2022.

<sup>14</sup> STRAKA, Karel. *Rekonstrukce československé agenturní sítě a jejích výsledků z let 1933–1939: zpravodajské ústředí*. Vojenský historický ústav, Praha 2017; POSCH, Martin. *Spojenectvo z núdze: spolupráca SOE a československej spravodajskej služby počas 2. svetovej vojny*. VEDA, Bratislava 2021.

<sup>15</sup> STRAKA, Karel. „Představy a plány na ozbrojené vystoupení proti okupantům v Protektorátu Čechy a Morava v kontextu vztahů československého a britského zpravodajství z let 1939–1943. I.–III. část.“ In: *Historie a vojenství* 71 (2022), issue 2, pp. 4–19; issue 3, pp. 56–77; issue 4, pp. 76–95.

<sup>16</sup> Vladimír Cigna (1898–?) worked as an intelligence officer from 1933. He was transferred to the General Staff in 1935. During the war he was one of the interpreters of radio commentaries by Col. František Moravec, which were broadcasted in Czech to the occupied homeland by the BBC. On Cigna’s military career, see TOMEK, Prokop (ed.). „*Mluví důstojník ministerstva národní obrany*“: londýnské rozhlasové komentáře generála Františka Moravce. Euromedia, Praha 2023, pp. 39–41.

<sup>17</sup> Frank’s important activities in the neutral Netherlands were first noted by KOKOŠKA, Stanislav. „Na neutrálním území. Československá zpravodajská expozitura v Haagu 1936–1940.“ In: *Dějiny a současnost* 30 (2008), issue 9, pp. 41–43.

### Briefly on objectives, methods and archival sources

In view of the above, the author of this study sets out to answer the following research questions: who was Alois Frank? What was the course of his military career as an intelligence officer, which culminated at the turn of 1939–1940 in the neutral Netherlands? What network of intelligence agents did Frank rely on in the Netherlands? Were they mostly Dutch nationals who had already worked for the Czechoslovak intelligence service in 1936–1939, or did he manage to expand his network of agents? What were their fates during the Nazi occupation there? The usual methods of historical research were applied to answer these questions: in the introductory part, the biographical method,<sup>18</sup> which helps to introduce the main actor; subsequently, there is a microhistorical probe,<sup>19</sup> relying on modern approaches to the historiography of military intelligence. The latter only established itself as a separate historiographical discipline (at the interface between military history and the history of international relations and diplomacy) in the late 1980s.<sup>20</sup> Agency networks from 1936–1939 and 1939–1940 have been assessed quantitatively, using tables in the appendix.

In addition to literary sources, the study is based mainly on the results of archival research in the following archives: Archiv bezpečnostních složek (ABS, the Security Services Archive) in Prague, Archiv ministerstva zahraničních věcí (AMZV, the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in Prague, Národní archiv (NA, the National Archives) in Prague, and Vojenský ústřední archiv – Vojenský historický archiv (VÚA-VHA, the Military Central Archives – Military Historical Archives) in Prague. From foreign archives, Bundesarchiv (the Federal Archives) in Berlin-Lichterfelde and Nationaal Archief (the National Archives) in The Hague were used, and partially also Bundesarchiv (the Federal Archives) in Bern and the National Archives in London-Kew. In addition to sources of official military provenance, partial use was also made of memoirs, especially the unpublished memoirs of retired Col. Alois Frank. His *Notes and Recollections of an Intelligence Officer of Military-Political Intelligence Abroad during the Second World War, 1939–1945*, is subtitled *Facts – History*. This impressive, typewritten text was created in 1969–1970 and after the author's death it was transferred to Archiv města Plzně (the Pilsen City Archives) together with a part of his estate.<sup>21</sup> In his extensive memoirs (500 typewritten pages), however, Col. Frank recounts his wartime experiences only up to May 1940 and then concentrates mainly on describing the “big” history of the Second World War. In addition to the textual memoirs, an audio recording of Frank's lecture in 1968 on intelligence and resistance has survived. In the relaxed atmosphere of the 1960s, Frank – formerly persecuted by the Communists – was able to speak publicly to Czechoslovak audience in the cultural centre in Žinkovy (western Bohemia) about his intelligence activities during the Second World War.<sup>22</sup> However, both of these materials can be used only as a complementary source.

<sup>18</sup> FEDORČÁK, Peter. Biografia a biografická metóda v historickom výskume. In: ŠUTAJ, Štefan (ed.). *Ludia a dejiny – historická biografia a jej miesto v historiografii*. UPJŠ, Košice 2016, pp. 26–36.

<sup>19</sup> On this approach see the essay by the leading Italian historian and representative of microhistory C. Ginzburg, see GINZBURG, Carlo. *Stopy*. AMU, Praha 2023.

<sup>20</sup> In some Western countries, specialised professional journals on this topic are already published, e.g. in the UK (*Intelligence and National Security*) and after the collapse of the Eastern Bloc also in Poland (since 2011, the specialised journal *Wywiad i kontrwywiad wojskowy II RP. Z działalności Oddziału II SG*).

<sup>21</sup> AMP, f. Plukovník Alois Frank – osobní pozůstalost, carton no. 506, Zápisky a vzpomínky zpravodajského důstojníka, carton no. 507 – newspaper clippings on military intelligence from the 1960s.

<sup>22</sup> Private documentation of Ladislav Čapek, audio recording of the discussion with Col. Frank, Žinkovy, 28. 11. 1968. Digital copy in possession of the author.

### Intelligence officer and Cavalry Major Alois Frank (1897–1974) and his military career until 1939

Alois Frank was born on 3 June 1897 in the West Bohemian village of Soběkury (Přeštice district, now Plzeň South) in the family of Josef Frank (1859–1928), a directing teacher. After graduating from the municipal and burgher school, he followed in his father's footsteps and studied at the Czech Teachers' Institute, where he graduated in 1915. At that time, however, the events of the Great War entered his life and he had to enlist in the Austro-Hungarian army as a one-year volunteer. After completing basic training and the school for reserve officers in Prague, he was sent to the Italian front in July 1916. There he served as a platoon commander of the 22nd Battalion of Field Hunters, part of the 11th Army Corps, with the rank of ensign. On 1 August 1917 he was promoted to the rank of lieutenant in the reserve. Due to health complications, he returned home before the end of the war and underwent treatment in military hospitals in June 1918.<sup>23</sup>

After the proclamation of the independent Czechoslovak state on 28 October 1918, he volunteered as a member of the emerging Czechoslovak Army, and he was assigned to the Dragoon Regiment No. 14 in Klatovy. Immediately after the coup he participated in the takeover of the border areas. As a cavalry officer (promoted to first lieutenant in 1920), he served in the West Bohemian garrisons in Klatovy, Dobruška and Stod. He was promoted to captain in 1928 and became the regiment's intelligence officer in 1931. In view of the proximity of the border with Germany, he began to devote himself to intelligence work. *"In this service I was mainly dependent on the gendarmerie and the financial guard. For obtaining minor intelligence reports I had a few [own] informers."*<sup>24</sup> In his new position as a staff captain (promoted in 1933), Frank proved himself so well that, after five years' service, he was assigned to the intelligence department of the General Staff in Prague (2. oddělení Hlavního štábu). According to František Fárek's memoirs<sup>25</sup>, Frank's transfer to Prague may have been due to his personal ties to the Agrarian Party, specifically to the Minister of National Defence, František Machník, who had previously worked in Klatovy as the director of the local agricultural school. Frank then worked for the intelligence department of the General Staff from May 1936 (since June 1937 at the rank of major) until the fateful days of March 1939.<sup>26</sup>

In view of his previous experience, when Frank successfully operated in the German border area and collected reports from his agents from the so-called dead drops, he was assigned to the search group (*pátrací skupina*) of the General Staff Col. František Moravec, specifically to its intelligence section (*výzvědná sekce*).<sup>27</sup> In 1936–1938, he concentrated on the area of Austria, collecting reports on the penetration of Nazism into that country.<sup>28</sup> In 1937, he had 12 agents of his own at his disposal.<sup>29</sup> Among the most important of these was

<sup>23</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, Sbírka kvalifikačních listin, Kvalifikační listina Aloise Franka.

<sup>24</sup> ABS Praha, f. 302, sign. 302-73-3/2, Protokol s plk. v. v. A. Frankem, 23. 11. 1949, p. 2.

<sup>25</sup> FÁREK, František. *Z historie naší zpravodajské služby*. Praha 1968. Unpublished manuscript (copy in possession of Dr. Milan Vyhliďal), unpaginated.

<sup>26</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, Sbírka kvalifikačních listin, Kvalifikační listina Aloise Franka.

<sup>27</sup> On the organisational structure of the intelligence department of the General Staff in the second half of the 1930s, see VYHLÍDAL, M. *Zpravodajci*, op. cit., pp. 21–40. For an organisational chart, see e.g. KOKOŠKA, J. – KOKOŠKA, S. *Spor o agenta A-54*, op. cit., p. 318.

<sup>28</sup> *Memoirs*, op. cit., pp. 4–7.

<sup>29</sup> ABS, f. Z (Mapy zpráv zpracované Studijním ústavem MV), Z-6-314/2, Československá zpravodajská



the Viennese-born Emil Haas, code name “*Emil*” (b. 21 July 1891), who had been in the service of the Austrian police since 1922 and eventually became directly embedded in the structures of the Vienna Police Directorate in 1929.<sup>30</sup> After the Anschluss in March 1938, he joined the ranks of the intelligence officers working against Nazi Germany, already at the rank of major. As one of these officers, Frank regularly attended meetings with the highly controversial and later legendary and mythical agent A-54.<sup>31</sup> In reality, however, this was not a double agent, but a civilian employee of the Dresden branch of the German military intelligence service – the so-called *Abwehr* (*Abwehrstelle Dresden*) – Paul Thümmel (1902–1945), who began working for the intelligence department of the General Staff in 1936 under the aforementioned code name and received a generous financial reward for his reports. This enabled him to lead an expensive life, which included several mistresses.<sup>32</sup> However, Thümmel was also a member of the “Old Guard” – a member of the NSDAP since 1927. Thus, he received an extremely low membership number of 61 574<sup>33</sup> as well as the prestigious NSDAP gold badge (*Goldene Parteiabzeichen der NSDAP*).<sup>34</sup>

In the crisis year of 1938, Alois Frank was used for various special missions. In May 1938, he went to the Baltics together with Major Bohumil Dítě. Both officers crossed the Czechoslovak-Polish border by car on 11 May 1938. On 12 May they continued across the Lithuanian-Latvian border at Zemgale and on the same day crossed from Latvia to Estonia at the Valka/Valga border crossing, to continue on to Tallinn (14 May) and from there by boat to Helsinki, Finland (16 May). On 18 May they were back in Prague at the headquarters.<sup>35</sup> The aim of the Baltic mission was to verify the addresses of German immigrants sent by Nazi Germany to the Baltic countries. Subsequently, they were to work – hidden among the minority of Baltic Germans – to provide intelligence against the Soviet Union and to organize intelligence networks in the Baltic States. The Czechoslovak military intelligence received the information via the agency network and wanted to verify it on the ground before providing it to the Soviets. The information was then passed on to Soviet officials,<sup>36</sup> with whom intelligence cooperation had been ongoing since 1935.<sup>37</sup> In the summer of 1938, Frank attended the famous meeting with Paul Thümmel in Major Dítě’s

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služba v letech 1920–1945, p. 149 (no. 105 Frank, Alois).

<sup>30</sup> STRAKA, pp. 121–123. According to searches in the database of the German Bundesarchiv INVENIO, Haas was tried for embezzlement in 1942. This suggests that he probably managed to conceal his collaboration with the Czechoslovak intelligence service (thanks to his membership in the NSDAP).

<sup>31</sup> The book by Rudolf Ströbinger contributed significantly to the spread of various myths half-truths: STRÖBINGER, Rudolf. *Agent A-54. Největší československý špión všech dob*. 4th ed. Votobia, Olomouc, 2001.

<sup>32</sup> KOKOŠKA, J. – KOKOŠKA, S. *Spor o agenta A-54*, op. cit. Most recently in PLACHÝ, Jiří. Agent A-54 a StB. In: *Sborník Archivu Ministerstva vnitra 2* (2004), pp. 281–291.

<sup>33</sup> Bundesarchiv Berlin-Lichterfelde (BA B-L), Former BDC Collection, Personenbezogene Unterlagen der NSDAP / Parteikorrespondenz, Sign. R 9361-II/1134952, Paul Thuemmel (geb. 15. 1. 1902).

<sup>34</sup> This was a special award given to all members of the Nazi Party who, as of 9 November 1933, had a registration number between 1 and 100,000 and an uninterrupted membership. The party number of the recipient was engraved on the back of the badge. Under these conditions, however, the badge was awarded to only 20,487 men and 1,795 women.

<sup>35</sup> For a facsimile of the border inspection stamps, see AMP, f. Plukovník Alois Frank, *Zápisky...*, appendices, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 20–22.

<sup>37</sup> For more details see e.g. STRANKMÜLLER, Emil. „O spolupráci československé a sovětské vojenské rozvědky v Praze a v Londýně.“ In: *Slovanský přehled* (1968), issue 1, pp. 72–79.

apartment in Bubeneč, Prague, which also served as a conspiracy apartment. The meeting was exceptional in that after it was over, Czechoslovak intelligence officers waiting in a parked car managed to photograph all the participants (including Thümmel). A series of photographs taken on 10 August 1938 in front of the house at 22 Albin Bráf Street<sup>38</sup> shows Alois Frank, agent “Voral” (Paul Thümmel) and Jaroslav Tauer.<sup>39</sup> Frank himself was living nearby at the time, in the neighbouring street Na Piavě No. 4.<sup>40</sup> Alois Frank, as a professional officer, was of course also affected by the September general mobilization of September, announced in response to the large demonstrations in Prague against the adoption of the British-French plan (22 October 1938)<sup>41</sup> and the establishment of the new official government on the evening of 23 September 1938. As war with Nazi Germany was imminent, members of the 2nd department of the General Staff moved to Klánovice, Prague, on the night of 23–24 September, and continued their journey to Vyškov, Moravia, in the morning. However, in response to the well-known events of Munich on the night of 29–30 September, no fighting occurred between the Czechoslovak and the German Army, and when Czechoslovakia officially accepted the Munich ultimatum, Wehrmacht troops began occupying the Czechoslovak borderlands, which were annexed to Nazi Germany, from 1 October 1938.

While the problem of Czech-German coexistence was temporarily subdued by the withdrawal from the border area, problems arose in the following months with other minorities of the Czechoslovak state. The Poles were ceded the territory of Těšín/Cieszyn after the ultimatum of 2 October 1938<sup>42</sup> and Hungary gained the area of southern Slovakia and southern Carpathian Rus after the first Vienna arbitration in November 1938. Other state-forming peoples of Czechoslovakia, the Slovaks and Ruthenians, forced autonomy on the weakened Prague government. The autonomy of Slovakia was proclaimed on 6 October 1938 by the so-called Žilina Agreement and the autonomy of Carpathian Rus on 11 October.<sup>43</sup> However, the constitutional enshrinement of this state of affairs and the change of name to Czecho-Slovakia, as the Second Czechoslovak Republic was officially called, did not take place until after 22 November 1938.<sup>44</sup> A new government headed by Jozef Tiso (1887–1947) took office in Slovakia, while Nazi Germany was preparing the final dismantling of the common state. The anti-German riots staged by the Nazi intelligence

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<sup>38</sup> Today the street Československé armády no. 785/22.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. AMP, f. Plukovník Alois Frank, *Zápisky...*, pp. 23–24; MAJEWSKI, Piotr M. *Kdy vypukne válka? 1938. Studie o krizi*. Academia, Praha 2022, pp. 225–226.

<sup>40</sup> Today the Charles de Gaulle street no. 626/4. NA Praha, f. PŘ, EO, Frank Alois (nar. 3. 6. 1897).

<sup>41</sup> The Czechoslovak government adopted the so-called British-French plan, according to which the areas inhabited by more than 50% Germans were to be gradually ceded to Nazi Germany. The newly drawn borders were to be internationally guaranteed.

<sup>42</sup> FRIEDL, Jiří. *Komunikacja strategiczna wobec Czecho-Słowacji i emigracji czesko-słowackiej*. Study manuscript, in print.

<sup>43</sup> Most recently on the complex situation in Subcarpathian Rus, where Polish, Hungarian and Ukrainian interests clashed during the Second Republic, see DĄBROWSKI, Dariusz. *Polská republika a otázka Podkarpatské (Zakarpatské) Rusi 1938–1939. Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů*, Praha 2021; SVOBODA, David. *Jablko z oceli: zrod, vývoj a činnost ukrajinského radikálního nacionalismu v letech 1920–1939*. Academia, Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, Praha 2021, pp. 774–860.

<sup>44</sup> Regarding syntheses on the Second Republic cf. GEBHART, Jan – KUKLÍK, Jan. *Druhá republika 1938–1939: svár demokracie a totality v politickém, společenském a kulturním životě*. Paseka, Praha – Litomyšl 2004; Andrzej MAŁKIEWICZ. *Samobójstwo demokracji: Czechosłowacja w okresie II Republiki 1938–1939*. Wrocław 2013.

service SD in Bratislava were intended to serve this purpose. The original date for the declaration of Slovak independence was set by the Germans in consultation with some Slovak radicals on the evening of 10 March.<sup>45</sup> In the end, however, it was delayed by four days, as the central government in Prague was uncomfortable with the rapprochement of part of the Slovak political representation with the Germans and decided to remove the Tiso government from office and declare a state of emergency (sometimes referred to in existing literature as the “Homola putsch”).<sup>46</sup> This took place on 9–11 March with the assistance of officers from Moravec’s search group. The intelligence department of the General Staff deployed officers from the search group (Frank’s colleagues) as early as 6 March in the following locations: “[Bohumil] Dítě – Piešťany area, Staff Capt. [František] Fárek – Trenčín area, Staff Capt. [Antonín] Longa – Banská Bystrica area, Turčianský Sv. Martin, Staff Capt. [Josef] Rybář – Bratislava and Staff Capt. [Oskar] Olmer – Žilina”.<sup>47</sup> The existing literature does not mention the role of Alois Frank, which was quite delicate – he was the one who handed over the dismissal decree to Jozef Tiso. He officially left for his Bratislava mission as ministerial councillor Alois Formánek on the night of 9 March 1939, taking with him one of the loyal ministers of the Slovak autonomous government, the Agrarian politician and finance minister Pavol Teplanský (1886–1969), who “*was very upset and trembling all over. After a short drive, he put his left arm around Major Frank’s neck and asked him to help him on his way to compose the speech he intended to make in Bratislava in the morning*”.<sup>48</sup> On the morning of 10 March 1939, Frank handed the decree to Jozef Tiso, who was then staying in his apartment in the monastery. “*He received the decree and declared: I protest against this act because it is illegal. Major Frank replied: I am only doing my duty, and I give this document to you as the executive of the President’s office. To this Tiso said: I am only telling you this so that one day history will record that I said something about it. Major Frank went to the government building to hand over the decrees to the other ministers...*”<sup>49</sup>

Frank returned to Prague the same day, and the Prague government failed to defend Slovakia in the end. After all, the Czech lands themselves were only a few days away from occupation. Information about the upcoming German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia was also available to the Czechoslovak military intelligence from several sources. One of them was a warning from the French intelligence *Service de Renseignement*, which on 11 March 1939 reaffirmed that there will be a violent action against Czechoslovakia, to be carried out on 14 or 15 March 1939.<sup>50</sup> On the same day, Frank’s colleague from the Intelligence Section, Staff

<sup>45</sup> ALTENHÖNER, Florian. *Muž, který začal druhou světovou válku. Alfred Naujocks: padělatel, vrah, terorista*. Academia, Praha 2019, pp. 82–90.

<sup>46</sup> ZUDOVÁ-LEŠKOVÁ, Zlatica. Výnimočný stav na Slovensku v marci 1939 a „Homolov puč“. In: *Rozbitie alebo Rozpad? Historické reflexie zániku Česko-Slovenska*. VEDA, Bratislava 2010, pp. 384–391.

<sup>47</sup> BYSTRICKÝ, Valerián. „Vojenský zásah ústrednej vlády na Slovensku 9.–11. marca 1939.“ In: *Historický časopis* 58 (2010), issue 3, pp. 439–469.

<sup>48</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 20, sign. 20-21-15/1-8, Tajné, Výpis ze zpravodajského deníku (1.–10. března 1939), p. 6 (9. března).

<sup>49</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 20, sign. 20-21-15/1-8, Tajné, Výpis ze zpravodajského deníku (1.–10. března 1939), p. 7 (10. března).

<sup>50</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 20 (Ministerstvo národní obrany – Londýn), sign. 20-7-2/1-10, I. díl. Zpráva F. Moravce o událostech mezi 8. a 14. březnem 1939, undated; KOKOŠKA, Jaroslav – KOKOŠKA, Stanislav: *Spor o agenta A-54. Kapitoly z dějin čs. zpravodajské služby*. Praha 1994, p. 115–119.

Capt. František Fryč met with “agent” A-54 in the railway station restaurant in Turnov.<sup>51</sup> Immediately afterwards, Thümmel was taken by car to Prague, where he confirmed the date of 15 March and provided further details of the planned aggression.<sup>52</sup>

Immediately after 11 March, the search group headed by General Staff Col. František Moravec started packing important documents and card files. This is how Alois Frank himself recalled the hasty events during one of the post-war interrogations. “*First we packed the documents and files of Staff Capt. Fryč, because he had the most extensive file material. The files mainly concerned Germany, Austria and Hungary. The card file and the registration sheets concerned agents and confidants, and I saw these [later] in London. The material was taken to the villa in Podbaba<sup>53</sup> and I received orders from Ltc. Tichý on the morning of 14 March to go to Podbaba and load the things there...*”<sup>54</sup> Subsequent events are dealt with in detail in the relevant literature, and therefore it is enough to state that General Staff Col. František Moravec informed the central (Prague) Czech-Slovak government about the upcoming German aggression as early as 12 March, but without any response. Most of the ministers did not want to take any concrete measures and relied on the assurances of Foreign Minister František Chvalkovský that no violent action would be taken against Czechoslovakia. Moravec therefore took advantage of a last-minute offer brokered by the British Secret Intelligence Service (SIS, MI6) liaison officer Mjr. Harold Gibson (1897–1960) and flew to Great Britain with his ten closest associates to continue their intelligence work against Germany. Moravec made his decisions on the selection of his colleagues in haste and was personally uncomfortable that he could only take a limited number<sup>55</sup> of associates and secret documents on the plane.<sup>56</sup> Gibson took custody of the key intelligence material from Ltc. Václav Kopačka on the morning of 14 March 1939. The most important intelligence files and agency records were then picked up by Alois Frank and loaded by members of Moravec’s “intelligence eleven” into a twin-engine *Dakota* (Douglas DC-3) of the Dutch company KLM.<sup>57</sup> The plane departed from Prague’s Ruzyně Airport at 5.45 p.m. on 14 March 1939, with a stopover in Rotterdam, Netherlands, and arrived in London at about 10.40 p.m.<sup>58</sup> The following day, 15 March 1939 – after Slovakia had declared an independent state with Hitler’s “blessing” – the German occupation of Bohemia and Moravia began,<sup>59</sup> which lasted until the end of the Second World War.

<sup>51</sup> MLEJNEK, Pavel. „Odchod jedenácti elitních vojenských zpravodajců do Anglie začal před 82 lety na nádraží v Turnově.“ In: *Od Ještěda k Troskám: vlastivědný sborník Českého ráje a Podještědí Turnov* 28/44 (2021), issue 1, pp. 35–39.

<sup>52</sup> STRAKA, Karel – TOMEK, Prokop – BANDŽUCH, Tomáš. *Ve službách republiky: 100 let od založení československého vojenského zpravodajství. Serving the republic: 100 years since the establishment of Czechoslovak military intelligence*. Praha 2018, pp. 94–95, 110–111.

<sup>53</sup> It was a conspiratorial villa in Divoká Šárka, from which operated the head of the agency search centre I. (ASC I.) Ltc. Václav Kopačka. VYHLÍDAL Milan. „Agenturní pátrací středisko I. (Praha). Příspěvek k problematice čs. vojenského zpravodajství před druhou světovou válkou.“ In: *Vojenská historie* 29 (2025), issue 2, pp. 7–28.

<sup>54</sup> ABS, f. 302, sign. 302-73-3, Protokol s plk. pěch. v. v. Aloisem Frankem, 23. 11. 1949, pp. 1–2.

<sup>55</sup> The last officer, however, did not manage to fly away. This was Mjr. Bohumil Dítě from the Defence Section.

<sup>56</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 20, sign. 20-21-13 (Dodatek zpravodajských deníků z r. 1939–1944), pp. 52–53.

<sup>57</sup> ABS Praha, f. 302, sign. 302-74-1/14, Protokol s E. Strankmüllerem, 25. 11. 1949.

<sup>58</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, Sbírka kvalifikačních listin, Josef Bartík, Vložka ke kmenovému listu.

<sup>59</sup> Most recently on this topic BINAR, Aleš. „Hodnocení vojenské okupace českých zemí v březnu 1939

Unfortunately, the details of the planning of this covert operation are not available from British sources. British historian and SIS history expert Keith Jeffery notes in his comprehensive synthesis that “no direct trace of this dramatic operation remains in the SIS archives”.<sup>60</sup> We can at least mention that more important intelligence material was brought to the UK by Gibson himself over the next 14 days, with the help of royal couriers and diplomatic pouches. On 30 March 1939, he returned to London along with other employees of the Prague branch of MI6. It is worth noting that Gibson had been working in Prague under the false identity of a British Embassy passport officer since 1934 and had been cooperating with Czechoslovak intelligence officers since 1936 at the latest. During the war, the cooperation continued not only on the soil of Great Britain (1939–1940), but also later in neutral Turkey (1941–1945), where he served as the head of MI6 intelligence headquarters for the entire Balkan Peninsula, only to return to Prague again after the war (1945–1948).<sup>61</sup>

### The Advanced Intelligence Centre “Libuše” in The Hague in 1936–1939<sup>62</sup>

Before focusing on Frank’s time in the Netherlands, let’s go back in time to 1936–1939, when he followed up on the successful activities of his colleagues, namely the intelligence officer Rudolf Šiman and the military diplomat Josef Svoboda.

From the beginning of 1935, the Czechoslovak military intelligence felt the increased intelligence onslaught of Nazi Germany against Czechoslovakia. The defence section (*obranná sekce*) responded to this increased pressure by making more arrests of Nazi agents, and the intelligence section planned to expand its intelligence networks with the help of neutral countries that also bordered Nazi Germany. These were mainly countries already neutral in the previous world conflict in 1914–1918, i.e. the Netherlands,<sup>63</sup> Switzerland<sup>64</sup> and later also Sweden. It was in the Netherlands and Switzerland that official diplomatic posts of military attachés were to be newly established.<sup>65</sup> At the same time, however, so-called Advanced Intelligence Centres (*Předsunutá agenturní ústřední – PAÚ* referred to as “AIC”) were to operate secretly in both countries, even before diplomatic recognition. For both AIC posts, two senior officers were selected who had many years of experience in intelligence, and who were also well equipped with language skills. Staff Cap. Karel

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v dokumentech XIII. armádního sboru.“ In: *Historie a vojenství* 67 (2018), issue 1, pp. 4–27.

<sup>60</sup> JEFFERY, Keith: *MI6. The History of the Secret Intelligence Service, 1909–1949*. London: Bloomsbury, 2010, p. 308.

<sup>61</sup> KREISINGER, Pavel: Britský zpravodajský důstojník Harold Gibson a československá vojenská zpravodajská služba. In: BINAR, Aleš et al.: *Ozbrojené síly a československý stát*. Brno: Univerzita obrany, 2020, pp. 137–150.

<sup>62</sup> Unless otherwise stated, this part of the study is based on the following publication: STRAKA, op. cit., pp. 305–359.

<sup>63</sup> KLINKERT, Wim. “‘In the interest of peace and quiet in Europe’: The military and strategic role of Dutch neutrality, 1890–1940.” In: *Journal of Modern European History* 17 (2019), Issue 1, pp. 48–63.

<sup>64</sup> Neutral Switzerland was an important base for Masaryk’s first Czechoslovak foreign resistance. Cf. SOUBIGOU, Alain. *Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk*. Praha, Litomyšl: Paseka, 2004, pp. 176–185; PUŠ, Ivan. „Československá Beseda Svatopluk Čech v Curychu během první světové války.“ In: *Historica Olomucensia* 59 (2020), pp. 123–137.

<sup>65</sup> For an in-depth discussion of military diplomacy, see ZUDOVÁ-LEŠKOVÁ, Zlatica: *Zapomenutá elita. Českoslovenští vojenští diplomaté v letech 1938–1945*. Praha: Mladá fronta, 2011.

Sedláček (1894–1960),<sup>66</sup> proficient in German, French and also Dutch (he was born into a Czech family in Brussels, Belgium), went to Switzerland (AIC codenamed “Kazi”).<sup>67</sup> Staff Capt. Rudolf Šiman (1893–1962) travelled to the Netherlands (AIC with codenamed “Libuše”) with his wife and two-year-old son<sup>68</sup>. In addition to German and French, he also knew English, as he had completed six semesters at a law school<sup>69</sup> in 1914–1916 and had also studied English literature.<sup>70</sup> Perhaps it was this “exotic” knowledge of English in the interwar period that made Šiman’s superiors decide to send him to the Netherlands, where Great Britain, through MI6, had already developed its intelligence activities during the years of the First World War.<sup>71</sup> In addition to organizing his own intelligence network, Šiman was thus able to establish cooperation with the British, who after 1936 strengthened their interest in cooperating with Czechoslovak military intelligence. Both officers, Sedláček and Šiman, travelled abroad as civilians with the cover of journalists – employees of the *Radio l’Europe Central* news agency.

Staff Captain Rudolf Šiman had been working at the 2nd section of the General Staff since November 1929. On 31 January 1936 he was formally retired.<sup>72</sup> However, as early as 21 February 1936<sup>73</sup> he began to work in The Hague, Netherlands, in a two-storey house in the diplomatic quarter at 1 Stadhouderslaan, which the Czechoslovak Intelligence Service had purchased for its purposes. Officially, the owner of the house was one of the officers of the intelligence department of the General Staff Albín Plevka, and the property tax was paid regularly.<sup>74</sup> Šiman subsequently began to build a network of collaborators who would provide information about the German army. These included not only Dutch nationals frequently travelling to Germany, but also German emigrants fleeing to the neighbouring democratic country for fear of political or racial persecution. According to secret instructions, the Dutch AIC “Libuše” was to assign agents code numbers in the series from A-901 to A-1000, while the Swiss AIC “Kazi” was to assign numbers from A-801 to A-900,<sup>75</sup> but in practice this rule

<sup>66</sup> KOPECKÝ, Lukáš. „Karel Sedláček – zapomenutý zpravodajec?“ In: *Zprávy Včely čáslavské* 5 (2022), pp. 39–66.

<sup>67</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, Sbírka kvalifikačních listin, Karel Sedláček, nar. 1894.

<sup>68</sup> See the database of residency applications in The Hague available at [https://haagsgemeentearchief.nl/genealogy/personenoverzicht?mivast=59&mizig=100&miadt=59&miview=tbl&milang=nl&misort=an%7Cdesc&mizk\\_alle=Rudolf+Šiman](https://haagsgemeentearchief.nl/genealogy/personenoverzicht?mivast=59&mizig=100&miadt=59&miview=tbl&milang=nl&misort=an%7Cdesc&mizk_alle=Rudolf+Šiman).

<sup>69</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, Sbírka kvalifikačních listin, Rudolf Šiman, nar. 1893.

<sup>70</sup> For example, the specialist journal *Vojenské rozhledy* printed his essay on the book *The Future of Infantry* by the later famous military theorist and historian of both World Wars B. H. Liddell Hart (1895–1970). See ŠIMAN, Rudolf. „Lehká pěchota (Nový typ pěchoty podle kpt. anglické armády Liddella Harta).“ In: *Vojenské rozhledy* (1934), issue 11, pp. 268–277.

<sup>71</sup> KLINKERT, Wim. Espionage Is Practiced Here on a Vast Scale. The Neutral Netherlands 1914–1940. In: *Perspectives on Military Intelligence from the First World War to Mali. Between Learning and Law*. The Hague: Asser Press, 2017, pp. 33–34.

<sup>72</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, Sbírka kvalifikačních listin, Rudolf Šiman, nar. 1893.

<sup>73</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 255/1946, file no. 32706/48, Rudolf Šiman, nar. 1893.

<sup>74</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 37, sign. 37-165-2/326, Plán elektrického vedení v domě, 1. 5. 1940.

<sup>75</sup> The names were chosen after the two daughters of the mythical Prince Krok from Czech legends. The name of the third (middle) daughter, Teta, was used as a code name for the AIC in Litoměřice, which on 1 July 1938 had 32 male and two female agents and was subordinate to the Prague intelligence headquarters. For more details see STRAKA, Karel. „Agenturní síť čs. armády v Čechách a v Německu (1937–1938).“ In: *Historie a vojenství* 61 (2012), issue 4, pp. 46–66.



was only partially observed.<sup>76</sup> A number of key contacts were made by Šiman through Karel Erban (1896–1969), who from October 1931 served as a press attaché at the Czechoslovak embassy in The Hague. Prior to that, he had worked at the Czechoslovak Honorary Consulate in Batavia (today's Indonesia).<sup>77</sup> It does not seem that Šiman – unlike Sedláček<sup>78</sup> – established close and friendly contacts with the Dutch intelligence service. This probably proved fatal for him, because after his exposure by the Dutch police in January 1940, the Dutch intelligence could not intercede on his behalf and he was subsequently expelled from the country for violating neutrality and conducting espionage.<sup>79</sup> Via Belgium he reached France, where from 2 March 1940 he stayed in Paris with the military administration of the Czechoslovak National Committee.<sup>80</sup> Before the fall of France, he was sent to the Middle East on 26 April 1940, where he became a military agent in Beirut, Lebanon, and later – after the French mandate territories were transferred under the administration of the Vichy regime – moved to British Palestine.<sup>81</sup> There he served as Chief of Staff (from March 1941 at the rank of major) at the Czechoslovak Military Mission for the Balkans and the Near and Middle East in Jerusalem.<sup>82</sup>

The situation in the Netherlands improved for the Czechoslovak intelligence officers when Ltc. Josef Svoboda (born 25 September 1893) was appointed to the post of military attaché. This Russian, French, German and English speaking intelligence officer had previously headed Group C (foreign group) of the Intelligence Department of the General Staff.<sup>83</sup> In addition to his official representational role, he was instructed by his superiors to “*detect early on the movements of major German armed forces from northern and northwestern Germany in the eastern or southeastern direction.*”<sup>84</sup> It is clear from the surviving documents that Svoboda handled agents A-903 and A-905<sup>85</sup> but their identities have been only partially established.<sup>86</sup> Both officers were briefly supported by one more: in August 1938, it was Staff Sgt. Vilém Marek (born 31 July 1911), who was to serve as a radio operator in The Hague.

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<sup>76</sup> See Table 1.

<sup>77</sup> AMZV Praha, Sbíрка osobních spisů, Erban Karel, nar. 1896.

<sup>78</sup> Sedláček worked closely with the Swiss officer Hans Hausmann (1897–1974), who also provided him with the necessary cover and protection from possible arrest. Schweizerische Bundesarchiv Bern, Reference Code J1.107, 2012/140, BD: 34, Spezialbericht: Angelegenheit Simpson (Sedlacek), St. Gallen, 25. November 1952, pp. 1–5.

<sup>79</sup> See below for more details.

<sup>80</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 255/1946, file no. 32706/48, Rudolf Šiman, nar. 1893.

<sup>81</sup> Šiman's wife Marie and their six-year-old son Ivan tried to get out of occupied France to the Middle East in 1941 with the help of Portuguese visas. However, it is not clear from surviving Portuguese sources whether they actually succeeded. Arquivo Diplomático e Biblioteca – Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros, Lisboa, Localização e Cota: Sala: S12 Estante/Modulo: 1.E31 Prateleira/Gaveta: P02 Número: 76910. Available at <https://ahd.mne.gov.pt/Nyron/archive/catalog/winlibsrch.aspx?sk=&pesq=3&doc=130079>.

<sup>82</sup> Most recently on this topic LENORMAND Paul. „The Palestinian triangle: Czechoslovaks, Jews and the British Crown in the Middle East, 1940–1943.“ In: *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 27 (2020), issue 1–2, pp. 199–221.

<sup>83</sup> ABS, f. Z (Mapy zpráv zpracované Studijním ústavem MV), Z-6-314/2, Československá zpravodajská služba v letech 1920–1945, p. 543 (no. 408 Svoboda, Josef).

<sup>84</sup> STRAKA, K. *Rekonstrukce*, op. cit., p. 311.

<sup>85</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection Vojenské zpravodajství I, carton 4, sign. 8/5, Agenturní spisy I. republiky.

<sup>86</sup> See Table 1 for details.

Marek was conscripted into the Czechoslovak Army. After two years of full-time service in the army, he remained as a “longer-serving” sergeant. In 1937 he was appointed Staff Sergeant by profession and soon assigned to the Intelligence Department of the General Staff. Staff sergeants proved to be an important reinforcement to the growing intelligence apparatus during the 1930s. As junior ranks, they were preferably entrusted with the operation of radio stations or the making of photographic copies in photo laboratories so that officers could devote themselves to agency and analytical work.<sup>87</sup> Vilém Marek, however, was withdrawn back to Czechoslovakia together with his superior Ltc. Svoboda after the Munich crisis in September.<sup>88</sup> After the occupation, Svoboda joined the domestic resistance (Gen. Kravák’s group of the *Defence of the Nation*) and was subsequently arrested by the Gestapo in Kladno and sentenced to two years for preparing treason. After his release, he ended up in the Flossenbürg concentration camp, where he survived to see the end of the war.<sup>89</sup> Vilém Marek illegally crossed the border of the Protectorate on 3 August 1939 and left for Poland, from where he took a boat to France and from the second half of August 1939 worked as a radio operator at the Czechoslovak military mission in Paris. There he was in charge of communication with his home country and was directly subordinated to Ltc. Oldřich Tichý. After the fall of France he was evacuated to Great Britain, where he worked as a radio operator until the end of the war.<sup>90</sup> Karel Broukal, a former staff sergeant from the office of the Czechoslovak military attaché (Ltc. O. Tichý) in Bern, Switzerland, was similarly involved in the foreign resistance and eventually served as a radio operator for Czechoslovak intelligence officers in Ankara, Turkey.<sup>91</sup>

From November 1938 onwards, only Staff Captain Šiman operated from The Hague as an exposed intelligence officer, and to Svoboda’s position of military attaché was hastily appointed in January 1939 the former head of the 2nd Department of the General Staff, General Staff Col. František Hájek. He remained completely unacceptable for the Germans, and therefore had to leave the post of the head of the intelligence department in Prague: “after Munich the Germans did everything to take revenge for this [our earlier] work [against them] and demanded the removal of General Staff Col. Fr. Hájek. [...] The Germans had to be satisfied, at least formally, so General Staff Col. Fr. Hájek was sent to Holland to continue with the established contacts there.”<sup>92</sup> The fact that Col. Hájek left for The Hague on 14 January 1939, where he was to work as the new military attaché of the Czechoslovak Republic, was no accident, but a well thought-out move. He was counting on the imminent start of resistance activities abroad, since Hájek’s earlier “idea was to deposit money abroad in case of war and to station [Czechoslovak intelligence] officers in various places abroad.”<sup>93</sup>

<sup>87</sup> On the role of staff sergeants in interwar Czechoslovak intelligence, see especially VYHLÍDAL, Milan. „Zpravodajec a odbojář František Müller (1897–1944). Sonda do činnosti zástupců rotmistrovského sboru meziválečného vojenského zpravodajského oddělení.“ *Vojenská historie* 27 (2023), issue 2, pp. 111–135.

<sup>88</sup> ABS, f. Z (Mapy zpráv zpracované Studijním ústavem MV), Z-6-314/2, Československá zpravodajská služba v letech 1920–1945, pp. 364–366 (no. 268 Marek, Vilém).

<sup>89</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 255/1946, file no. 80396/47, Svoboda Josef, nar. 25. 9. 1893.

<sup>90</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 255/1946, file no. 109587/48, Marek Vilém, nar. 31. 7. 1911.

<sup>91</sup> Ibidem, file no. 55754/47, Broukal Karel, nar. 17. 2. 1909.

<sup>92</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 24, sign. 24-9-7 (František Hájek), p. 107, Písemný záznam rozhovoru gen. Rudolfa Viesta s pplk. Josefem Bartíkem ve věci sporu plk. gšt. Fr. Hájek – plk. gšt. Fr. Moravec, 15. 4. 1942.

<sup>93</sup> Ibidem.

As military attaché, Col. Hájek was able to work in the Netherlands for exactly two months, until the fateful days of March 1939. Then he acted very prudently, for on the morning of 15 March 1939 he had already collected the intelligence fund deposited in a Dutch bank. It was 109,000 Dutch guilders in cash and 20,000 pounds in the form of a cheque. On 17 March he travelled to London, where he handed over the money to his deputy, General Staff Col. František Moravec, who in the meantime had flown to Great Britain with his officers.<sup>94</sup> On 16 March 1939, Artur Pacák, the Czechoslovak envoy in The Hague, handed over his office to the Germans, including the political archive. Fortunately, he managed to burn cipher materials. His Swiss counterpart Bohdan Štrér, based in Bern, did likewise.<sup>95</sup> Even there, however, the money was retrieved at the last moment. Staff Captain Sedláček took care of sending it to London: *“After a long negotiation, I got the envoy Dr. Štrér to go with me to the underground tresor of the Bernese bank, where a safe-deposit box was opened and issued to us on our signature. There was again a long haggling in a separate room, and without counting I threw the money into my briefcase and left for Geneva. I drove by car to the British Consulate, where, after giving the password, I was received either by the Consul or his representative [...] at my request he gave me an envelope and a seal, I put the money in the envelope without counting, [and] sealed it...”*<sup>96</sup> On the other hand, the money deposited in Stockholm, Sweden (500,000 Swedish crowns), where there was no intelligence officer or military diplomat at the time, could not be saved and fell in the hands of the Germans.<sup>97</sup>

After Hájek's departure, Staff Captain Šiman remained in the Netherlands alone again, and in May 1939 he was assigned a new superior – Major Alois Frank. After the war, however, Frank was very critical of Šiman's activities between 1936 and 1940: *“that former officer worked with little success. For my responsible work I needed more efficient workers, which was not the case here, and he was also rather careless in his conspiratorial activities”*.<sup>98</sup> The relations between the two officers were obviously not good. Still, an extremely detailed analysis of interwar sources by Karel Straka,<sup>99</sup> as well as other hitherto unknown documents<sup>100</sup> show that Šiman and Svoboda managed to build a fairly reliable agency network in only three years. In total, there were eight agents marked with A- codes (A-902 to A-907, A-1019, A-1101) and at least nine other (unmarked) registered confidants. Frank eventually made one of them (Theo Hespers) his chief agent. It is true that some agents went silent after the events of Munich and March, but this was certainly not Šiman's fault. On the other hand, others only began to develop their activities fully in 1939–1940. A detailed overview can be found in the following table.

<sup>94</sup> Archiv Národního muzea Praha, f. Edvard Beneš, carton 47, inv. no. 460, Zpráva plk. Františka Hájka pro vyslance Smutného o situaci na čs. vyslanectví v Londýně dne 17. 3. 1939, 20. 10. 1940.

<sup>95</sup> NĚMEČEK, Jan. *Soumrak a úsvit československé diplomacie: 15. březen 1939 a československé zastupitelské úřady*. Praha: Academia, 2008, pp. 255–257, 210–230.

<sup>96</sup> ABS, f. 302, sign. 302-96-2, Strojopis vzpomínek Karla Sedláčka na březnové události roku 1939 ve Švýcarsku, undated.

<sup>97</sup> NĚMEČEK, Jan. What Happened to Czechoslovak Funds in Sweden? In: *Sweden's World War II Dilemmas: Case Study: Czechoslovakia*. Prague: Institute of History, Stockholm: Paideia, 2020, pp. 15–27.

<sup>98</sup> AMP, f. Plukovník Alois Frank, *Zápisky...*, p. 59.

<sup>99</sup> STRAKA, K. *Rekonstrukce...*, op. cit., pp. 317–354.

<sup>100</sup> ABS Praha, f. 302, sign. 302-38-4.

Table 1: List of secret agents and confidants used by Rudolf Šiman (AIC “*Libuše*”) and Josef Svoboda (military attaché in The Hague) in 1936–1939<sup>101</sup>

Surname and first name	Number (code name)	Date and place of birth (nationality)	Type of cooperation (circumstances of arrest)	Date and place of death; notes
KRIEDEMANN, Herbert	A-902 (“ <i>Mayer</i> ”)	1 March 1903, Berlin (Reich-German, Communist emigrant) <sup>102</sup>	tipster sentenced by the VGH in Berlin to 2 years in prison (28 October 1941) <sup>103</sup>	? After the war he settled in Hanover. <sup>104</sup>
VOS, H. O.	A-903	c. 1881 (he was 57 years old at the time of his registration in 1938) (Dutch)	residential agent	? He was paid a salary of 10 Dutch guilders per month. <sup>105</sup>
HARTMANN, Heinz	A-904 (“ <i>Heinz</i> ”)	ca. 1901–1902, he was about 35 years old at the time of his registration (Reich-German)	residential agent	?

<sup>101</sup> Sorted by number. Based on Karel Straka’s research published in the monograph *Rekonstrukce...* and on the author’s research at the Security Services Archive in Prague, the Federal Archives in Berlin-Lichterfelde and the National Archives in The Hague (unless stated otherwise).

<sup>102</sup> BA Berlin, sign. R 58/3258a, RSHA (Gestapo), Kriedemann, Herbert, geb. 1. 3. 1903.

<sup>103</sup> BA Berlin, sign. R 3017/32921, Kriedemann, Herbert, geb. 1. 3. 1903.

<sup>104</sup> Arolsen Archives, Reference Code DE ITS 2.1.2.1 NI 017 7 NIE ZM, available at <https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/en/archive/2-1-2-1-NI-017-7-NIE-ZM>.

<sup>105</sup> ABS Praha, f. 302, sign. 302-38-4/34, Krycí adresy – hlášení, 4. 3. 1938.

?	A-905	? (Dutch)	tipster	?
RICHTER, Harry	A-906 ( <i>"Vend"</i> )	8 May 1900, Tirchenreuth <sup>106</sup> (Reich- German, emigrant)	tipster <sup>107</sup> also supposed to work for the British MI6 <sup>108</sup>	? After the occupation of the Netherlands, he fled to Great Britain on 13 May 1940. <sup>109</sup> There he reported to the Czechoslovak foreign army until 15 May 1940, but was not conscripted. <sup>110</sup>
SNEP, J. M.	A-907 ( <i>"Artista"</i> )	13 January 1887, Westervoort (Dutch)	tipster	8 September 1943 Berlin-Plötzensee Executed for resistance activities. <sup>111</sup>
Exportagentur EXOTA (?)	A-1019 <sup>112</sup>	?	?	?

<sup>106</sup> BA Berlin-Lichterfelde, Sign. R 1507/2175, Reichskommissar für Überwachung der öffentlichen Ordnung, Harry Richter (geb. 8. 5. 1900), pp. 247–257.

<sup>107</sup> Dr. Alfred Platz, Mister Kann and probably also Geert Gernand worked for Richter as “subagents”.

<sup>108</sup> ABS Praha, f. 302, sign. 302-73-3, Dodatek k protokolu s plk. v. v. Frankem, p. 1.

<sup>109</sup> ABS Praha, f. 302, sign. 302-89-6/32-36, Agenti Bartíka – Richter, Harry.

<sup>110</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 24, sign. 24-19-10/414-415, Richter Harry, Questionnaire. According to the completed questionnaire, Richter knew not only German but also French, Dutch and Russian. His wife was to be deported to Siberia in the USSR at that time. In 1942–1945, Harry Richter was to work as an agent of the political intelligence of the Ministry of the Interior of the Government in Exile (Lt. Josef Bartík's department) and was to report news from the German and Austrian emigration. After the war he remained in Britain, obtained British citizenship and supposedly worked for the MI6. See ABS Praha, f. 302, sign. 302-199-8/7-8, Němečtí emigranti – agenti anglické zpravodajské služby.

<sup>111</sup> See <https://stichting18september.nl/slachtoffers/joseph-maria-snep/>.

<sup>112</sup> ABS Praha, f. 302, sign. 302-38-4/37, Libuše (Šiman).

ALPEN, E. V.	A-1101 <sup>113</sup>	? (Dutch)	?	?
SNEP, A. P. L. (brother of J. M. Snep)	?	1881 (Dutch)	undetermined also supposed to work for the French intelligence	?
van der STAP, Johannes (Jan) Antonius Marie <sup>114</sup>	?	2 June 1916, Hengelo <sup>115</sup> (Dutch)	registered confidant (emigrated to France in 1938) <sup>116</sup>	?
KANN, Mister (?)	?	? (Dutch)	registered confidant	?
PLATZ, Alfred (Dr.)	? ( <i>“Advocate”</i> )	1890 <sup>117</sup> (Reich- German, emigrant)	registered confidant	after 1941, St. Cyprien <sup>118</sup>
GERNAND, Geert	?	14 June 1913, Wedde (Dutch)	agent-walker sentenced by the VGH in Berlin to 3 years in prison (14 August 1942) <sup>119</sup>	21 April 1943, Berlin He died in prison.

<sup>113</sup> ABS Praha, f. 302, sign. 302-38-4/38, Libuše (Šiman).

<sup>114</sup> Brother Theodorus Antonius Maria van der Stap (1914–1942) was executed for resistance activities and cooperation with British intelligence in the Sachsenhausen concentration camp on 3 May 1942. See <https://oorlogsgravenstichting.nl/personen/147048/theodorus-antonius-maria-van-der-stap>.

<sup>115</sup> Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken (1945-1954), Inv. nr.: 21051, van der STAP, Johannes (Jan) Antonius Maria.

<sup>116</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>117</sup> <https://www.stolpersteine-berlin.de/en/reichsstr/9/alfred-platz>.

<sup>118</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>119</sup> BA Berlin-Lichterfelde, Sign. R 3017/8825, Gernand, Geert, geb. 14. 6. 1913, Aktenzeichen/Registriernr. IJ 465/41g (Alte Signatur VGHI/Z-Bruintjes, Jan).



de LEVIE, Werner	?	12 September 1916, Varel (Reich-German, emigrant)	tipster <sup>120</sup> sentenced by the VGH in Berlin to 7 years in prison (1 June 1943) <sup>121</sup>	8 July 1965, Berlin-Friedenau <sup>122</sup>
BRUINTJES, Jan Jacob <sup>123</sup>	?	23 September 1899, Oude Pekela (Dutch)	agent-walker sentenced by the VGH in Berlin to 3 years in prison (14 August 1942) <sup>124</sup>	8 September 1985, Oude Pekela <sup>125</sup>
HESPERS, Theo	? ("Catholic")	12. 12. 1903, Mönchen-Gladbach (Reich-German, emigrant)	agent/chief agent <sup>126</sup> sentenced to death by the VGH in Berlin (22 June 1943) <sup>127</sup>	9 September 1943, Berlin-Plötzensee Executed for resistance activities.
SMIT, Hendrik	?	15 May 1911, Vlagtwedde (Dutch)	agent-walker	? On 28 May 1943, he was pardoned before the VGH in Berlin, then transferred as a political prisoner to the Dachau concentration camp (23 September 1943). <sup>128</sup>

<sup>120</sup> ABS Praha, f. 302, sign. 302-73-3, Dodatek k protokolu s plk. v. v. Frankem, p. 1.

<sup>121</sup> BA Berlin-Lichterfelde, Sign. R 3017/12369, Levie, Werner de, geb. 12. 9. 1916.

<sup>122</sup> E-mail correspondence between the author and Ineke Ijsenbrand, 12. 8. 2024.

<sup>123</sup> His relative Jan Geert Bruintjes (born 13. 3. 1917, Oude Pekela) served during the war in the Dutch merchant navy, which was under the Dutch government-in-exile. See Nederlands Instituut Militaire Historie, REGISTRATIEKAART UIT KOOPVAARDIJ ARCHIEF, Bruintjes Jan, 1917. Available at <https://www.oorlogsbronnen.nl/tijdlijn/ac68c94c-9687-4fca-80ab-714e0ba80f51>.

<sup>124</sup> BA Berlin-Lichterfelde, Sign. R 3017/8825.

<sup>125</sup> The death notice was published in the newspaper Nieuwsblad van het Noorden on 9. 9. 1985. Available at <https://www.delfer.nl/nl/kranten/view?query=%22jan+Jacob+bruintjes%22&page=1&coll=ddd&identifier=ddd:011011399:mpeg21:a0234&resultsidentifier=ddd:011011399:mpeg21:a0234&rowid=8>.

<sup>126</sup> ABS Praha, f. 302, sign. 302-73-3, Dodatek k protokolu s plk. v. v. Frankem, p. 2.

<sup>127</sup> BA Berlin-Lichterfelde, Sign. R 3018/3019, Hespers, Theodor, geb. 12. 12. 1903.

<sup>128</sup> <https://collections.arolsen-archives.org/de/document/7142724>.

### Alois Frank in the Netherlands on the eve and at the beginning of the Second World War (1939–1940)

A new phase of intelligence activity began for the officers of “the eleven” on March 15. As the first exiles from military circles, they formed the core of the future Czechoslovak foreign resistance, which slowly and intricately constituted itself in the following months, in several centres: in London, Paris and Warsaw. Especially in the initial period, Moravec’s men were greatly assisted by Major Gibson, who arranged accommodation, British passports, etc.<sup>129</sup> However, thanks to the cash collected, the Czechoslovak intelligence officers were financially independent of the British.

In the early days, Moravec’s officers performed the following tasks: 1) distribution and study of the material brought in, 2) utilization of the intelligence and defence material for the British Intelligence Service, 3) reestablishing the existing agency network, and 4) expansion of the agency network.<sup>130</sup> In addition, the London intelligence group needed to establish reliable links with the forming domestic resistance in the occupied Protectorate, and it was also important to ensure the evacuation of their wives and children who might have been threatened with arrest after 15 March. Without moving their families to safety abroad, the members of Moravec’s group would have exposed themselves to possible blackmail by the Prague Gestapo, which had František Moravec and Josef Bartík in its sights from the beginning of September 1938 at the latest.<sup>131</sup> The names of the other officers also soon found their way onto German lists of inconvenient persons. All members of Moravec’s “intelligence eleven”, as well as Rudolf Šiman and Karel Erban, can therefore be found in the so-called Nazi Black Book (*Die Sonderfahndungsliste G.B.*), compiled in 1940 by Walter Schellenberg, an officer of the Nazi intelligence service SD. It was on the basis of this list that individuals were to be arrested after the successful execution of the planned German invasion of Great Britain (*Operation Seelöwe*).<sup>132</sup>

In May 1939, the situation in Moravec’s group partially cleared up. Through the illegal intelligence group *Three Counsellors*, consisting of three former officers of the intelligence department of the General Staff (Staff Capt. Antonín Longa, Staff Capt. František Fárek and Staff Capt. Alois Čáslavka), it managed to establish contacts with home.<sup>133</sup> It was the *Counsellors* who organized the successful departure of ten families (wives and children) of intelligence officers to nearby Poland in the summer of 1939 – namely, Alois Čáslavka, who also transferred his own family of three to Poland after the plan to remove the families to France failed.<sup>134</sup> He thus strengthened the ranks of the emerging foreign resistance and became the “twelfth” officer of the intelligence group. Moravec now had eleven officers at his disposal, whom he decided to deploy throughout Europe. A Czechoslovak intelligence post was set up in Paris under the code name “*Karel*” (sometimes also “*Karla*”) for the purpose

<sup>129</sup> ABS Praha, f. 302, sign. 302-74-1/15-16, Protokol s E. Strankmüllerem, 25. 11. 1949.

<sup>130</sup> KOKOŠKA, Jaroslav – KOKOŠKA, Stanislav. Spor o agenta A-54, p. 132.

<sup>131</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 20, sign. 20-7-1, Tajný úřední záznam, 8. 9. 1938.

<sup>132</sup> Hoover Institution Library materials, Hoover ID: DA585. A1 G37 (V), Die Sonderfahndungsliste G.B. Available at <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/55425/die-sonderfahndungsliste-gb>; accessed 26. 7. 2023.

<sup>133</sup> NA Praha, f. Svaz protifašistických bojovníků – ústřední výbor Praha, pozůstalost Františka Moravce, unprocessed materials, Zpráva Tondy (Antonína Longy) ze dne 3. 5. 1939, p. 1.

<sup>134</sup> VYHLÍDAL, Milan. Vojenská zpravodajci proti nacistické okupaci: Odbojová skupina Tři konšelé. Praha: Academia, 2022, pp. 139–166.

of gathering intelligence information. In the summer of 1939, the head of this headquarters was entrusted to Lt. Oldřich Tichý, to whom were subordinated Mjr. Karel Paleček and Staff Capt. František Fryč.<sup>135</sup> Other officers were sent on shorter intelligence missions in the same year, for example to Poland (Josef Bartík,<sup>136</sup> Alois Frank<sup>137</sup>), which was of course a critical country not only due to its location but also with regard to promising intelligence cooperation.<sup>138</sup> Traditional neutral countries such as Sweden, where active compatriots lived – and where Alois Frank was sent in August 1939 to find out what had happened to the intelligence pool there,<sup>139</sup> and later twice Alois Čáslavka as well (first in September 1939 and twice from June to August 1941) – also proved important in terms of intelligence and connections with home.<sup>140</sup> Of particular importance were the Netherlands, where the above-mentioned AIC “*Libuše*”, led by Staff Captain Rudolf Šiman, had existed since 1936. When Col. Hájek joined the French Foreign Legion, it was necessary to reinforce the staff, and it for this difficult task Colonel Moravec chose Major Alois Frank.

Frank arrived with a new identity in the Netherlands on 14 May 1939. He officially posed as Alfred Frank, a British citizen born in Bristol, the representative of the London coal company Foster & Co., specialising in the sale of British coal and coke abroad.<sup>141</sup> Unofficially, he became the head of the Czechoslovak intelligence branch – AIC “*Libuše*” – on the same date. His main tasks included:

- 1) rebuild the tattered agency network of 1936–1939, since many agents and confidants went silent after the events of Munich and the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia;

- 2) resume contact with agent A-54, ideally through personal meetings in the neutral Netherlands (earlier meetings in Prague were no longer an option after the intelligence officers left for Britain);

- 3) try to expand the intelligence agency network against Germany;

- 4) establish a connection with home, i.e. with the occupied Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia;

- 5) provide a shortwave radio for communication purposes during the war;

- 6) contact British intelligence officers from MI6, S. P. Best and R. H. Stevens.

Immediately after his arrival in the Netherlands, Frank settled down in the quiet Hague and began to work on his assignments. He was in regular telephone contact with Moravec’s London

<sup>135</sup> GEBHART, Jan. „Českoslovenští vojenští zpravodajci v Paříži (1939–1940).“ *Moderní dějiny* 3 (1995), pp. 129–138; for broader context, see STRAKA, Karel. „K počátkům československého zahraničního odboje po osmdesáti letech – francouzská perspektiva.“ In: *Historie a vojenství* 69 (2020), issue 2, pp. 4–51.

<sup>136</sup> For a more detailed discussion of Josef Bartík’s two Polish missions, see KREISINGER, Pavel. *Emigracyjny ośrodek wywiadu czechosłowackiego w Londynie i jego kontakty z polskim Oddziałem II. Działalność majora Josefa Bartíka*. (Manuscript of a chapter for a collective monograph being prepared by the Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (IPN, Institute of National Remembrance) in Wrocław, head of the authors’ collective D. Dąbrowski.

<sup>137</sup> Frank went to Poland twice in June 1939, but with different tasks than Josef Bartík. The second time, on 23 June, he visited Český Těšín, where he brought three short-wave radios to establish contact with the domestic resistance in the Protectorate. Later he was to supervise the transfer of officers’ wives and children. See *Paměti...*, pp. 65–79.

<sup>138</sup> Most recently on this topic DĄBROWSKI, Dariusz. „The Hot Summer of 1939. Polish and Czechoslovak Military Intelligence on the Eve of the Outbreak of War in the Light of Reports by Polish Officers.“ In: *Historica Olomucensia* 65 (2024), issue 1, pp. 22–41.

<sup>139</sup> AMP, f. Plukovník Alois Frank, *Zápisky...*, pp. 111–113.

<sup>140</sup> STAŇKOVÁ, K. *Plukovník...*, op. cit., pp. 132–139.

<sup>141</sup> *Paměti...*, p. 58.

intelligence headquarters. For longer calls, Frank travelled to neighbouring Rotterdam, *“a large busy port city from where thousands of business calls were connected overseas daily, so that my calls to London fell into this tangle like drops of water into the sea”*.<sup>142</sup> Frank sent less important written messages to Moravec in London by airmail, and the more important and urgent ones by diplomatic pouch via the British Embassy.<sup>143</sup> Frank needed a suitable place for secret meetings with agents and for receiving parcels. For conspiratorial reasons, he lived in rented apartments, and in order to not attract too much attention, he brought no visitors there. In addition to the existing agency network inherited from Šiman, he decided to rely on a network of newly recruited compatriots. The aforementioned Karel Erban helped him to find suitable candidates. Although he was transferred from The Hague to the “headquarters” of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Prague on 1 January 1939 and subsequently dismissed and placed at the disposal of the Minister without Portfolio Jiří Havelka, he decided to “go on vacation” after the events of March 1939 and return to the Netherlands with his wife Běla in order to work for the emerging foreign resistance since 24 April 1939.<sup>144</sup>

A couple of Czech expatriates became absolutely crucial to Frank’s activities. These were the merchant Karel Jelínek, settled in The Hague since 1921,<sup>145</sup> and his partner Eliška Hájková (née Adler), who was of Jewish origin.<sup>146</sup> They both lived in a shared household in the very centre of The Hague at 148 Noordeinde, and their company (*Kunshandel*) De Favoriet, which focused on the import and sale of art and luxury goods from Czechoslovakia (mainly cut glass, leather goods, ceramics and jewellery)<sup>147</sup> rented the same house. The company prospered and was later able to open a branch in Rotterdam. Jelínek entrusted its management to his niece, Božena Ordánová, who from 1935 lived at Jelínek’s address and commuted to Rotterdam.<sup>148</sup> Alois Frank used one of the rooms in the De Favoriet house as his office, where he collected all the mail and agency reports. Božena Ordánová’s contacts proved to be useful in establishing the connection with home: her older brother Jan Ordán (born 19 June 1897) was active in the domestic resistance in the Protectorate and was in regular written contact with his sister. Soon he began to provide important information regarding the circumstances of the Nazi occupation in the Vsetín region. Between 15 July 1939<sup>149</sup> and his arrest in February 1940, he managed to send approximately 100 letters written in secret ink to the Netherlands, in which he focused not only on the course of the occupation but also on the war preparations in the summer months of 1939. He took note of war production at the Vsetín armaments factory and monitored the situation at the railway stations where war materials were loaded. He even managed to secretly

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<sup>142</sup> Paměti..., p. 59.

<sup>143</sup> ABS Praha, f. 302, Sign. 302-72-3, Dodatek, p. 3.

<sup>144</sup> AMZV Praha, OSO, Karel Erban, Odůvodnění přihlášky o odškodnění, undated.

<sup>145</sup> Haags Gemeentearchief, Bevolkingsregister gemeente Den Haag, Inv. Nr. 838 (Jeha – Jenezon). Jelínek, Karl, 20. 5. 1891. Available at [https://haagsgemeentearchief.nl/genealogy/personenoverzicht?mivast=59&mizig=100&miadt=59&miview=tbl&milang=nl&mizk\\_alle=Jelínek](https://haagsgemeentearchief.nl/genealogy/personenoverzicht?mivast=59&mizig=100&miadt=59&miview=tbl&milang=nl&mizk_alle=Jelínek).

<sup>146</sup> Haags Gemeentearchief, Bevolkingsregister gemeente Den Haag, Inv. Nr. 647 (Haire – Hakkenbroek), Hajek/Adler, Eliska, 17. 11. 1891.

<sup>147</sup> Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Reichskommissariat in den besetzten Niederländischen Gebieten, 1940–1945, Inv. Nr. 248, Jelínek Karl (Aktenzeichen J 61), Schlussbericht über das beschlagnahmte Vermögen des Karl Jelínek, 15. 8. 1943.

<sup>148</sup> Haags Gemeentearchief, Bevolkingsregister gemeente Den Haag, Inv. Nr. 1318 (Oppenkamp – Ormel), Ordanova, Božena, 20. 2. 1904.

<sup>149</sup> VUA-VHA Praha, Collection 37, Sign. 37-165-1/117, Zpráva z vlasti (zdroj příbuzní Jelínkovi ze Vsetína).

take a series of photographs of reinforced concrete anti-tank barriers; these photographs were delivered to the Netherlands and then to London.<sup>150</sup> When the Czechoslovak foreign army began to emerge in France in the autumn of 1939, Ordáň was asked to get hold of old interwar military training books, which also reached their destination. Some of the messages he sent were transmitted by foreign radio from London<sup>151</sup> and Ordáň heard them himself in the Protectorate.<sup>152</sup> Interesting is the “Christmas” report of 25 December 1939, informing about the arrest of the legendary mayor of Vsetín, inventor and resistance fighter Josef Sousedík (1894–1944)<sup>153</sup>. At the end of the broadcast, two Protectorate jokes were made, one of which concerns listening to foreign radio: “*In our country, from the New Year, we will pay 22 CZK for radio listening, namely 10 CZK to London, 10 CZK to Paris and 2 CZK will remain for radio listening at home.*”<sup>154</sup> Soon afterwards, Ordáň was arrested by the Vsetín Gestapo (1 February 1940) and subsequently sentenced by the Nazi People’s Court in Breslau to 2.5 years’ imprisonment for participation in the domestic resistance (namely for the distribution of illegal leaflets *Krajinská stráž* (*Local Guard*)). He stayed in prison until 9 January 1943. He managed to conceal his connections to the foreign resistance, which probably saved him from a much heavier sentence.<sup>155</sup> In addition to Jelínek, Ordáňová and Hájková, Frank also relied on a network of other compatriots, of whom there were around 2,500 in the Netherlands in 1938. Roughly half of them lived in the industrial area of Limburg, where they made their living as miners.<sup>156</sup> These were used extensively by Frank. On the other hand, the potential of the Baťa employers from Best (a suburb of Eindhoven), where a Baťa factory was built in 1933 – it had almost 1000 workers employees<sup>157</sup> from Czecho-Slovakia and later from the Protectorate, including workers of Jewish origin, sent there as part of the so-called “controlled transfers” in the crisis years of 1938–1939<sup>158</sup> – apparently remained unused.

Dutch nationals who sympathised with the Czechs after the Nazi occupation (such as the journalist Van Blankenstein or the painter and designer Chris Lebeau) were not left out, as well as some of the Czech exiles who fled from Nazism to the Netherlands after 15 March 1939 (especially the aforementioned Karel Erban or Frank’s wife Anna, whom he used as a liaison). A detailed overview is given in the following table.

<sup>150</sup> Ibidem, sign. 37-165-1/185–189, Morava – zprávy, 4 fotografie, 1 lístek.

<sup>151</sup> The BBC began wartime broadcasts in Czech on 8 September, but the first commentary by František Moravec was broadcast on 27. 1. 1941. For more details on Moravec’s commentaries see TOMEK, Prokop. *Mluví důstojník...*, op. cit.

<sup>152</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 255/1946, file no. 68474/47, Ordáň Jan.

<sup>153</sup> Josef Sousedík invented electromechanical power transmission. His discovery was used by the legendary Czechoslovak trains *Slovenská strela*, which ran on the Prague-Bratislava line at speeds of up to 130 km/h. For more details see EFMERTOVÁ, Marcela C. „Mihla se očím jako střela, bez páry, kouře k svému cíli spěla“: Josef Sousedík (1894–1944). In: *Pivo, zbraně i tvarůžky: podnikatelé meziválečného Československa ve víru konjunktury a krizi*. Praha: Maxdorf, 2014, pp. 86–103.

<sup>154</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 37, sign. 37-165-1/735, II. díl, Zpráva z domova, 25. 12. 1939, pp. 1–2.

<sup>155</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 255/1946, file no. 68474/47, Ordáň Jan.

<sup>156</sup> SKLENÁŘOVÁ, Sylva. *Čechoslováci v zemích dnešního Beneluxu v meziválečném období (1918–1938)*. Praha: Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, 2013, p. 40.

<sup>157</sup> BALABAN, Milan, Lukáš PERUTKA, Simon PAYE, Dalibor SAVIČ and Jan HERMAN. “The Social Welfare System in Bata Company Towns (1920s–1950s): Between Transnational Vision and Local Settings.” In: *International Review of Social History* 68 (2023), issue 1, p. 25.

<sup>158</sup> Cf. MAREK, Martin. „Z baťovského Zlína do světa. Směry transferu a kvalifikační kritéria přesouvaných baťovských zaměstnanců v letech 1938–1941.“ In: *Moderní dějiny* 19 (2011), issue 1, pp. 157–197; HERMAN, Jan. „Baťa, Židé a Steinův seznam (1938–1939).“ In: *Moderní dějiny* 26 (2018), issue 1, pp. 111–134.

Table 2: List of Czech compatriots, exiles and Dutch nationals used by Major Alois Frank for the activities of AIC “*Libuše*” in 1939–1940<sup>159</sup>

Surname and first name	Occupation (residence)	Date and place of birth	Type of cooperation (circumstances of arrest)	Date and place of death (note)
AMBROŽ (AMBROS), Miloš (Ing.)	trader, employee of an iron cartel (9 Stadhouderskade, Amsterdam)	15 November 1910, Rousínov u Brna	He received messages from Vojtěch Klátil.	?
van BLANKENSTEIN, Marcus <sup>160</sup>	Jewish-Dutch journalist (The Hague)	13. 6. 1880, Ouderkerk aan den IJssel (near Rotterdam)	Delivering foreign news and policy briefings on the current situation in Europe.	18 Sep 1964, The Hague In May 1940, he fled from the Nazi occupation into exile. In Great Britain he became editor-in-chief of the weekly <i>Vrij Nederland</i> and was one of the leading figures of the Dutch exile. <sup>161</sup>
ERBAN, Karel	former press attaché of the Czechoslovak Embassy in The Hague	5 May 1896, Votice	Frank’s closest associate. He tipped off compatriots and new agents.	15 November 1969, Tucson, Arizona, USA <sup>162</sup> (after February 1948 he fled into exile in the Netherlands).

<sup>159</sup> Sorted alphabetically. Based on the author’s research at the Security Services Archive in Prague, the Federal Archives in Berlin-Lichterfelde, the National Archives in The Hague and the Military Central Archives – Military Historical Archives in Prague (unless otherwise stated).

<sup>160</sup> Cooperation with the Czechoslovak intelligence service is also mentioned by KLINKERT, Wim. Espionage Is Practiced Here on a Vast Scale. The Neutral Netherlands 1914–1940. In: Perspectives on Military Intelligence from the First World War to Mali. Between Learning and Law. The Hague: Asser Press, 2017, pp. 42–43.

<sup>161</sup> <https://resources.huygens.knaw.nl/bwn1880-2000/lemmata/bwn1/blankenstein>.

<sup>162</sup> DEJMEK, Jindřich – NĚMEČEK, Jan – MICHÁLEK, Slavomír. Diplomacie Československa, Díl II. Biografický slovník československých diplomatů (1918–1992). Praha: Academia, 2013, p. 60.



FRANKOVÁ, Anna (wife of Alois Frank), code name Formánková	Housewife, later a worker of the Czechoslovak Red Cross in Great Britain) (37 Nijenrodestraat, The Hague)	3 May 1902, Plzen	Liaison, responsible for picking up messages from secret intelligence boxes in The Hague and Amsterdam.	
HÁJKOVÁ (née Adlerová), Eliška	Partner of the merchant Karel Jelínek (148 Noordeinde, The Hague)	17 November 1891, Prague	Sentenced on 29 May 1943 (VGH Dresden).	Executed on 15 October 1943 in Dresden.
HOEKSTRA, J. (K.?)	Owner of the property, including the apartment where A. Frank and his wife lived (19 Aron-skelweg, The Hague)	? (Netherlands)	Informant (checking persons from the Groningen area recommended by Chief Agent Hespers).	?
JELÍNEK, Karel	Art dealer: <i>Kunshandel De Favoriet</i> (148 Noordeinde, The Hague)	20 May 1891, Prague	Owner of an apartment in The Hague, maintenance and operation of a radio station, liaison.	Executed on 15 October 1943 in Dresden (18:18). <sup>163</sup>
KLÁTIL, Vojtěch (František)	Secretary of the International Federation of Transport Workers (river navigation, etc.) (130-II Woestduin-straat, Amsterdam)	1904 (?), Vienna (about 35 years old, Viennese Czech)	He supplied reports on military transports (Rhine and Maas river basins), tipster.	?

<sup>163</sup> Gedenkstätte Münchner Platz Dresden, executed persons catalogue, no. 3593, Jelínek Karl.

LEBEAU, Joris Johannes Christiaan (Chris)	Dutch painter and designer (textiles, postage stamps) <sup>164</sup> of anar- chist-Com- munist ori- entation (24 Lange Beesten- markt, The Hague)	26. 5. 1878, Amsterdam	He offered the possibility of an emergency overnight stay, messages from agents were sent to his address (secret mailbox), he was trained as a radio operator together with his wife (he was arrested on 3 November 1943 for helping Dutch Jews).	2 April 1945, Dachau concentration camp <sup>165</sup>
LUŽNÁ, Miloslava (wife of Jaroslav Lužný)	House- wife (later a worker of the Czecho- slovak Red Cross in Great Brit- ain)	28 April 1903, Hořice	Liaison, message pick-up and delivery.	?
LUŽNÝ, Jaroslav	Former at- taché of the Czechoslo- vak Embas- sy, represen- tative of the Protectorate Export Office in The Hague (from 1 January 1940) (Am- sterdam)	10 August 1896, Slavkov u Brna	He was bringing news from the German consulate.	18. 10. 1952 <sup>166</sup> On 16 May 1940 he took part in the conscription to the Czechoslovak. Army in France, but was not drafted for health reasons (scars on his neck and wrists after a suicide attempt). Subsequently, he was sent to the hospital in Béziers. After the fall of France he was evacuated to Great Britain, where he found employment as an official of the Czechoslovak Council of State. <sup>167</sup>

<sup>164</sup> <https://by.textielmuseum.nl/en/brands/chris-lebeau/>.

<sup>165</sup> <https://www.oorlogsbronnen.nl/tijddlijn/Joris+Johannes+Christiaan+Lebeau/86/6243>.

<sup>166</sup> VUA-VHA, Sb. 255/1946, file no. 107447/69, Lužná.

<sup>167</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 24, Lužný Jaroslav, nar. 10. 8. 1896.

ORDÁŇOVÁ, Božena (niece of Karel Jelínek, sister of Jan Ordáň)	Branch manager of <i>Kunshandel</i> De Favoriet in Rotterdam (65 Coolsingel, Rotterdam)	20. 2. 1904, Vsetín	She provided news from the Protectorate through her brother Jan Ordáň.	After 1989, The Hague. <sup>168</sup>
VEDRAL (VETHRAL), Josef	Dealer in stringed musical instruments; chairman of the Czecho- slovak colony – the Havlíček Society (19 Molenstraat, The Hague)	27 March 1883, Paseky (nad Jizerou?)	Messages could be sent to his address (obtained by Šiman). <sup>169</sup>	After 1946, the Netherlands. <sup>170</sup>
WEIGNER (M.D.)	Professor (Leiden)	?	Address for messages from home (probably not used).	?
ZAHRADNÍK, Vilém	Miner, chairman of the St. Prokop So- ciety <sup>171</sup> (237 Heerlenweg, Heerlen, part of Heerlen- heide)	circa 1901 (he was 38 years old in 1939) <sup>172</sup>	Tipster, he was supposed to look for capable agents walkers.	?

<sup>168</sup> E-mail correspondence between the author and Dana Skopalová (née Ordáňová), October 2024.

<sup>169</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 37, sign. 37-165-1/7 (1. část, rok 1939), Schránka Vedral, Haag 12. 5. 1939.

<sup>170</sup> Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Nederlandse Beheersinstituut (1945-1947), Inv. Nr. 178372, J. J. Vedral.

<sup>171</sup> The Roman Catholic St. Procopius Society was founded in 1934 and was named after the patron saint of miners. The society was strictly apolitical and organized mainly lectures, musical and theatrical performances, as well as tours to explore the art and industrial collections in the Netherlands. For more details see SKLENÁŘOVÁ, Sylva. Čechoslováci v zemích dnešního Beneluxu v meziválečném období (1918–1938). Praha: Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, 2013, pp. 101–102.

<sup>172</sup> ABS Praha, f. 302, sign. 302-38-4/42, Typy-hlášení, 14. 6. 1939.

?	Czech miners (Heerlen)	x	Agents-walkers (carrying correspondence and sending mail from Germany to the Protectorate).	?
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In addition to reaching out to compatriots and Dutch nationals, Frank was of course tasked with reviving the cooperation with the former agency network from 1936–1939, even though some of the old agents did not prove very successful. This was the case of the Reich-German emigrant and musician by profession Werner de Levie, who worked as a tipster for the AIC “*Libuše*” – he did not have a residence permit in the Netherlands and was also the target of complaints that he had “*run up a lot of debts in the neighbourhood and was always hanging around cafés and with women*”. As a result, he was arrested by the Dutch police in July 1939 and threatened with deportation back to Germany. Moreover, as stated by an unnamed agent-walker from Oude Pekela (identified as Jan Bruintjes), the address of Frank’s homeowner Hoekstra, to whom de Levie was supposed to send messages, was also found during the police search.<sup>173</sup> As a result of this, Frank decided to move to a new address at 37 Nijenrodestraat.<sup>174</sup>

The Czechoslovak intelligence was also worried about agent Harry Richter (A-906), who wanted to fulfil his patriotic duty at any cost after he was granted Czechoslovak citizenship and in the autumn of 1939 he intended to volunteer to join the emerging Czechoslovak foreign army in France. At the same time, however, he worked for the British MI6,<sup>175</sup> which was not enthusiastic at all about his possible departure to another country. One of the Czech officers made a similar comment (it is not clear from the reports whether it was written by Šiman or Frank): “*I have no doubt about the sincerity of his intentions. For the time being Richter belongs to the staff of Br. Passport Control Office in The Hague. For his travels he has a car [with] diplomatic [plates], which of course makes his work considerably easier, given that he can easily get through all the controls near the border.*”<sup>176</sup>

A prominent Protectorate exile who fled to the Netherlands in 1939 to escape the Nazi occupation was also interested in cooperating with the Czechoslovak intelligence service: Josef Ludvík Fischer (1894–1973), a left-wing intellectual, professor of philosophy and the first post-war rector of the restored Olomouc University. After a short trip to Paris, where he met other Czechoslovak exiles, he contacted Karel Erban and wanted to meet the Czechoslovak intelligence officer working in the Netherlands at any cost. However, Professor Fischer was rejected by Erban himself for his alleged “intellectual impracticality”. In an intelligence report sent to Moravec’s headquarters in London, it is stated that the professor “*has no idea of such matters and could only cause unpleasant complications...*”<sup>177</sup> The question is

<sup>173</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 37, sign. 37-165-1/116, Libuše – Werner de Levie – zatčení, 15. 7. 1939.

<sup>174</sup> Ibidem, sign. 37-166-1/139, Libuše – změna bytu hlášení, 29. 7. 1939.

<sup>175</sup> Richter’s name was also added to a special search list, the so-called Nazi Black Book. Hoover Institution Library materials, Hoover ID: DA585. A1 G37 (V), Die Sonderfahndungsliste G.B., p. 172, no. 53, Richter Harry. Available at <https://digitalcollections.hoover.org/objects/55425/die-sonderfahndungsliste-gb>, accessed 26. 7. 2023.

<sup>176</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 37, sign. 37-166-1/272, Libuše – Harry Richter hlášení, 15. 9. 1939.

<sup>177</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 37, sign. 37-165-1 (II. část) /628, pplk. Vaněk – rozhovor s prof. Fišerem, 5. 12. 1939.

whether this refusal was not short-sighted. Fischer, who was living underground in Amsterdam, soon made extensive contacts with Dutch resistance fighters and sailors, centred around the left-wing underground newspaper *Het Parool* (founded in 1941). With one group of resistance fighters (consisting, among others, of the sailor Johannes Frans Goedhart<sup>178</sup> and the Jewish resistance fighter Carl Martin Zeller Mayer<sup>179</sup>) Fischer was to sail secretly to Great Britain on 21 March 1942. However, the group was betrayed by the Rotterdam driver Henke Luyendijk, and only Fischer – hidden in a large chest – survived the Gestapo raid. The others were either executed in the sand dunes of Waalsdorpervlakte or sent to concentration camps.<sup>180</sup> Fischer himself (using the nickname “Joost” spent the rest of the war in Amsterdam, where he hid in the hustle and bustle of the big city at many addresses, mostly with various professors. He earned his living by teaching Czech and giving secret apartment lectures in philosophy.<sup>181</sup>

Of the former collaborators, the most reliable were the agents-walkers, namely Geert Gernand and Hendrik Smit, who lived near the German border and made observation trips to Germany to monitor the deployment of the German army. Gernand, for example, made a three-day trip along the Ems River in the Leer–Pappenburg–Meppen–Lingen area in July 1939, while Hendrik Smit brought reports from the Osnabrück–Hannover–Linden area at the same time.<sup>182</sup> One of Frank’s most effective agents during this period was Theo Hespers (codenamed “*Catholic*”), a German exile and president of the German Catholic Youth Association in exile, operating from inland Eindhoven in 1939–1940 and in possession of a Dutch passport.<sup>183</sup> He sent his agents to Germany via the border town of Venlo, and the agents in question then brought news of the German army from his hometown of Mönchengladbach, as well as from Krefeld and Düsseldorf.<sup>184</sup> With the generous financial support of the Czechoslovak Intelligence Service, Hespers financed the publication of the illegal magazine *Kameradschaft*.<sup>185</sup> With many of the surviving reports on the German army, however, it is impossible to determine who brought them, as they are marked only with the inscription “reliable”.<sup>186</sup> Still, it can be assumed that these anonymous reliable walkers were mostly Hespers’ agents. One can get at least a partial idea of their performance from the part of the cash book kept by Rudolf Šiman, where the rewards paid for the month of September 1939 are recorded.<sup>187</sup>

<sup>178</sup> <https://oorlogsgravenstichting.nl/personen/50599/johannes-frans-goedhart>.

<sup>179</sup> <https://beeldbank.40-45nu.nl/index.cfm/search/detail?id=aada8797901511e383cd00163e3251a4&browseaction=search.themas&currentrow=3>.

<sup>180</sup> „Professor Fischer verborg zich in een kist.“ In: *Het Parool*, 20 maart 1947, p. 3. Available at <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/kranten/view?coll=ddd&identifier=ABCDDD:010829561:mpeg21:a0093>.

<sup>181</sup> MUSIL, Jiří V. J. L. Fischer v nizozemském exilu. In: Josef Ludvík Fischer. 6. 11. 1984 – 17. 2. 1973. Sborník ze semináře k 105. výročí narození. Olomouc: Vlastivědná společnost muzejní v Olomouci, 2001, pp. 51–72.

<sup>182</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 37, sign. 37-165-1/160-161, Libuše, zprávy chodců Gernanda a Smita, 11. 8. 1939.

<sup>183</sup> Ibidem, sign. 37-165-1 (I. část) /361, agent Hespers – holandský pas.

<sup>184</sup> ABS, f. 302, sign. 302-73-3, a map, undated and unpaginated.

<sup>185</sup> Ibidem, sign. 302-73-3/30-32, Úřední záznam, 7. 6. 1939. Copies of the *Kameradschaft*: *Schriften junger deutscher magazine* were preserved in Hespers’ court file, where they formed part of the evidence. BA Berlin-Lichterfelde, Sign. R 30181319 (Hespers, Theodor, 12. 12. 1903), Teil. 3, Bd. 4.

<sup>186</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 37, sign. 37-165-1 (I. část) /719.

<sup>187</sup> Ibidem, sign. 37-165-1 (II. část) /691, Vydání – září 1939.

Table 3. Agency issues for September 1939

Date of payment	Name of agent <sup>188</sup>	Number of receipts (messages delivered)	Paid in Dutch guilders (G)	Paid in Reichsmarks (RM)
1.–13. 9.	Plaggeman?	5	150	40
8.–27. 9.	Noor?	4	130	x
13.–22. 9.	Hulstijn?	3	130	100
25.–27. 9.	Arends?	2	82	200
8. 9.	[Geert] Gernand	1	50	x
9. 9.	Op‘T. Eijnde?	1	20	x
1.–25. 9.	[Hendrik] Smit	5	185	70
7.–27. 9.	[Theo] Hespers	8	650	1700

To get a better idea of the level of remuneration, it is worth noting that the wage of a skilled worker or miner at that time was around 5.70 guilders per shift.<sup>189</sup> The monthly salary for the three intelligence officers (Šiman, Frank and Erban) was 1,050 Dutch guilders.<sup>190</sup> However, not all agents received similarly high fees as Hespers. For example, agent “*Plavec*”, who was recommended to Frank by his Czech compatriot Vojtěch Klátil, supplied colour sketches of German ports and information on the state of German ships and submarines. For 14 sketches and reports he received only the advance of 245 guilders. Czechoslovak intelligence could not evaluate the material themselves, so they passed it on to British MI6, who did not trust the agent. Later, the British caution was justified – this German engineer from the port of Emden (near the German-Dutch border) turned out to be a member of the Abwehr, which Frank learned by accident 20 years after the end of the Second World War.<sup>191</sup>

Vigilance against German agents operating on neutral soil at the beginning of the Second World War was necessary. Through Karl Erban and van Blankenstein, the Czechoslovak officers received an unspecified warning from the deputy commander of the Dutch intelligence service (*De Generale Staf Sectie III*), Major Jacobus G. M. van der Plassch (1887–1961),<sup>192</sup> who – despite formal neutrality of the country – worked closely with the British military attaché W. L. Gibson.<sup>193</sup> The Czechoslovak officers already had their experience with the German agents: the double agent Wilhelm Moerz (also referred to in the archival sources as Verner Mörz<sup>194</sup>), who had worked for Czechoslovak military intelligence since the 1930s, arrived in the neutral Netherlands. From 1 March 1935 at the latest, he lived with

<sup>188</sup> If there is a question mark after the name, the person has not been identified from other sources.

<sup>189</sup> SKLENÁŘOVÁ, Sylva. Čechoslováci v zemích dnešního Beneluxu v meziválečném období (1918–1938). Praha: Masarykův ústav a Archiv AV ČR, 2013, p. 50.

<sup>190</sup> Sign. 37-165-1 (II. část) /691, Vydání – září 1939.

<sup>191</sup> Cf. Paměti..., pp. 114–115; VÚA-VHA Praha, sign. 37-165-2/330-338, Ing. Beck, 1. 5. 1940.

<sup>192</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 37, sign. 37-165-1 (II. část) /383, hlášení, 6. 10. 1939.

<sup>193</sup> KLINKERT, W. In the interest..., op. cit., p. 61.

<sup>194</sup> His own name was Werner Mikkelsen, born 18. 2. 1907 in Hamburg.



his wife Liselotte in Prague, where he worked as a merchant.<sup>195</sup> After 15 March 1939, agent Moerz remained in the Protectorate where he was tracked down by Abwehr Major Heinz Schmalschläger (1893–1972)<sup>196</sup> and “dragged” to the German side. Subsequently, Moerz was to go to Switzerland and establish contacts with the Czechoslovak intelligence as their former agent. Sometime after April 14, 1939, Moerz actually met with the Czechoslovak intelligence officer Staff Capt. Karel Sedláček,<sup>197</sup> who on 30 May 1939 reported to the intelligence headquarters in London about the cooperation that had been initiated. *“I have just informed Mörz that I agree to his meeting with B[artík] in France. Mörz will inform you of the result in Holland. On 26 May [of this year] I transferred to Mörz [...] one thousand Swiss francs, namely: CHF 600.- gratuity for the month of June 1939. CHF 160.- for the purchase of a typewriter. CHF 240.- advance for the trip to Holland. Mörz will send me the account statement.”*<sup>198</sup> According to Alois Frank’s memoirs, Major Bartík’s meeting with Mörz did not take place in France, but in the Netherlands: *“The meeting took place two days later [author’s note: Mjr. Frank does not provide the date of the meeting] in the cafeteria of the Medical Institute in Schweningen. But the meeting was over very soon. I observed the event only from afar. The meeting collapsed at the outset, because the head of the defence service [Bartík] had grasped the real motivation of [Mörz’s] offer [to resume intelligence cooperation], because he knew for certain what had brought Michelson to Holland, and parted with him coldly.”*<sup>199</sup> According to Frank, it was Josef Bartík who exposed Moerz as an agent working for Nazi Germany at the very first meeting.<sup>200</sup> This assertion would be confirmed by the fact that during his second intelligence mission to Poland in the summer of 1939, Josef Bartík handed over to his Polish colleagues an intelligence dossier which included a paper entitled *“Mörz – warning”* and a note that it was a defence matter.<sup>201</sup> Moerz then tried his luck in Great Britain, where he tried to infiltrate the MI6. Even there, however, he failed, as the sister domestic intelligence service – the Security Service (MI5) – had him on its radar since 1938 and kept a detailed file on him. It was finally declassified in 2006 and delimited to the British National Archives.<sup>202</sup> These documents show that in June 1940 Moerz was spotted on Regent Street in London. The MI5, which had his photograph, launched an extensive search for him, but with no result. In 1941 it was concluded that the agent had successfully evaded arrest and left Great Britain. Later, Moerz was removed from

<sup>195</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection Vojenské zpravodajství, Osobní svazky 1936–1938, no. 42604, Verner Mörtz, carton no. 4.

<sup>196</sup> Heinz Schmalschläger was in the Abwehr from 1935. In 1939–1941 he was assigned to the Abwehrstelle in Vienna, but before the occupation of Bohemia and Moravia in March he was sent to Prague four weeks earlier on the orders of the OKW as an intelligence officer with special secret tasks. On 15. 3. 1939 he was supposed to take over the files of the Czechoslovak intelligence department, which did not happen, as they were partly taken to Great Britain and partly burned. Cf. BA-MA, Freiburg, PERS 6/11299, Schmalschläger, Heinz (geb. 17. 1. 1893), ABS Praha, f. 52, sign. 52-87-4, Německá vojenská zpravodajská služba. Obrana-Abwehr, p. 39.

<sup>197</sup> KOKOŠKA, Jaroslav – KOKOŠKA, Stanislav: Spor o agenta A-54. Kapitoly z dějin československé zpravodajské služby. Praha: Naše vojsko, 1994, p. 143.

<sup>198</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 37, sign. 37-251-3, Zprávy od „Kazi“. Zpráva z 30. 5. 1939, p. 12.

<sup>199</sup> AMP, f. Plukovník Alois Frank, Zápisky..., p. 101.

<sup>200</sup> Another officer of the “intelligence eleven”. ABS, f. 302, sign. 302-74-1, Dodatek k protokolu, sepsaný dne 30. ledna 1950 ve věznicí v Ruzyni s plk. gšt. v. v. Emilem Strankmüllerem, p. 6.

<sup>201</sup> ABS, f. 302, sign. 302-89-1, Seznam zpravodajského materiálu předaného polské zprav. službě.

<sup>202</sup> <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/output/1-march-2006-releases-german-intelligence-agents-and-suspected-agents.html>, accessed 21. 6. 2012; [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/4775130.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4775130.stm).

the police list of wanted persons. The last report available to the British was dated 28 April 1955. According to this report, Moerz returned to his native Germany and lived in Frankfurt am Main.<sup>203</sup>

The Abwehr was not the only Nazi intelligence service operating in the neutral Netherlands. In particular, the “Venlo Incident” of 9 November 1939, successfully orchestrated by Heydrich’s Security Service (*Sicherheitsdienst*) officers Alfred Helmuth Naujocks (1911–1966) and Walter Schellenberg (1910–1952), has been written in golden letters in the history of espionage. It was then that the SD abducted two British MI6 intelligence officers (Sigismund P. Best and Richard H. Stevens) from the neutral Netherlands across the border into Germany. The third abductee was the Dutch intelligence officer Dirk Klop (1906–1939), who accompanied the two Britons to the border for a secret meeting and was seriously wounded during the shootout. He died the same day in a hospital in Düsseldorf, becoming the first Dutch casualty of the Second World War.<sup>204</sup> The well-known incident in Venlo also complicated the situation for Czechoslovak intelligence officers in the Netherlands, as it were Best and Stevens with whom Frank was to establish closer cooperation. The death of Lieutenant Klop was a major blow, too, as he was one of the few Dutch officers who were at least partially in contact with their Czechoslovak colleagues during the Munich crisis in September 1938.<sup>205</sup> As it turned out later, when Rudolf Šiman was arrested by the Dutch police, contact in the form of an allied officer who would have tried to settle the matter was sorely lacking.<sup>206</sup>

The Venlo incident brings us to November 1939. It was then that Major Alois Frank’s last meeting with Paul Thümmel (A-54) took place on the Dutch territory. In older literature, the importance of such meetings is often overestimated. At this point it should be noted that the Czechoslovak intelligence officers themselves contributed to the spread of the myth of the “all-knowing agent No. 1”, who knew in advance all the dates of the planned German attacks, in their post-war memoirs, starting with the chief of intelligence Moravec and ending with Alois Frank.<sup>207</sup> Even officers who did not meet Thümmel in 1939–1940 mention his reports warning of the Nazi invasion of France in May 1940, etc.<sup>208</sup> It was historians Jaroslav Kokoška and his son Stanislav who helped to clarify the facts. Together with them, we can confirm that only three meetings took place in the Netherlands, on 8 July, 3 August and most recently on 25–27 November. All of them took place at Frank’s conspiracy workplace, set up at Karel Jelinek’s place at 148 Noordeinde. At the second meeting, A-54 is said to have said when the invasion of Poland would take place, but in doing so he merely “*confirmed the well-known fact that, unless the date was changed, the so-called command alert would be launched on 15 August*”.<sup>209</sup> Similarly, another letter was sent by A-54 to the Netherlands

<sup>203</sup> NA London-Kew, sign. KV 2/2106-2107 (Morz, Wilhelm). Available at <https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>.

<sup>204</sup> Cf. JEFFERY, Keith: MI6. The History of the Secret Intelligence Service, 1909–1949. London: Bloomsbury, 2010, pp. 382–386; KLINKERT, W. Espionage..., op. cit., pp. 47–48; ALTENHÖNER, Florian. op. cit., pp. 106–118.

<sup>205</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 37, sign. 37-165-1 (II. část) / 606, 653, Holandsko – situace, 10. 12. 1939.

<sup>206</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 37, sign. 37-165-2/78-83, Záznam o policejní prohlídce u Šimana, 10. 1. 1940.

<sup>207</sup> Private documentation of Ladislav Čapek, audio recording of discussion with Col. Frank, Žinkovy, 28. 11. 1968. Digital copy in possession of the author.

<sup>208</sup> RESSEL, Alfred. Mé cesty válkou. Praha: Mladá fronta, 1975, p. 89.

<sup>209</sup> KOKOŠKA, S. Na neutrálním území..., op. cit., p. 43.

on 26 August 1939, the text of which was telephoned independently to Moravec in London by both Šiman and Frank. However, the letter only confirmed the German mobilisation and made no mention of the exact date of the attack.<sup>210</sup> Similar was the November meeting during which Paul Thümmel stayed for three whole days. In his memoirs, Frank described the results of the meeting in superlatives: *"It is 25 November 1939. The De Favori[e]t shop at 148 Nordeinde enters a man from whom I expect great and decisive news about German preparations and other actions and penetrations in Europe [...] the owner of the firm shows him into a special room prepared for him, where we can discuss all questions undisturbed [...] I offer him black coffee and we soon proceed to the meeting. One of the first reports says that offensive action against Holland cannot be expected in the near future. [...] In the written report, the agent has included among the messages one important thing – Germany is building secret weapons. [...] In November 1939 the first preparations for the assembly of these weapons are to be completed in an underground factory being built on the Baltic coast. [...] He had heard the name Pe[e]nemünde several times and the building of the factory was being carried out by German anti-fascists from the concentration camps..."*<sup>211</sup> The meeting did not, however, bring the desired information about the start of the western campaign, and the "miraculous" weapons were not deployed against Great Britain under the names V-1 and V-2 until 1944.<sup>212</sup> Moreover, it should be mentioned that Thümmel by no means worked for free or out of pure anti-Nazi conviction; on the contrary, he received exorbitant sums for his reports – specifically, in November 1939 he was paid 4,000 Reichsmarks and 20 guilders.<sup>213</sup> Further information about the start of the Western campaign was to be confirmed by A-54 in writing or in person at a meeting in Yugoslavia. However, the "key" telegram, which arrived in The Hague at 9 a.m. on 1 May at the address of De Favoriet, merely mentioned that Thümmel would not be able to attend the planned meeting with Czechoslovak officers in Belgrade on 12 May: *"LIEFERUNG AM 12. 5. 1940 ZUR FIRMA JUGO UNMOEGLICH BRIEF FOLGT – KARL"*<sup>214</sup> However, as František Moravec stated in his post-war memoirs, when Alois Frank forwarded the message to him in London, he subtracted two days from the date and suddenly had the exact date of the start of the western campaign.<sup>215</sup>

In the spring months of 1940, Frank's fears of an invasion of the Netherlands were understandably growing. After Šiman's expulsion, his main collaborator was Karel Erban. Both their wives (Frank's and Erban's) were sent to Paris in advance, from where they later arrived by air in Great Britain after a brief Belgian intermezzo.<sup>216</sup> Frank remained with Erban in the Netherlands until the German invasion, which only confirms that he had no idea of the exact date. One morning he was awakened by the Luftwaffe with its bombing and saw German paratroopers in the sky: *"Shortly after 4 a.m. on May 10, 1940, the press attaché and I left our apartments, since we were too close there to the danger that was descending from the planes onto the Dutch soil."* However, they were immediately arrested by a Dutch patrol. Their documents of different origins (Erban's Czechoslovak diplomatic

<sup>210</sup> ABS, f. 302, sign. 302-195-4/42, Úřední záznam, undated, after 26. 8. 1939.

<sup>211</sup> AMP, f. Plukovník Alois Frank, Zápisky..., pp. 118–120.

<sup>212</sup> RAJLICH, Jiří. Před 70 lety zahájili nacisté útoky tzv. odvetnými zbraněmi. Available at <https://www.vhu.cz/pred-70-lety-zahajili-naciste-utoky-na-velkou-britanii-tzv-odvetnymi-zbranemi/>, accessed at 27. 9. 2024.

<sup>213</sup> KOKOŠKA, J. – KOKOŠKA, S. Spor o agenta..., op. cit., p. 160.

<sup>214</sup> ABS Praha, f. 302, sign. 302-195-3 /43, Telegram odeslaný 30. 4. 1940.

<sup>215</sup> Cf. MORAVEC, František. Špion, jemuž neverili. Praha, 1990, p. 266; KOKOŠKA, J. – KOKOŠKA, S. Spor o agenta..., op. cit., pp. 166–167.

<sup>216</sup> AMP, f. Plukovník Alois Frank, Zápisky..., pp. 143–145.

passport and Frank's passport of a British coal merchant) did not inspire much confidence, and the two men were imprisoned as German spies in a cellar together with captured German paratroopers. Their release was achieved thanks to Erban's courage, as he managed to persuade the guards to make a telephone call with a well-known official of the Dutch Foreign Ministry. The original plan of the two men to get to Belgium and from there to France to join the Czechoslovak foreign army failed: *"Our afternoon attempt to reach the south of The Hague failed because the whole area was sealed off from the seashore to Rotterdam by German paratroopers. The entire 22nd Parachute Division was dropped there. In this situation it was impossible to get to Belgium according to the supposed plan of retreat [...] I had to use the sea and a boat to get to England."* Frank and Erban eventually sought the help of the British Embassy, which put them on an evacuation bus taking 50 British citizens to Amsterdam. However, the journey ended halfway at the Halfweg settlement, where the British persuaded a captain of a cattle boat moored on the adjacent canal to take them to Britain. At midnight on 13–14 May, the refugees boarded and after an 18-hour voyage arrived at the British port of Harwich.<sup>217</sup> Meanwhile, on 14 May, Rotterdam was bombed. During the attack 980 people died and 11,000 houses, 19 churches, 62 schools and 23 hospitals were destroyed,<sup>218</sup> whereupon the Dutch army surrendered on 15 May. On 19 May, the last Dutch territory in Flanders<sup>219</sup> was captured, and only a small part of the Dutch army and navy (about 1,600 men) managed to escape to a safe haven in the British Isles, where by the end of 1940 it had become the third strongest Allied army after the Poles and the Czechoslovaks.<sup>220</sup>

### Epilogue: Alois Frank and his associates after May 1940

After escaping the occupied Netherlands, Mjr. Frank fell ill – during the long stay on the cattle ship, his cheek cavity became infected. Before he could engage in further intelligence work, he had to undergo a serious medical operation, assisted by the personal physician of the Czechoslovak exiled president Edvard Beneš. After recovery, Frank returned to Moravec's group in the autumn of 1940. By then, France had been defeated by Germany and a Czechoslovak government-in-exile had been established in Great Britain, which included the Ministry of National Defence. It was further divided into individual departments, where the 2nd (Intelligence) Department of the Ministry of National Defence, headed by Col. Moravec, retained great influence. Major Frank became from the beginning its stable member<sup>221</sup> as a cipher officer within the cipher group. In July 1942 he was appointed the group's head, already at the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. At the end of 1944 he was to be sent at the rank of Colonel to the southern Italian port city of Bari, where the Czechoslovak military mission was based and from where special airborne operations into the Protectorate were directed

<sup>217</sup> Private documentation of Ladislav Čapek, audio recording of discussion with Col. Frank, Žinkovy, 28. 11. 1968. Digital copy in possession of the author.

<sup>218</sup> SWINT, William A. „May 14 Revisited: The German Air Attack on Rotterdam.“ In: *Aerospace Historian* 21 (1974), issue 1, pp. 14–22.

<sup>219</sup> HANÁK, František. „Obsazení Holandska.“ In: *Vojenské rozhledy* (1941), issue 3, pp. 16–33. The author of this forgotten contemporary analysis is artillery lieutenant of the Czechoslovak Foreign Army František Hanák (born 1912).

<sup>220</sup> BUD, Guy, C. P. “‘The Sanctuary of Them All’: The Politics of Manpower and Nationality in the Armies in Exile in the United Kingdom, 1940–4.” *Historical Research* 97 (2024), pp. 259–279.

<sup>221</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, collection 37, sign. 37-2-5/32, úřední záznam o vykonané přísaze, 12. 12. 1940.

in cooperation with the British SOE, but in the end the trip was abandoned.<sup>222</sup> Frank did not arrive in liberated Czechoslovakia until June 1945. However, as Moravec's man, he could not return to the intelligence department in the new post-war conditions, as the intelligence services were slowly but surely becoming dominated by the Communists. Temporarily he became the commander of the Infantry Battalion 38, based in Beroun, but he was not spared persecution after the Communist putsch in February 1948. Frank was arrested in November 1949 and subsequently imprisoned in solitary confinement for 10 months. Then, in September 1950, he was sentenced by a lower military court to one year's unconditional imprisonment for "*the offence of negligent keeping of state secrets*". After serving his sentence, which included detention, he was again interrogated and persecuted extrajudicially and sent for "re-education" to the infamous forced labour camps (TNP). He spent another 13 months in the camps in Brno and Pardubice. After his release he worked in manual professions in West Bohemia (Kovošrot Plzeň, Zahradnické závody města Plzně).<sup>223</sup> Similar fates awaited other intelligence officers, with the exception of František Moravec, who managed to escape abroad and eventually settled in the USA. Frank was later enlisted in 1955 to cooperate with the Communist secret police – *Státní bezpečnost* (the State Security, code name "*Florian*"). However, the relevant volume has been shredded,<sup>224</sup> and therefore it is impossible to find out exactly what form his cooperation took. Historians and journalists started to show interest in it only in the relaxed 1960s. This resulted in various newspaper articles<sup>225</sup> and a public talk in the West Bohemian village of Žinkovy, which took place on 28 November 1968.<sup>226</sup> Less than six years later, on 28 February 1974, Colonel in retirement Alois Frank died at the age of 76.<sup>227</sup>

It remains to add how the fates of Frank's associates unfolded. His colleague and the first head of the AIC "*Libuše*", Rudolf Šiman, did not return to the liberated Czechoslovakia from the Middle East until February 1946.<sup>228</sup> He, too, served no longer in the military intelligence, and the Communist persecution fell particularly hard on him after he unsuccessfully tried to flee abroad in October 1949. He was placed at the head of an artificially constructed anti-state group and sentenced by a state court to 25 years' imprisonment. In the same trial, another intelligence officer from Moravec's "intelligence eleven", Col. Josef Fořt (born 21 July 1893), was sentenced to three years. The sentence for the entire four-member group was handed down on the basis of the infamous Law for the Protection of the People's Democratic Republic No. 231/1948 Coll.<sup>229</sup>

Of Frank's many collaborators in the Netherlands, it is worth mentioning at least those who did not survive the Nazi occupation. For four of them the year 1943 proved fatal. Frank

<sup>222</sup> Ibidem, sign. 37-290-1/678-679, úřední záznam o rozmluvě s pplk. Pekninsem (SOE). Cf. POSCH, Martin. Spojenectvo z nůdže: spolupráca SOE a československej spravodajskej služby počas 2. svetovej vojny. Bratislava: VEDA, 2021, p. 122.

<sup>223</sup> VÚA-VHA Praha, Sbíрка vojenských osobních spisů, Frank Alois, Návrh na vyřízení žádosti o rehabilitaci, 29. 4. 1969.

<sup>224</sup> ABS, no. 20877 I. S., Skartační protokol, 14. 3. 1966.

<sup>225</sup> JIZBA, Jaroslav. „Co bývalo státním tajemstvím.“ In: Svobodné slovo, 1. 8. 1969.

<sup>226</sup> Private documentation of Ladislav Čapek, audio recording of discussion with Col. Frank, Žinkovy, 28. 11. 1968. Digital copy in possession of the author.

<sup>227</sup> Ibidem, death notice of Alois Frank.

<sup>228</sup> Sbíрка kvalifikačních listin, Hlášení změn (1. 10. 1938 – 31. 3. 1946), ABS, f. Z (Mapy zpráv zpracované Studijním ústavem MV), Z-6-314/2, Československá zpravodajská služba v letech 1920–1945, pp. 556–558 (no. 420 Šiman, Rudolf).

<sup>229</sup> NA Praha, f. Státní soud Praha, sign. Or I, 1786/49 (Rudolf Šiman a spol.).

and Šimon's agent-walker Geert Gernand was arrested just nine days after the Nazi invasion of the Netherlands, on 14 August. In 1942, together with Jan Bruintjes, he was sentenced by the Berlin People's Court (VGH) to three years without parole. The names of Rudolf Šiman and Harry Richter, for whom the accused were supposed to work, are specifically mentioned in the indictment.<sup>230</sup> Gernand died (officially due to tuberculosis) as a result of the harsh prison conditions on 21 April 1943 in Tegel Prison on Seidelstraße in the Berlin-Reinickendorf district.<sup>231</sup> Bruintjes was more fortunate – although he most certainly went to a Nazi concentration camp after serving his sentence, he survived the war and died in his hometown of Oude Pekela on 8 September 1985.<sup>232</sup>

Frank's financially well-endowed "chief agent" Theo Hespers fled the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands to neighbouring Belgium. Although this was also a Nazi-occupied country, Hespers managed to hide until February 1942. The Berlin VGH sentenced him to death for treason on 22 July 1943. His intelligence cooperation with Karel Erban is mentioned among other things in the lengthy sentence.<sup>233</sup> Hespers was executed in the Nazi execution chamber in Berlin-Plötzensee on 9 September 1943,<sup>234</sup> during a series of executions of mostly Czech resistance fighters that went down in history as the "bloody nights".<sup>235</sup>

In the same year, only a month later, Alois Frank's main collaborators Karel Jelínek and his companion Eliška Hájková were executed. Jelínek was arrested for the first time from 25 May 1940 to 24 October 1940, and for the second time he and his companion were held in police custody from 13 November 1940 to 17 September 1941. Their last arrest, on 27 July 1942, proved fatal.<sup>236</sup> They were transferred from the Netherlands to Prague and, after a short stay in the Prague Gestapo prison at Pankrác, they were moved to the police prison in the Small Fortress of Terezín on 4 September 1942, from where they travelled to Dresden on 21 October 1942.<sup>237</sup> Here they were brought before the People's Court (VGH), which had been sitting in the Land Court building since the beginning of 1943<sup>238</sup> to relieve the Berlin workplace. On 29 May 1943, the court sentenced them both to death for treason on the grounds that they had intensively collaborated with the Czechoslovak intelligence service in exile from May 1939 to April 1940. Although Alois Frank tried to prove otherwise in his memoirs, and with reference to a post-war conversation with Jelínek's niece Božena

<sup>230</sup> BA Berlin-Lichterfelde, Sign. R 3017/8825, Gernand, Geert, geb. 14. 6. 1913, Aktenzeichen/Registriernr. 1J 465/41g (Alte Signatur VGH/Z-Bruintjes, Jan).

<sup>231</sup> E-mail correspondence between the author and Ineke Ijsenbrand, 12. 8. 2024.

<sup>232</sup> The death notice was published in the newspaper *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden* on 9. 9. 1985. Available at <https://www.delpher.nl/nl/kranten/view?query=%22jan+Jacob+bruintjes%22&page=1&coll=ddd&identifier=ddd:011011399:mpeg21:a0234&resultsidentifier=ddd:011011399:mpeg21:a0234&rowid=8>.

<sup>233</sup> BA Berlin-Lichterfelde, Sign. R 3018/1319 (Hespers, Theodor, 12. 12. 1903), Teil 3.

<sup>234</sup> [https://www.gdw-berlin.de/en/recess/biographies/index\\_of\\_persons/biographie/view-bio/theodor-hespers/?no\\_cache=1](https://www.gdw-berlin.de/en/recess/biographies/index_of_persons/biographie/view-bio/theodor-hespers/?no_cache=1) a <https://www.gedenkstaette-ploetzensee.de/totenbuch/recherche/person/hespers-theodor>.

<sup>235</sup> Cf. ČERNÝ, Vladimír – VAŠEK František. „Hromadné exekuce v Berlíně-Plötzensee (7.–13. září 1943).“ In: *Paginae historiae* (2005), issue 13, pp. 81–105; UHLÍŘ, Jan Boris. „Občané Československa popravení v Berlíně-Plötzensee. Výsledky dosavadního výzkumu.“ In: *Sborník Archivu bezpečnostních složek* (2021), no. 19, pp. 255–305.

<sup>236</sup> BA Berlin-Lichterfelde, Sign. R 3017/11142, Jelínek, Karl, geb. 20. 5. 1891.

<sup>237</sup> Památník Terezín, *Kniha léků*, sign. A 8839, K 24/MP (Karel Jelínek). The author would like to thank Michael Michner for tracking down this material.

<sup>238</sup> SACK, Birgit. „Převoz mrtvých do protektorátu nepřichází v úvahu“: nakládání s tělesnými ostatky popravených v Drážďanech v letech 1940–1945. *Paměť a dějiny* 12 (2018), issue 1, pp. 27–35.



Ordánová he claimed that “*it was for hiding Jewish property of Dutch nationals*”,<sup>239</sup> this was not true. In the extensive justification for the verdict, their activities are described in detail and, in addition to the names of Rudolf Šiman and Alois Frank, the code name Paul Thümmel used at the time – Dr. Holm – is mentioned as well: “*In early August 1939, Šiman arranged for the defendant Hájková to provide him with a room for a meeting with a gentleman from Prague. When the unknown man, who was the intelligence agent ‘Dr. Holm’, appeared in The Hague, the defendant showed him into her apartment and immediately informed Šiman of his arrival by telephone. She also gave the agent her typewriter to prepare a written report. Shortly thereafter, Šiman appeared in the company of one Frank, who attended the subsequent meeting with ‘Dr. Holm’ and was introduced to the defendants as a former Czech officer.*”<sup>240</sup> It is not at all clear from the surviving sources who turned Jelínek and Hájková in – whether it was some local collaborator,<sup>241</sup> or whether the information reached the Gestapo by other means. It is unlikely that this will ever be found out, just as in the world-famous Dutch case of Anne Frank (1929–1945), who became a symbol of Jewish suffering during the war thanks to her diaries.<sup>242</sup> However, there is reason to suspect that Paul Thümmel, who repeatedly stayed with Jelínek and Hájková, may have provided the Gestapo with (at least some) information. This theory is supported by the fact that Jelínek’s niece Božena Ordánová was not arrested; she worked in the Rotterdam branch and never came into direct contact with Thümmel. She must have been a very courageous woman, and also sure that no one could turn her in, because when the property of the arrested Karel Jelínek was seized in the summer of 1943, Ordánová tried to get her share of the company – and was partially successful. As Dr. Max Claessen, an official of the German Security Police (SIPO) in the occupied Netherlands, states in his final report, “*During the transaction, Ordánová, a former employee of Jelínek and a citizen of the Protectorate, approached me with demands. Among other things, she demanded 15,000 fl.*<sup>243</sup> *as her share in the company. However, there were no documents for this demand. She also demanded part of the existing furniture as her property. After detailed negotiations with the BdS*<sup>244</sup> *, the claim of 15,000 fl. was rejected by the Commissioner General for Finance and Economy, but the claim to the furniture was recognized to some extent...*”<sup>245</sup>

Eliška Hájková and her partner Karel Jelínek waited until 15 October 1943 for the sentence to be carried out. On the same day, 20 other people were executed (17 Czechs and three Germans). The executions began at 18.00. According to the record of his death,

<sup>239</sup> AMP, f. Plukovník A. Frank, Zápisky..., p. 135.

<sup>240</sup> Free translation of the author’s translation is quoted, see BA Berlin-Lichterfelde, Sign. R 3017/11142, Jelínek, Karl, geb. 20. 5. 1891.

<sup>241</sup> On the phenomenon of collaboration in the occupied Netherlands, see HIRSCHFELD, Gerhard. “Collaboration and Attentism in the Netherlands 1940–41.” *Journal of Contemporary History* 16 (1981), issue 3, pp. 467–486.

<sup>242</sup> BARNOUW, David – van der STROOM, Gerrold. *Kdo udal Anne Frankovou?* Praha: Academia, 2014.

<sup>243</sup> Meaning Dutch guilders. The abbreviation fl comes from the original name of the coin gulden florijn.

<sup>244</sup> Chief of the Security Police and SD (German: Befehlshaber der SiPo und des SD). For details on the staffing of this office in the Netherlands, see MEERSHOEK, Guus. *Mocenský rozmach a pád. Bezpečnostní policie a SD v Nizozemsku*. In: PAUL, Gerhard – MALLMANN, Klaus-Michael (eds.): *Gestapo za druhé světové války. „Domácí fronta“ a okupovaná Evropa*. Praha: Academia, 2010, pp. 415–435.

<sup>245</sup> Free translation by the author is quoted here. Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Reichskommissariat in den besetzten Niederländischen Gebieten, 1940–1945, Inv. Nr. 248, Jelínek Karl (Aktenzeichen J 61), Schlussbericht über das beschlagnahmte Vermögen des Karl Jelínek, 15. 8. 1943, p. 2.



which has been preserved in the Dresden Memorial, Karel Jelínek was executed at 18.18.<sup>246</sup> As a Catholic, he was buried at the Neuer Katholischer Friedhof, while Eliška Hajková was buried as a Jew at the Johannisfriedhof. Her remains were then transferred to the Dresden cemetery of the Czechoslovak resistance fighters in 1976 and her name is inscribed on the memorial to the executed.<sup>247</sup> Unlike others, they left behind no suicide note or farewell note,<sup>248</sup> as they had no children and probably did not want to compromise their relatives or anyone else with resistance activities.

## Conclusion

The aim of the present study was to describe and analyse the activities of Alois Frank in the neutral Netherlands in 1939–1940. There he became the head of the Advanced Intelligence Centre “*Libuše*”, which had been operating illegally since 1936. Frank succeeded in building on the successes of his predecessors Rudolf Šiman and Josef Svoboda and significantly expanded the existing agency network, especially to include Czech compatriots, but also some Dutch nationals. With the limited time available, Frank was able to accomplish most of the tasks he was sent to the Netherlands to perform (renewing and expanding the agency network, securing connections with the Protectorate, etc.). The Nazi occupation of the Netherlands in May 1940 prevented further promising development of his activities. While Frank and his close associate Erban managed to escape to the British Isles, their associates were not so lucky and some of them eventually paid the ultimate price for their cooperation with the Czechoslovak intelligence service – their own lives. Due to the fragmentary nature of the surviving archival sources, the text presented here constitutes the first comprehensive analysis of the activities of the “*Libuše*” centre in the years 1939–1940. The current state of research does not yet allow for a detailed comparison with the activities of other Czechoslovak intelligence centres in other neutral countries (Switzerland, Portugal, Turkey). The only exception is Sweden, where the seconded officer Alois Čáslavka performed diplomatic tasks in 1944–1945<sup>249</sup> rather than exploiting and building agency networks and thus remained there even after the end of the war.<sup>250</sup> Alois Frank, on the other hand, never returned to the Netherlands. The present study can therefore become both a starting point for later comparisons and a springboard for further examination. Even after the extensive research in several countries, it cannot be ruled out that completely new materials may yet be discovered. As was confirmed during the preparation of this study, relatives of former collaborators of the Czechoslovak intelligence service who have materials not available in public archives may represent a major advance in research. Individual biographical studies could also be an option in the future: some of Alois Frank’s Protectorate collaborators, namely Jan Ordáň, would deserve more attention. His forgotten reports from the occupied Vsetín region, delivered with a minimal time gap, represent a great source for the everyday

<sup>246</sup> Stiftung Sächsische Gedenkstätten – Gedenkstätte Münchner Platz Dresden, executed persons catalogue, Jelínek, Karl. The author would like to thank Birgit Sack for providing a copy of Jelínek’s card.

<sup>247</sup> E-mail correspondence between the author and Birgit Sack, 1. 2. 2024.

<sup>248</sup> PLACHÁ, Pavla – SACK, Birgit. „Tento dopis si nechte na památku na mě“: poslední dopisy Čechoslováků popravených v Drážďanech: komentovaná edice = „Behaltet diesen Brief als Andenken an mich“: Abschiedsbriefe von Dresdner Hinrichtungsoffern aus der Tschechoslowakei : eine kommentierte Edition. Praha: Pulchra, Lipsko: Leipziger Universitätsverlag, 2023.

<sup>249</sup> STAŇKOVÁ, K. Plukovník..., op. cit., pp.140–162.

<sup>250</sup> MEDVECKÝ, Matej. „Nepotrebný diplomat. Působenie česko-slovenského vojenského atašé v Štokholme po skončení druhej svetovej vojny.“ In: Vojenská história 19 (2015), issue 1, pp. 60–80.

life in the Protectorate in 1939–1940 and could be used for a separate critical edition in the form of a study or even a monograph.

*At this point, the author would like to express his sincere thanks to several people who have been helpful in the preparation of this study. These are Dr. Milan Vyhřídál (University of Defence in Brno), Mgr. Michael Michner (Terezín Memorial) and Dr. Birgit Sack (Gedenkstätte Münchner Platz Dresden). He would also like to thank the relatives, namely Ladislav Čapek (relative of Alois Frank), Mrs. Dana Skopalová, née Ordáňová (relative of Jan Ordáň and Božena Ordáňová) and Ineke Ijsenbrand, née Gernand (granddaughter of Geert Gernand), all of whom willingly provided the author with valuable family documentation (recordings, copies, photographs) and helped him through e-mail or telephone conversations to fill in important bits and pieces of the lives of their relatives and their colleagues.*

P. KREISINGER: MAJOR ALOIS FRANK. TSCHÉCHOSLOWAKISCHER  
NACHRICHTENDIENSTOFFIZIER UND SEINE MITARBEITER IN DEN  
NEUTRALEN NIEDERLANDEN (1939 – 1940)

Die Studie des tschechischen Militärhistorikers Pavel Kreisinger beschäftigt sich mit der Persönlichkeit des Nachrichtendienstoffiziers Alois Frank (1897 – 1974) und seinen Aktivitäten in den neutralen Niederlanden in den Jahren 1939 bis 1940. Vor der Zerschlagung der Tschecho-Slowakei gehörte Major A. Frank dem militärischen Nachrichtendienst an und war konkret Mitglied der von František Moravec geleiteten Nachrichtendienstgruppe. Alois Franks nachrichtendienstliche Aktivitäten in den Niederlanden betrafen die Zusammenarbeit mit Agenten und Informanten, die bereits in den Jahren 1936 – 1939 im Rahmen der vorgeschobenen Nachrichtenzentrale „Libuše“ in Den Haag mit dem tschechoslowakischen militärischen Nachrichtendienst kooperiert hatten. Alois Frank reiste im Mai 1939 in die Niederlande und trat dort offiziell als Handelsvertreter der britischen Firma Foster & Co. auf. Gleichzeitig begann er mit der Erfüllung der ihm übertragenen nachrichtendienstlichen Aufgaben, die beispielsweise die Wiederaufnahme des Kontakts mit dem Agenten Paul Thümmel (A 54), die Aufrechterhaltung nachrichtendienstlicher Verbindungen im besetzten Protektorat Böhmen und Mähren, die Ausweitung der nachrichtendienstlichen Tätigkeit gegen Deutschland usw. umfassten. Zugleich baute er in diesem Land ein neues Netzwerk von Mitarbeitern auf, das sich aus tschechoslowakischen Patrioten zusammensetzte. Dazu zählten beispielsweise Karel Jelínek (1891 – 1943) und Eliška Hájková (1891 – 1943), die später wegen ihrer genannten illegalen Tätigkeit von den Nationalsozialisten hingerichtet wurden. Nach der Niederlage der Niederlande im Mai 1940 gelang Major Alois Frank die Flucht nach Großbritannien. Die Studie basiert auf eigener Archivforschung, die in tschechischen, deutschen, niederländischen und britischen Archiven durchgeführt wurde.

P. KREISINGER: MAJOR ALOIS FRANK. ČESKOSLOVENSKÝ SPRAVODAJSKÝ  
DŮSTOJNÍK A JEHO SPOLUPRACOVNÍCI V NEUTRÁLNOM HOLANDSKU  
(1939 – 1940)

Štúdiá českého vojenského historika Pavla Kreisingera sa zaoberá osobnosťou spravodajského dôstojníka Aloisa Franka (1897 – 1974) a jeho aktivitami v neutrálnom Holandsku v rokoch 1939 – 1940. Pred rozbitím Česko-Slovenska major A. Frank patril k príslušníkom vojenského spravodajstva, konkrétne bol členom spravodajskej skupiny vedenej Františkom Moravcom. Spravodajské aktivity Aloisa Franka v Holandsku sa týkali

spolupráce s agentmi a informátormi, ktorí už predtým v rokoch 1936 – 1939 spolupracovali s československým vojenským spravodajstvom v rámci Predsunutej spravodajskej ústredne „Libuše“ v Hágu. Alois Frank pricestoval do Holandska v máji 1939, pričom tu formálne vystupoval ako obchodný zástupca britskej spoločnosti Foster & Co. Súčasne začal plniť zverené spravodajské úlohy, ktoré spočívali napríklad v opätovnom nadviazaní kontaktu s agentom Paulom Thümmelom (A 54), udržiavaní spravodajských kontaktov v okupovanom Protektoráte Čechy a Morava, rozšírení spravodajskej práce proti Nemecku atď. Zároveň si v tejto krajine vytváral novú sieť spolupracovníkov zloženú z československých vlastencov. Boli to napríklad Karel Jelínek (1891–1943) alebo Eliška Hájková (1891–1943), ktorí boli neskôr za uvedenie ilegálnu činnosť popravení nacistami. Po porážke Holandska v máji 1940 sa mjr. Aloisovi Frankovi podarilo uniknúť do Veľkej Británie. Štúdia vychádza z pôvodného archívneho výskumu realizovaného v českých, nemeckých, holandských a britských archívoch.

## **Zoznam použitých prameňov a literatúry/ List of references and literature**

### **Primárne zdroje/ Primary sources**

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Archiv bezpečnostních složek (ABS, the Security Services Archive) in Prague,

Archiv ministerstva zahraničních věcí (AMZV, the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs) in Prague

Archiv města Plzně (the Pilsen City Archives)

Archiv Národního muzea Praha (the National Museum Archives)

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