



Otto Skorzeny was leading the withdrawing operations of the Nazi army in February 1945 (Barch Berlin)

from Ploština and Prlov was arrested in 1948 in Wien, but the request of the Czechoslovak side for his release into Czech hands was turned down by the Austrian government for the lack of evidence. The case was postponed for long 17 years.

At the end of 1965 the Czech Commission for Prosecuting Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes in Germany received a memorial document, where the particular culprits of the crimes in Ploština and Prlov were stated. Besides Otto Skorzeny, there were seven more culprits in the list. Otto Skorzeny was interrogated by Wien authorities but he was never convicted because he lived in fascist Spain since 1949. In 1970 the only surviving war criminal was Robert Holzheuer, the one who sent the informers Baťa and Machů to Ploština and took part in many exterminating activities. Czech side didn't doubt his guilt but Germans claimed all the evidence as insufficient and the case was dismissed in 1971.

As late as in 1997 all the documents about the main culprits of the crimes committed in Prlov, Ploština and other villages

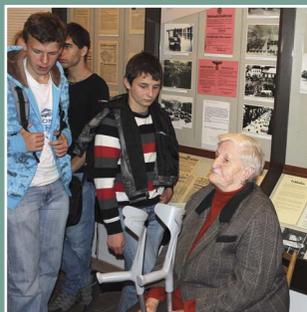


Kurt W. Tutter at the time of his arrest after 1945 (ABS Prague)



There have remained only furnaces at the places of the former cottages and the whole area is decorated by very precious White-leaf Saffron which forms a natural monument to the tragedy (The Memory of the Nation, ČSOP Valašské Meziříčí)

were uncovered. It turned out that the leader of the intervention Josef W. Tutter had been working in 1952-53 as a member of the intelligence service SSP (State secret police) operating in western Germany. In 1967 the prosecution of all the three criminals was stopped by the prosecutor Jaroslav David advised by the Deputy of the Home Minister Jaroslav Klíma. The memorial document wasn't sent to Western Germany until Tutter's death in 1983. In 2001 both Czech officers were facing the accusation of the abuse of power but their crime was prescribed in 1999 and the court didn't declare them guilty. The murders in Valašsko were thus dismissed once forever.



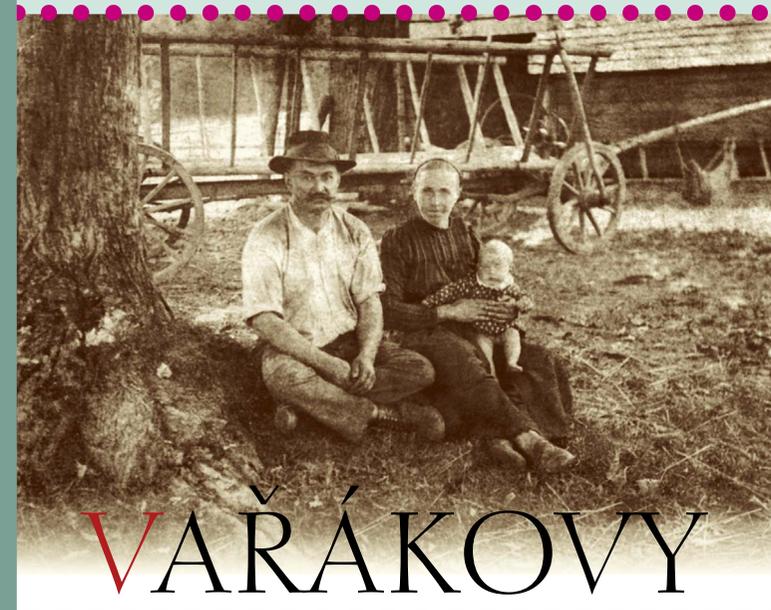
Children with Mrs. Húšťová, the survivor of the tragedies in Ploština and Vařákovy Paseky in the museum in Ploština, 2014

Photo on the front page: Tomáš Vařák, his wife Františka and daughter Vlasta at Vařákovy Paseky in 1932. (the archives of Božena Kršáková, born Vařáková)

For more information: www.obec-drnovice.cz, www.pametnaroda.cz



LAČNOV



V AŘÁKOVY PASEKY 2nd May 1945

The burnt-down settlement of Vařákovy Paseky as well as the victims of its innocent citizens are annually commemorated by the inhabitants of Lačnov, into which cadastral territory a dozen of logged cottages belonged. A little is known about the fact that another famous countryman from the nearby Smolina, who went to school and worked in Lačnov, is Jiří Valčík, a member of the Silver A paratroop, dropped to freezing dark Protectorate in December 1941 and together with Alfred Bartoš and Jiří Potůček brought over the transmitter Libuše.



Evropský zemědělský fond pro rozvoj venkova: Evropa investuje do venkovských oblastí



Josef Valčík in the photo from Smolína or Zlín (MM Valašské Klobouky)

This very important transmitter was hidden in Ležáky in the Czech-Moravian Highlands and worked until June 1942. Josef Valčík visited his family shortly after his arrival. He was one of the assassins of Reinhardt Heidrich and on 18th July 1942 he died a hero in the Church of Cyrillus and Methodius in Prague together with six of his mates. 14 members of Valčík's family were arrested and executed after this.

In 1945 German Reich was collapsing and couldn't cope with the superiority of the Allies. The fighting unit SbV 31 and the unit called Josef were losing control over the villages. Only during April 130 soldiers and about 40 members of Gestapo left behind a totally burnt-down village of Ploština with 27 victims, a partly burnt-down village of Prlov with 15 victims and devastated villages of Drnovice, Tichov, Pozdějov,



The Family of Tomáš Vařák from no. 81 in 1927. Tomáš Vařák had a stroke and died on 24th April 1945. His son Karel was tortured to death on 3rd May 1945 by Gestapo (the archives of Božena Kršáková born Vařáková)



The inhabitants of Vařákovy Paseky in 1927 (the archives of Božena Kršák, born Vařák)

Vysoké Pole, Lačnov and Bratřejov, where other innocent victims were dying.

It was May 1945 and the end of the war was coming. The fighting line in the Slovak Beskydy could be heard nearby and the valleys of the Vizovice Hills were penetrated by Soviet and Romanian soldiers. They were pushing the Nazi units, who were trying to set up here their transmitters and observation stations, into the hills. Four Nazi soldiers reached Vařákovy Paseky on 1st May 1945 and they set up their transmitter in



Aurelie Ludwigová helped to save the lives of many women and children (The Memory of the Nation, ČSOP Valašské Meziříčí)

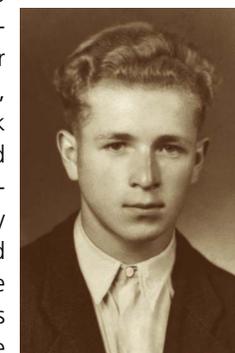
one of the houses. Partisans attacked the place, destroyed the transmitter and killed one of the soldiers, the remaining three soldiers escaped. Nobody had expected what would happen next. At dusk the inhabitants of Vařákovy Paseky were returning home when they were surprised by a big group of Nazi soldiers. They burnt down eight houses and arrested all the citizens dragging them to Valašská Polanka. It was only thanks to the parish priest Jan Absolon and his housekeeper Aurelie Ludwigová that they let women and children go. Four inhabitants of Paseky were led to



Four inhabitants of Vařákovy Paseky tortured to death on 3rd May 1945 (The Memory of the Nation, ČSOP Valašské Meziříčí)

Hošťálkov and there they were tortured to death a day after. At that time other surrounding villages were being liberated by the Red Army.

The first trials with the perpetrators of the crimes around Ploština, Prlov and Vařákovy Paseky were carried out by special People's Courts in 1945-1947. Several members of Zlín Gestapo were arrested, including the leader Helmut Heinecke, who was sentenced to death in 1947. A Gestapo Commissioner Robert Holzheuer known for using informers Baťa and Machů, had escaped from the Czechoslovak prison before the verdict was passed in 1947. Similarly, a well-known leader of all these crimes Otto Skorzeny managed to escape. Skorzeny and Holzheuer were entered into the general list of the United Nations Commission for Prosecuting the Crimes against Humanity and War Crimes. Johann Suppartisch, a member of Vizovice Gestapo responsible for brutal interrogations of victims



Karel Vařák was murdered by Gestapo on 3rd May 1945 (the archives of Božena Kršáková born Vařáková)