

English translation

APPEAL

To the former representatives of Communist Czechoslovakia, Messrs

Milouš Jakeš, Lubomír Štrougal and Peter Colotka, members of the presidium of the central committee of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia;
Vratislav Vajnar, minister of interior;
Vladimír Hrušecký, deputy minister of interior;
Jan Muzikář, chief of staff of the main administration of the border guard;
František Weis, chief of the political administration of the main administration of the border guard – deputy chief for political affairs;
Viktor Gallo, chief of the 11th Bratislava brigade of the border guard;
Josef Macz, chief of staff of the 11th brigade;
Rostislav Hradil, deputy chief of the 11th brigade for political affairs;
Jozef Pilát, chief of the 2nd battalion of the 11th brigade;
Karol Gucký, deputy chief of the 2nd battalion;
Kamil Faigl, deputy chief of the 2nd battalion for political affairs;
Lubomír Konečný, chief of the 11th company, 2nd battalion of the 11th brigade;
Štefan Malatinec, deputy chief of the 11th company;
Anton Majoroš, deputy chief of the 11th company for political affairs;
Viliam Švirk, Ernest Krčmerik and Jozef Vojtko, supervising officers;
Ivan Hirner and Oldřich Kovář, intervening patrol
in the case of Hartmut Tautz on 8 August 1986

Demand for a public apology for the killing of Hartmut Tautz and other innocent refugees on the Iron Curtain

In Bratislava – Petržalka on 9 August 2016

Dear Sirs,

We have gathered today outside Bratislava – Petržalka on the site where 30 years ago, in the evening hours of 8 August 1986, eighteen-year-old fresh grammar school graduate Hartmut Tautz from Magdeburg was attacked and gravely wounded by so-called “independent assault dogs“ of the border guard. Hartmut died in the early hours of 9 August 1986 in the Military hospital in Bratislava of the consequences of denial of timely medical help. The Bratislava self-administration region, the Nation’s Memory Institute and the Platform of European Memory and Conscience inaugurated a memorial to Hartmut Tautz here today.

Hartmut Tautz died during his attempt to run away from the Communist bloc to a free democratic country. It is you who bear the full responsibility for his cruel and unnecessary death – starting from the members of the presidium of the central committee of the Communist party who took decisions on the smallest

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details of the construction and organisation of the surveillance of the Iron Curtain as well as the staffing of the command of the border guard, to the minister of interior, to the entire chain of command of the border guard, down to the soldiers who, while performing your basic military service let out the aggressive dogs against Hartmut and did not provide him with timely first aid.

Nobody was ever taken to court for the death of Hartmut Tautz. The prosecuting authorities after 1989 refused to deal with the case of the killing of Hartmut Tautz.

There are at least 320 documented cases of civilians killed on the Czechoslovak Iron Curtain between the years 1948-1989. After 1989, Czech courts sentenced only 4 perpetrators to punishment, and none was sentenced in Slovakia. The planned, systematic and widespread killing of defenceless civilians on the borders as it was practiced in Communist Czechoslovakia however qualifies as a crime against humanity according to international law.

Dear representatives of the former Communist regime, on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the tragic death of Hartmut Tautz we demand: apologise publicly for his killing. Apologise to his family and apologise publicly to all citizens of former Czechoslovakia and the neighbouring countries for the killing of innocent people who were not threatening anybody by their escape across the border, who merely wanted to live a happy and free life, which was their inalienable right, as it is for all of us.

This way, you will make moral amends for at least some of the lawless acts which you committed during the Communist dictatorship and for which you bear full responsibility.

Signed:

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Correspondence address:
Platform of European Memory and Conscience
Londýnská 159/43
120 00 Praha 2
Czech Republic