

JULIUS FUČÍK'S DUAL DEATH

Peter Drews

When the complete edition of Julius Fučík's *Notes From Under the Gallows* appeared in 1994, it offered an answer to decades of speculation about the authenticity, or otherwise, of one of best known works of Czech postwar literature. Its author, Julius Fučík (1903–1943), a journalist and author of literary reviews, was taken in custody in Prague on April 24, 1942, for being a leading figure of Czech communist resistance, was sentenced to death in Berlin on August 25, 1943, and executed on September 9 in Plötzensee. During the period of detention, he took notes, which were smuggled out of prison. In postwar Czechoslovakia, these notes became one of the most important manifestations of communist hero worship. The present essay by Peter Drews offers, for the first time, a comprehensive history of the genesis and worldwide reception of the Fučík myth, and of its end. The latest critical edition of the *Notes*, from this point of view, appears as “an atmospheric document of an extremely dark period, from the pen of an author whose tragic death is at least partly due to political naiveté” and who, even after his death, became victim of “yet another dark age”.