

THE DEPORTATION OF CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZENS  
TO SOVIET INTERNMENT OR PRISON CAMPS,  
AND THE STRUGGLE FOR THEIR REPATRIATION,  
1945-1950

*Milada Polišenská*

This is a topic so far neglected by postwar Czech historiography. Neither did Czechoslovak authorities learn anything at first about Czechoslovak subjects being deported to the Soviet Union after World War II had ended, nor was it generally known. It is on the basis of Czech and Soviet files made accessible only recently that historians can begin to puzzle together basic information on this issue. The author of this study attempts to reconstruct negotiations which took place between Czech and Soviet authorities about an eventual repatriation of the deportees. As early as in the summer and autumn of 1945, relatives of missing persons submitted information which was collected at the Prague Foreign Ministry, and Czech diplomacy persistently pursued the aim of an unconditional repatriation of every deported Czech citizen. How difficult these negotiations were, is demonstrated by the author furnishing a description of the protracted and eventually vain attempts at finding out precisely how many Czechoslovak POWs and non-military inmates were being detained in the Soviet Union,

with Soviet sources quoting figures between 513 and 91 560, and Czechoslovak diplomats lacking any possibility of doing meaningful research of their own in the Soviet Union.