Introduction

A prison is an institution that is the last component of law enforcement. Its fundamental task is to protect society from deviant, thereby dangerous, individuals. However, it also serves as an instrument of discipline for individuals behind bars, which constitutes an environment providing a remarkable insight into a number of social phenomena. There are only few places where a clear relation between pressure and an institution can be observed, where consequences of powerfulness and powerlessness are actively manifested, and where groups with different values and interests are found in proximity. Therefore, it is no surprise that studying this institution offers a variety of topics of interest to numerous scientists from different disciplines. They have looked into the process of the transformation of a free person into an inmate and this person's adaptation to the repressive environment,[1] the society of captives, its dynamics and fight for dominance,[2] or the penitentiary and punishment as a metamorphosis of social and theoretical mechanisms in society.[3] Historians, psychologists, sociologists, philosophers, geographers, literary scholars and others have long been dealing with penitentiaries and they have contributed a wealth of knowledge that makes us think about not only the inception of the institution, but also about its purpose and its functioning, as well as the ramifications of its existence on society and on the sentenced.

So far it has mainly been historians who have been dealing with the history of the Czechoslovak penitentiary in the second half of the twentieth century. They have primarily pointed out its repressive character. A number of inspiring books and studies were written that often divide the development of the Czechoslovak penitentiary system into two periods: the 1950s, when repression in prisons as well as in the society could be said to be peaking while political prisoners in labour

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1   Goffman, *Asylums*.
2   Sykes, *The Society of Captives*; Clemmer, *The Prison Community*; Cressey and Krassowski, "Inmate Organization"; Irwin and Cressey, "Thieves, Convicts and the Inmate Culture."
3   Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.

camps and prisons experienced different forms of violence, and the years between 1969 and 1989 (referred in Czech history as the period of "normalisation") when bullying and repression returned to prisons again. By contrast, the 1960s tend to be neglected in the research. This decade can be regarded as a certain turning point, as the period of democratisation was considered to be a deviation that seemed as though it had nothing in common with the 40-year rule of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia. Whereas books dealing with the 1950s offer a similar narrative, books and studies dealing with the period of "normalisation" differ in their perspectives. The first group of the publications focuses on the repression and bullying of inmates, accentuating the continuous supervision over the sentenced. In contrast, the second group concentrates on partial reforms, the arrival of psychologists and expert educators in penitentiaries, or the application of new research methods, which, in fact, enriched the Czechoslovak penal system. In particular, the activity of the Penology Research Institute (Výzkumný ústav penologický, VÚP) and the role of its first commander, Jiří Čepelák, are elevated. These two narratives, which represent the viewpoints of two groups of contemporary witnesses (former political prisoners and former or current employees in the prison system), oppose each other and appear to be telling two different stories about prison system in Czechoslovakia. Nevertheless, the stories represent two sides of the same coin, and therefore the question arises whether a story can be told that would join both narratives. What perspective can we really take when looking at the Czechoslovak prison system during the period of "normalisation"? What role did the prison system play in society during this period?

This book presents the work of three authors who met in the association Political Prisoners.eu several years before it was written. While sharing their interest in political prisoners, life behind bars and the prison system in general, each of them majored in a different subject. Klára Pinerová is a historian, Kristýna Haluzíková Bušková a psychologist and Michal Louč a social anthropologist and an oral historian. In the past we tended to focus on the stories of political prisoners incarcerated in the 1950s and their offspring; however, we kept coming

back to the view that research about the Czechoslovak prison system should not conclude with the presidential amnesty in 1960 (as is often the case). We realised that while the experience of political prisoners from the initial period of the era of the Communist Party dictatorship was different from the experience of political prisoners from the period of "normalisation," the experience of imprisonment left deep wounds on members of both groups in the form of trauma and depression. That is why we have decided to take a closer look at the prison system in Czechoslovakia in the 1960s. Our different professional experience stood us in good stead. The interdisciplinary approach led us to asking a variety of questions, to intertwining different levels and to reaching a multitude of conclusions that we would hardly have come to had it not been for our specialisations. In addition, we had to make numerous compromises with respect to methodology and terminology, used differently in each area. The present book does not render a complex picture of the development of the prison system in Czechoslovakia, as the range of the publication would be far from sufficient. Many topics are either touched upon or not analysed at all (e.g. gender question). First and foremost, our aim was to shed light at the continuity and discontinuity of the Czechoslovak prison system and to analyse how the main tendencies pursued at the highest levels of prison administration manifested in the prisons. We also wondered how criminal and political prisoners or the prison staff had adapted to the new environment and how the experience of different groups related to prisons was created. Unlike the previous research, we focus not only on the experience of political prisoners, but – thanks to interviews applying the method of oral history – also on criminal prisoners and employees in prisons (wardens, psychologists, expert educators and doctors). This helped us take a broader view and not only describe the ubiquitous repression but also analyse reforms, which were inextricably intertwined in the prison system of the 1960s and the following decades.

At the beginning of the research, it was clear that it could not be placed between the traditional milestones of the history of Czechoslovakia. It would have been logical to begin the story and the ensuing

analysis with the year 1968, the period of the awakening of Czechoslovak society, the period heralding the onset of frenetic activities leading to democratisation, and to finish with the year 1989. However, in the initial stages of our research, we found that a great many changes had been made in the prison system prior to and after these traditional milestones. In the end, we decided to delineate the period by the years 1965 and 1992, which also enabled us to examine the prison system during the "normalisation" periods, leading us to better understand its development.

In the selected years we can see important legislative milestones which put an end to long-term processes that had preceded them. As we shall demonstrate, the Czechoslovak prison system diverged from the class conception of punishment. These gradual changes had led to the enactment of the Act no. 59/1965 Coll., On the Execution of Punishment by Imprisonment. In the late 1960s, the prison system was following a path of self-reflection, professionalism and humanisation, but these positive transitions were interrupted by the invasion of the army of the Warsaw Pact. Other changes took place after 1989 and led to an act that substantially reformed the organisation and management of the Czech prison system (Act no. 555/1992 Coll., On the Prison Service and the Judicial Guard of the Czech Republic). A new concept of the prison system was created at the same time, moving it in a new direction based of the tradition of the humanities. However, both of the legislative steps presented here as groundbreaking feats had been preceded by years of negotiations against the backdrop of social and political changes. That resulted in the necessity to examine and analyse certain topics from as early as the 1950s, in particular when addressing the historical context. We came to the conclusion that the tendencies in the Czechoslovak prison system cannot be adequately analysed without the knowledge of changes performed in the course of the 1950s.

Apart from the positivist approach – in the Czech example this was the most frequently used – two methodological conceptions can be applied to the historiography of the prison system in order to help us to understand and analyse it: considering it as a "total institution" and as

part of a "social arrangement". When concentrating on everyday life and the prison subculture, one is inspired by the work of the Canadian sociologist Erving Goffman, who considered the prison system as a "total institution". This sociological term stands for forms of institutions where all aspects of life of the social actor are subordinated to and governed by rules valid in these institutions. According to Goffman, total institutions existed in a social vacuum, without any social conflict or any connection to contemporary ideologies or dogmas. The two most renowned American sociologists, Donald Clemmer[4] and Gresham M. Sykes,[5] who are frequently cited to this day, came to a similar conclusion in the 1950s. Both established the deprivation model, which assumes that a prison society develops with respect to deprivations ensuing from incarceration.

Another approach is to regard the prison system as part of a "social arrangement", an institution where transformations of social discourses can be observed. This approach is clearly demonstrated in Michel Foucault's book *Discipline and Punish*[6] and in the work of John Pratt, who concentrated on the transformation of punishments in relation to the transformation of the discourse of civilisation.[7] When applying this methodological approach, historians, sociologists and anthropologists draw substantially different conclusions. They perceive the prison system as dependent upon social context, and the approach towards the convicted is shaped by contemporary discourses. Whereas the approach influenced by Goffman's studies makes it possible to understand the functioning of prison society, what rules govern that society and the ways social actors adapt to the environment, Foucault's view shows social change.

Based on the statements above, we can draw the conclusion that the penitentiary institution can be analysed and examined from two points of view: as an institution with its own role in society, and as an institu-

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4   Clemmer, *The Prison Community.*
5   Sykes, *The Society of Captives.*
6   Foucault, *Discipline and Punish.*
7   Pratt, *Punishment and Civilisation.*

tion with its own world and society shaped by specific conditions stemming from the very essence of its purpose. We have decided to intertwine both approaches in our research. We want to demonstrate how the social and political context affected the activities and workings of the prison as a system as well as how these metamorphoses were manifested in the internal life in prisons, in the behaviour towards the convicted, how adaptation strategies of both inmates and prison personnel were changing. The story that we are about to tell gives the impression that the prison system and society are two entwined entities. As though the prison, the behaviour towards the convicted and the understanding of the role of the prison as such would reflect changes in the society. In this context, the words of one of our narrators are apt: "One can see the condition of a household by the toilet, and the condition of the society by the prison." We based our research on the conviction that the prison system is not an institution that would evolve outside a political, economic or social context. We believe that the role of the prison system is created and moulded by dominating master narratives, which – among others – influence the manner in which the prison staff behave towards the convicted. It is an institution unique in its social and moral environment and its practices reflect wider social patterns.

So as to understand changes in the society and their transfer to the functioning of the prison system, we have decided to use the narrative approach, deeply rooted in all the disciplines of our focus. Predominantly, the concepts of master and individual narrative are used in this book. By means of the narrative analysis, we examine how master narratives (political-ideological, technocratic and humanistic) affected the prison system in Czechoslovakia, the purpose of the punishment and the approach towards the convicted, and how these were accepted or refused by the individual actors and ingrained in their individual narratives. It needs to be said at the beginning that we consider narratives more than a mere means of expression or description of a given situation, given the fact that a person thinks, perceives, imagines and makes moral decisions under the influence of narrative structures.[8] By

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8   Sarbin, "The Narrative as a Root Metaphor for Psychology," 8.

narrating a story, we attribute certain meaning to the present, the past and the future, which can be substantially different in other narrative structures.[9] The use of the given master narratives within a certain period of time helps us understand why various changes were taking place at certain times.

A narrative is often described as an oral or written record of mutually connected events.[10] It is a tool for interpretation by means of which people attach meaning and coherence to individual events.[11] However, a narrative can also be seen in a far more complex way: firstly, as a presentation of real events in the world as a story that puts them into context and, secondly, as an explanation or interpretation of individual events in connection to a specific theory, ideology or standpoint. Hence, there are many narratives of capitalism or Marxism. The latter definition is the nearest to our approach.

A narrative can be found on different levels of human actions. For the purposes of the present research, two major narrative levels are distinguished: the master narrative and the individual narrative. Master narratives are reproduced through individual social discourses and cultural production. The term "master narrative" (also known as "meta narrative" or "grand narrative") is currently used in various disciplines, from literary theory to the humanities and the social sciences, and its definition may vary. Our conception accentuates its social function and impact on the formation of individuals' as well as society's opinion on historical events.

Having found its place in historical science, historiography in particular, in the 1980s, the term "master narrative" began being used in the historical science ten years later. Generally, it is a set of all-inclusive narrations that render an explanation and legitimise the character and components of a specific culture. The roots of this term can be found in the postmodern discussion about narratives, and the first impetus to its formulation can be found in *Metahistory*, by Hayden White, although

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9   Bruner, *Acts of Meaning.*
10   "Narrative," *Oxford English Dictionary.*
11   Shweder et al., "The Cultural Psychology of Development."

he does not use the term as such. In *Metahistory*, White argues that historiography can be considered as a literary genre and that historians are dependent upon language and rhetorical tropes.[12] The concept of historical master narrative can also be found in comparative studies by the French social anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss.[13] In his research into colonialism in Central and Latin America, he draws attention to the missing voices of the subdued native inhabitants or imported African slaves in the written documents. While written documents predominantly demonstrated the perspectives of the controllers, the oral tradition provided a completely different view on the history. By following this realisation, Lévi-Strauss distinguished between the master narrative, that is, the narrative of the colonial masters, and the slave narrative, the stories of their slaves.[14] This view was later adopted in gender studies, thus becoming a tool to criticise the dominant Eurocentric and masculine historical images.[15]

The term "master narrative" was later spread in works by French deconstructionists. One of their main figures, Michel Foucault, focused on master narratives from the macrohistorical perspective. In his books, he concentrated on their power, their coherence as well as their change over time.[16] However, it is the philosopher Jean-François Lyotard who is considered the main figure related to the term "master narrative" and who "used the term [*meta récit*] in his criticism of the enlightened vision led by the Hegelian philosophy of history and historic materialism and pointed to the 'totalitarian' sides of modernism."[17] Lyotard argues that such authoritarian, universalist narratives no longer occur in postmodernism. He states that postmodernism typically demonstrates mistrust towards master narratives as they lose their ability to make sense. These

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12   Ankersmit et al., *Re-figuring Hayden White.*
13   Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes tropiques.*
14   Jarausch and Sabrow, *Die Historische Meistererzählung*, 14; Klein, "Search of Narrative Mastery," 277–279.
15   Kolář, "Mezi hegemonií a pluralitou," 335; Jarausch and Sabrow, *Die Historische Meistererzählung*, 15.
16   Foucault, Discipline and Punish; Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1*; Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 2;* Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 3.*
17   Kolář, "Mezi hegemonií a pluralitou," 335.

"major narratives" are thus being replaced by "minor narratives" (*petits récits*"), which are local and claim no right for a universal status.[18] Nevertheless, critics challenge this view by saying that the existence of local narratives can be perceived as yet another type of master narrative, while some regard it Eurocentric. In an effort to better define the differences between the terms "master narrative", "grand narrative" and "meta narrative", Allan Megill established several categories: "micro narratives" of the events, "master narratives", which aim to explain a wider historical segment, "grand narratives", which claims to provide an authoritative historical segments, and "meta narratives", which draw from cosmologies such as Christianity. This categorisation is not used in this book and the authors consider the terms "master"/"grand"/"meta narratives" as synonyms.[19]

In historical sciences, the term "master narrative" is mainly used in historiography when authors strive to describe the main story of history. In the present work, we enrich this term with the view of psychologists who use "master narrative" to explain the acting of human individuals and perceive it as a means for structuring our seeing of the world to make sense of it. In terms of this conception, master narrative represents the fulfilment of the basic human need for belongingness. The psychologist Phillip Hammack refers to it as "collective solidarity", that is, the attempt to think and perceive the world just as others in the same time and place.[20] In this sense, master narratives carry meaning, and their reflection in the products of the given culture and acceptation by individuals to their own narratives leads to their continuity. This is how even master narratives find their way into "minor narratives" of everydayness and shape the identity of their carriers.

Our understanding of master narrative is an implicitly intended system of general narrated rules and compositional principles reflected in the individual texts, albeit unspoken most of the time. Ideologically

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18   Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition*; Klein, "Search of Narrative Mastery," 279–285; Browning, *Lyotard and the End of Grand Narratives.*
19   MeGill, "'Grand Narrative' and the Discipline of History," 152–153.
20   Hammack, "Narrative as a Root Metaphor," 84.

and culturally acceptable, they legitimise institutions or societies.[21] These generally elaborated rules are shared collectively among groups of people affiliated with the narrative, such as a nation, community or family.[22] The crucial aspect for the acceptance of a master narrative by a group is for its members to identify with the central story and to regard it as more or less compulsory and important for their being. Consequently, they feel the need to embed it in their individual narrative.

Each master narrative carries a certain system of values.[23] It contains an emotional drive, has convictions based on specific ideas and carries the motivation to behave in a certain way and to hold certain approaches. Particular ideas and convictions included in narratives lead to specific emotions, which then leads to the motivation to perform. (For instance, a guard in the position of an educator who has accepted a discipline-based political-ideological master narrative will adopt authority and repression towards inmates. Based on the framework of values included in the accepted narrative, such treatment of prisoners will both advocate and justify repressive actions.) Such motivations are frequently manifested as concrete goals with an undertone of values contained in the individual master narratives. Master narratives also implicitly carry moral anchors which stem not only from ideas and convictions contained therein but also from their emotional character.[24]

On the level of the society, multiple master narratives are construed simultaneously most of the time. One of them can occur predominantly during a particular period, whereas another can represent an opposing narrative. The opposing narratives are referred to as "counter narratives" in some publications. Having a far wider application, a counter narrative is not a mere opposite as it never leaves the dominating framework, but works with components and parts of an existent framework from the inside.[25] In the present book, however, we do not work with

21   Kolář, "Metanarace národních dějin," 91; Sniegoň, "Historie ve znovuzrozené volné soutěži," 208.
22   Hammack, *Narrative and the Politics of Identity.*
23   Hammack, "Narrative and the Cultural Psychology of Identity," 231.
24   Taylor, *Sources of the Self.*
25   Bamberg and Andrews, *Considering Counter-Narratives.*

this term and place the various master narratives on the same level, taking into account that some of them were dominant in certain periods, sometimes they co-existed as alternative "worlds", and opposing one another at times. The distribution of "powers" was dependent upon a certain social and political context, and the narratives adopted the context, while simultaneously structuring it. On the personal level, people would choose which of these master narratives they integrate into their individual narrative.

We also work with the term "threat" in this book, as it generally applies at the moment when a society feels somewhat threatened, when people or whole societies tend to identify strongly with one master narrative and consider the other narratives as threatening or ideologically hostile. As a rule, major master narratives carry the image of an enemy. It is often the feeling of being threatened that could be found in the background of numerous ideologies. Since people adopt these master narratives in their individual narratives, they also adopt the images of threats they contain and reproduce them. Hammack[26] showed how Palestinian and Jewish teenagers adopt master narratives of their nations which depict the threatening nature of the other group, resulting in mutual aversion at an early age. The feeling of collective threat significantly contributes to the reproduction of these patterns in individual narratives, whereas its absence allows for a change, which leads to the refusal and acceptance of new master narratives.[27] To resume the example mentioned above, the moment such mutually polarised Jewish and Palestinian teenagers met at a summer stay outside their countries and under the supervision of psychologists, and participated in group discussions aimed at clearing oneself of the feeling of mutual threat, most of them got over their national master narratives and created a new, binding narrative. However, a year after returning to their respective countries, on being re-exposed to the rhetoric of their national narratives which depicted the other nation as a threat, their opinions aligned with the national narratives.

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26   Hammack, "Identity, Conflict, and Coexistence."
27   Hammack, "Narrative and the Cultural Psychology of Identity," 224.

By observing this dialogue-based process, in terms of which individuals either adopt master narratives into their individual narratives, or refuse them and instead identify with new or up-to-that-time sub-dominant master narratives, the process of the reproduction of the social order, or, conversely, its changes, can be captured.[28] It is beyond any question that 30 years after the Velvet Revolution and the end of Communist Party dictatorship it is quite arduous a task to analyse the existence of master narratives in individual narratives. In some cases interviews with contemporary witnesses are to a greater or lesser extent affected by the current narratives, which has been taken into account in the analysis, of course. However, not infrequently the authors were surprised to find the extent to which the then dominating master narrative (and the values it promoted) has persisted to this day. This goes to show that refusing one master narrative and accepting another one instead is neither frequent nor can be taken for granted. That is because a narrative includes a set of beliefs, ideas, moral values and opinions that become part of our personality. It also contains information about what we find safe and threatening in the context of our own lives.[29]

The psychologist Dan P. McAdams argues that the life narrative (that is, the way we understand and tell the story of our life) is an integrating component of our identity. Our narrative fills our lives with meaning in the eyes of ourselves as well as others. We follow it when taking concrete steps and adopting certain behaviours. As a consequence, changing narratives in the course of our lifetime is hard as it requires re-evaluation of our approach, convictions and actions. This can be quite uncomfortable for many and can lead to negative feelings, since it may be very difficult for us to justify our own prior decisions.[30] Usually, people resort to such radical changes, as the acceptance of another master narrative, only at times when they reach a point when their current narrative and the resulting conviction are subjectively unbearable and prevent them from living the lives that they are accustomed

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28 Ibid.
29 Dallos, *Attachment Narrative Therapy,* 14.
30 McAdams, "The Psychology of Life Stories," 111.

to. Normally, they suffer more under the burden of their narrative than profit from its internal arrangement.

Another important aspect related to narratives is the position of the individual in terms of the master narrative in question. Master narratives have a significant impact on the opinions and behaviour of the majority of the people in society; therefore, what is quite substantial is the position of the individual within it.[31] Being an outsider, an enemy or another undesirable person considerably affects a person's shaping of identity and their self-reflection as well as their position in society. From the viewpoint of narratives, this person's position in the master narrative is also reflected in their personal narrative. The history of the prison system provides a number of examples as to the importance of the position of the individual in the master narrative. As a case in point, political prisoners in the 1950s were depicted as public enemies, which affected the way they were treated and even provided justifications for their imprisonment.[32] It also had an impact on their lives later on, when many of them could not get rid of this social position in their personal narratives, which had a detrimental effect on their identity for the rest of their lives. Similarly, prison workers who advocated a strict, even semi-military approach towards prisoners based on convictions stemming from the then dominating political-ideological narrative enjoyed a very stable position in the prison system at that time. After 1989, however, they were strongly criticised and their social position came under threat. The position we can adopt in terms of a master narrative also depends on whether we can identify with the master narrative or not.

In this book we are mainly going to concentrate on the master narratives prevalent in the prison system in the individual eras and their impact on the setup of conditions, values and workings in prisons. We observe master narratives and the values they contain, moral convictions, fundamental ideas and the ensuing goals and motivations. Furthermore, we focus on the acceptance of these master narratives by

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31   Thorne and McLean, "Telling Traumatic Events in Adolescence."
32   Nečasová, *Obrazy nepřítele v Československu.*

prison employees and the ways they reflected their approach towards the convicted, namely whether they succumbed to or rejected the prevalent master narratives, and the resulting social and personal consequences this entailed. We also observe the prisoners' adaptation to these narratives by means of the behaviour of the prison workers, who were members of the Correctional Education Corps (Sbor nápravné výchovy, SNV).

Three prototypical master narratives have been identified in the prison system in the observed period of time: political-ideological, technocratic and humanistic. These proved to be fit for both a comprehensive analysis of the prison system and an adaptation of the main actors to prison conditions. The authors are aware of the simplification. However, the selection of the predominantly occurring master narratives enabled us to get a better grasp of the main tendencies in the prison system, which later manifested in a shift in the treatment of convicts.

The dominant master narrative over the whole observed period was undoubtedly the political-ideological master narrative, which spread fully after the communist coup d'état in February 1948. Based on the official state ideology of Marxism-Leninism, the narrative legitimised the dominion of communist or labour parties in Central and Eastern Europe. A number of selected individuals were in charge of proper interpretation of the traditional authors of Marxism-Leninism: Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin in the 1950s.[33] The Czechoslovak penology policy had its origins in Marxism-Leninism and demonstrated the dialectical combination of repression and coercion with conviction and re-education. The official ideology found its way into the prison system and the behaviour towards the convicted in a number of ways, and in the course of the 40-year-long Communist Party dictatorship, it was gradually transforming in line with social and political changes. Repression and coercion were applied on political prisoners, first and foremost, who were the main enemy in the initial stage of the stabilisation of the dictatorship. While doubts were expressed regarding the re-education of political prisoners (although it was continually taking place),

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33   Bettelheim, "Stalinist Ideological Formation."

there were no doubts about the re-education of imprisoned criminals. Therefore, ideas of transformation into a "new socialist man" were used with respect to them. The vehicle – apart from ideological education – leading towards this goal was mainly productive labour, perceived as the fundamental component of the penal system. It was the labour that constituted the hope for improvement and re-education.

The theory of the prison system was influenced by the writings of Soviet educator Anton Makarenko in the 1950s, who greatly emphasised – apart from labour – the role of the collective, which, Makarenko argued, could be used to educate individuals.[34] In practice, however, it became an inspection body, checking what individuals were doing and whether they had adjusted and aligned with the goals of re-education. In essence, collective education was meant to make individuals break. This underlying idea was the driver of the management and application of authoritative principles. As the Communist Party played a major role in the directive rule (as well as in other areas), discipline was imposed on prisoners, who had to follow a strict schedule. Wardens and other prison workers also had to submit to discipline, which was observed by means of various inspection systems, in particular by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Prison cadres were among the most prioritised groups regarding party affiliation. In terms of this, members of the Communist Party were screened, checked and trained. Were anyone to neglect their duties, they would be investigated and, alternatively, punished.[35] The party dealt with party matters, but also took part in the workings of the prison system.

Maintaining and imposing discipline was also associated with the militarisation of the prison system. Obedience was asked from prisoners, wardens and other prison workers. Each had to follow orders, non-conforming opinions were disallowed, individual opinions and treatment suppressed. People in the prison system, just as the mentally and physically challenged at the time, were intended to be made invisible. If any information about the situation in prisons leaked, ev-

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34   Bosewitz, *Waifdom in the Soviet Union*, 135–166.
35   Kaška, *Neukáznění a neangažovaní*.

erything was presented as without any problems. The prison system was criticised only in the short period of the Prague Spring in 1968, when newspapers and TV stations covered issues related to political processes and the bullying of political prisoners, and the top representatives of the prison system discussed its future.[36] This changed following the Warsaw Pact invasion, after which the topic was strongly censored again.

A significant feature of the Czechoslovak prison system at the time was the absence of inspection bodies. According to prison orders and, later, Act no. 59/1965 Coll. (On the Execution of Punishment by Imprisonment), prisoners could lodge complaints, and prosecutors and various committees elected by the National Assembly oversaw the situation in prisons. However, inspection bodies were a component of the system, and complaints hardly ever led to any remedies. It was the discussion about political processes that touched upon the topic of socialist law and its obedience. Various inspection systems were created in the 1960s, aiming to prevent any illegal activities from happening. Still, prisoners imprisoned during the period of "normalisation" say that they would rather not make any complaints, as they were concerned about lowering their chances for a parole.

The political-ideological master narrative, dominant up to 1989, had created conditions for authoritarianism under which prisoners were considered a mere subject for re-education that should be "broken" and forced to change by means of labour and ideological teaching. A prisoner should be transformed into a socialist man, a fully-fledged part of the socialist society. Just as a political prisoner, a criminal prisoner was considered an enemy who had failed to grasp the convenience of the socialist life. However, a political prisoner was a person who had attempted to destroy socialism consciously, whereas a criminal prisoner, being the remainder of a bourgeois style of life, was to become a thing of the past.

While the political-ideological master narrative was present in socialist countries, the technocratic (expert) and the humanistic (human

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36   "Kontrola"; Kaštánek, "Aktuální otázka současného vězeňství," 3; Kaštánek, "Beseda o problémech za vězeňskou zdí," 3; Koncl and Branislav, "Říkají si muklové," 37–39; (až), "Nad úvahami o budoucnosti čs. vězeňství," 3; (lc), "Vzpoura v nápravně výchovném ústavu v Minkovicích," 2; Miňovský, "Věznice Ruzyně – jak vypadá dnes," 3.

rights) narratives were being implemented in the countries of the Western bloc, significantly affecting the political, social and economic situation there. In the context of the Czechoslovak prison system, both narratives can be interpreted as complementing, or contrasting, under specific political and social circumstances. The technocratic master narrative found its way into the Czechoslovak prison system mainly in the 1960s in relation to the expert rule.[37] This narrative is founded on rational supremacy. The key component is the position of science as the discoverer of the objective truth and emphasis is put on information which represents power. Human reason and science should be applied in every situation and under every circumstance. The conditions for human life can be improved by the application of scientific knowledge.[38] This conviction is typical of modernism; however, the beginning of expert knowledge and experts in Czechoslovakia came as late as the 1960s. The Prague Spring represented the apex of the attempt by experts and the party elite to build socialism, which reflected the emphasis on scientific rationality. These tendencies were not condemned after 1968 but were still used in various ways.[39] Psychologists and expert educators working in penitentiaries since 1963 aimed for the resocialisation of the criminal prisoner by way of scientific knowledge. Striving for more than creating knowledge, they engaged in the transformation of behaviour and life standards of convicts. Their knowledge should help them in correcting "bad habits". The first specialised institution to deal with penitentiary and penological research was established in the mid-1960s. The Penology Research Institute worked on not only research assignments, but also spread new scientific knowledge about the prison system among employees. Employees of the institute cooperated with psychologists and expert educators, who often participated in the research that was conducted.

The requirement to increasingly use science and scientific knowledge in the prison system brought about increased demands on the professionalism of the prison staff. Even ordinary wardens were supposed to

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37   Sommer et al., *Řídit socialismus jako firmu*; Kopeček et al., *Architekti dlouhé změny*.
38   Hall and Geiben, *Formations of Modernity*.
39   Sommer et al., *Řídit socialismus jako firmu, 8–9*.

have at least a high school diploma, which led to the development of the school system from the 1960s. The highest degree in education that employees in prisons could achieve since 1979 was at the Department of Penology at the University of the National Security Corps (Sbor národní bezpečnosti, SNB). Progressive tendencies from the Prague Spring had largely ceased by the beginning of the 1980s. The Penology Research Institute was abolished, and psychologists and expert educators were degraded to mere "workers". No longer were they experts bringing new knowledge to improve the resocialisation of convicts; they only helped solve issues and day-to-day administrative tasks related to assessing convicts and their involvement in the work process. While technocratic tendencies in other fields were manifested in Czechoslovakia up until 1989, expert thinking in the prison system was silenced in the 1980s.

The last master narrative that we work with is the humanistic (human rights) one, which began to be manifested as early as the 1960s. It was most notable in 1968, only to be severely rejected in the period of "normalisation". It reappeared and became dominant after 1989, at least according to official documents.[40] This narrative is based on the ideas of civic freedom and equality, democracy, progress, and – in the context of the prison system in particular – human rights. It stems from the conviction that a person has an inalienable right for humane treatment and that they should not be stripped of their dignity. This was shown by means of an emphasis on psychological therapy and the humane treatment of convicts who deserved individual approach. Contrary to the political-ideological narrative, which considers prisoners mere objects for re-education, in terms of the humanistic narrative prisoners were seen as human beings with their own rights. Living space, diet and healthcare should be comparable to life outside prison, and prisoners should be treated in a humane manner, with no signs of violence, unnecessary bullying or discipline. These tendencies vanished from the Czechoslovak prison system after 1968, but in the period of "normalisation" this narrative was seen in particular in the dissident

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40   Dirga and Hasmanová-Marhánková, "Nejasné vztahy moci."

environment, which drew some aspects from the materials of the United Nations as well as other organisations concerned with human rights, such as Amnesty International or Helsinki Watch. The narrative thus affected the penal system predominantly from the outside. Charter 77, The Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted (Výbor na ochranu nespravedlive stíhaných, VONS) and foreign human rights organisations submitted requests for the maintenance of prisoners' rights and kept track of breaches, hence forcing a change in the system, especially in the treatment of political prisoners. These tendencies became dominant after 1989, when a number of dissidents and individuals associated with the dissident movement engaged in the reform of the prison system.

The Czechoslovak prison system had been undergoing radical changes since the 1950s. New tendencies were promoted in various periods that aligned with the social and political situation. The prison system as a whole was not an institution that would evolve separately, regardless of changes in the society. The way it was managed was clearly shaped by people who were making decisions about where Czechoslovakia was headed, as penal and penitentiary policy was created at the highest levels. These changes are described by means of master narratives in this book, by observing them on multiple levels. Changes in the prison system could be observed in not only the system itself, as organisational changes in the management of the institution as such, but also in the transformation of the thinking of those in top positions of the prison administration and in the lowest positions alike. We show that the narrative they adopted and that affected the interpretation of their experience and decisions had an effect on their treatment of different categories of prisoners.

The main body of the book is divided into four chapters. Although discussions appear throughout the book, each chapter has its own primary author. Chapter 1, "Milestones in the Development of the Prison System after the Second World War", the introductory chapter, mainly written by Klára Pinerová, with the help of Michal Louč, presents a basic historical overview of changes in the prison system and provides a

description of the most crucial tendencies. While the book deals mainly with the period 1965–1992, we could not help but delve into the period of the 1950s in order to point out the continuities that occurred in the prison system. Despite the fact that the 1960s are regarded as the turning point in the prison system, our research has shown the somewhat misleading nature of these claims, as the changes taking place in the course of the 1960s had begun as early as the late 1950s. We also devote space to the situation in the prison system after 1989, which has been marginalised in history research so far.

The three chapters that follow provide analyses from different angles. Chapter 2, "Tendencies in the Prison System", written by Klára Pinerová, deals with master narratives and their transformations at the organisational and system levels, primarily analysing texts from the penal system (concepts, laws, commands, prison orders, papers presented at national events of leading heads of the prison system, journals aimed at prison workers). Applying narrative analysis, it attempt to highlight the appearance of new tendencies in the history of the prison system in Czechoslovakia, paying attention to not only its repressive nature but also the inclination towards modernisation, which was simultaneously taking place in other countries and which typically emphasised psychological and psycho-therapeutical aspects in the work with the convicted.

In Chapter 3, "Everyday Life in Prison," written mainly by Michal Louč, the interest in the functioning of the prison system shifts from the system level to the individual level. By drawing from contemporary literature, prison literature and recollections of contemporary witnesses, the main topics analysed are the administration of prisons, the roles of the actors, the types of prisoners and their treatment, everyday life in prisons and its changes over time, the differences between penitentiaries, the various forms of threats facing prisoners and prison workers (work norms, disciplinary punishments, violence, self-harm, repression towards political prisoners) and the related survival strategies. Experiences of custody are also partially touched upon, custody being the first place where an individual is confronted with a yet unknown critical

situation and an environment where the imprisoned adopt the rules of prison life and ways of coping with them.

Chapter 4, "Employees as Bearers of the Different Meanings of Their Work", written by Kristýna Haluzíková Bušková, primarily concentrates on prison employees and provides an analysis of how selected master narratives found their way into their individual narratives and later influenced their views, opinions and behaviour towards convicts. At the same time, it shows the consequences of the acceptance or the failure of accepting the master narrative on their personal life and how they tried to adapt to the conditions back then.