



The building of the former headquarters of the State Security on Špitálska 14 in Bratislava (At two lions).



Villa Jaroň on Uhrova Street in Bratislava. One of the most representative buildings of the functionalist style in the world. It was demolished in 2011.



The railway station in Bratislava-Filiálka, which is no longer in use today. This is where the railcar loaded with the possessions of a family affected by Action B would depart from.



Building of the former Central National Committee in the Primate's Square in Bratislava.

comrades, was being discussed during secret meetings of the Special Committee. Later on, apartments were being made available even for mass organisations or large companies.

## NON-REHABILITATION

In the fall of 1956, a Special committee for filing complaints against Action B was created. It had a formal character, therefore only a few cases were reconsidered. *The Act of July 1968* was supposed to help investigate Action B but the events of August 1968 and the normalisation process put a stop to rehabilitations for a very long time. *Act No 87/1991* on out-of-court rehabilitations did not sufficiently (financially or by returning their property) indemnify even a small number of those who lived long enough to still be eligible for compensation.

## QUOTE

*"Suchá Hora in the district of Trstená was designated as our new place of residence. (...) We were assigned an old cabin that had gaps in the walls big enough to let the light in. The so called kitchen used to serve as a place for cooking potatoes for pigs. When we arrived, the chairman of the Local national committee happened*

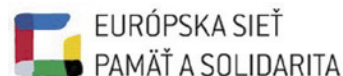
*to be away from the office. His deputy signed a note for us confirming that the assigned accommodation was completely unfit for occupancy. It did not help."*

Ján Mora, evicted in Action B from Bratislava

Sources of photographs: Slovak national archive, Military Historical Institute, Archive of the Museum of the Slovak National Uprising, Publication Famous Villas of Slovakia, Archive of Mária Jurčovičová, Photo archive of Michal Babál



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## ACTION B (1952 – 1953)

After usurping power in 1948 the Communist Party tried to recreate society along the lines of the communist ideology and remove the real or supposed opponents of the regime. One of the manifests of this effort was the forceful eviction of the „untrustworthy“ citizens, from the larger towns to the country, which was supposed to serve the creation of new, classless society. Apartments were handed over to people loyal to the communist regime. The next step towards forming the new society, created according to the Soviet pattern, was to be achieved through Action B – “B” as apartments.



A villa in Fraňo Kráľ Street – in 1952 its original inhabitants, the Jurčovič family, were moved to Jasenová in Orava.



Jozef Lietavec, a commissioner of the Ministry of Interior, the man in charge of Action B in Bratislava.



A cabin in Jasenová in Orava, where the Jurčovič family had to move after they were evicted from Bratislava.

The Minister of National Defense Alexej Čepička, the initiator of Action B in Czechoslovakia.



A commemorative plaque for the families evicted under Action B from Bratislava-Dúbravka.

The initiator at national level was the Minister of National Defence Alexej Čepička. His plan for "eviction of nationally untrustworthy person or persons who occupy an apartment contrary to the common interest" was approved by the political secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (ÚV KSČ) in March 1952 as top secret. In Slovakia, a secret Special Committee, led by a Commissioner of the Internal Affairs Jozef Lietavec, was set up to be the executor of Action B. They received secret tips from the local arms of the Slovakian Communist Party (KSS) or from national committees, naming persons who were to be evicted.

One of the statistics lists the eviction of 1,042 families of nationally untrustworthy persons from the following cities: Bratislava 678, Komárno 160, Martin 136 and Žilina 68. Assignments to forced labour lasted from the summer of 1952 to the autumn of 1953. After moving to their assigned new home in the countryside, they had to report to their assigned place of employment.

## LEGALITY OF ACTION B

The State Security led Action B was relying on the then valid legislation. *The Housing Act No 138/1948* allowed

cancellation of the tenancy agreement of a person that was nationally untrustworthy and ordering them (by a decree) to be moved to an assigned municipality in the countryside. Many times a verbal directive was all it took. Arbitrary decisions, unsubstantiated evidence and allegations made Action B illegal and, what is more, even contradictory to the then valid laws and Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic of May 1948.

## PROCESS OF EVICTION

A family chosen for eviction would either receive a decree and a several days' notice of a railcar being made available to them or they would just receive a surprise one morning in the form of a moving van. It was a shock for the families. When news of evictions started spreading, many families would preemptively pack the necessities just in case a pair of "secret" police officers showed up on their doorstep bringing a decree of eviction. The almost invariably horrible conditions of the new place, foreign environment, suspicions of local people, new inferior employment and impossibility of receiving an education were all factors that negatively affected the mental and physical health of evicted families. Their lives were derailed forever.

## GROUPS OF PEOPLE AFFECTED BY ACTION B

Persons to be evicted were chosen by the committee and the process was almost always based on political and class criteria. The committee would choose persons politically active before 1948, members of the Democratic Party, intellectuals, businessmen, self-employed persons, owners of nice houses/apartments, but also regular people. For example, someone might have been designated as untrustworthy because they refused to lend their car for the transportation of banners for the celebration of J.V. Stalin's birthday, did not demonstrate a positive attitude toward the people's democratic establishment, promoted religious beliefs or owned a factory where 27 workers were employed, etc.

## PROCEDURE FOR ASSIGNING AND CLASSIFICATION OF APARTMENTS

Action B was officially supposed to remedy the problem of lacking accommodation and provide people who came to towns to work with a place to live. In reality, from the very beginning the percentage share of allocation of the acquired apartments to representatives of the Ministry of Interior, including the State Security police, soldiers, party representatives and other deserving