

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to greet you most sincerely on behalf of the Civic Association PAMĚŤ. I would also like to thank to Mr. Ivo Strejček MEP that the exhibition takes place here, in the European Parliament.

What is the Civic Association PAMĚŤ and what are its aims? The main aim is to work with available archival sources and on their basis to deal with fates and life's tragedies of citizens, to make books, television documentaries, exhibitions from them, to strengthen the memory, self-esteem and moral values of our society.

Today, the Czech Republic is in Europe. We must speak about fates of our citizens; we must speak about the events that plunged our country for many years into isolation with the world. And above all we must transfer this information so that this period will never repeat again.

One of the many cases that we are presenting here is also one of the most famous. It features fates of families in the region Mor. Budějovice and Třebíč, which are finding out that they are intended to be liquidated because of their resistance to collectivization. Communists cannot accept the resistance in these villages. They are increasing targets to farmers. There are no fodder crops for cattle. The cattle are dying.

The farmers are imprisoned for not achieving the absurd targets. Their wives with their children are not able to manage farms, the access of communists to their possessions is already free, and nothing stands in their light. The resistance to the regime is rising; the farmers are looking for the way how to defend themselves. They are forming resistance groups into which StB (State Police) members also infiltrate. They are urging fighters to activities that will lead them to prison.

This is the beginning of the tragedy Babice. And the result was 110 convicted, 11 of them were sentenced to death; others to severe sentences, 4 of them will die in prison. The families of convicted private farmers were deported to border areas, they had to leave their homes, their farms and estates were confiscated and stolen.

The exhibition "Millers from Babice" is based on the book of the same name by the authors Luděk Navara and Miroslav Kasáček, both present here. They are also the authors of the exhibition.

My own experience from the time described in the book is direct; I was born in that area. I married into the family of Melkus, which was affected by these events and thus I have been sharing their life story.

Finally, it must be said that though the communist regime tried to break the spirit of faith, freedom and entrepreneurship, it never succeeded.