

THE ASSASSINATION OF REINHARD HEYDRICH

Heydrich was one of the **top leaders of Nazi Germany**. He served as the **Acting Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia** — basically the Nazi governor of the Czech lands — and was often called “*the Butcher of Prague*.” He was responsible for **organizing Nazi control over occupied Czechoslovakia and for planning the Holocaust**.

Two Czechoslovak soldiers, **Jozef Gabčík and Jan Kubiš**, who had been **trained in Great Britain**, were sent on a secret mission called **Operation Anthropoid**. Their goal was to **kill Heydrich in Prague**. They attacked his car on **May 27, 1942**, and Heydrich died from his injuries a few days later.

The assassination was a major success for the resistance — it showed that even a small, occupied country could fight back against Nazi power. However, the Nazis responded with **brutal revenge: they destroyed 2 entire villages, Lidice and Ležáky, and killed hundreds of innocent people**.

This event remains one of the most dramatic and tragic moments of WWII in Central Europe — and an important example of courage, sacrifice, and the fight for freedom.

Author's note: This drama performance is highly simplified; some people who were part of this event are not even included in the performance.

Klára Konečná

List of roles:

Antonie Březinová: Brigadier General **František Moravec**, chief of the Czechoslovak military intelligence (and author of the idea to kill Reinhard Heydrich) + **A member of the group Říjen** - double role

Filip Chytil: Acting Reich Protector **Reinhard Heydrich** + the **plane navigator** - double role

Johana Drexlerová: **Johannes Klein**, Heydrich's bodyguard and private driver + **A member of the group Říjen** - double role

Ignác Karczub: Czechoslovak soldier **Jan Kubiš**

Klára Konečná: **Jan Zelenka-Hajský**, Anti-Nazi fighter, one of the founders of the Sokol resistance network and of the group Říjen, which was part of the Sokol resistance network + **The Narrator** - double role

Anežka Marie Macková: **Nazi soldier n. 1** + **A member of the group Říjen** - double role

Jana Milerová: **Nazi soldier n. 3** + **A member of the group Říjen** - double role

Luisa Smejkalová: Chief Police Inspector **Václav Král** + **A member of the group Říjen** - double role

Jindřich Strejček: Czechoslovak soldier **Jozef Gabčík**

Aneta Ticháčková: **Nazi soldier n. 2** + **A member of the group Říjen** - double role

Karolína Vašků: **Major General Colin Gubbins** (head of the British Special Operations Executive, organized the training of specially trained military agents, including Jozef Gabčík and Jan Kubiš) + **František Josef Šafařík** (he helped the resistance during WWII by providing the group Říjen with information about

Heydrich's movements and plans, which made the assassination possible) - double role

Vysvětlení:

Explanation:

Sokolská odbojová síť – byla tajná odbojová organizace během druhé světové války v Protektorátu Čechy a Morava, kterou tvořili převážně **členové Sokola**. Pomáhali **organizovat odboj proti nacistům**, shromažďovali **informace**, šířili **ilegální tiskoviny** a připravovali **sabotáže**.

The Sokol resistance network – was a secret resistance organization in the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia during WWII, composed mainly of **members of the Sokol gymnastics movement**. It carried out **resistance activities against the Nazis**, gathered **intelligence**, **distributed illegal publications**, and prepared **acts of sabotage**.

Protektorát Čechy a Morava – byl **okupační správní útvar nacistického Německa** na území českých zemí. Vznikl 16. března 1939 po okupaci Československa. Formálně měl omezenou autonomii s prezidentem Emilem Háchou a českou vládou, ale skutečnou moc vykonával říšský protektor jmenovaný Německem.

Hlavním cílem bylo využití českého průmyslu pro válečné účely a postupná germanizace obyvatelstva. Protektorát existoval až do **osvobození v květnu 1945**.

The Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia – was an **occupation administrative unit of Nazi Germany** on the territory of the Czech lands. It was established on March 16, 1939, after the occupation of Czechoslovakia. Formally, it had limited autonomy with President Emil Hácha and a Czech government, but real power was exercised by the Reich Protector appointed by Germany. The main goal was to exploit Czech industry for war purposes and gradually Germanize the population. The Protectorate existed until **liberation in May 1945**.

Skupina Říjen – byla **jedna z odbojových skupin**, která vznikla **v rámci sokolského odboje** a měla za úkol především **pomoc parašutistům s organizací realizací atentátu**.

Group Říjen – a **resistance group within the Sokol network** whose main job was to **help Jan Kubiš and Jozef Gabčík** with the **organization and realization of the assassination**.

Záchytné (kontaktní) adresy – tajná místa, kde se odboj mohl scházet, skrývat lidi, předávat zprávy nebo uchovávat materiál.

Safe addresses – secret locations used by resistance members to hide people or material, meet or exchange messages during WWII.

Scene n. 1 – The office of František Moravec

Anežka: Colin Gubbins knocks 3 times on the door.

František Moravec: Come in!

Anežka: Gubbins takes off his military cap before speaking.

Colin Gubbins: Excuse me, General. The Czechoslovak soldiers are waiting outside, as you requested.

František Moravec: Bring them in, please.

Colin Gubbins: Of course, General.

Anežka: Gubbins leaves the room and comes back after a while with Jan Kubiš and Jozef Gabčík. (Meanwhile, when the Major General is outside, František Moravec takes a sip of his coffee.)

Colin Gubbins: Here they are, sir.

František Moravec: Thank you.

Anežka: Gubbins gives a slight bow to Moravec, salutes, and leaves.

Jan Kubiš and Jozef Gabčík (together): Hello, General!

(Kubiš and Gabčík give Moravec a slight bow and shake his hand.)

František Moravec: Hello! It's very good to meet you. As you surely know, you've been chosen from many other men for a special covert operation that could help free your country from the German occupation. Out of 2,000 men, only 24 were selected for the special training under the British SOE* - and only two of them were chosen for the operation itself. You must be among the very best to have made it this far!

Jan Kubiš: Thank you, sir, but I wasn't actually meant to be here. It was supposed to be Karel Svoboda. He got injured during training, so they sent me instead.

* *Special Operations Executive (SOE) - Oddělení pro zvláštní operace, sekce britské zpravodajské služby během 2. světové války, zaměřená na vedení boje nestandardními metodami*

František Moravec: I'm sure that you'll be just as good as Svoboda would have been. You're all brave men and your country will remember you for this!

František Moravec: Now, have a seat, please. We've got a lot of work to do.

Scene n. 2 – Meanwhile in Prague...

Anežka: Reinhard Heydrich sits behind his desk, surrounded by documents and some stationery, and he's writing something. After a moment, he stands up, walks to the window, lights a cigarette and stares out over the city.

Anežka: Suddenly, Johannes Klein knocks on the door.

Reinhard Heydrich: Who is it?

Johannes Klein: It's Klein, sir.

Reinhard Heydrich: Come in!

Reinhard Heydrich: What do you want? Why are you disturbing me? Don't you see I have a lot of work to do?! You'd better say something important!

Anežka: Heydrich's voice is sharp and impatient.

Anežka: Klein stands stiffly at attention, avoiding eye contact. His voice is quite nervous but still firm.

Johannes Klein: Apologies, sir. I bring a report. Another transport left this morning. Around five hundred Jews. The numbers keep rising.

Anežka: Heydrich says coldly:

Reinhard Heydrich: Good. Let it rise. Go now! And bring me some cognac.

Anežka: Heydrich slowly exhales smoke.

Johannes Klein: Certainly, sir.

Anežka: Johannes Klein gives him a slight bow and quickly leaves.

Scene n. 3 – Back in London...

Anežka: Moravec, Gabčík and Kubiš are sitting around a table. A large map is spread out in front of them, with three cups of coffee placed nearby. The room is silent. Tension hangs in the air. Gabčík and Kubiš are full of expectations.

Jozef Gabčík: So... what are we gonna start with?

František Moravec: Before we start planning anything, you must understand what our Operation Anthropoid truly involves. You're here voluntarily, yes - but you still don't know exactly what you're being asked to do.

Anežka: Gabčík and Kubiš exchange worried glances.

You've been chosen for a very special and dangerous mission. If you accept this - there's no turning back.

Jan Kubiš: What is it? Tell us!

František Moravec: Your mission is not sabotage. It's an assassination. The target... is Reinhard Heydrich. The Acting Reich Protector of Bohemia and Moravia - a man whose hands are stained with the blood of thousands, not just your people.

Anežka: Gabčík and Kubiš exchange horrified looks - but there's determination in their eyes. Kubiš clenches his fist.

Jan Kubiš: That's crazy. We're going to kill Heydrich!

Jozef Gabčík: Yes, we are.

František Moravec: If this is your final decision, we can start.

Anežka: Moravec gives a faint sigh of relief.

František Moravec: First of all, we need to figure out how to get you somewhere near Prague...

Scene n. 4 – Two months later, on the night of December 28 to 29, 1941

Anežka: Kubiš and Gabčík are on a plane. Suddenly, the navigator starts to speak through their transmitter. The voice cracks.

Navigator: Operation Anthropoid, prepare for exit. You will jump in 2 minutes. In the final 10 seconds, the plane's door will begin to open. Good luck.

Anežka: Gabčík nods slightly, his face tense.

Jozef Gabčík: Understood. Thank you.

Jozef Gabčík: You alright?

Jan Kubiš: Yeah...

Anežka: The plane's door slowly opens, and the cabin is filled with the roar of the engine and the wind.

Jozef Gabčík: Let's count to three. 1, 2...3!

Anežka: They jump. After a while, they start to see the city better.

Jan Kubiš: Open your parachute! Now!

Jozef Gabčík: OK – I'm trying!

Anežka: After a while, they land on a field. Gabčík groans in pain.

Jan Kubiš: What happened?

Jozef Gabčík: I hurt my leg! I must have landed wrong.

Jan Kubiš: Oh, no! Can you walk?

Jozef Gabčík: I don't think so. You must help me.

Jan Kubiš: Alright. Lean on me. We should find our safe address. But how are we gonna do that? You're injured, it's really dark and I can't even recognize this place. Do you remember studying the map of Ejpvovice, the place we were supposed to land at? This just doesn't look familiar to me... What if we landed at a wrong place?

Jozef Gabčík: But how could that happen? We had it all planned. And we had a navigator. You probably can't recognize it because it's dark.

Jan Kubiš: Alright, but anyway. We can't stay here and there's no way we'll find our safe address right now. Do you see that house? There is a small garden shed next to it. We can try to hide there till the morning.

Jozef Gabčík: It's risky, but it seems like we have no choice. Perhaps we'll find our safe address tomorrow.

Anežka: Kubiš supports Gabčík, and they move slowly across the dark field. They're getting closer to the garden shed.

Jan Kubiš: It's safe. No one's here. Let's break the door open.

Anežka: They break in and put down everything they carry – parachutes, weapons, and heavy containers. After that, Kubiš helps Gabčík to sit and he takes out a bandage from his bag to wrap Gabčík's wounded leg.

Scene n. 5 – The next day, December 29

Anežka: Kubiš is already awake in the garden shed. He nudges Gabčík to wake him up.

Jan Kubiš: Wake up! It's almost 8 AM. *(He checks his watch)* Listen, I was right. I went outside to check where we are, but I still can't recognize this place at all! We need to ask someone, but very carefully. I have an idea.

Jozef Gabčík: Alright, tell me.

Jan Kubiš: There's a church nearby, so I you could go there and ask the priest. It's probably the safest option. I could tell him that I was on my way back home from work in the Riech, but got lost.

Jozef Gabčík: Sounds good to me. Come back soon, I'll wait here.

The Narrator: The local priest, František Samek, told Jan Kubiš where he was and he also provided him with contacts of people that helped the skydivers to get to Rokycany.

Due to a mistake of the plane operator, Jan Kubiš and Josef Gabčík ended up around 100 km away from Ejpovice u Plzně - the

place they were supposed to land at. They landed near a small village Nehvizdy.

Luckily, it took them only one day to get into Rokycany, where they met one of the resistance members, Václav Stehlík. Every time they met a resistance member, they used secret pre-arranged slogans for safety reasons. The operation could continue again as planned. Václav Stehlík took them in his car to Plzeň, where they met the Chief Police Inspector, Václav Král...

Scene n. 6 – The apartment of Václav Král, December 30

(A modest home office. Papers and a typewriter on the desk. A coat hangs on a rack by the door.)

Anežka: Late afternoon. It's windy outside and it's snowing a bit. Král is writing on the typewriter when someone knocks on the door. He freezes and listens. Another knock. Slowly, he rises and walks to the door. He opens it just a crack.

Václav Král: (quietly) Yes?

Jan Kubiš: Adina sends regards to Plzeň – March 8 is good.

Anežka: He pulls the door open wider. Jan Kubiš stands there, snow clinging to his coat. Behind him, Jozef Gabčík leans on a rail. Both look tired. Václav Král looks surprised but also frightened.

Václav Král: I understand. Come in. Quickly.

Anežka: The men remove their hats. Gabčík's limping as he moves.

Václav Král: You're hurt!

Jozef Gabčík: Oh, yes. But it's nothing, just a bad landing.

Václav Král: Sit down. You've come a long way. I received a message from London some time ago, but I don't know exactly what you were sent to do. The less I know, the better. But tell me at least what happened? I was expecting you to arrive earlier.

Jan Kubiš: We landed in Nehvizdy instead of Rokycany. It must have been a mistake of the plane operator. Luckily, we found some people from the resistance also in Nehvizdy and they helped us to get a train to Rokycany. They also agreed to move the material we left there, to Prague.

Václav Král: I was beginning to worry that you'd been caught. Thank God you're here now!

Jozef Gabčík: We'll have to stay here for a few days and arrange fake documents and so on...

Václav Král: Don't worry about it now. I'll take you to the right people tomorrow. You must be really tired. Eat and rest. My wife is just preparing dinner. And you also need to get your leg treated.

Jozef Gabčík: Thank you very much! We appreciate your help.

The Narrator: After the meeting, Václav Král acted quickly. He arranged false identity papers for the two men — Jan Kubiš became *Otto Strnad* and Jozef Gabčík became *Zdeněk Vyskočil*. Through his cousin Ladislav, who worked at the labor office, Král also secured work permits so they could move around without raising suspicion. He introduced them to Jan Bejbl, a trusted

resistance member, who helped connect them with Václav Růta in Prague.

Soon after, Kubiš left for Prague to prepare the next steps, while Gabčík stayed in Plzeň to recover from the leg injury he suffered during the parachute landing. In the following months, both men moved between Prague and Plzeň. Král gave them shelter not only in his own apartment but also in a discreet riverside cottage near Radobyčice.

To protect them, Král built a wide network of support in Plzeň and the surrounding villages. He relied on trusted colleagues from the police, local officials, and members of the Sokol movement.

When Gabčík finally got into Prague with his leg recovered, he and Kubiš met Václav Růta who introduced them to Jan Zelenka-Hajský, one of the founders of the Sokol resistance network.

Scene n. 7 – Finally together in Prague, January 1942

Anežka: Kubiš and Gabčík are in Prague on their way to Zelenka's house in Žižkov, one of the important addresses connected to the Sokol resistance network. They're trying to look inconspicuous. Gabčík knocks on the door.

Anežka: Hajský opens the door just a crack.

Jozef Gabčík: Are you Hajský?

Jan Zelenka-Hajský: Yes. And you must be Gabčík and Kubiš.

Anežka: They both nod.

Jan Zelenka-Hajský: Come in. I've been expecting you. Václav Růta sent you, right?

Jozef Gabčík: Yes, we need your help.

Anežka: Hajský quickly looks around the street to see if anyone is watching them. Then, he closes the door and shakes hands with Kubiš and Gabčík.

Jan Zelenka-Hajský: I'll do everything I can to help. First of all, let me introduce myself. My name is Jan Zelenka, but you've probably heard of me as Hajský - that's my codename. I am one of the founders of the Sokol resistance network, and you are about to hear top secret information about our illegal organization. You were sent from London on a very dangerous mission, I heard. If we are supposed to collaborate, I need to know all about it.

Anežka: He gestures for them to come to the table. (they sit)

Jan Kubiš: (he exhales) We were sent to commit an assassination. We have to kill Reinhard Heydrich.

(Kubiš speaks slowly, with a dramatic and mysterious voice.)

Jan Zelenka-Hajský: What on earth! This is really something I didn't expect. This won't be easy; we must plan it with absolute precision. First, tell me — do you already have a plan? Or is everything still in the early stages?

Jozef Gabčík: In London, they gave us only the basic outline of the operation. The place and the method of the attack are up to us. We need people, hiding places, information... basically everything.

Jan Zelenka-Hajský: (*nods*) I understand. And you'll also need cover identities. In Prague, you can't show up twice at the same place.

Jan Kubiš: We have forged documents.

Jan Zelenka-Hajský: Good. Sokol has contacts. We'll arrange clothing, accommodation, and couriers for you.

Jozef Gabčík: And who exactly knows about us?

Jan Zelenka-Hajský: Only those who must. Not a single person more. If the Germans find you, the whole network collapses. That's why we'll meet only when it's absolutely necessary. And you'll follow my instructions to the last detail. Understood?

Kubiš and Gabčík: (simultaneously) Understood.

Jan Zelenka-Hajský: Good. Then let's start planning. You should know — Heydrich is a devil, but he has one weakness. He travels the same route every single day and without almost any protection. He thinks that he's untouchable!

Kubiš: (leans forward) And that's exactly what we need.

Narrator: Jan Zelenka-Hajský soon managed to form a small group within the Sokol resistance network that helped the skydivers plan and carry out the entire operation.

This group, later known as Říjen, provided the skydivers with safe hiding places, food, drink, clothing, and most importantly, information that was vital for the realization of the assassination.

Scene n. 8 – A meeting of the group Říjen, March 1942

Anežka: The members of the group Říjen with Jan Zelenka-Hajský, Jan Kubiš and Jozef Gabčík are sitting around a table in a large room at the apartment of one of the resistance members. (a huge map, papers etc.)

Member 2 (Anežka) is writing detailed notes of the meeting.

Jan Zelenka-Hajský: Alright, let's begin. We still haven't decided on a plan... but I believe, that since our last meeting, you all have many new information that will help us to move on. We're moving slowly, but securely.

If we want this mission to succeed, every step has to be well thought-out. You all know that a single mistake could ruin everything.

(He looks at everyone in the room gradually and stops at František Josef Šafařík.)

Jan Zelenka-Hajský: *(continuing)* Šafařík, could you please tell us what you found out about Heydrich's movement since our last meeting?

(František Josef Šafařík stands up.)

František Josef Šafařík: *(pointing at the map)*

Here. This is the route he uses most often: Every morning from Panenské Březany, the place he lives in, to the Prague castle. Then here is a bend from the street Kirchmayerova to the street V Holešovičkách - he slows down right here. That gives us our main

opportunity. But it's not certain. He can always decide to take a different route.

Member 1 (Anet): So, if he takes a different path that day, will we just cancel the operation and try the next day? Perhaps we should prepare a backup plan...

Jozef Gabčík: That's a good idea. We should discuss that later. But for now, let's count on his usual route.

Member 2 (Anežka): You need the exact positions. Who stands where, who watches which direction.

Member 3 (Jana): And the escape routes. If things go wrong, you must know exactly where to run. We should prepare safe addresses somewhere near the place.

Jan Zelenka-Hajský: Great observations, thank you. We need to go through this step by step. First important question: how are they going to get to the place?

Member 4 (Johy): Bikes! What about bikes? It's inconspicuous.

Jan Zelenka-Hajský: Yes, that could work.

Member 5 (Luisa): What about their weapons? What are they going to use?

Member 6 (Tonička): Probably guns?

Jan Kubiš: One of us could use a gun and the other one a grenade.

Jan Zelenka-Hajský: Alright, I'll take care of the weapons; I have some good contacts.

Member 3 (Jana): What's next?...

(The scene gradually quiets down, and the narrator continues:)

Narrator: It took them more than another two months until the plan was completed, and everything was sorted out. On May 27, 1942, in the morning, the two Czechoslovak soldiers were riding bikes on their way to kill the Acting Reich Protector Reinhard Heydrich...

Scene n. 9 – Final detailed planning of the operation

Scene n. 10 – OPERATION ANTHROPOID

Scene n. 11 - Hidden in the church

Scene n. 12 – Under Nazi Interrogation

Scene n. 13 – *The last words of 2 heroes*