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Polarized identity of the politically persecuted in the 1970s and 1980s Czechoslovakia: The societal conflict still alive in their psyche.

With the onset of communism, the top-down, highly unified master narrative was imposed on Czechoslovak society and its people in support of the communist ideology. This master narrative was based on the Marxist-Leninist ideology and in 1960 the new Constitution guaranteed the application of Marxism Leninism in "upbringing, education and culture". Those who opposed it or did not fit the new master narrative were considered as a threat to the regime and positioned into the role of the enemy. In the 1970s and 1980s it was the political dissent who adopted a humanist counter-master and was positioned into the political enemy. This paper concerns the current identity of the formerly persecuted dissidents and members of the underground. Using qualitative, multi-level narrative psychological methodology, it explores how the then narrative positioning done by society back then affects them currently in their individual narratives and lives. In particular, it focuses on a group of participants who retain a polarized identity against current Czech society. In their narratives, they still perceive Czech mainstream society as behaving according to the Marxist-Leninist ideology and thus see the majority of Czech people as a potential threat. This affects their daily interpersonal interactions with people, close relationships, as well as their attempts for history to be remembered and ideas of how justice should be carried out. The threat and conflict of the past is still alive in their minds. The implications for their psychological well-being and reconciliation on societal level will be discussed.