

## PROGRAMMATIC DOCUMENTS OF THE CZECHOSLOVAK SOCIALIST PARTY FROM 1948 TO 1989

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*In the present study, we seek to analyse the Czechoslovak Socialist Party's programmatic documents during the era of the "building of a socialist society" in Czechoslovakia (1948 – 1989). The party emerged from the ruins of the long-standing Czechoslovak National Socialist Party in the aftermath of the February 1948 communist coup. As a new political party, it distanced itself from the programmatic principles of its predecessor, which had pursued a vision of establishing national socialism as a product of the reformist efforts of people committed, in essence, to the idea of a welfare state built on national traditions, espousing the ideas of humanism, democracy, and human freedom, while spurning the concept of Marxism-Leninism and the replication of the Soviet model of socialism and communism. Thus, one of its foremost priorities after its constitution was to devise its own programme. In the early years of its existence, it subscribed to the Czech Socialist Party's 1918 programme, but this makeshift solution was replaced in short order by a series of declarations in which it aligned itself with the programmatic goals of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. In 1949, it adopted its rules of organisation, in the introduction of which it inserted tenets about its core programmatic focus, which, understandably, did not reflect the full breadth of its interests and opinions on issues of political, economic, social, cultural, and other aspects of life. Nevertheless, for years the party portrayed this introduction as a fundamental and representative statement standing in for a standard party manifesto, stemming from the fact that, after the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1949, which defined the "general line for the building of a socialist society in Czechoslovakia", and which the Czechoslovak Socialist Party adopted as a guide for its own policy and activities, the drafting of a programme for Czechoslovak Socialists became pointless, perhaps undesirable. All the way through to 1989, the Czechoslovak Socialist Party had no standard congress-adopted programme of its own. In the thawing of the political situation in 1968 that created a window of opportunity for change, an outline of a programme emerged that was heavily influenced by the contemporary climate seeking to construct a democratic model of socialism ("socialism with a human face"), but this was nothing more than a passing phase quickly suppressed by the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia and the subsequent era of "normalisation". In the 1970s and 1980s, Kučera's leadership of the party attempted to counter national-socialist ideology and the tendency for the party to declare itself non-Marxist by adopting the ideology of scientific socialism as a blueprint for the party's approach to building a socialist society. Yet, at the same time, it proclaimed scientific socialism a doctrine that was not binding on party members and permitted them to lean towards a different ideological outlook. It was not until further political upheaval in 1989 that the party had a chance to formulate a standard programme. The leadership, however, recommitted itself to a vision of socialism, which, even in its reworked guise, no longer had the power to resonate with the public and, after many vicissitudes, the party ended up a marginal component of the Czech political system that coalesced after 1989.*

**Keywords:** programme, political parties, political system, Czechoslovak Socialist Party, Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, socialism.

**Formulation of the issue.** The political upheaval in Czechoslovakia in February 1948, which ushered in the "dictatorship of the proletariat", wrought sweeping changes in the country that were far beyond the comprehension of most of society. Certainly, many signs were already evident in the immediate wake of the Second World War, when the communists succeeded in pushing through a string of policies that would upend the democratic traditions of the first Czechoslovak Republic, but there was still a great deal of faith that their vision would be stopped in its tracks by free elections. Post-war society rode a left-wing wave, largely caught up in the euphoria of having gained freedom through liberation from Nazism and fascism, and in illusions rooted in a failure to properly consider the international situation, as most people could not fathom the tides that would lead to the emergence of a bipolar world order, with few supporting

the idea of building a socialist society.

When the coup came in February 1948, it also profoundly upset the structure of the country's political system, predicated on the concept of the National Front as a grouping of all forces that had pledged to work together to rebuild post-war civil society. The collaboration between equally balanced political parties as the constituent elements of political life gave way to the dictatorship of a single party, which relegated the political parties that had survived the "purge" of spring 1945 to the role of "shadow entities", formally existing but in reality, politically impotent.

**Study objectives.** In the period immediately following February 1948, only four political parties were active in the Czech lands: besides the ruling Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, there was the left-leaning Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party, which the Communists rapidly

absorbed even before 1948 was at an end, the middle-ground Czechoslovak People's Party, to which Catholic-oriented voters gravitated, and the Czechoslovak Socialist Party (hereafter abbreviated to CSP). This study, following a discussion on the CSP's formation [Marek], aims to analyse its programmatic documents from 1948 to 1989 and to sketch its programmatic and political workings in the period when real socialism was being built until the subsequent political upheaval in 1989, which marked the beginning of Czech society's return to the values of European democracy.

**Analysis of sources and literature.** This study's subject of interest has yet to be explored comprehensively. Various studies dealing with the history of the CSP have only glossed over the programmatic aspects. To date, Luděk Kapitola [Kapitola, 1984] has ventured furthest into the questions of the party's programme in a book devoted to the history of this entity. His is a treatise that is wholly sympathetic to his perspective as a Marxist and pro-Communist functionary of the Socialist Party and a former member of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. For us, this work is useful in the overall way it deals with the party's history, making it a source of factographic information and an aid to navigating party documents. Authors of studies discussing the party's history in 1968/9 comment on the CSP's 1968 programme [Pernes, 1999; Petera, pp. 285–288]; its anomalies and its departure from the standard ideological line threaded through all party documents make it impossible to overlook. Otherwise, however, this study relies on archival and printed documents. Archival records are stored in two collections of the National Archives in Prague: The Czechoslovak National Social Party Archive and the Emanuel Šlechta collection. Printed documents take the form of the party's two main periodicals, *Svobodné slovo* ("Free Word") and *Socialistický směr* ("Socialist Direction"). Other sources of information important for our subject of study are the printed minutes of national conferences, anthologies of documents, and publications of speeches by party officials, which are listed in the bibliographic index at the end of the study.

**Research results.** Upon the founding of the party in 1948, its leadership subscribed to the 1918 programme of the Czech Socialist Party,<sup>1</sup> that is, to a reformist vision of Czech socialism. It was radical and rejected Marxism. Economics-wise, it called for private ownership of means of production to be abolished and for the capitalist model of production to be transformed or replaced by a socialist one. It espoused the progressive traditions of the Czech past. It stressed the importance of ethics, nurture and education for the life of society, and the need for broad cultivation of the cultural domain. And, while acknowledging the significance of religion for human life, it vigorously advocated the secularisation of society and

the separation of church and state [Program Československé strany socialistické přijatý na 8. valném sjezdu dne 30., 31. března a 1. dubna 1918; NA, f. E. Šlechta, sig. 40-30-2, kart. 30 – Syllabus z přednášek Dr. A. Neumana, 1949; Socialismus stavíme nejvýše, 1949, p. 1; Harna, 1998, p. 32, 77–78; Harna, 1978, pp. 32–76].

However, the rhetorical option of the National Socialist programme dating from the dusk of the First World War was not asserted by the CSP for long. This was doubtless an improvisation, a way out of a crisis at a time the party leadership had to focus on existential problems and there was not yet time for deeper reflection. Nevertheless, the party elite did recognise the programmatic void. The proclamation made by the Czechoslovak Socialist Party's Central Action Committee on 20 April 1948, issued on the occasion of the forced merger of the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party with the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia [Nedvěd, pp. 65–81; Vošahlíková, p. 121–123; Hrubec, Bárta (eds.), p. 74; Pernes, 2006, p. 33], has been described as the first statement of the party's programmatic direction, albeit in a heavily reduced – though succinct – form. It is couched in three points: 1) We want to work closely with the Communist Party in order to make the whole nation a "*conscious community of working people in the cities and countryside*". This collaboration will play out not only in the political arena, but also in the cultural and intellectual spheres. 2) Our goal is to build socialism in our country, because in socialism we see the fulfilment of national ideals and a guarantee of the happiness and wellbeing of broad sections of the people. Socialism, as a classless society of equals, will enable the nation's creative forces to flourish, and is a guarantee of enduring prosperity and peace among nations. 3) We want to join the family of Slavic nations, which, under the guidance of the Soviet Union, share our goal of building socialism, the ideal and aspiration of all workers [Politickou shodou k jednotě národa, p. 2; Kapitola, 1984, p. 22].

Notwithstanding the fact that this was an impromptu exercise in improvisation that, for the time being, lacked a link between the party and the National Front (NF),<sup>2</sup> and that the articulation of its relationship to the Communist Party conveyed an expectation that soon devolved into total subservience, the proclamation declares three constants that can be found in various iterations in all other contemporary official party documents, speeches by party officials, and political declarations at all levels up to 1989.

The idea of initiating preparatory work aimed at drafting a party programme first appeared in the minutes of a meeting of the inner circle of the CSP leadership held on 3 January 1949 [NA, f. E. Šlechta, sig. 40-30-2, k. 30–zápis schůze užšího předsednictva]. After this date, however, there is no evidence of work directed at the production of the programme. Nor does party documentation offer an

<sup>1</sup> In 1897, in response to the internationalism of the Social Democrats, the Czech National Socialist Party was founded. It was renamed the Czech Socialist Party in 1918. At the Brno party congress in 1926, the party again changed its name, this time to the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party, which it then retained *de facto* (during the Nazi occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1939–1945, it temporarily ceased its activities and its membership was dissolved into the National Labour Party and the National Unity Party) until 1948.

<sup>2</sup> Party chairman Emanuel Šlechta expressed this relationship succinctly, for example, at a meeting of regional secretaries and party deputies on 5

October 1951 in Prague, saying: We are a component of the National Front. The directives of the NF are the directives of the Communist Party, as the leading component of the NF. The NF spreads them to its other components and we adopt them. "I, as party chairman, go to the NF Central Action Committee for advice on what to do and what they think, to seek advice and also assistance, but ultimately I have to take that responsibility myself and not say – they told me to do it." The fact of the matter is that the CSP, at least in the 1950s and up to the mid-1960s, was indeed limited and controlled by the NF.

explanation for this. We are therefore reduced to speculation.

In January, parallel to the initiative to draft a programme, the party leadership ordered the redrafting and publication of another key party document, the new rules of organisation [Organisační řád, 1949a]. An analysis of the situation within the party reveals that the party apparatus took on both tasks at the time, but evidently believed the priority was to deal with the party's organisational structure. This conclusion is based on the fact that, throughout 1948, beyond the CSP's inner circle of leadership, its organisational network was made up solely of members of the party's action committees (at regional, district and local level), i.e. its membership comprised only unelected functionaries who had been receptive to the February coup and the country's new political and economic direction. The fact that, on 14 February 1949, the party had a total of 3,027 members in 485 action committees [NA, f. E. Šlechta, sig. 40-30-2, k. 30 – zpráva generálního tajemníka], was alarming when contrasted with the more than half-a-million-strong membership base of the National Socialists prior to February 1948 [Kocian, p. 1147], so everyone felt that it was imperative to start recruiting new members.

This explains the logic behind prioritising the drafting of organisational rules at the expense of the programme. At the same time, however, the party leadership very quickly woke up to the fact that the process of recruiting new members, which included vetting the ideological profile of each applicant, could not proceed without an examination of candidates' views and knowledge, and would stall if they were unable to endorse the party's programmatic direction [NA, f. E. Šlechta, sig. 40-30-2, k. 30 – nábor členů a ustavování místních organizací]. This prompted the decision by the people around chairman Šlechta to include an ideological introduction in the first edition of the party's rules of organisation, issued in June 1949. That introduction defined the CSP's programme objectives clearly and unambiguously. In terms of substance, it offered nothing fundamentally different from the April 1948 proclamation. Although it simply refined and elaborated on the three principles mentioned above [Organisační řád ČSS, 1949a, p. 1–2; Kapitola, 1980, p. 30; NA, f. E. Šlechta, sig. 40-30-2, k. 30–Organisační řád], in practice this document, written by party chairman Emanuel Šlechta (1895 – 1960) [Pernes, 2005] and supplemented by party officials, served as a substitute for the party programme for many years. Extant archival documents show that the ideological introduction to the rules of organisation was regarded as a programmatic document even by the party elite [Jíše, p. 3]. Its role as programme is also evidenced by the fact that this introduction, slightly modified in style, can be found in all subsequent editions of the rules of organisation,<sup>1</sup> although over time its value diminished as the party adopted other ideological materials.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Party historian Luděk Kapitola describes the introduction as “an ideological and programmatic document of extraordinary importance”. It articulates the CSP's programmatic principles, its position on socialism and the building of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, and its foreign-policy leanings.

<sup>2</sup> In the first half of 1950, the tenets expressed in the ideological introduction were fleshed out in seven separate articles in *Svobodné slovo*:

On the face of it, the absence of a party programme was undeniably an anomaly. We do not know whether this was a conscious decision made by the party's praesidium, or its leaders, following an analysis of the organisation's position and its anticipated role in the heavily reduced post-revolutionary political system of the NF [Krejčí, p. 165; Vodička; Cabada, pp. 69–71; Broklová, p. 78–85], or whether it was the follow-through of a recommendation made by the Communist Party, which would have amounted to an order for the CSP in this period. In any event, it is safe to say that sometime in the late 1940s or early 1950s the party leadership abandoned the idea of devising its own comprehensive programme and instead declared that it had decided to contribute to the general line for the building of a socialist society in Czechoslovakia, as defined by the Ninth Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia [Pernes, 2008, p. 35–36; Felcman, pp. 166–186; Kaplan, 1966; Protokol]. The party's top echelons also persisted in accepting other resolutions and conclusions issued by congresses of the Communist Party, and by meetings of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, as well as government declarations. The CSP thus fully aligned itself with the programme of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. It is not until the 1970s that we find, in the reports of top politicians and in the minutes of meetings of the party apparatus, hints (rather than declarations) that the party would pick out and pursue only those aspects of the Communist Party's resolutions that coincided with CSP policy, which it would then adapt on its own terms. Even so, in the second half of the 1980s the party leadership's documents still state: our programme is the programme of the Communist Party and the NF. In practice, the party's elite convened meetings of its supreme bodies (national party conferences) so that they would take place immediately after the Communist Party's congresses and Central Committee meetings.

The CSP declared that its priority mission and the purpose of its existence was to contribute to the building of a socialist society in Czechoslovakia – under the leadership of the Communist Party of the Czechoslovakia, under the aegis of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and within the NF. It hailed socialism as the crowning achievement of the revolutionary, democratic, and humanist traditions of the Czechs and Slovaks. In socialism, it saw a shining example of the equitable ordering of society. It extolled socialism's purported ability to put true democracy into practice and to create a new kind of person guided by socialist morality. Socialism, in the CSP's eyes, was the sole guarantor of state and national security for the two peoples of Czechoslovakia. That security was to be supplied by the Soviet Union. The CSP contended that its relationship with the Soviet Union was a consequence of its grasp and adoption of the ideas of scientific socialism as the most progressive philosophy of the day [Proč jsme socialisty, pp. 9–17].

There was a radical shift in terms of the formulation of

“Patriotism and socialism” (5 March); “The people's democracy” (12 March); “The legacy of the Hussite revolution” (26 March); “The party programme of 1918” (2 April); “The National Front” (23 April); “Socialism – the socialist order” (18 June); “Eternal alliance with the Soviet Union” (16 July).

a CSP programme in 1968. Changes in the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and its “post-January policy” had profound effects on the whole of society [Benčík, Domaňský, Hájek, Kural; Mencl, pp. 21–232; Pithart]. From the Socialist Party’s perspective, the “suffocating embrace” of the Communist Party and the NF had loosened a little. The new people at the top of the CSP took advantage of the change in circumstances and after 20 years of existence, under pressure from the membership base, the organisation finally started to draw up its own party programme.<sup>1</sup> These efforts, if we look ahead, soon degenerated into nothing more than an aberration, a digression from the perennial position held towards the programme by the party’s leaders.

Preparations for the programme began in April 1968 [Ze schůze předsednictva ÚV ČSS, 1968, p. 1] in response to the fact that a certain section of the party’s membership base was expressing dissatisfaction with the position, policies and trends pursued by the CSP since its inception. These members also noted the absence of a party programme. They wanted change. This prompted the party leadership to draw up a paper entitled *Outline of the CSP’s Ideological Principles* [Nástin ideových zásad Čs. strany socialistické, 1968a, pp. 1–8; Nástin ideových zásad ČSS, 1968b, p. 3; Pecka, Belda, Hoppe (eds.), pp. 120–126; Löbl, 2012, pp. 721–726, 302–303] and to call on party officials to initiate discussions on this paper within their respective organisations. The goal was to harvest feedback and other input for the preparation of the party programme. The document was to be approved at the national party conference scheduled for the autumn of 1968. These efforts did in fact succeed in provoking a debate both within the party organisations and in the party press [O náplni programu naší strany, 1968, p. 3; Co chce městský výbor naší strany v Praze, p. 4], and confirmed that the draft ideological guidelines on the table enjoyed considerable support within the party. Ultimately, however, the party programme could not be finalised because the preparatory work was disrupted by the August invasion of the country by the Warsaw Pact states [Benčík, pp. 235–288; Valenta] and the national party conference was not held. In the autumn and winter of 1968, the CSP leadership did not resume the preparations for the programme, and after Husák took to the helm of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the policy of “normalisation” was rolled out in 1969 [Bárta, Felcman, Belda, Mencl; Otáhal; Kudrna], the CSP Central Committee, under pressure from the Communists, distanced itself from the *Outline of the CSP’s Ideological Principles* and declared it an invalid document.

What new changes are introduced by the *Outline of the CSP’s Ideological Principles*? In the very beginning, after years of virtual silence, it points out that the CSP is a non-Marxist socialist party. It proceeds from the observation

that, so far, the results of efforts to build a socialist society have been disappointing: socialist democracy is dysfunctional, there is no viable model of a socialist economy, and society is in a protracted moral crisis. While the authors<sup>2</sup> of the *Outline* did not ignore the three basic programmatic pillars of the CSP described above, they nonetheless revised them considerably. 1) The relationship between the CSP and the Communist Party was fundamentally transformed. The authors of the paper underlined their conviction that the Communists should be not superior or privileged, but an equal partner to other political parties. This is why the tenet about the Communist Party’s leading role in society is almost heretically absent from the document. 2) The programme dared not deny the existence of the NF, but demanded that it operate as a pluralist political system. 3) The Soviet Union was viewed as a global superpower and the guarantor of Czechoslovak national security. The paper recommended forging closer relations with those European countries which, like Czechoslovakia, were progressing towards socialism, but it also attached equal importance to the need to bring the East and West closer together and to foster cooperation with advanced capitalist countries with a view to achieving broad European economic integration.

The *Outline* dedicated most of its content to the issue of building a socialist society. The document’s authors urged the Communist Party to acknowledge the right of other political parties to have their own ideas about the form that should be taken by socialism and about how to get there. They asked for socialism to be built domestically, the “Czechoslovak way”, taking into account local conditions, customs and traditions. In doing so, they set themselves against the Soviet model of socialism. The ideal was democratic socialism.

In the economic sphere, the programme called for the monopoly of state ownership of the means of production to be counterbalanced by other types of ownership, especially cooperative ownership. Production, too, must be defined by plurality and competition. The current task, they wrote, is to promote conditions for the development of private entrepreneurship based on people’s own work in crafts, retail, services and agriculture.

From the point of view of the CSP’s programme, the *Outline of Ideological Principles* also tackled the issues of culture, education and science for the first time. In the cultural realm, it distanced itself from censorship. It noted deficits in environmental care. It considered the administrative management of science and education and their lack of interaction with practical life to be an unwelcome trend. Tenets geared towards state social and health policy are also integral to the *Outline of the CSP’s Ideological Principles*.

The window of opportunity to draft a standard programme for the CSP that appeared in the period post

<sup>1</sup> If we leave aside the timid emancipationist impulses associated with the post-1956 internal party crisis, which were severely punished by the Communist Party in 1959–1960 before resurfacing in the mid-1980s in the years of Soviet perestroika and glasnost, and the activities of certain branches of the party in 1989, the efforts of the “pro-Dubček forces” within the CSP in 1968 to draft their own party programme can be interpreted as an important attempt to bend the rigid principle of total subordination to the programme and policies of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, as advocated by the party leadership under both Šlechta and Neuman.

<sup>2</sup> According to Karel Löbl’s recollections, the main authors of the *Outline of Ideological Principles* were Jiří Pavlis (1931–?), the editor-in-chief of *Svobodné slovo*, and Karel Dobeš (1922–2002), the editor of Melantrich’s book publishing department. Communist Party members – Zdeněk Mlynář (1930–1997) and Jiří Hermach (1912–2011) among them – were also invited to contribute, and reportedly wanted a priority to be given to the inclusion of the tenet of the Communist Party’s leading role in society.

January 1968 closed as a result of political events in the country after the suppression of the “Prague Spring”. The overly tight restrictions set by the Communist “normalisers” did not leave much hope for the programme’s future. The fact of the matter is that the normalisation era – which placed an increased emphasis on the ideological sphere of societal life and sought the causes of the “crisis period” [Poučení], among other things, in the undervaluation, laxity or formality of ideological work and education in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism, and in ideological diversion and the spread of revisionist tendencies [Politická výchova, 1972, p. 9–10] – created a convenient space within the CSP for its leaders to resolve the problem of its ideological profile. They appear to have regarded the declaration of the party’s non-Marxist profile as an anachronism and a burden at this time. We noted above that, within the party, this tenet had intentionally been kept out of the spotlight over the years. The 1968 *Outline of Ideological Principles* violated this taboo by declaring the tenet in the document’s very preamble.

Normalisation leaders initiated the innovative ideological “reconstruction” that took place within the CSP in two separate stages in the 1970s by updating the ideological principles established at the beginning of the 1950s. They were redefined in June 1969, shortly after Gustáv Husák (1913 – 1991) [Kaplan, 1989, pp. 116–148; Mlynář, pp. 237–248] assumed the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia [Shrnutí činnosti, p. 97]. A meeting of the CSP’s Central Committee [Základní cíl strany: práce pro vlast, p. 1, 4; Závěry z 20. června 1969–východisko pro práci ČSS. Zpráva předsednictva ÚV, 1969, pp. 6–8] defined five principles that would guide the party henceforth: 1. All efforts within the party will be devoted to building a socialist society. 2. The CSP is solidly anchored in the NF. 3. The party recognises the Communist Party’s leading role in society and wants to contribute to the building of a new social order as its helper. 4. We want to foster socialist democracy in accordance with the current needs of society. 5. The country’s orientation towards the Soviet Union and the countries of the socialist community has our full support [Usnesení ÚV ČSS, 1969a, p. 1–2; Usnesení ÚV ČSS, 1969b, p. 6–8; Houška, p. 41–42; Kapitola, 1984, pp. 67–68]. The party leadership affirmed the sincerity of these intentions first in September by agreeing to the Moscow Protocol of August 1968 [Politická výchova, 1972, p. 10; Kapitola, 1984, p. 63] and a month later by reversing all the positions adopted by the CSP’s bodies after the invasion of the country by Warsaw Pact troops [Závěry ze zasedání ÚV ČSS 24. října 1969, pp. 1–4; Tvůrčí prací v Národní frontě pro šťastnou budoucnost, pp. 5–14; Kapitola, 1984, p. 68].

The broader party base’s reception of these actions by the leadership might be described as confused and largely unresponsive. In response, the party elite around chairman Bohuslav Kučera (1923–2006) [NA, f. AČSNS, k. 523, 524, 525–B. Kučera] resorted to a sweeping campaign of persuasion, though they were not above repression either. “Recalcitrant” members were expelled from the party.

Coercion and the threat of losing one’s job (practised throughout society at the instigation of the Communist Party) and party membership proved effective [Kaplan, 1993, p. 74–75]. The resistance, quite tenacious in certain organisations, was formally broken by the party leadership. The validity of the ideological principles was reaffirmed by a meeting of the CSP Central Committee in February 1971 [Kapitola, 1984, p. 71].

While the articulation of these CSP’s ideological principles essentially parroted the norms that the party had been pursuing and implementing since its inception, but now in a different stage of societal development, the aim of the second stage of its “ideological reconstruction” was to redefine itself in relation to Marxism and thus also to find a solution to a dilemma that had long been “smouldering beneath the surface” of the party, thanks in part to the still-vivid presence of the ideology of national socialism among the section of the membership base that had joined the party in the late 1940s. It was Šlechta who, at a meeting of the CSP’s broader praesidium on 27 April 1950 [Šlechta, 1950, pp. 329–339], had first declared the theory of scientific socialism, i.e. the teachings of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels [Socialism], to be the doctrine that “will guide our steps in the building of socialism” [Socialismus–socialistický řád, p. 3; NA, f. E. Šlechta, sig. 40-30-6, k. 30–Zpráva o činnosti ČSS za měsíc červen a červenec 1950].

In July 1950, the praesidium of the CSP Central Committee decided to organise six months of compulsory ideological training. The objective was to apprise the party’s entire membership base of the principles of scientific socialism in the period from November 1950 to April 1951. The praesidium issued instructions for lectures to be prepared and for special publications for the training of lecturers to be issued. *Svobodné slovo* and *Socialistický směr* ran an agitation campaign in support of the party leadership’s plans [Věděním k tvořivé práci a socialismu, p. 1]. However, a later assessment by Luděk Kapitola (1922 – 2002)<sup>1</sup> indicated that Šlechta’s initiative fell flat and that the party’s members were not yet ready to embrace Marxism [Kapitola, 1984, p. 32]. Kapitola’s account is not entirely accurate, since documents from both the Extraordinary National Party Conference held in 1960<sup>2</sup> and the Fourth National Conference held in 1963 required members to further their knowledge of the principles of scientific socialism, and stated that party political education should also be directed towards this goal [Zpráva Ústředního výboru ČSS, 1963, pp. 20, 25, 45; Kapitola, 1984, p. 45, 48].

A major milestone on the road to the official adoption of Marxism by the CSP was the approval of a resolution of the Sixth National Party Conference from February 1972 [NA, f. AČSNS, k. 601 – usnesení, 1972; 30 let ČSS, p. 81–84; Kapitola, 1984, p. 76]. This document initiated a process that lasted several years (1972–1978), during which the party definitively adopted scientific socialism as an ideology pointing the CSP’s path to building a socialist order. The party’s record of history interpreted the

<sup>1</sup> One of the most prominent figures within the CSP’s apparatus in the 1950s, editor-in-chief of *Svobodné slovo* from 1959 to 1968. Czechoslovak ambassador to Argentina from 1969 to 1975, Czech National Council deputy from 1976 to 1981, deputy of the People’s Chamber of the Federal Assembly from 1981 to 1990. Long-serving

member of the praesidium of the CSP Central Committee. Recorded in the files of the StB (State Security Service).

<sup>2</sup> In 1960, the Melantrich publishing house published *Co je vědecký socialismus* (“What Scientific Socialism Is”) by its functionary and later editor-in-chief Jiří Pavlis.

significance of the Sixth National Conference in this matter as the dawn of a new, qualitatively different phase in the party's teaching, accentuating the importance of scientific socialism for the discovery of the objective laws of the socialist revolution and the daily practice of party life (the establishment of a two-year, and subsequently, three-year distance learning course in scientific socialism at the party's central political school) [Politická výchova, 1972, p. 11; Kapitola, 1984, p. 80]; come the following Seventh National Conference National Party Conference in January 1977 [NA, f. AČSNS, k. 602A – Zpráva ÚV ČSS, 1977; Kapitola, 1984, p. 32, 88], it was openly declaring scientific socialism as “its guiding principle and focus” [Kapitola, 1980, p. 28; NA, f. AČSNS, k. 602A – Zpráva ÚV ČSS, 1977; Kapitola, 1980, p. 28].

The process of adopting Marxism as the CSP's ideological guide was crowned by two other documents, which also articulated the CSP leadership's position on the policy of the normalisation regime and on the results of the construction of socialism in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. The first of these, chronologically, was a speech by party chairman Bohuslav Kučera at a meeting of the CSP Central Committee held on 2 November 1977 to mark the 60th anniversary of the October Revolution in Russia, in which his reasoning for the alliance with the Soviet Union relied on the theory of scientific socialism [Kapitola, 1984, p. 97]. A few weeks later, at a meeting of the CSP Central Committee on 1 February 1978, Kučera said the theory of scientific socialism was the basis for the party's current credo contained in the answer to the question: why are we socialists? [Proč jsme socialisty; Kapitola, 1984, p. 103] He gave a seven-point summary: 1. Socialism is the culmination of Czech national traditions evolving from the Middle Ages to the present day. It is the pinnacle of our aspirations and the pinnacle of national endeavour [Kapitola, 1984, p. 100]. 2. Only socialism has allowed true patriotism to flourish. Thanks to socialism, our country has blossomed. [Kapitola, 1984, p. 97] We are patriots and we want to do the nation good by building socialism. 3. We are believers in humanism. Socialism has eradicated the exploitation of man by man and has enabled man to develop his personality in every way. 4. Socialism embodies the principles of equality, freedom and democracy. 5. Socialism forms people of the utmost moral values. 6. Socialism guarantees our national freedom and has brought true freedom to the Czechs and Slovaks. 7. Only socialism can secure a world free of war.

Kapitola, the party's ideologist, considered the documents adopted by the party between 1972 and 1978 as the formation of the CSP's ideological programme [Kapitola, 1984, p. 103, 104]. They created distance from the ideology of national socialism. These documents, especially Kučera's two speeches, were also viewed as the baseline for the party's future ideological programme at the CSP's Eighth National Conference held in 1982 [NA, f. AČSNS, k. 603B – Přehled činnosti ČSS od 7. celostátní konference, p. 6; Za socialistickou vlast, za socialistického člověka, za život v míru, p. 8–9; NA, f. AČSNS, k. 603A – Přehled činnosti ČSS od 8. do 9. konference, p. 8], which

stated that conditions were ripe for the collective compilation of ideological principles and deferred this task to the Ninth National Conference scheduled for 1987 [NA, f. AČSNS, k. 603A – Zpráva ÚV 9. celostátní konference ČSS].

The acceptance of Marxism as a guide to building socialism and its ideological programme was accompanied by a certain dissociation from the ideology of Marxism-Leninism and the declarations that the CSP was not and could not be a Marxist party [Kapitola, 1984, pp. 108; Kapitola, 1980, p. 31]. Kapitola, as the mouthpiece of the Czechoslovak Socialists, justified his claims as follows: There can only be one revolutionary party in a socialist society. Only a political party which is the party of the working class, its vanguard, and which represents and purposefully defends their socio-political interests, can be a truly Marxist-Leninist party. Its mission is to lead the working class. A party becomes such an organisation by its formation, its composition, its class struggles, its position in society, the principles of its organisation and activities, and its ideology, which is Marxist-Leninist doctrine in all its totality. Our party is not and – given its composition, development and position in our political system – cannot be such a party [Kapitola, 1980, p. 31]. We have accepted Marxism, i.e. only a part of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, and we do not require our members to accept Marxism-Leninism in its entirety [Löbl, 2012, p. 387]. Our party allows its members the freedom to take different worldviews of reality. Nevertheless, it does not surrender the right to explain Marxism-Leninism in its entirety and completeness to its members, for it is precisely knowledge of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, an understanding of the essential contexts and laws of societal development, that is the best way to understand the substance of domestic and world events, the way to deepen and permanently consolidate socialist convictions, which would then be projected into the stances and actions of worthy members of the socialist party [Kapitola, 1984, p. 108].

The Ninth National Party Conference held in 1987 brought to an end attempts to draft at least an ideological programme for the CSP. According to party vice-chairman Karel Löbl (1925 – 2021),<sup>1</sup> the party's praesidium took up one of the proposals of the plenary session of the congress and revisited issues related to ideological principles in the light of stimuli stemming from Soviet perestroika and glasnost [NA, f. AČSNS, k. 603A – Náměty pro ústřední orgány]. It concluded that the CSP's programmatic direction was inconsistent with the needs of societal development and decided to draw up a new Draft of the Party's Programmatic and Ideological Principles with a view to submitting them to the delegates that would be attending the Tenth National Party Congress in 1992 [Löbl, 2012, p. 599]. The document was outlined in the summer of 1989, but subsequent political developments in the country prevented it from progressing beyond a sketch. In December 1989, it was replaced by the Draft Programme of the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, which was submitted to the congress merging the party with the exiled National Socialist Party, held on 16–17 March 1990 [Fic, pp. 80–

<sup>1</sup> An expert in the field of metallurgy. He was a prominent figure within the CSP, especially during the normalisation era, when he was the party's vice-chairman. Deputy of the Czech National Council and the Chamber of Nations of the Federal Assembly from 1969 to 1971, deputy of the

People's Chamber from 1971 to 1990. Minister of the Government of the Czech Socialist Republic from 1969 to 1989. StB agent, author of extensive memoirs on his political and professional career.

82], for debate.

To sum up the issue, the Czechoslovak Socialist Party did not have a formal programme of its own, approved by the party's congress or bodies, until 1989. A first detailed draft, comparable in structure and content to similar documents of other standard political parties, was not, as we have mentioned, published until December 1989. The document was thus written in a radically different political climate from the one in which the party existed and worked during the years covered by the "building of a socialist society". Therefore, it is irrelevant to our analysis of the party's programmatic direction. Let's just say that at the end of 1989 the CSP subscribed to the ideas and principles of patriotism, humanism, democracy, progress, national traditions, political pluralism and a modern socialism corresponding to the needs of society on the brink of the third millennium. Its authors continued to regard socialism as the ideal of an equitable society that broadly satisfies the spiritual and material needs of citizens and the nation. They viewed it as an unfinished journey of exploration and discovery that had not yet yielded the results rightfully expected for society [Návrh programu Československé strany socialistické, 1989, p. 1]. Some of the tenets of this document subsequently appeared in the party's June 1990 election manifesto, entitled A Chance for the Competent. However, the election results proved that the manifesto lacked the potential to appeal to the targeted section of the electorate. The party was not represented in any of the three assemblies (the Czech National Council, the People's

Chamber, and the Chamber of Nations of the Federal Assembly); in each case, it garnered around 200,000 votes, i.e. slightly more than 2.5% of all votes cast, and consistently ranked eighth among all parties vying for voters' favour [URL: <https://www.volby.cz/> - cit. 31. 12. 2023; Šedo, p. 1455].

**Research conclusions.** Issues surrounding the Czechoslovak Socialist Party's programme are only a fragment of the rich history of Czech national socialism, the ideological and organisational roots of which stretch back to the second half of the 19th century. Ideologically, it was a response to the socialist doctrines emerging in modern industrial society; organisationally, its bearer was a political party of national workers that defined itself as opposed to international social democracy and was founded in 1897 as a product of the political polarisation of Czech society. The founding of the CSP in 1948 can be seen as a break with the leftist, pro-Communist wing of the Czechoslovak National Socialist Party and the vast majority of its membership base. It is no accident that radical voices in Czech history label its leaders as traitors, quislings and collaborators. They broke up a workable, mainstream and influential political party and ran a marginal shadow organisation that found its *raison d'être* in being an obsequious servant to the Communist Party. In our opinion, our analysis of the CSP's programmatic documents from 1948 to 1989 provides convincing proof of its lack of political dependence and its full responsibility for one of modern Czech history's darkest chapters.

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Чехія, Оломоуц

## ПРОГРАМНІ ДОКУМЕНТИ ЧЕХОСЛОВАЦЬКОЇ СОЦІАЛІСТИЧНОЇ ПАРТІЇ 1948 – 1989 РР.

*Предметом авторського інтересу в представленому дослідженні є аналіз програмних документів Чехословацької соціалістичної партії в роки т. зв. побудови соціалізму (1948 – 1989) у Чехословаччині. Партія виникла після лютневого комуністичного перевороту 1948 р. на руїнах традиційної Чехословацької націонал-соціалістичної партії. Нова політична партія дистанціювалася від програмних принципів своєї попередниці, яка дотримувалася ідеї побудови націонал-соціалізму, як результату реформаторських зусиль людей, що переслідують фактично ідею соціальної держави, заснованої на національних традиціях, ідеях гуманізму, демократії та свободи людини, відкидаючи концепцію марксизму-ленінізму та копіювання радянської моделі соціалізму і комунізму. Тому одним з головних завдань після заснування партії було створення власної програми. У ранній період свого існування вона приєдналася до програми Чеської соціалістичної партії від 1918 р., але дуже швидко замінила цю імпровізацію кількома деклараціями, в яких ідентифікувала себе з програмними цілями Комуністичної партії Чехословаччини. В 1949 р. вона ухвалила організаційний регламент і внесла до його вступної частини тези про свої основні програмні орієнтири, які, звичайно, не відображали всього спектру її інтересів і поглядів на питання політичного, економічного, соціального, культурного і т. ін. життя. Проте протягом багатьох років партія подавала цей вступ як основоположну і репрезентативну заяву, що заміняє стандартну партійну програму. Виявилось, що після IX з'їзду Комуністичної партії Чехословаччини 1949 р., який визначив т. зв. генеральну лінію побудови соціалізму в Чехословаччині, коли Чехословацька соціалістична партія прийняла її також як директиву для своєї політики та діяльності, створення програми для чехословацьких соціалістів було або непотрібним, або небажаним. Аж до 1989 р. Чехословацька соціалістична партія не мала власної стандартної програми, прийнятої з'їздом партії. Пом'якшення політичної ситуації у 1968 р. хоча і створило простір для змін, що відобразилося у появі основних положень програми, на яку сильно вплинула тогочасна атмосфера спроб створити демократичну модель соціалізму ("соціалізм з людським обличчям"), але це був лише епізод, швидко придушений вторгненням військ Варшавського договору в Чехословаччину та подальшою «нормалізацією». У 70-х і 80-х роках ХХ ст. партійне керівництво, очолюване Кучерою, спробувало подолати націонал-соціалістичну ідеологію та тенденції оголосити партію немарксистською, прийнявши ідеологію наукового соціалізму як настанову щодо підходу партії до побудови соціалізму. Але водночас науковий соціалізм проголошувався доктриною, яка не була обов'язковою для членів партії та дозволяла їм мати іншу ідеологічну орієнтацію. Лише наступний політичний переворот 1989 р. відкрив перед партією можливість розробити стандартну програму. Проте керівництво знову повернулося в ній до концепції соціалізму, яка, однак, навіть в оновленому вигляді вже не приваблювала громадськість, і після багатьох перипетій партія стала маргінальним складником чеської партійно-політичної системи, що сформувалася після 1989 р.*

**Ключові слова:** програма, політичні партії, партійно-політична система, Чехословацька соціалістична партія, Комуністична партія Чехословаччини, соціалізм.