

Political development of The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in Košice during the period of the Bolshevization (years 1924 – 1929)

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The submitted paper focuses on main events affecting the process of Bolshevization of the Czechoslovak Communist Party in Košice during years 1924 – 1929. The primary sources relevant to gaining information of the whole process are till now unpublished documents deposited in the State Archive in Košice, namely funds Košická župa and Policajné riaditeľstvo Košice. Development of political and personal situation in Košice communist organization is complemented by changes in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on state level and impact of these changes upon Košice branch. In a concise fashion are also probed interferences of the Communist International, which had a substantial impact upon developments of CPC as well as communist organization in Košice. The aim of the paper is also take into consideration a social situation in Košice and its impact on personal relations of exponents of CPC.

Key words: Bolshevization. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The Communist International.

The inhabitants of Slovakia found themselves after demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and establishment of the Czechoslovakian Republic (CSR) in a radically new geopolitical situation. Politically, economically and socially the new state was completely different in comparison to the ancient regime which replaced. A political power of aristocracy, sanctioned by centuries, was gone. It was superseded by a number of political parties representing various ideological, national and religious principles, which vied for a power in an environment of a parliamentary democracy. The first years of CSR were a period during which leftist ideology was profoundly popular among people in Slovakia. Political representative of abovementioned ideological orientation, The Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers Party (the Social Democrats) became the most influential political subject in CSR. In the first election to the National Assembly, the Social Democrats received more than one and half of million votes (25, 65 % of the total vote), more than any other political subject. There were several reasons for it. An inhuman character of the First World War caused a loss of trust in a moral fabric of the pre-war regime and radicalized a large segment of population. People were craving for a social equality and the Social democrats, which formulated their ideological credo on imperative of creation of a socially just society, were viewed as the most qualified to make this goal a reality. There were, however, also external factors which contributed to a political radicalization – the Russian Revolution resulting in a victory of Bolsheviks, who in an attempt to spread communism abroad, founded a supranational political organization – the Communist International (CI).

Inspired by a Russian example, radical socialists in Hungary, established the Hungarian Soviet Republic (HSR).¹ Though communist rule in Hungary lasted only from March till August 1919, ideological influence of HSR in Slovakia and especially in

1 The communist government in Hungary published on March 22 1919 "The Proclamation of the Revolutionary Governing Council of Hungary", in which stated that "Proletariat of Hungary takes all authority to its hands". DANIELS, Robert V. (Ed.). *A documentary history of communism. Volume 2 Communism and the World*. Hanover; London : University Press of New England, 1984, p. 37.

Košice was significant. After the defeat of SRH, a number of members of communist government fled to Czechoslovakia, where they obtained a political asylum.² Refugees from Hungary contributed to popularization of a communist ideology in Košice and, according to historian Karol Fremal, thanks to them Košice became a “*cradle of the Marxist Left in Košice*”.³ A similar view holds French historian Jacques Rupnik, according to whom the communist movement in Slovakia in its initial phase was an offshoot of the Hungarian communist revolution.⁴

The development of a radical socialist movement took a concrete form at the Congress held in Ľubochňa during January 14 – 16 1921, when participants accepted 21 thesis formulated by the Communist International as necessary conditions to join an alliance of communist parties. On May of the same year the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was founded. Despite accepting CI conditions, political unity of CPC was not achieved and infighting of differing factions characterized also a situation in the Košice branch of CPC.

CPC was sharply criticized during the Forth Congress of the Communist International held in 1922. CI declared that there were unacceptable differences between radicals and a moderate fraction. The Communist International demanded that all members of CPC will uphold the utmost discipline.⁵

At the beginning of 1923, opposition political parties, including communists, organized a wave of protests against preparation of so called “The Law for protection the Republic”. According to report of the Police Directory in Košice (PD K) the Communist Party in Košice held a protest meeting against above mentioned law on February 19 1923. The member of the House of Representatives for the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, Herman Taussig, argued that this law was not designed to protect CSR, but to protect “capitalists and corrupt officials” and will become a grave of democracy in Czechoslovakia.⁶

Because amendments submitted by opposition were refused by parties of the ruling coalition, opposition deputies, including communist representatives in the House of Representatives, refused their participation on preparation of contested

2 A classic example was Eugen Fried, who held an important position in the Hungarian Soviet Republic. After defeat of HSR he emigrated to CSR and actively participated on foundation of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. During years 1923 – 1924 he was a member of the Central Committee of CPC. His radical views and endeavors to implement them into activities of CPC in Košice, led to a conflict with more conservative wing of CPC. Czechoslovak security authorities found his activities unacceptable and sentenced him to two years in prison. Fried’s ultra-radical views were criticized also by a leadership of the CI and he, under pressure, renounced them. CPC did not expelled Fried, but the Executive of the Communist International (E CI) deemed necessary to remove him from Czechoslovakia. He was working at the Executive E CI in Moscow and during World War II organized illegal resistance movements in France, Netherland and Belgium. In 1943 Gestapo caught and murdered him. KOLÁŘ, František (Ed.). *Politická elita meziválečného Československa 1918 – 1938*. Praha : Pražská edice, 1998, p. 61. However, according to French historian Jacques Rupnik, exact circumstances of Fried’s death are not known and he was possibly murdered by the Russian GPU. RUPNIK, Jacques. *Dějiny komunistické strany Československa : Od počátku do převzetí moci*. Praha : Academia, 2002, p. 44.

3 FREMAL, Karol. Korene bolševizmu na Slovensku. In: *Acta historica Neosoliensia*, 2002, Tom. 5, pp. 37-38.

4 RUPNIK, J. *Dějiny...*, p. 67.

5 Rezolúcia IV. kongresu III. Internacionály o otázke komunistickej strany v Československej republike. In: *Pravda chudoby*, 1923 (22. XII.), no. 103-104, p. 1.

6 Štátny archív (State Archive, hereinafter ŠA) v Košiciach, fund (hereinafter f.) Košická župa (Košice County, hereinafter KŽ), box (hereinafter b.) 6, number (hereinafter no.) 1744 /23 prez.

law. A communist deputy Josef Haken declared law to be “*an unprecedented attack on basic rights of citizens and the main target should be working class*”.⁷

During the spring of 1923, CPC in Košice organized several public meetings, which ended in violence. In a monthly reports from April and May 1923 PD K informed the Košice County Office (KCO) that acts of violence committed by communist activists, resulted in arrests. This, according to PD K, led to diminishing of belligerency of communists. Fear of persecution allegedly resulted in a loss of membership of the Communist Organization in Košice. Also frequent confiscations of communist periodical *Kassai Munkás* led allegedly to a “*moderation of its content*”.⁸

Public activities of CPC in Košice at the outset of year 1924 were mostly aimed at a recruitment of young people. With a goal to gain new members, “The Agitation Week” was organized during January 7 – 14 1923. On 14 of January a public gathering was organized which, according to the Police Directory in Košice, was attended by approximately 60 young people. Alexander Löwy, an influential leader of young communists, assured participants of the meeting that the Communist Party will establish a committee, which will control observance of eight hours working week in all industrial enterprises in Košice. Next speaker, H. Taussig, appealed to crowd that communists should be more active in spreading an anti-government propaganda, especially among soldiers.⁹

In its report submitted on April 2 1923 to the Košice County Office, PD K informed about the conference of CPC held on March 23 1924, which was attended by leading representatives of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, including the General Secretary of Antonín Zápotocký. Delegates representing various regions of the Košice County criticized a lack of finances, which allegedly led to a hampering of efforts to intensify a communist propaganda in the city and a country side. Criticized was also alleged incompetence of a leadership of Košice CPC.¹⁰

According to PD K, criticism had most likely a positive impact, because “*In communist circles there was a visible increase of activity. Till recently slumbering communist organization woke to a new life with a fresh force and plentiful finances to its disposal.*”¹¹ PD K, informed KCO that financial support was provided by the Russian Communist Party (Bolsheviks). At the same time, communist emissaries were allegedly bringing instructions directing tactic and strategy of communist activities in Košice.¹²

Even though CPC accepted conditions formulated by the Communist International, in reality Czech and Slovak communists retained a significant measure of independence. The most recalcitrant were especially members of older generation, who began their political career as members of the Social Democratic Party, and were not used to a strict discipline and a blind obedience to the leaders. There was also another factor as historian Michal Reiman noted – plurality of political parties and a free expression of political opinions, had inevitably an impact on communists. Despite belligerency and radical anti-establishment declarations, CPC was actually a part of a democratic political

7 Odchod komunistov a opozície z ústavného výboru. In: *Pravda chudoby*, 1923 (27. II.), no. 23, p. 1.

8 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 4839, no. 3603/23 prez.; no. 4838/23 prez.

9 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 261, no. 1359/24 prez.

10 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 261, no. 3791/24 prez.

11 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 41, no. 5156/24 prez.

12 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 41, no. 5156/24 prez.

system of CSR. The Party participated on elections and took part in an opposition politics.¹³

At the V Congress the Communist International, held from June 17 till July 18 1924, CI came to a conclusion that existing situation in CPC was unacceptable. CPC was criticized for failing to eliminate "*opportunistic deviations in the sphere of theory and practice*".¹⁴ The goal of Bolshevization was to gradually divest CPC from its social-democratic and national tradition and fused it more firmly into an international communist movement led by CI.¹⁵

Representatives of CPC, who attended the V Congress of CI, were divided into two fractions. Leader of moderates, Bohumir Šmeral, declared that he is not opposed to Bolshevization and refused accusations that he was "*inclined to opportunism*". The radical fraction was represented by Alois Neurath, Július Verčík, Marek Čulen and Eugen Fried.¹⁶ Views of radical fraction expressed E. Fried, who argued that thesis of "dictate of proletariat" was absent in communist propaganda and CPC was not preparing its members for a "class struggle". This, in his opinion, was a root of rightist deviation. Even though neither side was explicitly condemned by CI, program of Bolshevization was declared as an unavoidable goal of CPC. This decision was accentuated by Gregory Zinoviev, who devised a plan of reorganization of CPC based on a "cells" system.¹⁷

On January 21 1924 the Executive of Communist International published a decree, named "*In regard to rebuilding of communist parties on the basis of nuclei established in industrial plants.*" The Czechoslovak Communist Party deliberated E CI directive during a conference held on May 4 1924 in Brno. There was a wide spread resistance against implementation of a system of "cells". However, A. Zápotocky criticized all those who were against E CI decree and participants of conference decided, that an existing organizational structure of CPC, which was based on a territorial principle, will be superseded by establishing "cells" in factories and workshops.¹⁸ A communist historian L. M. Minajev wrote, that the aim of reorganization was to adopt a Russian model, because the Communist International deemed as necessary condition for advancement of communist movement to adopt experiences gained by the Russian Bolsheviks. But Minajev admitted that communist parties should complement the Russian model by experiences of concrete conditions of revolutionary movements in their own countries.¹⁹

13 REIMAN, Michal. *O komunistickém totalitarismu a o tom, co s ním souvisí*. Praha : Karolinum, 2000, p. 53.

14 FIRSOV, Fridrich. I. Pomoc kominterny při bolševizaci KSČ. In: VOLKOVÁ, Květoslava (Ed.). *V bojovém svazku Komunistická strana Československa a komunistická internacionála (1919 – 1943)*. Praha : Svoboda, 1988, p. 99.

15 RUPNIK, J. *Dějiny...*, p. 57.

16 The Police Directory in Košice informed the Košice County Office that J. Fried attended V Congress of CI, probably using a false passport. ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 44, no. 6975/pres/24.

17 RUPNIK, J. *Dějiny...*, pp. 67-69.

18 JÍŠA, Václav. K organizační výstavbě KSČ v letech 1921 – 1925. In: VOLKOVÁ, Květoslava (Ed.). *V bojovém svazku Komunistická strana Československa a komunistická internacionála (1919 – 1943)*. Praha : Svoboda, 1988, p. 88.

RUPNIK, J. *Dějiny...*, p. 57.

19 MINAJEV, L. M. Dějiny komunistické internacionály – zdroj inspirace pro teorii a praxi revolučního dělnického hnutí. In: VOLKOVÁ, Květoslava (Ed.). *V bojovém svazku Komunistická strana Československa a komunistická internacionála (1919 – 1943)*. Praha : Svoboda, 1988, p. 16.

Pravda chudoby appealed to members of CPC to abstain from “excuses” and actively participate on process of bolshevization, because “*the first duty of every communist is to obey orders of party leadership.*”²⁰

The local branch of CPC in Košice held on September 14 1924 a conference, during which a decision was to be made what course should be taken. *Pravda chudoby* wrote that J. Fried, who was a member of the Executive Committee (EC) of CPC in Košice, submitted a resolution, in which he welcomed critical attitude of CI toward “opportunistic tendencies” in CPC and demanded that all members of the Party decisively repudiate these tendencies.²¹ However, discrepancies between left and right wing of CPC did not end. On October 28 1924 PD K informed the Košice County Office of a meeting held by the Executive Committee of the Košice CPC. The session was attended also by a representative of CI, D. Z. Manuilskij, who demanded that CPC strictly adhere to a decision adopted by E CI at its V Congress. Manuilskij allegedly threatened members of Košice division of CPC, that if they will not support demands of E CI during oncoming II Congress of CPC, they will be expelled.²²

The II Congress of CPC, which started on October 31 1924, was mired by a deep cleavage between unconditional supporters of CI and those who resisted it. Only interference of CI²³ prevented victory of “right” wing. Finally, a small majority of CI supporters (18 to 14) was elected to the Central Committee of CPC.²⁴ The victory of “left” fraction made possible to initiate a process of Bolshevization.

According to PD K, the reorganization of CPC in Košice was proceeding only slowly, mainly due to a failure of activists responsible to carry on this process. Even though they were replaced, situation did not improve.²⁵ Though an establishment of a “cells” network was formally realized, it was beset by serious difficulties. Besides resistance of a large segment of rank-and-file, a lack of competent organizers was hampering the whole process. A situation of the Communist Party in Košice was aggravated also by a conflict between E. Fried, a leader of a left fraction and representative of a right wing, H. Taussig. Fried reinforced his position by gaining an influence among young communists and transformed them into a radical segment of CPC in Košice.²⁶

At the close of 1924, E. Fried became an undisputed leader of young communists in Košice. Security authorities judged his activities as dangerous and decided to stop it. On December 9 1924 PD K informed the Ministry Plenipotentiary for Slovakia about activities of a local organization of CPC. As the most dangerous was named J. Fried, who was allegedly threatening a “public order” in the city. Because several court proceedings were pending against him, Fried was arrested.²⁷ In summary of E.

20 Nutnosť prestavby organizačného aparátu strany. In: *Pravda chudoby*, 1924 (28. V.), no. 54, p. 1.

21 Aby naša strana bola stranou bolševickou. In: *Pravda chudoby*, 1924 (28. IX.), no. 21, p. 2.

22 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 58, no. 13513/24 prez.

23 The CI send a letter written by Zinoviev to the delegates of II. Congress of CPC in which accentuated necessity of an “ideological purity” of CPC, and demanded to elect a central committee “*which it would be Bolshevik not only by worlds, but its deeds*”. FIRSOV, F. I. *Pomoc kominterny...*, p. 102. Komunistická internacionála zjazdu KSC. List súdruha Zinovieva delegátom zjazdu. In: *Pravda chudoby*, 1924 (2. XI.), no. 132.

24 RUPNIK, J. *Dějiny...*, p. 69.

25 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 261, no. 13677/ prez.

26 ŠA v Košiciach, f. Policajné riaditeľstvo v Košiciach (Police Directory in Košice, hereinafter PRK), b. 3, no. 10951/1924 prez.

27 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 104, no. 15216/24 prez.

Fried's criminal offenses, listed by PD K, were his illegal journey to Moscow, where he attended the V Congress of CI. Other offenses were his anti-government speech at "the X International Day of Youth" held on September 4 1924 and his attendance of an illegal public meeting held on 17 September of same year, during which Fried allegedly incited participants to commit "acts of violence". In a cited report E. Fried is described as ambitious and scheming person who is willing to use any means to push aside persons, who were in his judgement not radical enough. According to usually well informed PD K, during the V Congress of CI E. Fried was authorized to defeat the right fraction the Communist Organization in Košice and to secure that the process of Bolshevization will succeed.²⁸

PD K informed KCO that incarceration of E. Fried caused deep disturbances in a radical fraction. It had also a negative impact upon a communist periodical *Kassai Munkás*, which was managed by him. Because E. Fried was also in charge of build-up of system of "cells", his apprehension derailed the whole process. The exponents of radical wing, composed primarily of young communists led by A. Löwy, were allegedly trying to intensify a process of Bolshevization, but moderates led by H. Taussig were staunchly opposed to reorganization of the Party. Besides, older communist felt insulted by dictatorial manners of E. Fried. Before Fried's imprisonment the conflict between H. Taussig a J. Fried became the main topic of a meeting of representatives of Košice CPC held on December 3 1924. The meeting was attended by A. Seidler, who was dispatched by the Centrale of CPC in Prague and was given an authority to decide what measures should be taken. A. Seidler sided with J. Fried and criticized H. Taussig for his negative approach toward radical fraction and also for his temerity toward government establishment. He demanded an increase of activity of CPC in Košice. However, Seidler's exhortations came to no avail, because there was no one capable to replace J. Fried.²⁹

On December 20 1924 the Ministry Plenipotentiary for Slovakia dispatched to all counties and security authorities in Slovakia a circular issued by CPC, which got hold of, containing instructions how to build-up a system of "cells" in industrial plants. According to guidelines, a formative role in creation of "cells" should have local committees of CPC, who should persuade workers to join "cells" and become more active in organizing public meetings. Each "cell" composed of less than ten members, should have one chairman and one deputy. In case than there were more than ten members in "cell", than a committee was to be elected. Members of "cells" were obliged to perform various tasks, such as keeping contacts with trade unions in factories; secure a distribution of periodicals; be in touch with local organizations of young communists and actively participate on educational activities. In the sphere of education, two tasks were considered of the utmost importance: 1; initiation of courses aimed at enhancement of political awareness and 2; attention given to an education of young workers. Education was to be focused on gaining knowledge about situation of young workers in a capitalistic society; on history of the Communist International; on history of labor movement etc. The form of lectures was to be attractive to young people. Lectures were to be focused on issues, which young people were primarily interesting in. The "cells" were obliged to meet at least ones in week.³⁰

28 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 104, no. 15216/24 prez.

29 ŠA v Košiciach, f. PRK, b. 3, without number. Date of report 20. XII. 1924.

30 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 57, no. 11446/1924 adm. rev.

As was already mentioned, the system of “cells”, which would impose a strict discipline on each member of CPC and severe curtailment of free exchange of opinions, was strongly opposed by moderates. Josef Bubník, a prominent critic of Bolshevization, refused right of CI to intervene into internal conditions of CPC and demanded equality between CPC and CI. Such an open revolt against dictate of the Communist International was unacceptable and on February 25 1925 J. Bubník was expelled from the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.³¹

Difficulties which CPC encountered during the process of implementation of “cells” network were analyzed and commented by Slovak press. According to *Slovenská Politika*, one of periodicals of the Republican Party, a crisis, which was ravaging the Communist Party, was having a profoundly negative impact on morale of many communists, apathy was growing and there was a noticeable a significant decrease of a membership. This was allegedly partly caused also by cessation of flow of finances from Moscow, because CI lost trust in CPC.³² *Robotnícke noviny*, an official daily of the Social Democratic Party, concluded that due to decrease of importance of adherents of J. Fried, Bolshevization was failing.³³

That situation in regard to implementation of “cells” system was unsatisfactory, admitted even a communist historian Zdeněk Burian, according to whom the reorganization of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in period between II and III Congress of CPC was not yet accomplished and “serious defects were occurring in activities of county committees of the Party”.³⁴

Pravda chudoby published an article named “In regard to a situation in our Party”, in which informed about emergency of so called “middle fraction” led by B. Šmeral and A. Zápotocký. This group, according to *Pravda chudoby*, was supporting “right” wing in the Party. Exponents of “middle fraction” in CPC were allegedly endangering process of Bolshevization and were responsible for emergence of a “social opportunism”. *Pravda chudoby* wrote that this policy was openly declared at the Conference of Confidants held on February 25 1925 Prague. B. Šmeral, A. Zápotocky and H. Taussig submitted a resolution, in which they demanded termination of all activities which would lead to deepening of crisis and requested enactment of congress of CPC as soon as possible.³⁵ *Robotnícke noviny* characterized their policy as a “putsch”, aimed at defeating the “left” wing, which could result in a serious rupture in the Czechoslovak Communist Party.³⁶ *Slovák*, an official periodical of Hlinka’s Slovak Peoples Party, reported than crisis in CPC culminated, when J. Bubník left CPC and declared intention to form a new communist party, which will not be subservient to the Communist International.³⁷

Crisis in CPC was solved, for a time being, during a session of the General Assembly of CI held on March 21 – April 6 1925. The decisive influence upon decisions made by of CI had Josip Vissarionovich Stalin, who criticized B. Šmeral for his protection of moderates in the CPC. J. V. Stalin, who was rapidly gaining an influence in CI, demanded

31 RUPNIK, J. *Dějiny...*, pp. 69-70.

32 Súnrak komunistického hnutia v ČSR. In: *Slovenská politika*, 1925 (11. I.), no. 9, pp. 1-2.

33 Bolševizovali. In: *Robotnícke noviny*, 1925 (28. I.), no. 22, p. 1.

34 BRADÁČ, Zdeněk. Význam roku 1924 v dějinách KSČ (Příspěvek k periodisaci dějin KSČ v dvacátých letech). In: *Československý časopis historický II*, 1954, vol. 52, no. 4, p. 667.

35 K situácii vo vnútri našej strany. In: *Pravda chudoby*, 1925 (1. III.), no. 26, p. 1.

36 Československí komunisti previedli puč proti Moskve. In: *Robotnícke noviny*, 1925 (3. III.), no. 50.

37 Vyvrcholenie krízy v komunistickej strane. In: *Slovák*, 1925 (4. III.), no. 51, p. 2.

intensification of Bolshevization and defended right of the Communist International to intervene into developments of communist parties.³⁸ *Robotnícke noviny* wrote that Stalin considered B. Šmeral to be “an excellent Communist”, but his aim to end a conflict in CPC and achieve a compromise jeopardized process of the Bolshevization of the Party. Stalin emphasized that CPC must concentrate all powers on goal to liquidate “right” fraction.³⁹

Interference of CI into affairs of CPC took a concrete form during a session of the Plenary Assembly of CI in March 1925 on which participated J. Zápotocký and J. Haken. CPC was requested to “*elevate combat ability and gave up parliamentary and municipal opportunism*”. It was also asserted that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia must at any price succeed in building-up united approach of Prague, Brno and Kladno communist organizations on the basis of Bolshevik line.⁴⁰

A final declaration of the Communist International was published in “the Manifest addressed to the members of CPC”. J. Bubník was termed as a traitor and his expulsion from CPC was approved. CI expressed a firm conviction that “*the preservation of unity of CPI as well as ideological protection against rightist deviations will be approved by the whole membership of CPC*”.⁴¹

The situation in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was evaluated by the Politbyro of CPC on March 28 1925. The Ministry Plenipotentiary for Slovakia got hold of this document and informed all county offices in Slovakia about its content. According to the Politbyro, there were five fractions in CPC. One group was composed of adherents of J. Bubník, who were still members of CPC, despite expulsion of their leader. The leadership of CPC was certain that it is only a question of short time when this fraction will cease to exist. The group represented by B. Šmeral, A. Zápotocký and K. Kreiblich, had reservations to CI. Even though centrist political orientation of B. Šmeral was unacceptable, he had a considerable support among workers and his expulsion could result in a split of CPC. Therefore, his elimination was not desirable. The third fraction, represented by A. Neurath and J. Haken, accepted recommendations of the Communist International in regard to necessity of Bolshevization of CPC, but was “*not free from centrist elements*” and was not capable to carry desired reorganization of the Party. Adherents of Bohumil Jílek were mostly radicals. This fraction, however, had a negligible influence in CPC. A truly left orientation was pursued by J. Verčík and A. Seidler, but they also had no meaningful influence among members of CPC and this fraction was exclusively comprised of young communists. In regard to a situation in Košice, it was concluded that a local communist organization was not yet capable to implement Bolshevization.⁴²

Optimistic, though cautious evaluation of development of situation in the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia expressed CI: “*To summarize, it may be said that CPC in general consolidated its position. But this, of course, does not mean that in the*

38 RUPNIK, J. *Dějiny...*, p. 71.

39 Moskva na strane “politbyra”. In: *Robotnícke noviny*, 1925 (1. IV.), no. 74, p. 4.

40 Zinovievova metóda bolševizácie čl. kom. strany. In: *Robotnícke noviny*, 1925 (25. III.), no. 68, p. 2.

41 Kominternu členstvu našej strany. In: *Pravda chudoby*, 1925 (15. IV.), no. 47, p. 1.

42 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 79, no. 4879/925 adm. rev.

further course of Bolshevization deviations will not take place. Recent event have shown that we must reckon with the possibility of Right as well as ultra-Left tendencies."⁴³

As a very important factor in bolshevization of CPC was agitation among young communists. In that regard, the Central Secretariat of the Communist Youth on March 21 1925 prepared instructions addressed to all "cells" in industrial plants, advised them how to publish journals and manage work of correspondents. The main goal was to prepare adequate solutions to problems affecting young people on a local level. Correspondents were advised to flexibly react on each occurrence of class struggle with a proper explanation of these events in spirit of Marxist-Leninist ideology. Journals published by "cells" were to be focused on events happening in industrial plants and on spreading communist propaganda. However, they should not inform about internal developments of CPC. Expenses, connected with publishing and distribution of journals were to be covered by "cells" and journals should be given gratis to young people, especially to those who were not communists.⁴⁴

Leaders of the Communist Party in Košice decided that each "cell" should publish its own journal, which would inform about situation in a factory, where "cell" was established.⁴⁵

With an aim to make Marxist-Leninist ideology more popular in Košice, "the Lenin's Circle" led by Tibor Weisz was established on July 3 1925. It was basically an educational course aimed at increase of knowledge about communist movement. PD K got possession of a transcript of initial lecture given by T. Weisz, in which he explained what communist parties are, what is their significance for working class, why each and every worker should be a member of a communist party, why there can't be fractions inside of communist parties and why communist parties must be firmly united.⁴⁶

However, a goal to achieve a lasting unity of CPC, was not easily to come by. At least, not in Košice. In a situational report dated July 7 1925, PD K informed the Košice County Office about persistent conflict raging in a local communist organization. The main discrepancy existed between radical young communists led by T. Weisz and moderate fraction represented by H. Taussig, who was supported by trade unions of metal workers, carpenters and construction laborers. The County Executive Committee of the Communist Youth (the Committee) in the city published a circular in which H. Taussig was sharply criticized. According to PD K, the Committee also informed the Centrale of CPC in Prague about an "opportunistic policy" of H. Taussig and demanded that he will be expelled from the Party.⁴⁷

On September 7 1925, a meeting of the Executive Committee of Košice CPC was held, on which beside H. Taussig and other communist exponents, participated also J. Haken, representing the Centrale of CPC. Though J. Haken admitted that H. Taussig's work in Košice CPC was "extraordinary", he sharply criticized his conflict with T. Weisz and announced that leadership of CPC decided to suspend him from

43 Published by the Communist Party of Great Britain: *The Communist International between the fifth and sixth world congresses. 1924-8.* London : Dorrit Press, 1928, p. 219.

44 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 2. Not numbered.

45 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 104, no. 4692/1925 prez.

46 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 85, no. 755325 prez.

47 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 86, no. 7991/1925 prez.

the post of the Chairman of CPC in Košice and also from the post of chairman of the Control Commission of CPC.⁴⁸

A considerable impact upon situation in CPC had III Congress of CPC, held on September 26 – 28 1925 in Prague under leadership of J. Haken. Haken in his speech admitted that the Communist Party is still struggling with internal dissensions, but declared that a “cleansing” process was progressing.⁴⁹ *Pravda* informed that the III Congress of CPC declared a firm conviction in success of Bolshevization and without reservations approved demands of the Communist International.⁵⁰

In comparison to enthusiastic commentaries of a communist press in regard to status of CPC, a sharply pessimistic view was expressed by PD K. According to a summary analysis elaborated by PD K, the activities of CPC in Košice were feeble and participation on public gatherings organized by communists was weak. For example, “the International Cooperative Day” held on July 18 – 19 1925, despite a strong advertisement, was attended barely by 500 persons and of this number approximately two third of them were allegedly occasional spectators. Also a conflict persisted between trade unions and CPC in Košice, caused by a tendency of communist leaders to dictate policy of trade unions without consent of their members.⁵¹

Despite internal dissensions as a victory for the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia can be judged results of elections to the National Assembly held on November 15 1925. CPC got 933 711 votes and became the second strongest political party in CSR.⁵² According to K. Fremal, success was a result of a well-organized election campaign, which focused mainly on an improvement of social and working conditions of workers. Consequently, the best results CPC achieved in industrial centers. From an ethnic composition of voters, above average results were achieved among German and Hungarian minorities. A confessional aspect also played role – Protestant voters chose CPC in higher numbers than their Catholic counterparts.⁵³

Communist press celebrated election results as a success. *Pravda* wrote that CPC must endeavor to convince voters of CPC to become conscious Bolsheviks and join ranks of the Party.⁵⁴ *Kassai Munkás*, a communist periodical published in Košice in Hungarian language, scorned periodicals representing views of civic political parties, who predicted an approaching end of CPC. According to *Kassai Munkás*, election results proved how false these predictions were and documented extent of popularity of CPC among people.⁵⁵

48 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 93, no. 10916/25 prez.

49 Sjezd komunistické strany. In: *Národní Listy*, 1925 (27. IX.), no. 265, p. 1.

50 III. zjazd strany v znamení bolševickej jednotnosti. In: *Pravda*, 1925 (30. IX.), no. 117, p. 1. The periodical *Pravda Chudoby* was on 4 September 1925 renamed to *Pravda*. The first issue of *Pravda* was published on 1 October of the same year. KIPSOVÁ, Mária (Ed.). *Bibliografia slovenských a inorečových novín a časopisov z rokov 1918 – 1938*. Martin : Matica Slovenská, 1968, p. 33.

51 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 262, no. 12095/25 prez.

52 *Československá statistika*. Svazek 31, Řada 1 (Volby, sešit 2). Praha : Státní úřad statistický, 1926.

53 FREMAL, Karol. KSC vo svetle výsledkov parlamentných volieb v rokoch 1925, 1929, 1936 a 1946 na strednom Slovensku. In: ŠMIGEL, Michal (Ed.). *Radikálny socializmus a komunizmus na Slovensku (1918 – 1989)*. *Spoločnosť medzi demokraciou a totalitou*. Banská Bystrica : Katedra histórie FHV UMB v Banskej Bystrici; Historický ústav SAV, 2007, pp. 68-69.

54 931. 000 hlasov komunistických 931 000 bojovníkov proti pánom. In: *Pravda*, 1925 (18. XI.), no. 158, p. 1.

55 „Poražená komunistická strana“. In: *Kassai Munkás*, 1925 (19. XI.), no. 158. (Translation of the article into Slovak language is deposited in ŠA v Košiciach, f. PRK, b. 2.).

In spite of a relatively high number of votes, actual number of active members of CPC during year 1925 decreased from 138 996 in 1924 to 93 220.⁵⁶ It is difficult to ascertain exact causes of decline of membership, but most likely it was a stringent discipline imposed on members CPC, which led to revulsion on part of membership.

Even though in 1926 Bolshevization was proceeding only with a limited success, at the Sixth Enlarged Plenum of the CI, Gregory Zinoviev expressed a great satisfaction with the CPC progress and asserted that "it had become a loyal section of the Communist International."⁵⁷ Valuation of G. Zinoviev, however, was overly optimistic.

On January 2 1926, PD K, in a "confidential report" submitted to the Košice County Office, wrote that young communists, who in previous years constituted a radical and united segment of the Communist Organization in Košice, suffered from internal dissensions. This was manifested at a conference held on December 25 1925, during which a conflict erupted in connection with preparations to the congress of the Communist Youth, scheduled to be held on March 1926. A negative impact upon situation had also an uncertainty in regard to influential leaders of young communist, A. Seidler and A Löwy, who had no Czechoslovak citizenship and could be expelled from CSR.⁵⁸ That these worries were no without justification, indicated a report PD K, which depicted persecution of A. Seidler by security authorities.⁵⁹

An acute need for capable leaders of "cells" led to establishment of a training course aimed at enhancement of theoretical knowledge of Marxist-Leninist ideology. Informed about training course, enacted at "the Communist House" in Košice, security authorities entered building and arrested lecturer Moric Klein together with 15 persons who were attending the class. Results of interrogation indicated that besides the Marxist-Leninist ideology, school was focused on gaining practical knowledge how to build-up a network of "cells" and organize their activities.⁶⁰

According to PD K, a decisive influence in the communist organization gained Weichherz-Zamek, an exponent of a radical left in the Party. PD K also registered an increased communist propaganda. Notably, it was enactment of undertaking named the "Week of Press", which was aimed at popularization of communist press, especially a periodical *Kassai Munkás*. Financial support to carry out these activities was allegedly provided by Prague, personally by A. Zápotocký. PD K got also possession of instructions, which CPC in Košice dispatched to all leaders of "cells", requesting them to inform how many unemployed were registered in each "cell". These information were to be used in a campaign against unemployment. "Cells" were also instructed to make preparations for celebration of "the International Day of Women", for "the International Red Help" campaign and actively participate on activities providing help

56 RUPNIK, J. *Dějiny...*, p. 85.

57 ZINNER, Paul E. *Communist Strategy and Tactics in Czechoslovakia, 1918 - 48*. New York; London : Frederick A. Praeger, 1963, p. 42.

58 ŠA v Košičiach, f. PRK, b. 8, no. 544/26 prez.

59 A. Seidler, who was on October 1925 elected to the post of a secretary of the Communist Youth in the Košice County, was several times investigated in connection with distribution of communist posters. For disturbing election campaign of the Hungarian National Party in 1925 A. Seidler was apprehended and was sentenced to ten days of incarceration. He was again apprehended for violation of court order according to which he was prohibited to leave Košice. ŠA v Košičiach, f. KŽ, b. 118, no. 1576/26 adm. rev.

60 ŠA v Košičiach, f. KŽ, b. 184, no. 3555/27 prez.

to communists held in prisons. It was requested that this campaign must be focused especially an improvement of situation of imprisoned E. Fried and A. Löwy.⁶¹

On March 21 1926 a public meeting was held on occasion of week of "the International Red Help" in Košice. The principal speaker, T. Weisz, called an attention to imprisoned communist in Czechoslovakia and declared that it was a "*Holy duty of each worker to join the International Red Help.*" PD K described meeting as peaceful, which remained more a jamboree than belligerent communist gatherings organized in previous years.⁶²

In a report, evaluating situation of a communist organization in Košice during first quarter 1926, PD K informed the Košice County Office, that activities of CPC slackened. Only worth mentioning was a celebration of "the International Lenin's Week", held on January 24 1926. Despite a massive propaganda, according to PD K, the celebration was a failure – approximately only 500 persons attended the Legionnaires Square where meeting was held. Also young communists, who traditionally spearheaded communist activities in Košice, were passive. Allegedly, this was a result of lack of finances and a lethargy of a leadership. However, as a potentially dangerous, PD K viewed an intensive communist campaign among agricultural laborers, traditionally adherents of the Hlinka's Slovak People Party.⁶³

A situation in CPC became again stormy, when radical fraction consolidated its position in CPC and a primary target of its attack became B. Šmeral. Šmeral's idea of creating an alliance with other socialist political subjects was unacceptable to leaders of the Communist International. As was already mentioned, Šmeral's popularity in CPC was considerable, and therefore the Communist International opted for a compromise solution. B. Šmeral was recalled to Moscow and a greater part of 1926 spent working in the Secretariat of CI. Even this was, in CI judgement, not sufficient to eliminate Šmeral's influence in CPC and he was sent to Mongolia, under pretense that his help is indispensable in solving problems of the Mongolian Communist Party. This way he was practically excluded from participation on development of CPC.⁶⁴ Šmeral's absence in Prague became a target of criticism of *Robotnícke noviny*. The periodical asked why B. Šmeral, who was receiving salary as a member of the National Assembly, was not performing his duties and was not representing Czechoslovak workers who voted him into office.⁶⁵

The increase of influence of the Bolshevik wing in CPC, which resulted in forced implementation of "cells" system, threw CPC into disarray. Even a communist historian F. I. Firsov admitted that the process of the Bolshevization was slow and beset with difficulties.⁶⁶

During the second quarter of 1926, according to PD K, a noticeable increase of influence of a radical fraction in CPC occurred. In judgement of PD K a primary credit

61 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 122, no. 3945/26 prez.

62 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 113, no. 4558/26 prez.

63 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 263, no. 495/26 prez.

64 Even though B. Šmeral visited CSR in year 1935, his absence in CSR resulted in loss of his previous influence in CPC. In 1938 he returned to Moscow, where he died in 1941. RUPNIK, Jacques. *Dějiny...*, p. 76.

65 Poslanec robotníctva či pisár Zinovieva. In: *Robotnícke noviny*, 1926 (12. V.), no. 108, p. 1.

66 FIRSOV, F. I. *Pomoc Kominterny...*, p. 108.

for this development deserved T. Weisz and Weichherz-Zámek, who were dispatched to Košice from the Centrale of CPC in Prague.⁶⁷

A significant event was the Conference of confidants of CPC in Košice (the Conference) held on November 12 1926 in Košice. An importance of the Conference is documented, besides presence of 74 delegates representing 57 "cells" and 3 delegates of "the International Red Help", also by participation of K. Gottwald. In his speech K. Gottwald analyzed situation of a capitalist society in general. Then, surprisingly, declared President T. G. Masaryk to be the principal protector of a stability of the Republic. Thanks to President, said K. Gottwald, political development in CSR did not take a direction of Italy or Spain. K. Gottwald even conceded, that during the Masaryk's presidency repression of proletariat by security authorities was moderate and it is important that T. G. Masaryk remain the President of CSR. K. Gottwald also emphasized that the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia must exploit a rivalry among bourgeois political parties and warned workers about misleading policies of these political subjects. In regard to a process of Bolshevization, he declared that it is not yet fully accomplished and admitted that "*workers yet do not understand a significance of Bolshevization*".⁶⁸

The Secretariat of CPC in the Košice County submitted to participants of the Conference an elaborate, in which in detail informed about status of a local communist organization. According to a submitted report, the establishment of "cells" was enacted, but their internal organizations were not yet formed. Also a planned educational program did not materialize. Three training courses were prepared, but education was rendered impossible by numerous arrests. As unsatisfactory was also characterized publishing of "cells" journals. According to cited report, a number of young communists from March 1924 till June 1926 decreased from 1061 to 580. There were insufficient numbers of "cells" formed from young communist in large industrial plants. Altogether, there were 10 "cells" in large factories, 13 in small enterprisers and 4 in country side. The Secretariat of CPC of XXIII County declared that a critical situation was a consequence of a lax approach to formation of "cells" and to negligence of a communist propaganda among young people.⁶⁹

In the third quarter of 1926, the most damaging to CPC in Košice was continued decrease of membership. PD K saw as a main reason strong revulsion of many communist to Bolshevization. A detrimental impact upon a communist movement in Košice had also an increase of activities of socialist political parties and also a growing popularity of Hlinka's Slovak People Party in a country side. Imprisonment of T. Weisz led to formation of a new leadership of the Communist Organization in Košice, represented by the County Secretary Goldhammer and editor-in-chief of *Kassai Munkás*, Weichherz Zámek. To prevent further weakening of the Party by arrests, they chose to tone down their criticism of a political situation in Košice. Moderation of communist activities, however, resulted in a decrease of a political influence of CPC in city. According to PD K an indicator of decline of CPC in Košice was a celebration of "the International Day of Communist Youth", roused only a small interest in Košice and outside of city was not taking place at all.⁷⁰

67 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 263, no. 104487/26 prez.

68 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 163, no. 15952/26 prez.

69 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 163, no. 15952/26 prez.

70 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 263, no. 17060/26 prez.

A similarly gloomy valuation of status of CPC was expressed by PD K in a situational report for fourth quarter of 1926. According to PD K, the communist organization in Košice was during the last months of 1926 in state of "utter stagnation". Slackening of communist activities was primarily contributed to relocation of *Kassai Munkás* to Moravská Ostrava.⁷¹ To secure publishing of *Kassai Munkás* it was also necessary relocate Weichherz-Zamek, Golhammer and technical personnel to Moravská Ostrava. Considering a leading role of both of them in a communist organization in Košice, their departure led inevitably to weakening of activities of CPC in the city. No less detrimental was a loss of jobs of typographers who prepared *Kassai Munkás* for publishing. Many of these people felt betrayed and joined the Social Democratic Party. Personal conflicts were negatively affecting also an organization of young communists.⁷²

On January 7 PD K reported to the Ministry Plenipotentiary for Slovakia, that all political subjects in Košice generated only a very little activity. This lull included also a local communist organization, which completely terminated public meetings. However, communists retained influence in city utilities, such as an electricity plant, a water distribution facility and gasworks, in which approximately 85% of workers were communists.⁷³

An unsatisfactory situation in a Košice communist organization, mainly a persistent decline of a membership, was discussed during a conference of CPC held on February 20 1926. Moric Klein, an exponent of a radical fraction, declared that this was not a fault of workers, but fault of the Košice County Committee, which passively observed infighting among the Committee members. Allegedly, a result of this laxity and dissensions was a loss of motivation on a sizeable part of communists. The conference ended without adoption of any concrete solution to the problem of declining membership.⁷⁴

In a report summarizing development of CPC in Košice during the first quarter of 1927, PD K wrote that a certain revitalization of communist organization occurred, but a new formidable competitor, capable to endanger position of CPC in Košice emerged. It was the Hungarian Section of the Social Democratic Party. Allegedly, the Hungarian Social Democrats were fairly successful in gaining a sympathy of workers by a policy of promoting many of them to leading positions in local social democratic organizations.⁷⁵

Personal changes in a leadership of CPC were initiated at the IV Congress of CPC held on March 25 – 26 1927. The prominent positions in CPC assumed Václav Bolen and Bohumil Jílek. Optimistic declarations of J. Haken, B. Šmeral, B. Jílek and others communist leaders, were sounding more like wishful thinking than a sober estimation of a real situation of CPC. Status of the party did not improved, rather took a course for worse. According to F. I. Firsov, under leadership of B. Jílek and V. Bolen "opportunistic

71 The rationale behind the transfer was to protect *Kassai Munkás* against an excessive severity of censure performed by Košice authorities. A more tolerant approach of government authorities to an opposition press in Western part of the Republic noted also Seton-Watson, a publicist well-versed in Czechoslovak political situation, who criticized a stringent practice of censure in Slovak part of CSR: "It is a time to relax a censure of press, which in Czechland and Moravia is almost non-existent, but in Slovakia is still rather severe." SETON-WATSON, R. W. *Slovensko kedysi a teraz*. Praha : Orbis, 1931, p. 57.

72 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 263, no. 22002/26 prez.

73 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 263, no. 5000/1927 prez.

74 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 166, no. 2658/27 prez.

75 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 151, no. 5031/27 prez.

mistakes" occurred, Bolshevization was pursued only formally and CPC was losing its fighting spirit.⁷⁶

The Communist Party considered propaganda as the most relevant tool in spreading communist ideology among industrial workers and agricultural laborers. Information how the CPC was proceeding in this regard were provided by the Department of Ministry of Interior in Bratislava, which informed PD K about content of documents confiscated during police raid in the County Secretariat of the Communist Party in Košice. Among documents were instructions how to carry a communist propaganda in a country side. Each "cells" in Košice was obliged to dispatch two agitators to country side and each "cells" was advised to look for best ways how to spread communist propaganda. Each "cells" was obliged to establish an agricultural section, which should endeavor to set-up a "cells" in each village.⁷⁷

In this context a necessity of publishing of journals and other propagandistic material was emphasized. These activities, however, were hampered by security authorities. Though CPC was a legal political subject, its premises were a frequent target of police raids, which resulted in confiscations of illegal press products and equipment necessary to make them. An illustrative example of such police action was confiscation of the journal "Utcai sejt ujság", published by one of the Košice "cells" and confiscation of a duplicating machine.⁷⁸ A certain way to remedy situation was to ship propagandist materials from the Western part of CSR. This was a case of shipment of posters dispatched from Prague, containing a political program of CPC, which should attract voters in oncoming communal elections. In these posters leaders of political parties of a ruling coalition were accused of "abominable lies" and it was asserted that only the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was showing the right way how to free workers from "yok of the masters".⁷⁹

PD K estimated that chances to increase of number of votes in communal elections in 1927, which CPC in Košice hoped to gain, were slim. In regard to an election campaign in a country side, the concrete steps how to carry out campaigning were delineated in instructions, which were prepared by the Agricultural Section of CPC and dispatched to county secretariats and agricultural county commissions. An attention was to be paid to the most acute problems affecting peasants in various regions – to injustices committed in implementation of a land reform; to unjust taxation and other pressing issues affecting economic situation of peasants. In regard to a concrete realization of campaign, an individual approach was to be advised. Promises were to be made to fight for improvement of status of agricultural laborers. Besides a personal agitation, posters were to be display on public places announcing how communists will deal with local issues. In general, the aim of an election campaign was to be aimed at improving the status of CPC in a country side.⁸⁰

The results of communal elections held on October 16 1927 were not made public. However, the Social Democratic Party got hold of them and they were published in a periodical *Pravo lidu*. In regard to a number of votes received by CPC, elections could hardly be characterized as a great victory. Though CPC received in Slovakia 128 898

76 FIRSOV, F. I. *Pomoc Kominterny...*, p. 108.

77 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 223, no. 11606/27 prez.

78 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 186, no. 12736/27 prez.

79 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 195, no. 16705/27 prez.

80 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 195, no. 15381/27 prez.

votes and became third strongest political subject after the Republican Party and the Hlinka's Slovak People Party, in comparison to the National Assembly elections, which were held on November 15 1925, communists lost 6 605 votes.⁸¹

The communal elections had no impact whatsoever upon the situation of a communist organization in Košice. The number of party members continued to decrease and passivity of "nuclei" persisted. Existing situation was discussed at the meeting of the Executive Committee of Košice CPC on November 27 1927, which was attended by J. Verčík and K. Gottwald. K. Gottwald declared that situation must improve and a way to achieve it was to increase a level of education of "cells" leaders. A. Löwy sharply criticized a local communist leadership. In his speech he not only accused the Secretary of a local branch of CPC, Štefan Drotzár, of a negligence of "Leninist" principles, but indicated a malevolent intention of leading party officials to disrupt the Communist Organization in Košice. Finally, J. Verčík appealed to all members of CPC to participate more actively on communist movement in Košice.⁸²

Criticism and appeals again had a little effect. During the first quarter of 1928 PD K registered only one undertaking organized by a local communist organization – a public gathering held on May 22 1928, named "the Social struggles and mobilization of an international reaction". According to PD K, meeting was attended only by approximately 300 persons and no incidents occurred.⁸³

A critical situation became evident after collapse of so called "the Red Day", held on 6 July 1928. Mass demonstrations envisioned by a leadership of CPC did not happen. *Pravda* admitted that consequences of "the Red Day" fiasco could undermine morale of communist throughout Slovakia.⁸⁴ As became a tradition, a crisis in CPC evoked interference by the Communist International. At its Fourth Congress, CI analyzed the situation in CPC. An official of CI, S. I. Gusev characterized political orientation of CPC as an "opportunistic and passive" and accused the leadership of CPC of failure to defeat exponents of "opportunistic tendencies". The Communist International wrote an "Open letter to members of CPC", which had a decisive impact on further course of events in CPC. According to CI, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia must "*renew discontinued connection to the masses*".⁸⁵ *Pravda* classified policy of CPC as incorrect and fully condoned criticism of the Communist International.⁸⁶

Interference of CI led also to a radical change in leadership of CPI, which took place at the V Congress of CPC (February 18 – 23 1929). Delegates of the V. Congress elected a new central committee in which adherents of radical wing had a majority. Leading personality in the Party became K. Gottwald.⁸⁷ According to F. I. Firsov "*At the V. Congress the Marxist-Leninist line was victorious. It united the closest tasks of communist movement*

81 ZEMKO, Milan – BYSTRICKÝ, Valerián (Eds.). *Slovensko v Československu (1918 – 1939)*. Bratislava: Veda, 2004, p. 592.

82 ŠA v Košiciach, f. PRK, b. 8, no. 20727/27 prez.

83 ŠA v Košiciach, f. KŽ, b. 195, no. 7748/28 prez.

84 Príčiny a následky. In: *Pravda*, 1928 (11. VII.), no. 155, p. 1.

85 FIRSOV, F. I. *Pomoc Kominterny...*, pp. 108-109.

86 Od oportunistickéj pasivity k bolševickej aktivite! In: *Pravda*, 1928 (4. X.), no. 225, p. 1.

87 „*The struggle between the incumbent leadership (Jilek and his supporters) and a radical elements clustered around Gottwald entered the decisive phase. In the fierce strife that raged throughout the fall and winter of 1928-29, Gottwald was steadily gathering strength.*“ ZINNER, Paul E. *Communist strategy...*, p. 43.

with its perspective goal – to throw down capitalism and install a dictate of proletariat.”⁸⁸ However, a decision of a newly elected leadership to change CPC to a strictly Bolshevik political subject, led to an unprecedented revolt in the Party. A number of CPC members, including prominent political leaders and intellectuals either left the Party, or were expelled.⁸⁹ A collective of Slovak historians admitted that “After the V Congress of CPC, an opposition increased also in Slovakia (...) a broadly implement purge initiated by the Central Committee of CPC, intended to get rid of opposition in the Party, cleansed CPC of opportunistic, petty-bourgeois and destructive elements, but also afflicted a sizeable number of honest Party members who hesitated to accept radical changes.”⁹⁰

The V Congress became a breaking point in a history of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. According to J. Rupnik, “Ascendancy of people who were totally devoted to Moscow and to J. V. Stalin personally to the helm of CPC was not only a sign of exchange of generations, but also a sign of change of relation between CPC and CI. A new era arrived, which can be defined as a Gottwald’s or Stalin’s era, because K. Gottwald built his career in the shadow of a career of J. V. Stalin and during all time of Stalin’s rule over international communist movement, from this line he did not strayed, not even at the moment when in Prague were hanged his most trusted companions, who, together with him, assumed leading posts in the Party 1929.”⁹¹

Similarly like communist organizations in other regions of CSR, also Košice branch was affected by a hostile attitude to Bolshevization on part of membership. No less damaging was loss of political appeal of CPC. E. Fried struggled to radicalize communist organization in Košice, but the process of Bolshevization resulted in slackened of communist movement in city. In a report dispatched to the Provincial Office in Bratislava on October 7 1929, PD K informed that public gatherings of CPC in Košice mostly ended in fiasco because participation was negligible. Allegedly, also a communist campaign organized before elections to the National Assembly in 1929 suffered from low interest of inhabitants of Košice.⁹²

However, if we take to consideration a depth of crisis in CPC, which was caused by Bolshevization, the results of elections to the House of Representatives held on October 27 1929 reflected purges and loss of membership only in a limited degree. It is true that CPC, in comparison to elections in 1925, lost almost 200 000 votes, but still was the fourth strongest party in Czechoslovakia.⁹³

88 FIRSOV, F. I. *Pomoc Kominterny...*, p. 114.

89 „The Party discussion of 1928 - 29, which led to a complete change in leadership and the adoption of an entirely new, much tougher policy, cost the Party its mass character. Its membership, which at the outset of the showdown hovered around the 100 000 mark, dwindled to about 24 000 (...) The majority of the Party senators – fourteen out of twenty – and fifteen out of fort-one parliamentary deputies deserted the Communist camp. A number of intellectuals – among them several stalwarts of socialism, such as Ivan Olbracht, Marie Majerova, Josef Hora, Helena Mahrova a Josef Seifert – either withdrew or were expelled. The Communist trade unions split, and one section, led by Josef Hais, joined forces with the Social Democrats. Several founding members, including Alois Muna also left the Party.” ZINNER, Paul E. *Communist Strategy...*, p. 50.

90 PLEVZA, Viliam et al. *Prehľad dejín KSČ na Slovensku*. Bratislava : Nakladateľstvo Pravda, 1971, p. 164.

91 RUPNIK, J. *Dějiny...*, p. 85.

92 SA K, f. PD K, b. 12, no. 15825/1929/prez.

93 In elections to the House of Representatives held on 27 October 1929 CPC obtained 753 220 votes on the state level, which amounted to 10, 20 % of total. In Slovakia it was 152 242 votes (10, 66 %). *Československá statistika*. Svazek 70, Řada 1 (Volby, sešit 4). Volby do poslanecké sněmovny v říjnu 1929. Praha : Státní úřad statistický, 1930, pp. 13, 34-35.

In summary evaluation of sources used, it is necessary to mention that fund the Police Directory in Košice is incomplete and documentary base is torso-like. The whole fund contains mere 20 boxes, which, in comparison to the Police Directory in Bratislava containing approximately two thousand boxes, is miniscule. The reason for such incomplete database could be explained by speedy transfer of the State Archive in Košice to Prešov after the Vienna Arbitrage. Additional losses could be attributed to transfer of fund to the Ministry of Interior in Prague after renewal of CSR. Therefore, to make reconstruction of events more complete, dearth of documentary material was, at least partially, compensated by citing articles and commentaries dealing with status of the CPC in Košice, which were published by communist periodicals as well as press representing views of non-communist political parties.

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