

**Establishment of communist regime in Czechoslovakia and an impact upon its
education system.**

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**Establishment of communist regime in Czechoslovakia and
Its impact upon the education system of the Republic.**

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Contents

FOREWORD	4
POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN SLOVAKIA DURING YEARS 1948 – 1950	6
DESTRUCTION OF LAST VESTIGES OF DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SYSTEM IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN FEBRUARY 1948	22
A REIGN OF TERROR	30
A RADICAL REMAKE OF SCHOOL SYSTEM IN SLOVAKIA AS RESULT OF IMPOSITION OF THE COMMUNIST REGIME	47

Foreword

Usurpation of political power by the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia in February 1948 ushered an unprecedented era in history of Czechs and Slovaks, which was characterized by a total control of every aspect of their lives. Since very first days of communist victory, a number of ruthlessly imposed rules was transforming Czechoslovak society into a tightly-knit organism in which there was no place for politically, economically and socially alternative way of life. Every person was coerced to participate on building of so called socialist society, based on ideology of the Marxism-Leninism. Reluctance obediently and enthusiastically perform all orders given by communist superiors, or even openly resist, resulted in a stern repression, frequently with use of cruel measures. Behind facade of universal happiness and professions of determination to fight “class” enemies of socialism, a large segment of society lived in fear.

Communist ideology deeply affected especially a sphere of education and upbringing of young generation. The whole school system was transformed to be a device of ideological indoctrination making young people devoted adherents of the Marxism-Leninism. Pedagogues, who spent their teaching careers in pre-communist regimes, were either purged, or reeducated. Besides adherence to the communist ideology, Czechoslovak political leadership was subservient to leaders of the Soviet Union, above all to the J. V. Stalin. A dominant influence of the Soviet Union affected also area of education. Soviet mode of education was presented as an example, which blindly copied on all types of schools.

According to the communist doctrine, the old capitalist society was destined to be destroyed and societal progress would inevitably lead to creation of a socialist society. Young generation was perceived to be a leading force in this process and schools were the main tool to secure that this goal will be fulfilled.

Submitted paper, in a concise fashion, is mapping main events shaping history of communist regime in Czechoslovakia during years 1948 – 1953 and process of establishing foundations of totalitarian society in CSR.

I. Political development of Slovakia during years 1948 – 1950

Renewal of the Czechoslovak Republic (CSR) after defeat of the Nazi Germany was from very beginning characterized by fight between the Communists and civic political parties. During existence of the inter-war CSR, radical left was represented by the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (CPC). After destruction of CSR and establishment of the Slovak Republic, the Communist Party of Slovakia (CPS) was founded. The division between Czech and Slovak communist parties was established after renewal of CSR in 1945. In Czech part of the Republic operated the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, in Slovakia the Communist Party of Slovakia. This, however, did not mean that ideology and political strategy of both political subjects differed in any meaningful way. A decisive say in setting-up political agenda had CPC. Subordination of CPS to CPC was confirmed during the Session of the Presidium of the Central Committee of CPC and the Presidium of the Central Committee of CPS on 17 – 18 July 1945.¹ After usurpation of power by the Communists in CSR, even formal existence of communist organization in Slovakia was abolished.²

The political system of the inter-war Czechoslovakia, which was characterized by a variety of political parties organized on ideological, economic and ethnic principles, was not renewed. Political subjects, classified as representatives of discredited bourgeoisie, were not allowed to be legalized. In Slovakia this was true especially in case of the Hlinka's People's Party, discredited by collaboration with the Nazi Germany. Only subjects led by persons known by their democratic attitudes and resistance to Nazism could be legalized. In the Czech part of the Republic besides CPC, renewed was the Social Democratic Party (SDP), the National Socialist

¹ PEŠEK, Jan. *Centrum moci Aparát Ústředního výboru Komunistické strany Slovenska 1948 – 1989*. Bratislava : AEP, 2006, p. 12.

² GABZDILOVÁ, Soňa. Komunistická strana Československa a školstvo na Slovensku v rokoch 1948 – 1953. In KÁRNIK, Zdeněk – KOPEČEK, Michal (eds.). *Bolševizmus, komunizmus a radikální socializmus v Československu*. Praha : Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, Dokořán, 2003, p. 201.

Party (NSP) and the People's Party (PP). In Slovakia situation was different. None of pre-war political subjects, with exception of CPS, were allowed to be renewed. Instead, the Democratic Party (DP), composed of Slovak anti-fascists, was established.

The presence of the Soviet Army in Czechoslovakia after defeat of the Nazi Germany resulted in a dramatic increase of political influence of the Communists. In Slovakia, CPS gained an upper hand in newly created state authorities – the national councils (NC).³ For example, during initial phase of formation of national councils in the region of Eastern Slovakia, 51 % of NC were composed of communists, of 31 % adherents of the Democratic Party and 18 % members of NC was without political affiliation.⁴ More evenly was power distributed between CPS and DP in the Slovak National Council (SNA), which was the highest political authority in Slovakia. The supreme executive institution was the Board of Commissioners (BC), in which CPS and DP had 6 deputies each.

Unlike radically different ideological platforms of political subjects active in the pre-war Czechoslovakia, ideological base of renewed CSR was determined by the Košice Government Program (KGP). KGP was formulated during negotiations of Czech and Slovak representatives in April 5 1945. In initial paragraphs of KGP, Czechoslovak government declared its unswerving allegiance to the Soviet Union, close cooperation with the Red Army and determination to make sure that a new Czechoslovak Army will be led by “democratic and antifascist” officers. Czechoslovak government vowed to *“from beginning to apply practical coordination with the Soviet Union in all areas – military, politics, economy and culture...”*⁵ War criminals, namely German and Hungarian nationals, were to be punished for their crimes against Czechs, Slovaks and citizens of other nations. Those who committed crimes against Soviet citizens were to be surrendered to the Soviet Union. KGP, in general, outlined fundamental direction which CSR will take in the future.

Besides institutions of the Central Government, established were also Slovak political institutions – the Slovak National Council and the Board of Commissioners, which were formed

³ National councils were organized on territorial principle – local national councils (LNC), district national councils (DNC) and county national councils (CNC).

⁴ ŠUTAJ, Štefan. *Občianske politické strany na Slovensku v rokoch 1944 – 1948*. Bratislava : VEDA, 1999, p. 45-46.

⁵ PRAŽÁKOVÁ, Alena (ed.). *Dokumenty modernej doby*. Praha : Svoboda, 1978, I – IV, p. 474-480.

during the Slovak National Uprising (SNU). However, similar government authorities, which would exercise political power only in the Czechland, were not established. This way an uneven political arrangement was put into existence, called the "Asymmetrical model".⁶

Existence of Slovak authorities wielding legal and executive power resulted in some sort of political duality. This led representatives of the Central Government in Prague to negotiate with Slovak side concrete limits of political authority of Slovak institutions.

During summer months of 1945 tensions between the Democratic Party and the Communist Party of Slovakia increased. CPS was losing popularity mainly due violent behavior of members of the Soviet Army stationed on the Slovak territory.⁷ A prominent member of CPS Karol Šmidke expressed his disappointment when he declared that what the Communists in Slovakia were building a quarter of century, "*Red Army destroyed overnight.*"⁸

On July 7 – 8 1945 the first Congress of the Democratic Party was held. Jozef Lettrich, who was elected to the post of chairman of DP, presented its political program. Leadership of DP declared that DP will fight for upholding of democratic principles and legal protection of each citizen.⁹

Even though ideological differences between communists and civic parties differed in organizational structure and ideology, a certain degree of compromise between CPS and DS existed. Both political subjects and various public associations were organized in unique organization, called the National Front (NF). In Czechland and in Slovakia operated regional organizations - the Czech National Front (CNF) and the Slovak National Front (SNF). The National Front narrowed possibilities of democratic expression and led to a political regime which was characterized as the "directive democracy". According historian M. Londák "*Košice Government*

⁶ BARNOVSKÝ, Michal. *Na ceste k monopolu moci. Mocenskopolitické zápasy na Slovensku v rokoch 1945 – 1948*. Bratislava : ARCHA, v spolupráci s Historickým ústavom Slovenskej akadémie vied, 1995, p. 30.

⁷ For example the District Nacional Council in Kežmarok required all local national councilss situated in region of Kežmarok to made a list of items taken by Soviet soldiers, because „*The Red Army in almost every village, were German minority members lived, was taking cattle, grain, wagons and other valuables.*” Štátny archív (ŠA) Poprad, fund (f.) Obvodné úrady (OÚ), NV Slovenská Ves, carton (c.) 1. Slovak authorities avoided interference, because as was reported by security authorities, "*To stop Soviet soldiers who are almost always drunk is impossible without use of arms.*" Slovenský národný archív (SNA), f. Povereníctvo vnútra (PV), Bezpečnostný odbor (BO), carton (c.) 1.

⁸ BARNOVSKÝ, M. *Na ceste...*, p. 53.

⁹ BARNOVSKÝ, M. *Na ceste...*, p. 53.

Program and government of the National Front initiated a specific form of democratic political system, a system of peoples democracy as a form of limited or directive democracy".¹⁰

In conception of the Democratic Party, the National Front and its national divisions should be tools for building a national unity composed of various segments of Slovak society. The role of NF was to prevent frictions among political parties and, as influential institution, should facilitate some sort of political modus operandy. However, in regard to aims of communist to eliminate any form of opposition, endeavor of DP to avoid conflicts with CPS was an illusion. Furthermore, the National Front was lacking an essential democratic function – voting. All decisions adopted by the National Fronts had to be unanimous, which would be rare to achieve in truly democratic political institution.

On surface, popularity of the Democratic Party was increasing and its membership grew. In reality, its position vis-à-vis CPS was weak. The main difference between both parties was discipline. According to historian Š. Šutaj *"It was becoming increasingly clear, that unlike CPS, DS was built on more democratic ideological principles, was allowing to its members a greater scale of opinions and was not able...to keep membership in tight line. DP concentrated numerous groups, which besides economic interests were united by fear of communist rule, of leftist totality. In the Communist Party tendencies toward centralization of power were increasing, relation between center and membership base was built on principle of subordination, on accountability of members to leadership, on fulfilment of decisions of the higher Party structures, which was manifested by sacrificing of national interests to centralistic approach".¹¹*

One way how to weaken political influence of the Democratic Party, in view of CPS, was assist in establishment of political subject which would attract the Catholic voters. Initially this idea was contemplated during the joint session of the central committees of CPS and CPC on July 17 18 1945. The General Secretary of CPC Viliam Široký declared in October 1945 that, besides Catholics who were not members of any political party, a new party should be also composed of some "more democratic" members of DP.¹² However, communist plot, was prevented by an

¹⁰ LONDÁK, Miroslav. *Otázky industrializácie Slovenska (1945 – 1960)*. Bratislava : VEDA, 1999, p. 17.

¹¹ ŠUTAJ, Š. *Politické...*, p. 64.

¹² BARNOVSKÝ, M. *Na ceste...*, p. 73.

agreement reached between Catholics and leadership of DS and concluded on March 31 1946. In regard to confessional adherence, both sides agreed that Protestants and Catholics will be presented in institutions of DP in ratio 3 to 7.¹³

Still, endeavors of CPS to weaken the Democratic Party via broadening a political scene in Slovakia continued. In January 1946 a new political subject, named the Strana práce (the Party of Labor - PL), was established, with consent of the Communist Party of Slovakia. Few months later, on May 5 1946, another political party – the Strana slobody (the Party of Freedom - PF) was founded. Representatives of PF declared their intention to build *“national, state and social life on principles of Christian creed... in sphere of relations between Czechs and Slovaks to pursue principle equality, to fight uncompromisingly for democracy, protect right to work, personal freedom, freedom of expression and religious believe, full appreciation of labor of peasants and to cooperate with Soviet Union and Western countries.”*¹⁴ Political program of the Party of Labor was based on similar values as the Party of Freedom

Both political subjects, regardless of their programs, in case that they would be successful in attraction of a sizeable segment of Slovak population, had potential to weaken the Democratic Party. That was the main reason that CPC allowed their establishment and agreed to include them into the National Front. PL and PF were basically indirectly a creation of CPS, which did not objected their establishment, hoping than in oncoming elections in 1946 they will attract voters, which would otherwise vote the Democratic Party. This, however, did not materialized and both political subject played only a marginal role on the Slovak political scene.

One of the most poisonous results of a tragic chain of events, which occurred after ascent of the Nazi Party to power in Germany, was irreconcilable cleavage between Czechs and Slovaks and German and Hungarian minorities who lived in Czechoslovakia. At the time of establishment of CSR, neither Germans nor Hungarians were included in the Czechoslovak Republic voluntarily and during existence of the inter-war Czechoslovakia, a majority of them retained their negative attitude toward CSR. Most of the German minority members contributed to destruction of CSR and actively participated on occupation of the Czech part of the Republic. Similarly hostile was a

¹³ BARNOVSKÝ, M. *Na ceste...*, p. 80.

¹⁴ ŠUTAJ, Š. *Politické...*, p. 142.

majority Hungarians who supported revisionist endeavors of the Hungarian Kingdom and annexation of the southern part of Slovakia to Hungary in November of 1938. After defeat of the Nazi Germany and its ally Hungary, Czechoslovak government decided to deport Germans and Hungarians from CSR. The intended mass deportations were justified by Czechoslovak authorities as a punishment for crime of so called "collective guilt". The primary pursuer of necessity to deport "non-Slavic" minorities initially was the Czechoslovak President Edvard Beneš and this radical approach gradually gained support of all politically relevant forces in Czechoslovakia.¹⁵

Unlike in the Czechland, where German minority was more than three million strong and deportation of Germans was a major political and social issue, in Slovakia German minority consisted only of approximately 150 000 persons and their deportation, in contemporary terminology "transfer", had secondary significance. The primary goal of the Slovak Government authorities was to expel as many Hungarian minority members as possible. This does not mean that Germans escaped consequences of inexorable approach of the Soviet armed forces to eastern boundaries of Slovakia. During the Slovak National Uprising (SNU) a number of German villages in the Eastern and the Central Slovakia were attacked by partisans and their inhabitants indiscriminately murdered.

Fearing reprisals after the Soviet Army will enter Slovakia, numerous Germans were evacuated by German authorities or left their homes on their own. The main destinations of evacuees were the Sudeten region and Austria.

After military operations ended, many Germans traveled back to Slovakia, hoping that they will be able to return to their homes. But this hope turned to be an illusion. German property, especially farms in the Spiš region, where Germans lived in concentrated settlement, became targets of indiscriminate looting. Besides devastation of their property, in many cases homes which belonged to Germans, were occupied by people from other localities, namely from the Eastern and the Northern Slovakia. Acquisition of German farms was supported by local

¹⁵ The intention of E. Beneš and his adherents to expel Germans from Czechoslovakia underwent during years of World War II an evolution which depended on changes in geopolitical situation in Europe, but E. Beneš never changed his mind.

national councils, which hoped that these people will help to save collection of harvest. However, only a small number of newcomers had knowledge to work farms. Collection of harvest in 1945 was also hampered by a lack of equipment which was stolen.

The destiny of German and Hungarian minority members was decided by the Košice Government Program. Articles VIII – XI and article XV of KGP determined a status of German and Hungarian communities in civic, economic and social level. With exception of active antifascists, Germans and Hungarians were stripped of Czechoslovak citizenship, persons accused of war crimes were imprisoned and tried by so called people courts and those who were members of Nazi organizations were placed to concentration camps and their property confiscated.¹⁶ Germans were also deprived of all rights in sphere of education. All German schools were closed.

In line with discriminatory measures adopted by KDP, the Slovak National Council on May 15 1945 issued Regulation No. 33/1945 Coll., on basis of which all German and Hungarian minority members who in any way participated on activities of Nazi regime, were to be tried by people courts and sentenced according to degree of their guilt.

In April 1945 began an internment of Germans to concentration camps. In its initial phase process was carried-on in a haphazard fashion with many negative consequences. There were no regulations in regard to organization of interment and police (the National Security – NS) was placing Germans in buildings which were available, even if they were utterly unsuitable to accommodate a large number of people. Incarcerated were complete families. For example, in village Švedlár were German families placed in a former German school. The oldest person was 81 years old and the youngest was toddler only one year old.¹⁷

Unregulated process of creation of concentration camps in Slovakia ended the Regulation No. 105/1945 Coll., issued by the Slovak National Council in August 1945, which authorized the Commission of Interior to manage process of their establishment.

Despite controversial nature of mass repressive measures enacted against German population, there was no opposition of any sort among Slovak political parties. On the contrary, a vague

¹⁶ PRAŽÁKOVÁ, Irena (ed.). *Dokumenty moderní doby*. Praha : Svoboda, 1978, pp. 474, 494.

¹⁷ State Archive SA Poprad, fund (f.). ONV Poprad, c. 3, prez.

attitude of CPS and DP exhibited at the outset of year 1945, was superseded by support of both parties to deportations German and Hungarians from CSR. Members of the Central Committee of CPS, during its session on June 16 1945, declared determination to make sure, that *“all Germans living on Slovak territory – with exception of active antifascists – will be placed in concentration camps and as soon as possible deported”*.¹⁸ Similarly radical approach assumed national councils. Participants of the First Congress of National Councils declared that: *“In interest of security of the Czechoslovak Republic and in interest of general security we demand that our renewed Czechoslovak state will be cleansed of perfidious and destructive German minority.”*¹⁹

In spite of frequent declarations of the Democratic Party leadership to fight for individual rights, a rule of law and democracy, also DP supported mass deportations of Germans. In existing political atmosphere it was impossible to express any other attitude. However, representative of DP surprisingly omitted postulate request to deport Germans and Hungarians from CSR during first congress of DP in Turčiansky Sv. Martin on July 7 – 8 1945. Besides obligatory declaration of unity with Soviet Union, main emphasis was placed upon necessity to uphold laws, to suppress censure and to stop violent acts committed by security organs. Delegates also abstained from insulting German and Hungarian minority members.²⁰

Frequently declared determination of state authorities to expel Germans and Hungarians from CSR depended on consent of the Victorious Powers. Destiny of Germans was decided during conference of USA, Soviet Union and Great Britain at Potsdam during July 17 - August 2 1945. It was decided that German minorities living in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia will be deported to Germany. President E. Beneš immediately reacted and on August 2 1945 issued the Constitutional Decree no. 33/1945 Coll., which revoked state citizenship of German and Hungarian minority members except persons who were loyal to CSR, fought for liberation of Czechoslovakia or suffered under Nazi terror.

Regulation No. 33/1945 Coll., created a legal base for mass deportation of Germans from Czechoslovakia. It was unprecedented event in history of CSR and had a negative impact on

¹⁸ SNA, f. ÚV KSS, Predsedníctvo, c. 789.

¹⁹ *Národné výbory*, volume I, October 1 1945.

²⁰ SNA, f. ÚV KSS, ÚV KSS, Generálny tajomník (GT), c. 2160, number (no.) 268.

individual rights in the Republic. It paved a way to abuse not only ethnic Germans but also other groups, which were politically unacceptable to regime.

The aim to deport German population as soon as possible caused a number of difficulties. The concentration camps were built in ad hoc fashion. A pervasive problem was absence of suitable buildings, which resulted in use of schools, military barracks and various make-shift buildings. A pressing problem was lack of provisions, clothing and hygienic articles. In several concentration camps lack of provisions was so acute, that inmates were starving.²¹ Besides alarming dearth of supplies, many inmates suffered from overcrowding and low level of hygiene which resulted in spreading of infectious diseases.²²

The National Security was informed about unacceptable conditions in concentration camps and on August 7 1945 issued instructions ordered to all subordinated authorities, to secure a minimal daily rations of food.²³ Situation in regard to supplying camps with provisions gradually improved after management of camps was taken over by the Commission of Interior (CI). However, with winter approaching, living conditions in camps were absolutely unsuitable for winter accommodation. This held true especially for concentration camps in mountainous region of Spiš where winters were harsh.

Despite of intensive anti-German propaganda generated by government authorities, political parties and periodical press, interest of Slovak public in predicament of Germans was rather perfunctory. Unlike Hungarian community, majority of which was concentrated in the Southern Slovakia, Germans lived predominantly in three separate localities.²⁴ Because their relatively small

²¹ For example, chief of the National Security in Gelnica demanded from the regional district national councils supplies of provisions, informing that „*camp in Gelnica-Thurzov is in such an acute lack of provisions, that if no relieve will be provided, people will start dying from hunger.*“ SA Spišská Nová Ves, f. ONV Spišská Nová Ves, c. 2.

²² Due to catastrophic hygienic conditions in concentration camps located in Kremnica in which 1 800 persons was apprehended, an outbreak of epidemic disease occurred. In absence of medicine only low quality of soap and petrol were used to fight disease. SA Žiar nad Hronom, f. ONV Kremnica, c. 523. Frequent deaths were no exception. In camp situated in Petržalka holding 2 300 inmates as a result of lack of food and grave hygienic conditions 92 persons died. SNA, f. PV, Bezpečnostný odbor (BO), c. 2877.

²³ SA Poprad, ONV Poprad, c. 3.

²⁴ In Bratislava and its environs, in the Central Slovakia in region called Hauerland and in the Eastern Slovakia in region of Spiš.

number²⁵ and rather inward mode of living, they were not viewed by Slovak majority as a threat. Traditionally good inter-ethnic relations between German minority members and Slovaks were damaged during the Slovak State, when Germans were influenced by the Nazi ideology. However, this ideological indoctrination lasted only few years, in time of German victories. When it became clear that Germany will most likely lose war, only few Germans in Slovakia persisted in their zeal for Nazism. Arrogance was superseded by fear and desperation. This can be one of reasons that hatred against Germans by Slovaks, which was manifested in Czechland during so called wild phase of expulsion, was missing in Slovakia and some Slovaks were even helping Germans. Benevolent attitude of some Slovaks toward Germans was criticized by state institutions.²⁶

In regard to deportation of Germans, Czechoslovak government expressed satisfaction with consent of Victorious Powers. Positively was valued also fact that agreement did not stated a precise numbers of persons who were about to be deported. This gave to Czechoslovak authorities a free hand in deportation of all Germans.

During the “main phase of transfer” in year 1946, from Slovakia were deported 32 400 Germans. The mass deportations ended on October 21 1946. The Commission of Interior estimated number of Germans before commencement of deportations approximately at 56 000 persons, so number of German minority numbers who remained in Slovakia could be in vicinity of 24 000 persons. However, this numbers is only conjectural. Traumatic events at the end of war, deprivations and repressive measures enacted by authorities, motivated many Germans to hide their ethnicity.

At time of its realization, deportation of Germans from CSR was hailed as a victory over mortal enemy, which contributed to increase of security of the Republic. During festivities of October 28 1946, President Beneš described expulsion of Germans as historical achievement in struggle with a perennial enemy of the Czech Nation. However, from the aspect of future development of democracy in Czechoslovakia it was a defeat. It was victory only for radical elements of Czechoslovak society, especially for the Communists Party.

²⁵ During 20th century number of ethnic Germans was roughly 150 000 persons, which was less than 5% of total population of Slovakia

²⁶ For example, in its situational report the District National Council in Kremnica wrote that absence of radical anti-German hostility on part of many Slovaks was a result of „*immense German propaganda*.“ ŠA Žiar nad Hronom, f. ONV Kremnica, c. 23.

After end of the World War II a region of the Southern Slovakia, which was annexed by Hungary, was returned to CSR. Hungarian minority members living in this region, were viewed by Slovak political representatives as a permanent threat to integrity of Slovakia. Consequently, for Czechoslovak representatives was expulsion of these potential enemies of state supremely important. Therefore, refusal of the Victorious Powers to allow deportation of Hungarians from Czechoslovakia was disappointing and several approaches were tried to decrease number of Hungarians in Slovakia as much as possible.

Similarly like ethnic Germans, after renewal of CSR Hungarian minority became a target of repressive measures of the Czechoslovak Government. On April 7 1945 the Commission of Interior decreed that in regions inhabited by Hungarian majority, instead of national councils, administrative authority must be delegated to commissioners formed exclusively from Slovaks. An exception could be made in cases of Hungarian active antifascists.²⁷ In localities, where national councils composed of Hungarians were already created, these were to be dissolved and government commissioners installed.²⁸

In regard to decrease of numbers of ethnic Hungarians in Slovakia, after plan to deport Hungarians on mass scale became unrealistic, two approaches were tried by Czechoslovak authorities as the most promising – exchange of population between Czechoslovakia and Hungary, eventually transformation of ethnic identity of Hungarians to Slovak nationality – via so called “re-Slovakization”. President Beneš, optimistically, at the end of 1945 expected that exchange of population will be successful, arguing that there are roughly equal numbers of persons of Slovak extraction living in Hungary as Hungarians living in Slovakia and they would most likely agree to settle in CSR.²⁹ However, Hungarian political representation exchange of population resolutely refused, as improper and resembling racial methods. On the other side, Czechoslovak politicians accused the Hungarian Government of scheming to keep members of Hungarian minority in Slovakia as a potential tool of “revisionist” policy of Hungary in future. Result was an impasse in exchange preparations. Negotiations between Czechoslovakia and

²⁷ ZVARA, Juraj. *Maďarská menšina na Slovensku po roku 1945*. Bratislava, 1969, pp. 53-54.

²⁸ PURGAT, Ján. *Od Trianonu po Košice*. Bratislava, 1970, pp. 248-249

²⁹ ŠUTAJ, Štefan. *Maďarská menšina na Slovensku v rokoch 1945 – 1948*. Bratislava : VEDA, 1993, p. 60.

Hungary eventually ensued at the end of 1945. On February 27 1946 the “Agreement in regard to exchange of population between Czechoslovakia and Hungary” (The Agreement) was concluded. Whereas persons exchanged from Hungary were to be selected only on principle of voluntary participation, the Czechoslovak authorities decided which Hungarians will be send to Hungary, regardless of opinions of affected persons.³⁰

From the beginning the Agreement was interpreted differently in Czechoslovakia as in Hungary. Hungarian representatives criticized repressive measures enacted against members of Hungarian minority in Slovakia and preparations for “re-Slovakization”. In return, Hungarian administration was criticized for delays in realization of exchange.

Year after signing of the Agreement, in February 1947, a number of Slovaks living in Hungary, who were willing to settle in CSR, reached 95 421 persons, which Czechoslovak side perceived as disappointing. According to communist Vladimír Clementis this was result of oppression of minority rights of Slovaks living in Hungary, which resulted in their low national Slovak awareness.³¹ Another reason of unsatisfactory result were alleged systematic obstructions by Hungarian administration and use of various ways to dissuade Hungarian citizens of Slovak extraction from participation on exchange.³²

An outcome of the Peace Conference in Paris in May 1946 was for Czechoslovakia disappointing. Expectations of the Czechoslovak Government, that it will be allowed to deport additional 200 000 ethnic Hungarians, were not realized.³³

Signatories of the Peace Conference concluded that CSR and Hungary should find solution to Hungarian minority status themselves. If they will be not able to solve this issue during next six months, Czechoslovakia will be entitled to ask for help the Council of Foreign Ministers.³⁴ According to historian Karel Kaplan, refusal of Victorious Powers to accept request of Czechoslovak authorities to deport members of Hungarian minority, undermined also possibility

³⁰ JANICS, Kálmán. *Roky bez domoviny. Maďarská menšina na Slovensku po druhej svetovej vojne 1945 – 1948*. Budapest : Lilium Aurum, 1994, p. 178

³¹ ŠUTAJ, Š. *Maďarská menšina...*, p. 73.

³² ŠUTAJ, Š. *Maďarská menšina...*, p. 74.

³³ JANICS, K. *Roky bez domoviny...*, p. 186.

³⁴ KAPLAN, Karel. *Pravda o Československu 1945 – 1948*. Praha : PANORAMA, 1990, p. 113.

of exchange of population between both countries.³⁵ Instead to exchange of minorities, a program of “re-Slovakization” was considered. The idea was based on presumption that predecessors of overwhelming majority of Hungarians living in Slovakia were Slovaks and therefore they should return to their roots, that is, to assume their true Slovak nationality.

On July 1 1946 the Commission of Interior established the Central “re-Slovakization” Commission (CRC). CI defined the role of CRC as a tool created to remedy an injustice of the past and declared that Czechoslovak government was offering to “Hungarized” Slovaks “return to the Slovak Nation”.³⁶

On the surface “re-Slovakization” was in its initial phase very successful. Over four hundred thousand Hungarian minority members applied for program of “re-Slovakization”. But, in reality the main reason was fear of deportation, from which persons who were accepted into “re-Slovakization” program were excluded.³⁷ After initial hesitations, wrote Hungarian historian Kálmán Janics, participation of “re-Slovakization” gained a mass character.³⁸

In spite of presentation of “re-slovakization” by Czechoslovak propaganda as a “success, it was not only criticized by Hungarian media as form of forced assimilation, but also Czechoslovak political representatives themselves were dubious in regard to real sense of it and viewed “re-Slovakized” Hungarians with suspicion.³⁹ Dubious nature of the whole undertaking was documented by questionnaires, which Hungarians, who applied to “re-Slovakization”, were obliged to complete. The questionnaires included questions which should provide “decisive signs of Slovak origin”, of Hungarians living in Slovakia, such as use of language in a family circle, mode of upbringing of children, membership in various public associations, mix marriages etc. Answers to these questions could be verified only with difficulties and gave applicants a broad leeway to present themselves as persons with strong Slovak roots. Despite dubious veracity of the program,

³⁵ „Road to solution on international forum was closed. This way was substantially narrowed possibility of bilateral agreement with Hungary, which was not interested to find solution and was using every opportunity to call attention of international public opinion to non-democratic approach of Czechoslovakia against Hungarian minority.” KAPLAN, K. *Pravda o Československu...*, pp. 115, 116.

³⁶ ŠUTAJ, Š. *Maďarská menšina...* p. 85.

³⁷ KAPLAN, K. *Pravda o Československu...*, p. 117.

³⁸ „Besides few stubborn individuals, filling of applications had massive form...In villages where members of intelligentsia applied first, all inhabitants followed”. JANICS, Kálmán. *Roky bez domoviny...*, p. 191.

³⁹ KAPLAN, K. *Pravda o Československu...*, p. 117.

A. Granatier, an ardent nationalist and one of the managers of the “re-Slovakization”, defined it as tool designed to reinforce the Slovak Nation with “*infusion of Hungarized Slovaks*”.⁴⁰

Czechoslovak authorities endeavored to decrease a number of Hungarian minority members living in the Southern Slovakia also by means of internal resettlement. The most ruthless was forced resettlement of Hungarian population realized during winter months 1946/1947. Even though transfer was officially carried on voluntary basis, resettlement was realized with assistance of police, which was not shy to use violence against helpless Hungarians. Unheated cattle wagons, used for transport of cattle, were utilized for transportation of people regardless of their age and physical condition. Deportations were executed in a bitter cold and whole process remained Nazi deportations of Jews. Total number of Hungarians, who were resettled to the Western part of CSR during years 1945 – 1947, was 44 129, of which only 2514 declared that they were resettled voluntarily.⁴¹ Also this measure, aimed to reduce number of Hungarian minority members in Slovakia, ended as an utter failure. Hungarians, deported from their homes were desperately trying to return and eventually only a fraction of them adapted to new conditions of life in Czechland.⁴²

It is difficult to ascertain precisely reasons of absence of critical reaction to inhuman deportations of Hungarians from the Southern Slovakia. Most likely imprisonment and deportations of Germans, together with constant propaganda against “enemies of state”, carried namely by the Communists, had impact upon general population and intimidated potential critics also in regard to mistreatment of Hungarian minority members. However, though rarely, critical reactions occurred.⁴³

⁴⁰ ŠUTAJ, Š. *Maďarská menšina...*, p. 88.

⁴¹ JANICS, Kálmán. *Roky bez domoviny...*, p. 120. According to J. Zvaru was number of deportees 41 666. Juraj Zvara: *Maďarská menšina...*, p. 66.

⁴² According to K. Janics „*Internal colonization was cruel and in the end unsuccessful attempt to liquidate Hungarian minority. It evoked not only negative reaction from affected people...but also considerably damaged Czechoslovak-Hungarian relations...Since autumn 1946 till spring 1947 was waged so strong propagandistic, medial and diplomatic war between Czechoslovakia and Hungary, evoked by policy of internal colonization, that endangered fulfilment of the Agreement in regard to exchange of population concluded February 27 1946 and temporarily paralyzed activity of interstate commission, which managed exchange*”. JANICS, K. *Roky bez domoviny...*, p. 121.

⁴³ During the conference of the Democratic Party in Zlaté Moravce held on February 23 1947 the General Secretary of DP Miloš Bugár criticized ruthless interference of Czech security authorities into process of deportation: „*Czechs are sending soldiers, police officers and clerks, who are coming to Hungarian villages, throw Hungarians to wagons*

Since 1947 political situation in CSR was influenced by external factors. This was primarily caused by increasing pressure of the Soviet Union to impose its dominance upon countries of the Central Europe and transfer them into obedient satellites. Tensions between these countries were for Soviets unacceptable. Therefore, raging medial and diplomatic war between Czechoslovakia and Hungary must ended and Hungarian community in Slovakia must have been integrated into mainstream of society. There were also other factors stemming from changing geopolitical situation.⁴⁴

Imposition of the Communist Regime in February 1948 ended the government program of “re-Slovakization”. Following years confirmed words of Hungarian communist Matyas Rákosi, who sarcastically called “re-Slovakization” a “hocus-pocus” and declared his conviction that even Slovak representatives did not take it seriously. Whereas, in 1950 354 532 persons living in Slovakia reported Hungarian nationality, in 1960 number of Hungarian minority members increased to 518 782 persons.⁴⁵ Reluctantly, Czechoslovak authorities accepted fact that Hungarian community will not only remain in Slovakia, but must be awarded minority rights.⁴⁶

Paradoxically, imposition of totalitarian communist regime, which trampled on human rights of Czechoslovak citizens, resulted in a significant improvement of life of Hungarian community. Resistance of fully emancipate Hungarian community was evident in the new Constitution, adopted on May 9 1948, which did not include a definition of status of Hungarians in CSR.⁴⁷ The General Secretary of CPC, Klement Gottwald expressed reluctance of the Czech Government to

as slaves and transporting them to Czechland.“ Národní archiv České republiky (NA ČR), f. 100/24, volume 41, no. 838.

⁴⁴ According to K. Kaplan „*No less significant for fate of Hungarian minority was fact that the Soviet Union was departing from Slavic policy, which could not have been a basis for formation of block with participation of non-Slavic states and that Europe was not anymore divided to defeated and victorious states, but on East and West blocks. Hungary, after imposition of communist monopoly of power, became in valuation of the Soviet policy an equal partner of Slavic and victorious states. Therefore, hope to impose Czechoslovak concept of solving of Hungarian community status was quickly disappearing*“ . KAPLAN, K. *Pravda o Československu...*, p. 123.

⁴⁵ ŠUTAJ, Š. *Maďarská menšina...*, p. 144.

⁴⁶ „*Czechoslovakia must accepted that there is no hope to carry on deportations neither on the base of decision of Allied Powers, nor via inter-sate agreement...Pursued intra-state solving of status of Hungarian minority, which promised to be more successful for CSR, but it was also not satisfactory and did not secure long lasting arrangement of ethnic relations in CSR. However, it was not tenable*“ . KAPLAN, Karel. *Československo v poválečné Evropě*. Praha : Karolinum, 2004, p. 152.

⁴⁷ Ústavný zákon zo dňa 9. Mája 1948. Ústava Československej republiky. Sbírka zákonů a nařízení 1948, č. 150; vydaná 9. Júna 1948.

award to Hungarians, when he declared: *"We will not include into the Constitution any minority rights...Hungarians, who will stay and fulfill all conditions and become state citizens, will have all civic rights."*⁴⁸

Award of state citizenship, unthinkable only short time ago, became reality on October 25 1948, when the National Assembly adopted Law no. 245/1948 Coll. in regard to state citizenship. Hungarian minority members could enjoy rights also in sphere of education and use of Hungarian language in public intercourse. The Board of Commissioners adopted on July 1 1952 "Principles of use of dual language in ethnically mixed southern districts", which allowed use of Hungarian language in public and issuance of official documents in Hungarian language.

⁴⁸ Klement Gottwald: *Spisy XII*. Bratislava 1955, p. 304.

II. Destruction of last vestiges of democratic political system in Czechoslovakia in February 1948

Election victory achieved by the Democratic Party in parliamentary elections 1946, in which DP received twice more votes as CPS, took whole Slovakia by surprise. It was unexpected namely in comparison with Czechland, where communist obtained a majority of votes and became the strongest party in CSR. Historian M. Syrný characterized most relevant reasons for it.⁴⁹

The Communists perceived victory of DP unacceptable and a decision was made to annihilate DP by all means.⁵⁰ The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia came to conclusion that it is necessary to weaken legislative and executive power of Slovak political institutions. The Slovak National Council was placed under control of the Central Government and members of the Board of Commissioners could be nominated by the Slovak National Council only after approval of government. Commissioners became responsible to government ministers, who also were authorized to make decisions in regard to personal compositions of government institutions in

⁴⁹ "Among main determinants of the electoral victory of DS were especially a small number of workers in structure of population of Slovakia, who constituted the main segment of voters of communist parties and, on the contrary, large segment of peasants, which constituted base of electorate of the Democratic Party as successor of the Agrarian Party. The second main reason of substantial victory of DS was utilization of deep religious sentiments of predominant majority of population in Slovakia...Further, about so different election victory in Czechlands and Slovakia decided fact that for Czechs was the Red Army (as representative of communist Soviet Union) real liberator from Protectorate terror, whereas in Slovakia liberation by the Red Army caused rather decrease of life standards compare to the first Slovak Republic. Negative perception of Soviets was exacerbated by violent acts committed by Soviet partisans and army committed on Slovak territory after front crossing". SYRNÝ, Marek. *Demokratická strana a volby na Slovensku. In Posledné a prvé slobodné (?) voľby – 1946, 1990.* Bratislava : Ústav pamäti národa, 2006, p. 94-95.

⁵⁰ Historian Michal Pehr wrote that „Disappointment of Communists in regard to results of (elections) in Slovakia went so far, that besides other reason, was established the Commission of the Slovak National Front, authorized to investigate behavior of political parties during the pre-election campaign...However the results of elections was impossible to annul“. PEHR, Michal. KSČ a voľby 1946. In KÁRNÍK Zdeněk – KOPEČEK, Michal. *Bolševizmus, komunizmus a radikálny socializmus v Československu.* Praha : Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, Dokorán, 2005, p. 184.

Slovakia.⁵¹ However, because subordination of Slovak national institutions to the Central Government, electoral victory of DP was lacking real significance. During session of the Czech National Front on June 12 1946, newly appointed the Prime Minister K. Gottwald proposed to limit authority of Slovak political institutions. The Slovak National Council was obliged to submit its decisions to central government for approval, which had a right to veto any measures adopted by SNC. The Slovak National Council could appoint members of the Board of Commissioners only after approval of the Central Government. Historian Samo Falťan characterized these changes as weakening political equality of Czech and Slovak political institutions.⁵²

Described charges were adopted by the Republic National Front on June 27 1946 and approved by the Slovak National Front on July 16 1946.⁵³

Position of the Democratic Party was complicated also by distrust of Czech civic political subjects. Openly hostile was especially the National Socialist Party, which perceived DP as representative of "Slovak separateness". As an illustrative example of "Czechoslovakist" orientation of the National Socialist Party, historian Samo Falťan quoted so called "Memorandum about Slovakia", elaborated by the "Department for the Scientific Policy" of NSP.⁵⁴

Leaders of DP were trying to avoid conflict with CPS and find way to some sort of cooperation with the Communist Party of Slovakia. However, CPS was unwilling to cease attacks against prominent leaders of the Democratic Party. The Communist Party of Slovakia refused also a

⁵¹ In valuation of M. Barnovský „*Slovak national organs in reality became helples institutions operating under supervision of government. And real situation was even worse. Because exact definition of legislative competences of the Slovak National Council and the Board of Commissioners did not exist, it was on discretion of govenment, what decision is in competence of government and what of the Slovak Nationa Council*“. BARNOVSKÝ, M. *Na ceste...*, p. 112.

⁵² „*It was hard and far reaching stroke into authority of Slovak national institutions. The Slovak National Council as representative of legislative authority was placed under control of governmen*“. FALŤAN, Samo. *Slovenská otázka v Československu*. Bratislava : Vydavateľstvo politickej literatúry, 1968, p. 222.

⁵³ BARNOVSKÝ, M. *Na ceste...*, p. 111.

⁵⁴ „*The most reactionary manifestation of Czechoslovakism after war period is so called "Memorandum about Slovakia", issued on July 7 1946, in which is outlined, how to assimilate the Slovak Nation...The plan is basically a summary of opinions of advocates of Czechoslovakism in conditions, when they must acknowledge existence of the Slovak Nation, which was demanding not only declarative but also full equality*“. FALŤAN, S. *Slovenská otázka...*, p. 248.

second proposal to end infighting between both political subjects, submitted by the Democratic Party in July 1947.⁵⁵

Position of DP was complicated also by absence of a political subject representing interests of Czech peasants, which would be most likely its natural ally. The Communists were vehemently opposed of renewal of the Republican Party (the Agrarians), which was the strongest political subject of the parliamentary system in inter-war Czechoslovakia. One of consequences was that the Democratic Party lacked a political subject with similar political agenda in the National Front. DP was further weakened by prohibition to extent its activities in the Western part of the Republic.⁵⁶

Electoral victory of DP evoked a sharp negative reaction among representatives of Czech political parties. Especially hostile was CPC. During the session of government on May 27 1946 the Minister of Information, communist Václav Kopecký characterized the Democratic Party as “separatist and anti-Czechoslovak”.⁵⁷

Political helplessness of DP was documented by its failure to prevent execution of Jozef Tiso, former President of the Slovak Republic. Representatives of DP did all in their power to convince President E. Beneš to grant amnesty to J. Tiso, but to no avail. The Democratic Party lost sympathy of a segment of Slovak society, which judged execution of J. Tiso as a gross injustice committed by the Central Government.⁵⁸

Depth of dependence of the Czechoslovak Government on the Soviet Union was illustrated in connection with the Marshall Plan, initiated by USA to assist in reconstruction of post war Europe. Because American financial help could be a valuable asset in rebuilding of Czechoslovak economy, on July 4 1947 government decided to participate on negotiations. However, on July 9

⁵⁵ ŠUTAJ, Š. *Občianske...*, p. 216, 217.

⁵⁶ Historian Jaroslav Rokoský wrote: „*When the National Front did not allowed to DS to broaden its activity into Czech lands, agrarians had only two options, either to be politically passive, or join some of Czech parties inside the National Front, which already many of them did*“. ROKOSKÝ, Jaroslav. *Koho volit? „Zrádní agrárníci“ a parlamentní volby 1946*. In *Posledné a prvé slobodné (?) voľby – 1946, 1990*. Bratislava : Ústav pamäti národa, 2006, p. 77.

⁵⁷ LETZ, Róbert. *Slovensko v rokoch 1945 – 1948 na ceste ku komunistickej totalite*. Bratislava : Ústredie slovenskej kresťanskej inteligencie, 1994, p. 42.

⁵⁸ More in regard to process with Jozef Tiso, RAŠLA, Anton – ŽABKAY, Ernest. *Proces s dr. Tisom*. Bratislava : TATRAPRESS, 1990.

1947, during visit of Czechoslovak delegation in Moscow, Stalin warned that presence of representatives of CSR in Paris, where the Marshall Plan was negotiated, would “contribute to isolation of the Soviet Union” and therefore it would be inconsistent with friendship between both countries. There was no one in Czechoslovak government, who would oppose the Soviet Dictator. Even President E. Beneš obediently decided to accommodate Stalin and radically changed his attitude.⁵⁹

Growing influence of the Soviet Union in Czechoslovakia was not only enhancing power of the Communists, but also had a negative impact on position of DP. During session of the National Front of Czechs and Slovaks on June 11 1947, the Democratic Party was accused by CPS of “subversive” activities. Danger caused by communist aggressive strategy to all non-communist political subjects, finally opened eyes of representatives of civic political parties in Czechland and changed their attitude toward the Democratic Party. Even though all parties declared their resolution to fight against “reactionary, fascist and destructive elements”, thanks to support from Czech civic political subjects, DS was not directly accused of these “crimes”.⁶⁰

Temporary stalemate did not changed determination of CPS to destroy the Democratic Party. Next step in offensive of CPS was accusation of alleged “anti-state activity” committed by the DP arty. In September 1947 the Commission of Interior informed about existence of subversive group in Žilina, named “Squads of Tiso”, which allegedly planned kill President E. Beneš. “Squads of Tiso” were infiltrated by the State Security and over 200 of its members were imprisoned. Even more dangerous to leadership of the Democratic Party was accusation blaming the General Secretaries Jozef Kempný, Miloš Bugár and other prominent members of DP of maintaining contacts with foreign enemies of CSR. Investigation led to imprisoned over 300 persons. The Minister of Interior Václav Nosek during government session on November 5 1947 declared that he was absolutely sure that subversive preparations were as dangerous to security of the Republic as were intrigues to destroy Czechoslovakia in year 1938. Anti-state plot was

⁵⁹ According to M. Barnovský, „When Edvard Beneš next day learned about Soviet request, informed members of government that there is no need whatsoever to discuss this matter” and that „is completely clear that there is necessary to refuse participation on conference”. Government did so – unanimously”. BARNOVSKÝ, M. *Na ceste...*, p. 151.

⁶⁰ ŠUTAJ, Š. *Občianske...*, p. 224-225.

allegedly prepared by émigrés, domestic illegal groups and members of the Democratic Party, who cooperated with an aim to destroy CSR. The final aim of the whole investigation was to criminalize leadership of DP, which would inevitably result in destruction of the Democratic Party.⁶¹

The Commission of Interior on September 27 1947 requested the National Assembly to give-up J. Kempný and M. Bugár for prosecution. The National Assembly decided to surrender both deputies to be investigated of alleged criminal activities. All Czech political subjects, with exception of the People's Party, voted for surrender. It was again one of selfdefeating decisions made by Czech civic parties, which weaken anti-communist opposition. Whereas CPC and CPS were pursuing their strategy in firm unity, the Czech political subjects, especially the National Socialists, were still unable to overcome their hostility toward DP.⁶²

Political subordination of Slovak institutions to the Central Government was threatening the very existence of the Democratic Party. A significant factor in communist prevalence was their control of the Ministry of Interior during the whole period of 1945 – 1948. This enabled CPC/CPS to coordinate actions of the State Security directed against DP. During public gathering in Bratislava organized by DP, Jozef Lettrich condemned brutal methods used by police to extort confessions from arrested members of DP, which were used in hostile propaganda against the Democratic Party. On the basis of extorted confessions DS became a target of aggressive attack by representatives of CPC. V. Kopecký appealed to Czech political parties to unite in fight against "Slovak traitors". This time, however, National Socialists and the Peoples Party defend DP and insisted on upholding of principles of parliamentary democracy. Still, DP must give-up three commissions in the Board of Commissioners and agree to personal changes in the Commission of Agriculture and the Land Reform and in the Commission of Sustenance and Food Supplies.⁶³

Stalemate in struggle between the Communists and DP culminated during last months of 1947. On October 30 1947 convened the Congress of Councils of Workers, which was dominated by CPS. Delegates demanded elimination of commissioners from the Board of

⁶¹ BARNOVSKÝ, M. *Na ceste...*, p. 195, 196.

⁶² ŠUTAJ, Š. *Občianske...*, p. 238.

⁶³ BARNOVSKÝ, M. *Na ceste...*, p. 216, 217.

Commissioners who were pursuing “anti-people” policies. Next day chairman of the Board of Commissioners, communist Gustáv Husák, resigned from his post. Commissioners representing the Democratic Party refused to do the same, but under pressure agreed to negotiate personal changes in the Board of Commissioners. As a consequence, DP lost majority in the Board of Commissioners to which it was entitled as a victor of 1946 parliamentary election in Slovakia.

During January 24 – 25 1948 DP convened its second congress. Nobody knew that this will be the last Congress and despite dangers looming above DP, the Congress was carried on in an optimistic mode. Politically, the program of DP was based on values of freedom and social justice with aim to prevent extreme accumulation of wealth by small segment of society. In regard to Slovak political realities, delegates uphold significance of the Slovak National Uprising, but the main emphasis was placed on necessity to protect democratic principles. As dangerous was perceived a growing political influence of special interest groups, especially associations which operated in coordination with the Communists and were pursuing political strategy of CPS. To the post of chairman of DP was again voted J. Lettrich.⁶⁴

Even though congressional proceeding were on surface emanating impression of confidence and strength, in following weeks DP was facing increasing pressure from the Communists. Pressure to impose communist dictate was mounting also outside Czechoslovakia. To definitely eliminate civic political parties, regardless of violation of democratic principles, demanded Stalin. Stalin’s envoy Valerij A. Zorin, who arrived to Prague on February 19 1948, suggested to K. Gottwald, that he should ask the Soviet government to send army into Czechoslovakia. Gottwald refused with explanation that this is not necessary and CPC has situation in CSR under control. As events of several following days proved, Soviet help was not needed.

Facing increasing communist political offensive, the National Socialist Party overcame its aversion to DP and both political subjects were looking for ways to coordinate their policies.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ BARNOVSKÝ, M. *Na ceste...*, p. 233.

⁶⁵ The official daily of CPS, *Pravda*, informed about coordinated strategy of both parties and about their intention to form an alliance. However, creation of united political bloc was not enacted, possibly because rapid pace of events took both parties by surprise. *Pravda*, 5 February, 1948, Issue 29, Informácie londýnskeho rozhlasu o tajnom paktovaní DP a nár. soc. (Informations of London radio about secret dealings of DP and Nat. Soc.), p. 2.

The opportunity to liquidate opposition gave Communists resignation of government ministers of the National Socialist Party, the People's Party and the Democratic Party on February 20 1948. The reason for resignation were personal changes in the State Security initiated by CPC. In the evening of the same day, the Central Committees of CPC and CPS issued statement, in which declared that resignation of non-communist ministers is a proof of their subversive policy and therefore they had no place in government.⁶⁶ *Pravda* accused resignation as attack upon security of the Republic.⁶⁷ In this situation only President Beneš could prevent definitive end of political opposition.⁶⁸

Despite reassurances, which E. Beneš gave to J. Lettrich and delegates DP during meeting on February 24 1948, the President his promise did not kept. Next day accepted resignation of ministers and named new members of government.⁶⁹ The members representing Slovakia in new government were the Communists Viliam Široký, Július Ďuriš and Vladimír Clementis. For the Party of Freedom was nominated Vavro Šrobár and exponent of dissenting fraction in DP Ján Ševčík.⁷⁰ E. Beneš betrayed his promise to refuse accept resignation of ministers. There are several explanations, which to certain extend alleviate failure of E. Beneš to defend democracy in Czechoslovakia.⁷¹

⁶⁶ In a joint proclamation CPC and CPS stated that resignation of non-communist ministers was an act of anti-government subversion: *"From all steps of representatives of the National Socialist Party, the People Party and the Slovakian Democratic Party lately it was clear that leading exponents of these parties are leaving the basis of the National Front, they are trying to shatter government and are moving toward opposition anti-government base..."*. PRAŽÁKOVÁ, Irena (ed.) *Dokumenty...*, p. 615.

⁶⁷ *Pravda* asserted that „Czech and Slovak reaction united with agents of foreign imperialists, is threatening security of the Republic - Antidemocratic and anti-socialist block wanted to destroy regime of people's democracy“. *Pravda*, 22 February, 1948, Issue 45, *Protiľudové živly sa demaskovali. Reakcia opustila Národný front* (Anti-social elements threw away their mask. Reaction left the National Front.), p. 1.

⁶⁸ According to J. Lettrich „Neither the Social Democratic ministers, nor the two non-partisan ministers: the Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Masaryk, and the Minister of Defense Gen. Ludvík Svoboda, handed in their resignation with others. As a result, a majority of cabinet ministers were still in government and from this the Communists could infer that the government as such had not resigned but that only some of its members had left“. LETTRICH, J. *History...*, p. 258.

⁶⁹ During the manifestation at the Wenceslaus Square K. Gottwald triumphantly informed about communist victory: „I am just now coming from the Caste from Mr. President. As of today morning I submitted to him proposal to accept abdication of ministers who resigned on February 20 this year and at the same time I submitted to Mr. President a list of persons by whom should be government completed and reconstructed. I can inform you, that Mr. President all my suggestions, as they were submitted, accepted“. PRAŽÁKOVÁ, I. *Dokumenty...*, p. 624, 625.

⁷⁰ BARNOVSKÝ, M. *Na ceste...*, p. 245.

⁷¹ „After February, in emigrant circles for an extended period of time discussions were carried on in regard to share of his responsibility for capitulation. Some were seeing reasons in his policies and in his personality, and were

In Slovakia communist putsch had slightly different course, but same end. On February 23 1948 G. Husák declared that resignation of ministers representing the Democratic Party means also resignation of commissioners for DP in the Board of Commissioners.⁷² During interview with historian Viliam Plevza, which was done after fall of communist regime, G. Husák admitted that he could not proceed in line with the Czechoslovak Constitution, so he opted for “political solution”.⁷³

Representative of DP protested, argued that G. Husák acted in utter discrepancy with law, but to no avail. On February 25 1948 the State Security occupied building of the Central Secretariat of DP. Next day J. Lettrich resigned on his post of chairman of DP. The State Security initiated a criminal investigation against him. To resist was impossible. Streets were controlled by the People’s Militia organized by the Communists. Seeing that everything was lost, number of exponents of the Democratic Party emigrated, among them J. Lettrich, M. Kvetko, F. Hodža. Those who were not able or not willing to leave Slovakia were arrested.

The difference between Czechs and Slovaks in regard to the communist putsch fittingly characterized political scientist Miroslav Kusý, who pointed to distinct attitude of Slovaks to the Communists in comparison to Czechs.⁷⁴

pointing to his pragmatism, others calling attention to his disease and mental depression, to mistakes of leadership of non-communist political parties etc....It is necessary to say that real possibilities of Beneš were limited. He could influence form of transition to totalitarian system, but it was not in his power to avert defeat of civic parties”.

BARNOVSKÝ, M. *Na ceste...*, p. 238.

⁷² *Pravda* published article in which wrote, that “Chairman of the Board of Commissioners Dr. Gustáv Husák dispatched on Saturday of 21 February to all members of the Board of Commissioners for DP a special mail, in which he stated that representatives of DP in the Board of Commissioners in this situation can’t fulfill program of the Board of Commissioners and of government...Therefore, resignation members of government for DP is considered also as resignation submitted by representatives of DS in the Board of Commissioners”. *Pravda*, 23 February, 1948 Issue 45, Zástupcovia DP nemôžu zostať v Zbore povereníkov (Representatives of DP can’t remain in the Board of Commissioners.), p. 2.

⁷³ PLEVZA, Viliam. *Vzostupy a pády. Gustáv Husák prehovoril*. Bratislava : TATRAPRESS, 1991, p. 59.

⁷⁴ „If into the First Republic Slovaks entered without their national will and for the renewal of the Republic they exhibited their positive attitude in SNU, then communist putsch in 1948 was in Slovakia enacted against their national will...Unlike in Czechland, here were the Communists a minority party and they had not behind them ...so strong hinterland as was in Czechland. This hinterland in the end was powerfully influencing also the whole Czech Nation...This finally significantly manifested itself in elections”. KUSÝ, Miroslav. Slovenský fenomén. In CHMEL Rudolf (Ed.). *Slovenská otázka v 20. storočí*. Bratislava : Kalligram, 1997, p. 470.

III. A reign of terror

Imposition of communist rule upon inhabitants of CSR resulted in profound changes in all aspects of their lives. Communist leaders immediately after their victory in February 1948 initiated measures aimed at asserting their monopoly of power. On February 21 K. Gottwald in Prague and next day V. Široký in Bratislava begun a process which transformed the National Front into a tool used for formation of totalitarian society. The institutions designed to carry-on this task were so called the Action Committees (AC). Despite fact that there was no legal justification for their establishment and they were formed on ad hoc basis, the Action Committees were wielding unchallenged power to decide how process of elimination of “reactionaries” will be carried on. Civic political parties were protesting creation of AC, but were powerless to do anything to stop it. Communist ascent to power was accomplished without resistance.⁷⁵

After elections in May 1946 the Democratic Party gained a majority in national councils and in district administrative commissions, which constituted elementary stratum of political structure in Slovakia. The Action Committees took control in above mentioned institutions.

The Democratic Party, which operated on strictly legal base, was unable to face-off aggressive strategy of CPS. Unlike leaders of the DP, who lacked any organized armed force, CPS could rely on unconditional support of the Union of Slovak Partisans (USP). Members of USP were armed and assumed control in Bratislava and other cities throughout Slovakia. USP actively participated also on formation of the Action Committees.

In confusing atmosphere of February 1948 a substantial impact of communists on ongoing political changes was gradual, but inexorable. According to M. Barnovský, communist take-over

⁷⁵ According to historian J. Pešek, *„Legislative accomplishment of February events after acceptance resignation and appointment of new members of government was done by approval of government and of the Board of Commissioners, by the Constitutional National Assembly and by the Slovak National Council.“* PEŠEK, Jan. *Nástup komunistickéj totality roku 1948.* In BYSTRICKÝ, Valerián et al. *Kľúčové problémy moderných slovenských dejín 1848 – 1992.* Bratislava : VEDA, 2012, p. 268.

ushered an era of total subordination of all inhabitants of Czechoslovakia, which was fated to last for more than four decades.⁷⁶

As was noted, communists gained control over Slovak highest political institutions – the Slovak National Council and the Board of Commissioners. Chairman of SNC J. Lettrich and deputy of SNC, Andrej Cvinček, resigned their posts. The leadership of the Democratic Party was usurped by people willing to collaborate with CPS, led by M. Polák, who declared that DP will accept only people with *“unambiguously positive attitude toward people-democratic regime and to Gottwald government of the National Front of working people”*.⁷⁷ Fearing persecution, numerous members of DP were renouncing their adherence to the Democratic Party, which seemed to be irreversibly lost, and were asked to join the Communist Party of Slovakia. *Pravda* reported that not only rank and file, but also district secretaries were submitting applications to CPC.⁷⁸ The General Secretary of CPC Rudolf Slánský, ignoring true motives of massive entry of formers the Democratic Party members to CPS declared that *“great events opened their eyes”*.⁷⁹ Fear of persecutions led many officials of DP to humiliating expressions of penitence and condemnation of *“reactionary policy”* of DP.⁸⁰

On March 5 1948 the Presidium of SNC nominated six new members of the Board of Commissioners. In new BC, CPS had a comfortable majority. From total number of 14 commissioners only 4 were not members of CPS. Changes were confirmed by the Constitutional National Assembly (CNA). Depth of communist victory was manifested by a fact that on March

⁷⁶ „During days of February 1948 occurred more than crisis of government, a change of political system followed, which initiated changes of the whole society. It was a transition from closed plurality and limited democracy to the monopoly of communist power and dictate realized with use of constitutional institutions and with use of violence...February, therefore, was a political turn-over and state putsch, an event of crucial significance from aspect of further development“. Barnovský, M. *Na ceste...*, p. 246-247.

⁷⁷ *Pravda*, 28 February, 1948, Issue 49. DS sa rozpadla – Dr. Lettrich sa vzdal (DS felt apart – Dr- Lettrich resigned.), p. 1.

⁷⁸ *Pravda*, 7 March, 1948, Issue 56, Okresní tajomníci bývalej DS hlásia sa do KSS (District secretaries of former DS are submitting applications to CPS.), p. 3.

⁷⁹ *Pravda*, 9 March, 1948, Issue 57, Prečo ten veľký príliv do komunistickej strany? (Why this great influx into the Communist Party?), p. 2.

⁸⁰ *Pravda*, 13 March, 1948, Issue 61, Trvalý príval členstva do KSS (Continuous avalanch of membership to CPS.), p. 3.

11 1947 CNA unanimously approved government program, even though a majority of the Constitutional National Assembly was constituted by members of civic political subjects.⁸¹

The final act of communist take-over of Czechoslovakia was adoption of the new Czechoslovak Constitution on May 9 1948. The Czechoslovak Republic was proclaimed the “People’s Democratic Republic” as “unified state of two equal Slavic nations, Czechs and Slovaks”. The institution wielding the supreme power was the Constitutional National Assembly.⁸²

Leaders of CPC, primarily K. Gottwald and V. Kopecký viewed Slovakia with suspicion and refused to include into the Constitution clauses, which would guarantee a certain degree of independence of Slovak political institutions. Demands to retain a greater independence from the Central Government, raised by Slovak communists, were labeled as “bourgeois separatist nationalism” and were refused.⁸³ The representatives of the Communist Party of Slovakia, namely Gustáv Husák, Vladimír Clementis and Ladislav Novomeský, who belonged to leading personalities of the Slovak National Uprising, were destined to pay a horrible price for their endeavors to have a greater say in a political development of Slovakia.

At the outset of April 1948 the General Secretariat of the National Front issued instructions advising security authorities how to “cleanse” society from “disruptive elements and political careerists”. According to instructions, everybody who publicly vilified government; who roused citizens against decisions of government; who was spreading false news; who organized listening radio broadcasts of foreign radio stations hostile to the Republic and who actively and conscientiously endeavored to cause economic disruption – these people were to be eliminated from public life.⁸⁴

Initial wave of repression was aimed against prominent officials of the Democratic Party. On the beginning of May 1948 a group of members of DS was sentenced to a long jail terms –

⁸¹ PEŠEK, J. *Nástup...*, p. 268.

⁸² PRAŽÁKOVÁ, I. *Dokumenty...*, p. 637.

⁸³ K. Kaplan characterized the Constitution as confirmation of superior political status of the Central Government: „*The Constitution of May 9 was approved by the Parliament unanimously. In regard to Czech-Slovak relation it was an expression of mistrust of Czech nationalists toward situation in Slovakia and constitutional liquidation of principle of equality*“. KAPLAN, K. *Pravda...*, p. 192.

⁸⁴ *Pravda*, 2 April, 1948, Issue 76, Koho vylúčiť z verejného života (To whom eliminate from public life).

among them Oto Obuch to 30 years, Ladislav Čulen to 18 years and Jan Ursíny to 7 years of imprisonment.⁸⁵ The State Court in Bratislava sentenced former DP officials, among others, Ľudovít Obtulovič, Ján Kempný and Miloš Bugár to jail terms ranging from 8 to 1 year. Alleged crimes of condemned opposition politicians were “plotting against the Republic and preparations to emigrate”.⁸⁶ However, not all of DP representatives ended in hands of communist security authorities. According to evidence of the State Security in Bratislava, among those who “treacherously left the Republic” were J. Lettrich, F. Hodža, M. Kvetko and others.⁸⁷

The Democratic Party, which in last democratic elections got twice more votes as the Communist Party of Slovakia, crumbled with astonishing speed. According to historian Karel Kaplan *“Extraordinary heavy fate affected the largest Slovak party – Democrats. During several after-February weeks DP fell apart and ceased to exist...A speedy destruction of the Democratic Party had several reasons. Already before February 1948 Communist endeavored to liquidate its coalition partner and after the February exposed it to extraordinary pressure and used administrative measures to realize their wish...Among members and officials of the Democratic Party was spreading fear...the rapid destruction of the Democratic Party contributed also decay of its leadership, caused by communist pressure. Some of leading official emigrated, others resigned on their posts and some DP members declared loyalty to the new regime, criticized former leadership of the Party and joined CPS. Also other factors had impact, it was heterogeneity of opinions and short time of existence of the Party, which prevented formation of firmer bonds of members to the Party.”*⁸⁸

As a symbolic end of era of limited democracy in Czechoslovakia can be perceived resignation of E. Beneš from the post of the President of the Czechoslovak Republic on June 7 1948. In his letter, addressed to K. Gottwald, referring to recommendation of his doctors in regard to his health condition E. Beneš, informed of his decision to resign from his post. However, publicist

⁸⁵ Pravda, 1 May 1948, Issue 101, Rozsudky nad sprisahancami (Sentences given to insurgents.), p. 2.

⁸⁶ Pravda, 19 May, 1948, Issue 114, Rozsudok nad sprisahancami Kempným a spol. (Verdict against intriguer Kempný and co.), p. 5.

⁸⁷ PEŠEK, Jan. *Odvrátená tvár totality. Politické perzekúcie na Slovensku v rokoch 1948 – 1953*. Bratislava : Historický ústav SAV; Nadácia Milana Šimečku, 1998, p. 73.

⁸⁸ KAPLAN, Karel. *Československo v letech 1948 – 1953 2. část*. Praha : Státní pedagogické nakladatelství v Praze, 1991, p. 22.

Zbyněk Zeman wrote that the main reason to resign was reluctance of E. Beneš to sign the new Czechoslovak Constitution.⁸⁹

E. Beneš outlived his abdication in only in less than two months. He died on September 3 1948. In surprisingly positive reaction leaders of the Communist Party paid reverence to deceased President. Leading communist dignitaries, including the Prime Minister A. Zápotocký and the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners G. Husák, attended funeral procession. In his fare-well speech A. Zápotocký priced merits of E. Beneš for the Republic and declared that "*By his labors for our country, for our Republic, he erected an undying monument in hearts of our people.*"⁹⁰ The discussions in regard of share of E. Beneš in communist usurpation of power in Czechoslovakia are continuing even today.

Death of E. Beneš paved way for further concentration of communist power. In lofty fashion, typical for language of communist periodicals, *Pravda* described an act of unification of the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party executed on June 27 1948.⁹¹ The Prime Minister A. Zápotocký characterized unification not as an act of coincidence or instantaneous whim, but as realization of "*long years lasting desire, for fulfillment of which members of working class long decades dreamed, worked and fought*".⁹²

The culminating act in process of power centralization was the total subordination of CPS to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. Before imposition of communist dictate it was tactically convenient to have communist organizations in Czechland and in Slovakia, even though CPS was in subordinated position to CPC since 1945. However, after February 1948 the Soviet model of a

⁸⁹ According to Jaromír Smutný, Chancellor of President Beneš, K. Gottwald protested against abdication and allegedly proclaimed that by his abdication Beneš declared him war. Eventually E. Beneš acceded to compromise and in abdication letter omitted his objections to anti-democratic form of oncoming elections. As the only reason for abdication were stated Presidents health problems. ZEMAN, Zbyněk. *Edvard Beneš. Politický životopis*. Praha : MLADÁ FRONTA, 2000, p. 118.

⁹⁰ *Pravda*, 10 September, 1948, Issue 210. Ľud sa dôstojne rozlúčil s Dr. Eduardom Benešom (People parted with Dr. Eduard Beneš with dignity.), p. 1.

⁹¹ „Sunday 27 June was for-ever written to history of Czechoslovak workers movement and by its significance it is honorably counted among historical days of February and to the glorious days of the First and the 30 May. After many years lasting separation on this day two Cs. Marxist parties again into one mighty unbreakable array“. *Pravda*, 20, June 1948, Issue 149. Zlučovaci zjazd KSČ a Čs. soc. demokracie spečatuje jednotu čs. robotníckej triedy (The unifying Congress of CPC and Cs. Soc. Democracy is sealing unity of Cs. working class).

⁹² *Pravda*, 20, June 1948, Issue 149. Zlučovaci zjazd KSČ a Čs. soc. demokracie spečatuje jednotu čs. robotníckej triedy (The unifying Congress of CPC and Cs. Soc. Democracy is sealing unity of Cs. working class).

strict centralization was adopted.⁹³ It was decided that CPS will retain its organization structure and name, but it basically became only an executive organ of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia declared that CPS *“made decision to realize organizational unification of CPS and CPC and this way to establish unified party of working class in Czechoslovakia...Creation of unified party, by which CPS became a territorial organization of CPC in Slovakia, contributed to concentration of all forces of the Communist Party in building of socialism in Czechoslovakia”*.⁹⁴

Decision to “concentrate all forces in building of socialism” in reality translated into a ruthless suppression of any kind of opposition to communist regime. Repression against “enemies of state” resulted in spreading of fear. Communist press incessantly reported about groups of spies and terrorists who were arrested for crimes against the Republic.⁹⁵

Since end of the Second World War, insufficient amount of goods was chronic feature of the Czechoslovak economy. After communist putsch situation even worsened. Regime liquidated all forms of private enterprise, which inevitably led to creation of a black market. “Grey economy” grew rapidly. Consequence of shortages was a black market. The enormous spread of illicit economic activities in Slovakia was is documented by a numerous articles in periodical press.⁹⁶

⁹³ According to J. Pešek *„An example were conditions in the Soviet Union and organization of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. In its frame existed as a teritorial organizations communist parties of individual republics, but not the Communist Party of largest and principal segment of the Soviet Union – of the Russian Federation”*. PEŠEK, J. *Centrum moci...*, p. 13.

⁹⁴ 1948, 28. září Rezoluce ústředního výboru Komunistické strany Slovenska o jednotné Komunistické straně Československa. *Dokumenty...*, p. 643.

⁹⁵ For example, the Commission of Interior informed on May 20 1948 about arrest of group of spies among whom were several former exponents of the Democratic Party: *„The main goal of this organization was destruction of people-democratic regime, which should be enacted in proper moment of international political situation. Above mentioned spy and subversive activity was managed and financed from abroad by several Powers harboring hostile attitude toward against the Soviet Union and its allies and generally against people-democratic regimes.”* *Pravda*, 22 May, 1948, Issue 117, *Odhalená špionážna skupina v Bratislave* (Disclosed spy group in Bratislava.), p. 2; In June the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of the National Defence informed that *„thanks to ardor of the State Security, dangerous terrorist group, dispatched from the American Zone in Germany with a goal to organize murders of Czechoslovak political representatives was detected and apprehended”*. *Pravda*, 20 June, 1948, Issue 165, *Odhalili nebezpečnú teroristickú skupinu* (They disclosed dangerous terrorist group.), p. 3.

⁹⁶ *Pravda* informed that arrested and placed to labor camps were hundreds of persons *“who were constantly dodging work, who by their activities are endangering build-up of state, peace and order and who were intentionally disrupting public distribution of goods and economic consolidation of state”*. *Pravda*, 13 August, 1948, Issue 186, *Prácou preškoľujeme šmelinárov a rozvratníkov* (Using work we are educating smuggles and subversives.), p. 2. An extent of smuggling illustrate summary article published by *Pravda*, informing about cases of

One of the measures used broadly in fight against all those who were accused of lesser crimes such as avoidance of work or smuggling were imprisonments in labor camps. To regulate organization of labor camps, on October 25 1948 the National Assembly adopted the Law in Regard to the Labor Camps (LC).⁹⁷

Because work was perceived as a civic duty of each citizen, anyone who was not employed, was running risk of being placed in a labor camp, where he must work for “general benefit of society”. In line with the Law no. 247, the Commission of Interior issued instructions in regard to organization of labor camps on territory of Slovakia. In labor camps were imprisoned persons after they served sentences for lesser crimes, or were imprisoned on basis of decision of special commissions, which were managed by county committees.⁹⁸

A segment of society, perceived by regime as “class” enemies, were well-to-do farmers, called “country plutocrats” or “kulaks”.⁹⁹ In its drive to control country side politically and economically communists decided to drastically remake agriculture. Individual ownership of land was to be eliminated and replaced by cooperatives. As a main obstacle to this transformation were perceived kulaks, farmers who wielded not only economic influence in villages, but also enjoyed authority among peasants. Acceptance of collective ownership of land was against the very essence of their philosophy of life. With goal to utterly eliminate “kulaks”, communist regime, with all power to its disposal, initiated ruthless campaign of economic repression, which caused to work land by these hapless people almost impossible. On the basis of Law no. 27/1950 Coll., “In regard to mechanization of agriculture”, confiscations of equipment in possession of “kulaks” were enacted. They were prohibited to hire agricultural workers. In spite of fact that these measures prevented them to work land, they were burdened by excessive taxes, which they could not fulfill. Failure to fulfill assessed taxes was defined by

illegal economic activities in various localities in Slovakia. *Pravda*, 18 September, 1948, Issue 217, Súdy se šmelinármi na celom Slovensku (Smugglers on trial in whole Slovakia.), p. 2.

⁹⁷ Zákon no. 247 zo dňa 25. októbra 1948 o táboroch nútennej práce. Sbíerka Zákonov republiky Československej. Čiastka 93. Ročník 1948. Vydaná dňa 17. novembra 1948.

⁹⁸ Štátny archív Košice (ŠA K), f. KNV Vnútro, k. 91, č. 2, časť V. (State Archive Košice, f. KNV Vnútro, no. 2, part. V.).

⁹⁹ Term „kulak“, derived from Russian language mean „fist“. According to historian Viera Hlavová „Term „kulak“, transferred from Russian language had eminently ideological underlining and had sufficiently pejorative charge, capable emotionally evoke hatred, envy and enmity against richer peasants...Transfer of notion „kulak“ to our conditions was an proof of profound Stalinization of social and political life.“ HLAVOVÁ, Viera. *Kulak – triedny nepriateľ*. Bratislava : VEDA, 2010, p. 15.

authorities as a crime and farmers were imprisoned in labor camps.¹⁰⁰ Ultimate hostile act in a chain of repressions of “kulaks” was confiscation of their property and banishment from their farms.¹⁰¹ Even those well-to-do peasants who tried to escape from circle of repressions giving-up their land and joined cooperatives, were persecuted. The Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia declared that “kulaks” are sworn enemies of cooperatives and therefore they must be expelled from them.¹⁰² Middle class and well-to-do peasant were mostly hard working, individualistic and conservative people who held economically and politically a significant position in Slovak countryside. Therefore, communist regime perceived them as foremost enemies and had no qualms to use all means to its disposal to their destruction.¹⁰³

Brutal suppression of “enemies of state” resulted in denunciations and spread of fear. The State Security recruited agents from all segments of society, who were obliged to report any criticism of regime. To create an atmosphere of danger threatening the Republic from internal and external reaction, security authorities were portraying existing subversive organizations as a major threat to CSR. These groups were used for propagandist purposes in broadly publicized trials. An illustrative example of drum-up trial during which was group of “subversives”, led by former partisan Viliam Žingor, accused of establishing an illegal organization composed mostly of former “capitalists and rich landlords” who harbored plans to destroy socialist regime. He was characterized as staunch enemy of socialism.¹⁰⁴ V. Žingor and two leading members of group were sentenced to death, rest received long jail terms ranging from 12 to 25 years.¹⁰⁵ V.

¹⁰⁰ Pešek, J. *Odvrátená tvár...*, p. 218.

¹⁰¹ Besides imprisonment and fines or placement in labor camps, since end of 1951 authorities began also confiscate property of „kulaks“ and evicted them from their homes. Pešek, J. *Odvrátená tvár...*, p. 221.

¹⁰² HLAVOVÁ, V. *Kulak...*, p. 25.

¹⁰³ According to a regional periodical *Košický kraj*, „*Countryside plutocrats are one of the most numerous bourgeois class, which is our direct and decisive enemy. To fight this class ... our main attention and our work must be focused on our villages...In fulfilling our most difficult and most responsible task during transition from capitalist to socialist, which is socialization of countryside. We must in increased measure to participate in such a way, that we will apply our criminal authority with all sharpness and decisiveness against county plutocrats*“. *Košický kraj*, 20. december 1952, Issue 1. *Zatlačovanie dedinských boháčov a škodcov pri socializácii našich dedín* (Suppressing countryside plutocrats and evil doers during the socialization of our villages.), p. 27

¹⁰⁴ *Pravda*, 19 October, 1948, Issue 245, *Začal proces so Žingorom a spol. Rozvratníci v službách imperialistov pred súdom* (A trial with Žingor and co. ensued. Subversives in service of imperialists on trial.), p. 2.

¹⁰⁵ *Pravda*, 22 October, 1950, Issue 248. *V procese so Žingorovou zločineckou bandou štátny súd vyniesol Rozsudok v mene mieru a šťastia nášho ľudu Žingor, Bibza a Nosák odsúdení k trestu smrti* (In trial with Žingor's criminal

Žingor was not only partisan commander who was persecuted. Almost all partisan leaders, who fought during the Slovak National Uprising and were not members of CPS, were prosecuted.

The State Security used provocateurs, who infiltrated illegal groups and to a large extent were “coordinating” their activity with aim to provide circumstantial evidence how dangerous these people were to the Republic.¹⁰⁶ In some cases “terrorist groups” were “created” by the State Security and scenarios of their alleged activities were prepared by the State Security in a minute detail. Confessions of people accused of spying and plotting terrorist acts were extorted by use of torture. After accused could not bear bestial torture anymore and broke down, preparation of public trials ensued. Trials were looked very convincingly, like well performed theatrical plays.¹⁰⁷

Communist takeover had a deep impact upon a foreign policy of Czechoslovakia. CSR became an abject satellite of the Soviet Union. In atmosphere of full blown “cold war”, the primary enemy of the Soviet Block and therefore also of Czechoslovakia, was USA. American diplomats were accused of spying and helping “anti-socialist elements” to emigrate.¹⁰⁸

Increase of repression led not only exponents of DP, but make also many ordinary people to emigrate. After relatively easy possibility to escape in 1948, during following years emigration became increasingly difficult. The Communist Party decided to make borders with Austria and Germany hermetically closed and constructed barb wire barriers making crossing impassible. In addition, armed sentries guarding borders had orders to kill anyone who would try to cross. Still, there were people desperate enough to attempt to escape and many of them were killed. The exact number of people who fled Slovakia during the first half of fifties is not known, but according to J. Pešek, from 1948 till 1953, 636 persons were sentenced for attempt to escape

group court passed Sentence in name of peace and happiness of our people Žingor, Bibza a Nosák sentenced to death.), p. 2.

¹⁰⁶ PEŠEK, J. *Odvrátená tvár...*, p. 28.

¹⁰⁷ For example, during trial with Žingor and associates, all accused not only confessed and expressed deep sorrow, but also condemned all those who “seduced” them to committ such a deplorable deeds. One of accused, Ján Lichner, even declared that he was surprised how fairly he was treated in jail.

¹⁰⁸ On October 22, 1949, Issue 251, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs handed over to American Embassy a note in which accused employs of US Embassy of spying and „sternly protested against this activity“. *Pravda*, 22 October, 1949. V note vláde USA čs. Ministerstvo zahraničných vecí protestuje proti americkej špionáži v ČSR (in the Note to government of USA CS. Ministry of Foreign Affairs is protesting against American spying in CSR.), p. 1.

from CSR. Boundaries with “capitalist countries” (Austria, Germany) were proclaimed the “Frontier Zone” and entry to it was possible only with a special permit. Even more inaccessible was so called the “Prohibited Zone”, which became a no man land.¹⁰⁹

The total subordination of Czechoslovakia to the Soviet Union resulted in constant and most of the time absurd admiration of all aspects of life in this country. Abject humility, which was unheard off in previous history of CSR, culminated especially on occasion of Soviet holidays and other memorable events. In some cases these expressions of admiration were so absurd, that they bordered on grotesque.¹¹⁰ Absolute priority, however, had adoration of Stalin. The Soviet dictator was elevated to a status of supernatural being and venerated as god-like savior of the Soviet Union from Nazi hordes. From the top politicians to common people, Czechs and Slovaks were endlessly professing their joy to witness infallible decisions of the Soviet leader. Celebration of every political event of merit ended by dispatching a salute to Stalin. For example, during the session of IX Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, delegates wrote the Salute addressed to Stalin, in which they expressed their deepest gratitude to him and to the Soviet Union for liberation of Czechoslovakia and for “enormous help in renewal of free and independent Czechoslovak Republic”.¹¹¹ Stalin was perceived as a supreme authority in every possible sphere of politics, economy and science, the superior thinker who only knew how to find a solution to the most difficult problems. Even though he was personally responsible for destruction of peasantry in Ukraine, which resulted in famine of imaginable proportions and resulted in causing death of millions of people, he was venerated as unrivaled expert on agriculture.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ PEŠEK, J. *Odvrátená tvár...*, pp. 76, 82.

¹¹⁰ For example, periodical *Nová politika* published an article „Ruština – mateřská reč nové civilisace (Russian language – mother language of a new civilisation.). *Nová politika*, 26 October 1949, Issue 251, p. 1. *Družstevný obzor*. 15 July 1950, Issue 14. *Žatva v SSSR – příspěvek k míru* (Harvest in the Soviet Union –a contribution to peace.), p. 222-223.

¹¹¹ *Pravda*, 29 May 1949, Issue 125, List IX. *Zjazzdu KSČ súdruhovi Stalinovi* (A letter from IX Congress of CPC to comrade Stalin.), p. 1.

¹¹² Periodical *Družstevný obzor* quoted Stalin as the only authority on issue of building socialistic agriculture: „Comrade Stalin is teaching us that in a period of transition from capitalism to socialism, is the most difficult is reconstruction of village and this task is possible to fulfill only by convincing of small and medium peasants to join fight against village plutocrats“. *Družstevný obzor*, 1 June 1950, Issue 11. *Za socialistickú prestavbu dediny* (For socialist reconstruction of village.), p. 1.

The culminating point in adoration of Stalin became celebration of his seventieth birthday on December 21 1949. Responsibility for smooth course of festivities had the Minister of Information and Enlightenment Václav Kopecký, the Minister of Schools, Sciences and Arts Zdeněk Nejedlý, deputy of the Prime Minister Viliam Široký and score of prominent members of government. Festivities, set on December 21 1949, included preparation of the Salute, which should be signed by as many people as was possible and gathering of collection of gifts, which should manifest love of people of Czechoslovakia to Stalin. The Council of Women, the National Front of Women, the Czechoslovak Community of Sokols, the Union of Czechoslovak Red Cross, the Union of Fighters for Freedom, the Socialistic Union of Youth and other associations prepared theatrical performances, discussions and educational courses, all of them intended to accentuate greatness of Stalin.¹¹³ The signing of the Salute was realized under auspices of the Union of Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship.

Preparations of festivities turned whole Czechoslovakia into a heave of feverish activities. Almost 9 million people signed the Salute, thousands of workers pledged themselves to increase their working efforts. Despite that the Christmas was approaching, instead of Christmas trees and decorations, buildings were covered by large pictures of Stalin.¹¹⁴

Another form of a collective expression of devotion to Stalin was a collection of gifts from various localities of CSR. Some of them were absurd, such as pained eggs, artificial rubber flowers, horses.¹¹⁵ With an aim to propagate collection, approximately 3 000 artefacts were

¹¹³ HASAROVÁ, Zuzana. Stalinove narodeniny – účel, podoba a priebeh akcie v Československu. In *Studia Historica Nitriensia*, 2017, Volume 21, Issue 1, p. 127, 129.

¹¹⁴ With overblown enthusiasm *Pravda* described preparations of festivities: „Czechoslovak people are living in sign of last preparations to celebrate 70th birthday of Generalissimus J. V. Stalin. Nine million of signatures attached to the Salute addressed to J. V. Stalin, ten thousands fulfilled work pledges by our workers, carefully and masterly elaborated gifts by our women and children, poets and artists. Workers and peasants are expressing a great respect, adherence, love and devotion to leader of happy Soviet people, teacher of nations, a creator of our liberation, J. V. Stalin. Workers are festively embellishing their factories, children schools, soldiers their barracks, whole cities and villages will be attired into festive robe in honor of generalissimus Stalin.“ *Pravda*, December 20, 1949, Issue 300. Čs. ľud pripravuje oslavy Stalinových narodenín (Cs. People are preparing to celebrate of Stalin's birthday.), p. 1.

¹¹⁵ HASAROVÁ, Z. *Stalinove narodeniny...*, p. 134.

displayed in Prague and Bratislava.¹¹⁶ Then, on December 17 1949, gifts were loaded to 13 railroad wagons and dispatched to Moscow.¹¹⁷

Birthday of Soviet dictator was to be commemorated also in another way. It was decided that the most proper approach how to honor him will be to erect a monumental statue in Prague. Václav Kopecký, the Minister of Information and Enlightenment, expressed bright and lasting future of monument: *"...the statue of Stalin, which over Vltava will join magic panorama of the Prague Castle, will become an eternal symbol of gratitude of our nations to the Soviet Union and will reminding to present and future generations, that in name of Stalin and in closest unity with the Soviet Union they must endeavor for further flowering of beloved Prague and for happiness and wellbeing of our whole country and its people"*. But prophecy of V. Kopecký was false. Very few monuments in history, build with great pomp and expense, has so short a life. Shortly after death of Stalin, in March 1953, communist leaders decided that monstrous statue must be teared down.

In Slovak capital Bratislava celebration of Stalin's birthday was planned as a culminating point of the "Days of Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship". According to report elaborated the Commission of Schools, Sciences and Arts, preparations lasted almost four weeks. To make sure that festivities will be impressive, slogans written banners were memorized by participants, who chanted them repeatedly. Decorated communists had honor to carry flags, most of them banners of CSR and the Soviet Union. Authors of report characterized festivities as a great success, which was possible to achieve thanks to *"reorganization of the Party and its reinforcement, substantial improvement of situation of plants and realization of political schooling"*.

Schools were organized their own festivities with "full participation of students." The grammar schooll in Michalovce, technical schooll in Košice, among others, were named after Stalin.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ HASAROVÁ, Z. *Stalinove narodeniny...*, p. 134.

¹¹⁷ As periodical *Nová politika* wrote, triumphal journey of train outfitted with large portrait of Stalin and flags of the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia at front was *"cordially greeted by Soviet people"*. *Nová politika*, 17 February 1949, Issue 297. *Vlak s dary československého lidu v Mosvě* (A train with gifts of Czechoslovak people in Moscow.), p. 1.

¹¹⁸ SNA, f. PŠSA,S/1949, n. 81 – 216, ev. n. 180, c. 92.

Despite expressions of excitement and euphoria, a large number of people lived in fear. Once was person accused of committing an anti-state crime, his fate was sealed. During years 1948 – 1949 communist regime was focusing mostly on repression of political opponents, well-to-do segments of society and members of the Christian Clergy. However, elimination of “class enemies”, did not ended a vicious circle of purges. Since autumn of 1949 a target of machinery of terror became communists themselves. This time witch hunt began and was supervised under direct auspices of Soviet “advisers” who came to Czechoslovakia to carry out Stalin’s orders.¹¹⁹ Process of extorting convictions from accused persons was very similar to persecution of political opponents initiated after February 1948, except that accusations against members of the Communist Party were even more absurd than charges against democratic politicians. Trials of persons accused of collaboration with “imperialistic” spy agencies and various hostile activities committed against CSR were characterized by astonishing cynicism.¹²⁰ What must have been horrifying to each communist, was absolute insecurity. There was no one who could be sure that he will be not accused of committing treason and other most condemnable acts against the Czechoslovak Republic.

In Slovakia, as a shock came revelation that three of the most revered Slovak communist leaders - a member of the Central Committee of CPS Gustáv Husák, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of CSR Vladimír Clementis and the Commissioner of Education Ladislav Novomeský were pursuing an erroneous ideology of the “bourgeois nationalism” and were committing most serious crimes against the Communist Party. Initial criticism was voiced by the General Secretary of CPS Štefan Bašťovanský. During the County Conference of CPS in Bratislava in April 1950 Š. Bašťovanský declared that it is “*the absolute necessity to eradicate the bourgeois nationalism in*

¹¹⁹ J. Pešek wrote: “From autumn 1949 the orientation to disclose “enemies” in the Communist Party comennced. In Hungary at that time was prepared trial with a group of Lászlo Rajko, which supposed to be a part of “broader international subversion”. For this type of “enemies” were looking for Soviet advisers in Czechoslovak Security Service (Makarov and Lichačov), who came to the Prague Ministry of Interior in October 1949.” PEŠEK, Jan. *Štátna bezpečnosť na Slovensku 1948 – 1953*. Bratislava : VEDA, 1996, p. 75.

¹²⁰ „When investigation was completed or came to such a phase that it was sufficient for commencement of court proceedings, the State Security proceeded to following phase of preparation of trial. The State Security formed „anti-state” groups and made decision who will be included in them ...The selection of persons included to these groups was based especially on two main principles. First principle was necessity to include into group persons of various political orientations and differing social and professional extraction. The second principle, especially in large public trials and monster-trials, was to make sure that accused persons will during trials answering questions in line with investigation protocols.” PEŠEK, J. *Štátna bezpečnosť...*, p. 79.

ranks of the Communist Party". He also declared that mistakes committed by CPS during the Slovak National Uprising and after a liberation of Czechoslovakia, allowed reactionaries to consolidate their positions and become dangerous to the Republic. This was, asserted Š. Bašťovanský, consequence of mistrust to the Czech working class and to *"its vanguard the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia led by comrade Gottwald"*.¹²¹

The concrete steps of fight against the "bourgeois nationalism" were initiated by V. Široký during IX Congress of CPS held in May 1950, who characterized the essence of the "bourgeois nationalism"¹²² and he accused G. Husák and L. Novomeský of being exponents of Slovak nationalism in the Communist Party of Slovakia. According to V. Široký, they did not want to see *"how bourgeois reaction is gathering its forces, how it is preparing to thwart further development of national and democratic revolution toward socialism..."*¹²³ V. Široký concluded that G. Husák and L. Novomeský instead asking for support from Czech working class and CPC in struggle with "reaction", were doing everything to eliminate influence of the central government in Slovakia.¹²⁴

Scathing criticism was targeted also against V. Clementis. He as a leading personality of DAV, a periodical of Slovak leftist generation active during inter-war CSR, whose adherents were also G. Husák and L. Novomeský, was blamed for non-Marxist and non-Leninist attitude toward the Communist Party. He was condemned for criticizing the Pact concluded by the Soviet Union with the Nazi Germany in August 1939.¹²⁵

¹²¹ „It is our duty, it is a holy order of the proletar internationalism...with consistency and determination get away with all influences of bourgeois ideology in our ranks and destroy the main ideological danger in our Party: bourgeois nationalism.“ *Pravda*, April 16 1950, Issue 89. Rozviňme zástavu proletárskeho internacionalizmu. Zúčtujeme so zhubným vplyvom buržoázneho nacionalizmu (Lets roll out a flag of proletarian internationalism. Let's get away with inimical influence of bourgeois nationalism.), p. 1.

¹²² „What is manifestation of bourgeois nationalism in our Party? What is its essence? Its essence is perceiving the national issue in isolation, severed from issue of class struggle, from fight against imperialism, from issue of political power in state. The essence of „bourgeois nationalism“ is in its approach to solve national issue of previously subdued nation...in cooperation with its own bourgeoisie and not in union with proletariat previously governing nation and that is accepting ideological leadership of nationalist bourgeoisie.“ *Protokol IX. Sjazdu Komunistickej strany Slovenska*. V Bratislave dňa 24. – 27. mája 1950. Bratislava : Ústredný výbor KSS, 1950, p. 64, 65.

¹²³ *Protokol IX. Sjazdu...*, p. 65.

¹²⁴ *Protokol IX. Sjazdu...*, p. 66.

¹²⁵ „Comrade Clementis...In 1939 after conclusion of Soviet-German Pact , which had so great significance for progressive humankind , because prevented vile and backstabbing plans of British-American imperialists, stood against the Soviet Union and took a position of class enemy“. *Protokol IX. Sjazdu...*, p. 72.

Despite fact that these drum-up charges were lies, all accused humbly, without a shred of self-esteem, admitted that it was true and professed their deepest penitence. In his speech during session of IX Congress of CPS, G. Husák declared: *"With report made by comrade Široký I agree and criticism addressed to me I in full extend accept...Bourgeois nationalism in its consequences is leading to enmity among workers of various nations, it can lead to betrayal of international solidarity of working class.*¹²⁶ Not suspecting that his words will be in a short future used against him, G. Husák pronounced *"...bourgeois nationalism is one of the most dangerous ideological weapons of reaction. Here, in our home, it is insidious weapon of defeated exploiters against working class. Therefore fight against nationalistic tendencies, against nationalistic deviation in The Party must be hard, consistent and uncompromising"*.¹²⁷

Similarly humbly confessed his "mistakes" L. Novomeský, who, without reservation, accepted diatribe of V. Široký against him: *"Also my mistakes in national politics most fittingly illustrated in his criticism comrade Široký pointing to wrong and inimical acts, which I committed during our national liberation struggle and after liberation...IX Congress of CPS subjected me to sharp criticism. However...I beg the Congress of the Party, to accept my confession"*.¹²⁸

These confessions, however, came to no avail. Neither G. Husák, nor V. Clementis and L. Novomeský became members of a new Central Committee of CPS. On the contrary, their sworn enemies V. Široký and Š. Bašťovanský occupied most powerful position in reorganized Central Committee.¹²⁹

Confessions extorted with use of inhuman torture were not enough. New leaders of CPS had not mercy. L. Novomesky was fired from post of the Commissioner of the Education, Sciences and Arts and, as a consolation, nominated to the post of the Chairman of the Slovak Academy of Sciences. Also he was not spared of wrath of CPS. On February 6 1951 he was arrested. Arrested were also G. Husák and V. Clementis. Devoted communists, who loyally served CPS, were

¹²⁶ *Protokol IX. Sjazdu...*, p. 156.

¹²⁷ *Protokol IX. Sjazdu...*, p. 157.

¹²⁸ *Protokol IX. Sjazdu...*, p. 170, 177.

¹²⁹ V. Široký besides post of Chairman of CPC and Deputy Chairman of Czechoslovak government became the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Š. Bašťovanský became the Central Secretary of CPS. *Pravda*, May, 28, 1950, Issue 124. Nový ústředný výbor KSS (A new Central Committee of CPS.), p. 2.

accused of the most abhorrent crimes and characterized as “insurgent band of traitors, agents and spies”.¹³⁰ Husák and Novomeský survived despite inhuman conditions in communist jails, but Clementis was not so lucky. He was sentenced to death and on December 3 1952 executed.

Reprisals of the Communist Regime were aimed also at the Catholic Church. A number of clerics became targeted as enemies of state and sentenced to many years of incarceration. As a culmination of anti-Church crusade can be judged a public process with Catholic bishops in January 1951, who were accused of being reactionaries and “agents of Vatican”. M. Buzalka and P. Gojdič received life sentences, J. Vojtaššák was sentenced to 23 years in jail.¹³¹

According to historian Miroslav Londák, accusations of the “bourgeois nationalism” was not an accidental conglomerate of “half-truths and mistakes”. Its goal was not only elimination of certain politicians who represented a certain political orientation, but it was premeditated strategy aimed at creation of barrier preventing in future possible Slovak political or other national requests, unacceptable to the Central Government.¹³²

Murderous machinery of security apparatus affected also its own ranks. An absurdity of murderous nature of the Communist Regime were reprisals enacted against top security officials, including leaders of the State Security in Slovakia, of the Intelligence Agency of the Commission of Interior and numerous others communist officials. At the beginning of 1952, leading members of the State Security were imprisoned. A slew, of totally drum-up accusations was charged against them. They were sentenced to many years of imprisonment. According to J. Pešek, from 1948 till 1953, 19 134 persons were sentenced to jail. Six of accused received death penalty and were executed.¹³³

A total subordination of Czechoslovakia to the Soviet Union was realized via so called Soviet advisers, who assumed control of all spheres of life in the Republic. K. Kaplan viewed their impact upon political, economic and social life in CSR as dominant: *“During years 1949 – 1956 were coming to Czechoslovakia Soviet advisers in such numbers, with such a status and mission,*

¹³⁰ PLEVZA, V. *Vzostupy a pády...*, p. 69, 71.

¹³¹ PEŠEK, J. *Odvrátená tvár...*, p. 97.

¹³² LONDÁK, M. *Otázky...*, p. 57.

¹³³ PEŠEK, J. *Odvrátená tvár...*, p. 99.

that in the power mechanism...it predetermined their significance and basically their unshakable position. Firstly it was their broad authority. Czechoslovak officials to whom were advisers assigned, soon began unconditionally fulfilling their instructions, advices and opinions. It was quite common that even highest officials - including the President (and the Chairman of CPC) were making significant decisions only after they asked their opinion."¹³⁴

The Czechoslovak Republic, which since its renewal was sliding into absolute subservience to the Soviet Union, lost last vestiges of independence and became in reality a province of the Soviet Empire.

¹³⁴ KAPLAN, Karel. Sovětští poradci v Československu 1949 – 1956. In *Sešity Ústavu pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, Svazek 14*, Praha : Ústav pro Soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 1993, p. 8.

IV. A radical remake of school system in Slovakia as result of imposition of the Communist Regime.

Destruction of democracy and its replacement by aggressive, intolerant and in many aspects inhuman regime had inevitably a dramatic impact on sphere of education. The Marxism-Leninism became an ideological base for building of communist society. Eminently important in process of construction of new form of education was elimination of previous school system. On all levels of schools was implemented into education process a “class” approach. It was a strategy to provide education primarily for workers and peasants, who were, according to the Marxist-Leninist ideology, “destined to build a communist society”.

Plurality of education, which is natural result of democratic societies and was, with certain limitations, respected by Czechoslovak government during years 1945 – 1948, was shortly after imposition of the Communist Regime in February 1945 replaced by ideologically homogenous school system. On April 21 1948 the Constitutional National Assembly adopted the Law no. 95 which became a legal base for unified school. Cited law was mandatory for build-up of the whole school system of elementary and middle schools in Czechoslovakia. Excepted were universities, military and theological educational institutions. Minister of Education, Sciences and Arts (MESA) Zdeněk Nejedlý characterized the Law no. 95/1948 Coll., as *“an epochal act which will unify education in the Republic”*.¹³⁵

In pursuance of above cited law, all schools were managed by state. Compulsory school attendance was extended to nine years and lasted from six to fifteen year of age of pupils. Compulsory was also coeducation in all types of schools. According to historian S. Gabzdilová *“The goal was unification of upbringing and education regardless of sex, religious adherence and*

¹³⁵ MÁTEJ, Jozef. Víťazstvo robotníckej triedy vo februári 1948 – základná podmienka pre všestranný rozvoj vzdelávania a výchovy socialistickej osobnosti v ČSSR. In KOČKA, Michal (ed.). *Február 1948 a rozvoj školstva a pedagogiky*. Bratislava : Nakladateľstvo Pravda, 1973, p. 21.

social origin in kindergartens, in elementary schools, in high schools, in professional schools and in grammar schools.”¹³⁶

In regard to duration of education and age structure of pupils, schools were divided to following segments: kindergartens – age of children from 3 to 6 years; elementary schools – age of pupils from 6 to 11 years; high school – age of pupils from 11 to 15 years; grammar and professional schools – age of students from 15 to 19 years. The highest form of education was realized in universities and colleges. The duration of education depended on type of university and lasted from four to six years.¹³⁷

Unification of schools in the whole Czechoslovakia was realized not only in regard to organizational structure, but also to implementation of communist ideology into education regardless of type of school.

To secure that content of education, especially in area of social topics, will implement dogmas off the Marxist-Leninist ideology, it was necessary to replace existing text books on all types of schools. The new textbooks, adjusted to the mental state of pupils according to their age, had to teach pupils about the historical significance of the communist ideology, namely about progressive roll of communists in creation the only society, which was able to remove exploitation of workers and peasants by bourgeois class and about inevitable victory of communist movement in the whole word. A significant part of education was to be devoted to history of the Soviet Union as the country which as the first in the world accomplished goal to free workers and peasant from yoke of bourgeoisie. A great attention was paid to emphasize the leading role of the Soviet Union in liberation of Czechoslovakia and its help in victory of socialism in CSR.

¹³⁶ GABZDILOVÁ, S. *Bolševismus, komunismus...*, p. 202.

¹³⁷ KOTOČ, J. *Základy československého školstva*. In KOTOČ, J. (ed.). *Slovenské školstvo po oslobodení*. Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo : Bratislava, 1970, p. 10.

The task of preparation of textbooks in Slovakia was in competence of the State Pedagogical Institute in Bratislava. The size of the task can be perceived by fact that from 1949 till 1951 over 200 textbook of various kind were published totaling almost 6 million prints.¹³⁸

A profound change affected also universities and colleges. According to official of the Section of Ministry of Schools and Sciences at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia, J. Červinka, *“Since the beginning of school year 1948/1949 a gradual liquidation of such attributes of bourgeois university, as is a liberalism, a lack of discipline, a pseudo-objectivity, a negligent relation toward upbringing of students, an individualistic approach in a scientific work, et cetera...Fundamental turn-over occurred in the sphere of pedagogy. In school year 1948/49 at several universities were initiated lectures of the Marxism-Leninism. During next school year the lectures of the Marxism-Leninism were implemented in all universities in CSR.”*¹³⁹

One of the features of immoral hypocrisy of communist ideology was loudly presented determination to struggle for world peace. Since usurpation of power, communist government pursued policy of militarization ordered by its Soviet overlords to detriment of life standard its own population. Despite massive preparation of the Soviet Union for war, which became obligatory also for all its satellites, propagation campaign was portraying CSR as a country determined to do everything in its power to preserve peace. Pupils and students on all types of schools were learning about actions of organizations such as and the World Congress of the Defenders of Peace and endeavors of socialist countries to preserve peace.

The Communist Party assumed political control in all universities and colleges. Direct control over student activities had the Czechoslovak Union of Youth (CUY). Student organizations active till the February 1948 were abolished.

A formative impact, had upon the highest segment of education IX Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on May 25 – 29 1949 in Prague. The Congress begun by election of honorary chairmanship composed of internationally known communist leaders. As

¹³⁸ GABZDILOVÁ, S. *Komunistická strana...*, p. 208.

¹³⁹ ČERVINKA, Jaroslav. Štvrtstoročie budovania socialistického vysokého školstva v Československu. In KOČKA, Michal (ed.). *1948 a rozvoj školstva a pedagogiky*. Nakladateľstvo Pravda : Bratislava, 1973, p. 107.

the first in line was nominated J. V. Stalin. Announcement of nomination was greeted by enthusiastic response, ovation and unanimous agreement by participants.

The Congress was commenced by speech of K. Gottwald. As became permanent feature of all communist gatherings, Gottwald's speech was frequently interrupted by ovations and laud expressions of approval. Speaking of education, Gottwald declared: *"Experience is teaching us that for build-up of socialism, working class must create and rise own intelligentsia, coming from its middle, class bound and ideologically connected. Therefore, we will enlarge a network of schools and training centers in which competent sons and daughters of workers and peasants will be speedily educated, so they will be capable occupy responsible position in economy, in administration, in corps of the National Security, in the Army and in social life in general... Besides this quick schooling of new cadres, we must far more seriously approach to manage entry to middle schools and universities from social aspect. We are proud that our state is financing our school system as generously as few states does. However, we can't be satisfied that these state and peoples financial means are spent on education of many anti-state and anti-people elements."*¹⁴⁰

According to the Minister of Information Václav Kopecký, the task of the Marxist-Leninist upbringing was to accomplish a revolutionary change in minds of people, to realize ideological education of masses in socialistic spirit and to give to all workers "ideology of our new epoch".¹⁴¹ In regard to education of youth, V. Kopecký declared that *"Youth must be led toward deep understanding of significance of self-education. And our youth movement must with all responsibility to take-up this task and to give a new ideological direction of development of youth. And this include also task led youth to adopt conscious proletariat internationalism connected with socialistic patriotism."*¹⁴²

L. Novomeský, not knowing that shortly after he will be accused of sabotaging socialistic principles of education, emphasized binding impact of policy adopted at IX Congress of CPC also upon education: *"If IX Congress charge the Communist Party with task to realize building of*

¹⁴⁰ Protokol IX. řádného sjezdu Komunistické strany Československa. V Praze 25. – 29. května 1949. Ústřední výbor KSČ, p. 103.

¹⁴¹ Protokol IX. řádného sjezdu, p. 348.

¹⁴² Protokol IX. řádného sjezdu, p. 370.

*socialism in our country, as in his speech suggested comrade Gottwald, a line of building of socialism must be bounding also for our educational work using methods which we are implementing in production, in plants, in agriculture etcetera.”*¹⁴³

After the IX Congress of CPC, the Section of Culture and Propaganda of the Central Committee of CPS prepared a program of the Marxist-Leninist lectures for members of the Communist Party of Slovakia. The goal was to establish a network of educational facilities focused primarily on deepening of knowledge of the Marxism-Leninism in ranks of cadres of CPS. At the helm of hierarchical structure was the Central Political School training lecturers and propaganda activists.

On occasion of commencement of classes of political education for members of CPS in November 1949, the General Secretary of CPS Š. Bašťovanský accentuated significance of knowledge of the Marxism-Leninism, which would result in increase of ideological awareness of communists, reinforce more intensive fight against „class enemy” and firm-up “international solidarity of workers”. In that sense, according to Bašťovanský, *„Our example in fight for right of people, for freedom, for happy tomorrow of workers, for peace and democracy and in building socialism was, is and will be the glorious Soviet Communist Party led by genial leader and teacher of international working class – comrade Stalin...”* “A year of the Party education” we are opening during days when our whole nation in frame of *„Days of Czechoslovak-Soviet Friendship”* is expressing its burning love and gratitude to heroic nations of the Soviet Union...this why we want follow in steps of the Soviet Nations, reinforce our brotherhood and alliance with them and learning from their immense experiences and forms of work.”¹⁴⁴

On May 24 – 27 1950, the IX Congress of the Communist Party of Slovakia was held in Bratislava. As was noted, despite having seemingly independent status, CPS was totally subordinated to CPC and operated basically as regional division of the Czechoslovak Communist Party. In comparison to IX Congress of CPC, it was held in a significantly changed political atmosphere.

¹⁴³ *Protokol IX. řádného sjezdu*, p. 447.

¹⁴⁴ *Pravda*. 4 November, 1949, Issue 261. Otvárame Rok stranického školenia (We are opening A Year of the Party Education), p. 1.

Before beginning of congressional session, a ceremony of voting members of honorary and executive chairmanship of IX Congress was done following of IX Congress of CPC. As in Prague, the most prominent position among honorary members was awarded to Stalin.

After speeches of representatives of various social organizations the Chairman of the Congress, the Minister for Agriculture Julius Ďuriš, opened the Congress. In his speech, besides obligatory exhortations of alleged successes in building of socialist society in Slovakia, successful fight realized by communist countries for peace led by the Soviet Union and its leader J. V. Stalin, he touched an explosive issue of “bourgeois nationalism”, in CPS: *“What are the workings of bourgeois nationalism in our Party ?...Its fundamental feature is its viewing a national issue in isolation, in separation from issue of class struggle, in separation from fight against imperialism, from issue of political power in state. The fundamental feature of bourgeois nationalism is in its willingness to solve national issue of formerly suppressed nation together with its own bourgeoisie and not in union with proletariat of formerly ruling nation and accepts ideological leadership of its own bourgeoisie.”*¹⁴⁵ And then he pronounced that it were G. Husák and L. Novomeský who were principal pursuers of the “bourgeois nationalism” in CPS.¹⁴⁶

J. Ďuriš characterized the “bourgeois nationalism” as a root of all evils hampering progress of building of socialism in Slovakia, including in the sphere of schools. Despite numerous assertions of communist officials, who previously were bragging about splendid achievements of the Marxist-Leninist ideology, including creation of socialist school system, Ďuriš suddenly drawn a bleak picture of situation in Slovak schools: *“The consequences of bourgeois-nationalistic deviations are very negatively impacting present state of schools. During the rapid increase of schools and number of pupils, the school administration failed to make sure that schools were placed into service of build-up of socialism, failed to assure upbringing of youth in spirit of socialism, in spirit of the Marxist-Leninist theory. It manifested further in reluctant support to establishing preparatory schools and training courses for study in universities... In build-up of schools was applied liberalism, which actually was giving free space to various “ideological”*

¹⁴⁵ Protokol IX. zjazdu, p. 64-65.

¹⁴⁶ Protokol IX. zjazdu, p. 71.

*opinions and to our peoples-democratic regime hostile influences. Upbringing of our youth was entrusted often to conscious enemies of socialism and the Republic.”*¹⁴⁷

Alleged “bourgeois nationalism” as a source of deformations affecting schools, criticized also Štefan Bašťovanský, who proclaimed that to eliminate “anti-socialist elements” in schools will be necessary to cancel a policy of compromises in personal policy applied not only in selection of students studying at universities, but also pursue a stern cadre policy in ranks of teachers. Policy of placing importance of professional qualification, in words of Š. Bašťovanský, must be superseded by a complex approach valuating also devotion to the Marxist-Leninist ideology.

During following years, one of the most accentuated issues in sphere of school policy in general and in universities especially, was to adjust educational process to the Soviet model, infuse education with the Marxist-Leninist ideology and to fight against the “bourgeois nationalism”.

In April 1950, an intensive campaign of fight against “nationalistic deviation” was initiated. According to report elaborated by the Commission of Schools, Sciences and Arts, *“The main task in this fight was undertaken by the Czechoslovak Union of Youth and its representatives in each faculty, which very belligerently criticized students and professors and was pointing to ideological mistakes in their lectures, textbooks and their political attitudes.”*¹⁴⁸

The initial phase of transformation of colleges and universities ended in 1950. On May 18 1950 the Law no. 58/1950 Coll., which defined role of institutions providing the highest education in socialist society. In practice it meant total elimination of autonomy of universities and control of all aspect of education by the Communist Party. At the same time universities were to be “cleansed” of all students suspected of hostile attitude toward the Communist Regime in Czechoslovakia.

In September 1949 purges at all universities and colleges were initiated with the aim, as was announced with irony typical for communist propagandists, to achieve a “profound democratization of universities”. The goal was: *“1/ Clear colleges and universities of hostile*

¹⁴⁷ SNA, f. PŠSA Collegium, c. 178, inventory number (inv. n.) 464-473.

¹⁴⁸ SNA, f. PŠSA Collegium, c. 178, inventory number (inv. n.) 464-473.

*elements and to improve class composition of student body; 2/ Activate broad masses of students to enhance quality of work, namely in study and in Czechoslovak Union of Youth.”*¹⁴⁹

Result of “democratization” of colleges and universities, according to report, was expulsion of 570 students.

The main task of institutions of highest learning defined in above cited report was ideological reconstruction of science and art via study of “scientific socialism” and Soviet scientific literature. As the second most important task was defined enhancement of moral and political upbringing of students. In final conclusion, it was declared that *“The pre-conditions for fulfillment of very difficult and complicated task, which we facing, were created with aim to oriented all teachers toward socialist science tightly attached to practice, to substantially improve learning morals, to lead to scientific career the most suitable and talented students.”*¹⁵⁰

However, purges in colleges and universities were enacted already before September 1949. During January 18 – 25 1949 a questionnaire action was realized in all colleges and universities with goal to determine “class origin” of students, their political attitudes, type of employment of parents and other information, which would detect political “suitability” students to be admitted to universities and colleges. On the base of knowledge gained from questionnaires, The University Committee of CPC divided students to four groups according to their loyalty to regime. To the first group were included members of CPS, to the second group “loyal” students, third group consisted of so called uncommitted, to fourth group opponents of communist regime.¹⁵¹ Students defined as hostile to regime were to be expelled from universities. Students who could be “reeducated” were expelled from universities conditionally. The number of students expelled from colleges and universities during period from February 1948 till autumn 1950 was 1 638 persons, which was 16, 6% of the whole number.¹⁵²

Ignoring request to questionnaire was not tolerated. In report of CSSA submitted to Central Committee of Communist Party of Slovakia on April 20 1950, which summarized results of

¹⁴⁹ SNA, f. PŠSA Collegium, c. 178, inventory number (inv. n.) 464-473.

¹⁵⁰ SNA, f. PŠSA Collegium, c. 178, inventory number (inv. n.) 464-473.

¹⁵¹ GABZDILOVÁ, S. *Komunistická strana...*, p. 210.

¹⁵² GABZDILOVÁ, S. *Komunistická strana...*, p. 210-211.

questionnaire action is written that students who refused to fill-up questionnaires were immediately expelled from schools.¹⁵³

Despite hundreds of expelled students, purges were judged as dissatisfactory. In report elaborated by the Law Council of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, mapping situation in the Faculty of Law of Slovak University in Bratislava, is written that composition of student body was as follows: members and candidates of CPS were making barely 8 %, number of “progressive” students was estimated at 11 %, indifferent approximately 50 %, 30 % of students were perceived as hostile to the Communist Regime and of this segment roughly 10 % were defined as implacable enemies of communist ideology. Authors of report wrote that *“The cause of this not very satisfactory state is seen...as a result not consistently realized screening (democratization) during which primarily emphasis was placed upon level of grades and not political attitudes of students...Moral political impact of democratization was especially weakened by practice of appeal to disciplinary commission, which very graciously judged appeals. Almost all appeals were settled positively...It is clear, that large responsibility for situation among students lies in hands of local organization of CPS...local organization of CPS is not the leading force in the Faculty and has no needed authority.”*¹⁵⁴ To remedy described problems, The Law Council, beside other measures, recommended to install at the Faculty of Law of the Slovak University a political instructor and replace immediately all old politically “unsuitable” professors.¹⁵⁵

An uncompromising approach to imposing communist goals in education advocated also L. Novomeský. He declared: *“IX Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, authorized to set goals and methods, that is a general line for communists in management of the Republic...devoted an extraordinary attention to cultural issues and school upbringing...Above all it is necessary to take note that IX Congress with all determination is demanding that all upbringing and especially schools will be effective tool of socialist upbringing of youth.”*¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ SNA, f. ÚV KSS – S, c. 7, archive unit (hereinafter only arch. u.) 11.

¹⁵⁴ SNA, f. ÚV KSS – GT, c. 2191. arch. u. 490/2.

¹⁵⁵ SNA, f. ÚV KSS – GT, c. 2191. arch. u. 490/2.

¹⁵⁶ NOVOMESKÝ, Ladislav. *Nový duch novej školy. Výber z prejavov a článkov o školstve a mládeži 1945 – 1950.*

Bratislava : Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo, 1974, p. 293. As an indicator of macabre times and perversion of

As was noted, career of L. Novomeský ended in disgrace and post of Commissioner of the Commission of Schools, Science and Arts was assumed by Ernes Sýkora. E. Sýkora in his "Materiel for the Chairmanship of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Slovakia" ("Materiel"), evaluated changes enacted in sphere of schools from IX Congress of CPS. Among the first applied measures were steps aimed at removal religious symbols from schools. The prayers by which teachers were beginning lessons were replaced by the "Song of Labor" and crosses were removed from class-rooms. These anti-religious measures evoked protest in several villages. Parents refused to send children to schools from which crosses were taken away. In some cases parents were against that their children will join youth organizations, because their alleged anti-religious nature.¹⁵⁷

The authors of "Materiel" accentuated necessity to exterminate "spirit of liberalism, eclecticism and ideological compromises". As an effective tool to achieve this goal, it was decided to initiate political schooling of teachers. Critically was also perceived lack of textbooks. It was suggested that situation should be alleviated by "politically most advanced" teachers who will prepare needed textbooks. As unsatisfactory was situation perceived also in the segment of highest education, where "socialist" textbooks were lacking completely. To remedy this situation it was decided to use works of Soviet authors. In pedagogy was suggested use textbooks written by Kornilov, Smirnov and Teplov, in psychology Kairov, Josipov, Gončarov and work of other Soviet authors.¹⁵⁸

In closing report authors of "Materiel" concluded that for future will be essential to fulfill following goals: 1. Initiate long lasting systematic ideological education process on all levels and types of schools; 2. Imbue schools with ideological content with help of textbooks written in

the Communist regime is an article published by periodical *Učiteľské noviny* (Pedagogical News), which during prosecution of Novomeský heaped insults and false charges against him: "*Novomeský did not wanted to make our schools political...He was against re-schooling of teachers. He was against acquiring a new knowledge by teachers, which they would implement into our schools and raise student in a new spirit, in a progressive spirit such as is applied in the Soviet Union. He did not wanted that teachers became familiar with the Soviet pedagogy and upbringing because he hated the Soviet Union*". *Učiteľské noviny* 10 May, 1951, Issue 15. Odsudzujeme činnosť Novomeského (We are condemning activity of Novomeský), p. 6.

¹⁵⁷ SNA, ÚV KSS, Moško, c. 2342, arch. u. 88. Materiál pre predsedníctvo ÚV KSS. Uskutočňovanie uznesení IX. Zjazdu v školstve, p. 2.

¹⁵⁸ SNA, ÚV KSS, Moško, c. 2342, arch. u. 88. Materiál pre predsedníctvo ÚV KSS. Uskutočňovanie uznesení IX. Zjazdu v školstve, p. 4.

spirit of the Marxism-Leninism; 3. Gradually improve educational system via home study, long distance study and evening classes; 4. Build-up firm and efficient youth organization which will be effective aide of socialistic upbringing and of increase of educational efficiency in general; 5. Organize associations of parents and friends of schools and deepen their cooperation with schools, so schools will became a leading factor of upbringing in family; 6. Use of all means to support new forms of socialist pedagogic activities with help, provided by district and county pedagogic boards.¹⁵⁹

Also school administration underwent a deep personal transformation. Altogether 36 officials were purged from various positions. According to "Materiel", *"In decisive measure they were exponents of previous regime...who did not proved that they got rid of ideological remnants of past and had honest attitude to people democracy."*¹⁶⁰

Repressive measures were applied against all teachers who fail to be utterly committed to implementation of communist ideology in teaching. Repressions were realized in two levels: a, relocation; b, releasing from teaching position. Relocated teachers were transferred to remote localities, characterized by primitive conditions of life, which actually were a form of banishment. No wonder that a large segment of relocated pedagogues refused to oblige and preferred to live teaching profession. A more stern measure was arbitrary termination of teaching positions.¹⁶¹ Approximately 600 teachers were either expelled or relocated.

During session of the Central Committee held June 24 1950, Ernest Sýkora bragged that teachers were becoming aware that student must be raised in spirit of the Marxism-Leninism and this was achieved by expulsion of reactionary pedagogues from schools.¹⁶² However, extensive relocations, in many cases realized without reason and capriciously, resulted in a serious interruption of process of education. Authors of the "The Report in regard to recent

¹⁵⁹ SNA, ÚV KSS, Moško, c. 2342, arch. u. 88. Materiál pre predsedníctvo ÚV KSS. Uskutočňovanie uznesení IX. Zjazdu v školstve, p. 21.

¹⁶⁰ SNA, ÚV KSS, Moško, c. 2342, arch. u. 88. Materiál pre predsedníctvo ÚV KSS. Uskutočňovanie uznesení IX. Zjazdu v školstve, p. 6.

¹⁶¹ SNA, ÚV KSS, Moško, c. 2342, arch. u. 88. Materiál pre predsedníctvo ÚV KSS. Uskutočňovanie uznesení IX. Zjazdu v školstve, p. 8.

¹⁶² GABZDILOVÁ, Soňa. Nové úlohy učiteľov na Slovensku v období vrcholiaceho stalinizmu (1948 – 1953). In *Studia Historica Nitrensia*, 2017, Volume 21, no. 1, p. 137-154.

experiences of activities of departments for schools, upbringing and physical education working as a branches of county committees" (The Report), elaborated by CSSA, admitted that *"Teachers exposed to various interventions were relocated frequently without respect for operational needs of schools...It is understandable, that in such a situation teachers were panicking, mad and were losing a positive attitude to work."*¹⁶³ The Report criticized undisciplined approach of county committees, which in personal policy were ignoring instructions of CSSA and were acting without reasonable justification.¹⁶⁴

Determination of CPS to increase a number of students from working and peasant families led to establishment of educational courses in one year duration, which should prepare young workers for study at universities and colleges. The regional secretariats of CPS were instructed to prepare guidelines for selection of suitable candidates. The main criterion was membership in CPC. In Slovakia the first courses were established in February 1949. During the period 1949 – 1952 enrolled to preparatory courses roughly 1 800 young workers and peasants.¹⁶⁵ Successful absolvents, especially those who were members of the Communist Party of Slovakia, were admitted to educational institutions offering the highest degree of education.¹⁶⁶

During its session on September 9 1950, the Central Committee of CPS made decision in regard to further development of schools in Slovakia. It evaluated, mostly with a critical approach, situation in the sphere of text books. Of 195 textbook prepared by The State Pedagogical Institute only 42 were published. The most critical situation was in category of technical textbooks, which were absent almost completely. As perfunctory was criticized activities of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth. It was decided that to increase quality of teaching, it is necessary to enhance "ideological awareness" of pedagogues and remove "senseless bureaucracy".

¹⁶³ SNA, f. Povereníctvo školstva, S/1949, n. 81 – 216, i. n. 91, c. 92, p. 6.

¹⁶⁴ SNA, f. Povereníctvo školstva, S/1949, n. 81 – 216, i. n. 91, c. 92, p. 7.

¹⁶⁵ GABZDILOVÁ, S. *Komunistická strana...*, p. 213.

¹⁶⁶ The CSSA on June 17 1949 issued the Decree no. 154.05/49-V/1, which contained guidelines for admonition of freshmen to Slovak colleges and universities in school year 1949/1950. Article II of the Decree states that „Primarily will be accepted graduates of state courses for preparation workers to university study...”

The goal to create a “new pedagogical intelligentsia” from ranks of workers and peasants, which was realized in form of 6 weeks classes, was valued as successful. However, according to the Central Committee, *“We still lacking sufficient number of teachers who are ideologically up to required level, especially in topics of social sciences, therefore 6 months instruction course will be prepared”*. In conclusion, the Central Committee of CPS emphasized need for “political” approach in solving educational issues: *“We were requesting and constantly ask, that all these measures will be implemented politically and administratively.”* Despite criticism, enacted measures were valued positively as having curative impact upon schools system.¹⁶⁷

In report devoted to evaluation of situation of universities and colleges in Slovakia, during session of the Central Committee on November 3 2017, E. Sýkora characterized “democratization” (in reality purges) as successful: *“On the base of resolution of the Secretariat of CC CPS, during vacations was realized a detailed research about each student in places of their residence, which resulted in gaining rich materiel enabling through realization of democratization, executed in September. Positive outcome of research was that questionnaires were more detailed and more concrete then in 1949, were evaluated by more professional comrades and data in questionnaires were verified by local district committees of CPS...This campaign motivated a political activity into ranks of students and successfully weened-out reactionary students. Consent to expel them was expressed unanimously.”*¹⁶⁸

As a pressing problem was allegedly unsatisfactory situation in ranks of professors: *“A significant share in realization of ideological and organizational work in restructuring of universities is task of professors. But it must be said, that in our universities this is the weakest point of the whole issue. Above all, problem is a dearth of professors educated in the Marxism-Leninism.”*¹⁶⁹

The “Sovietization” of Slovak schools was also perceived as an acute task. It was to be done by intensive orientation on Soviet science. Whereas ideological and professional standards of pedagogues were criticized as unsatisfactory, education of social science topics was valued

¹⁶⁷ SNA, f. ÚV KSS – Predsedníctvo, c. 798, arch. u. 22. Správa a realizácii rezolúcie IX. Zjazdu KSP.

¹⁶⁸ SNA, f. ÚV KSS – Predsedníctvo, c. 800, arch. u. 28. Správa o stave vysokých škôl.

¹⁶⁹ SNA, f. ÚV KSS – Predsedníctvo, c. 800, arch. u. 28. Správa o stave vysokých škôl.

positively. It was stated that *"In present school year a substantial improvement occurred in teaching of social sciences as a result of establishment of independent training centers, which were led by young proven officials of CUY, who underwent a special schooling...Special catedres of the Marxism-Leninism are established presently only in faculties of pedagogic, law and philosophy."*¹⁷⁰

The CC CPC, "to better secure socialist upbringing at schools", in reality to gain a total control of CPS in schools, established in schools located in district cities organizations of the Communist Party. Task of communist organizations in these schools was to make sure that communists in the Revolutionary Unions and the Czechoslovak Union of Youth were lead members of these organizations to implement a policy of CPS and make sure that all teachers, students and parents "will understand principles of school policy set by CPS".¹⁷¹ To realize this goal was primarily duty of organizations such as the Revolutionary Union and the Czechoslovak Union of Youth. Report stated that task of the Revolutionary Union was to motivate "patriotic teachers", *"apply new forms in process of ever more efficient means to raise youth in socialist spirit. The teacher has duty to constantly improve his (her) political and professional education and to strive for interconnection of school with life. His (her) out-of-school activities, especially help in establishment of the Unified Peasants Cooperatives in villages, which is helping in transformation of our society to become socialist"*.¹⁷² However, the Cultural-propagandist Section of the Secretariat of CC CPS admitted that local communist organizations in schools failed to fulfil expectations: *"Work of majority of local organization is just starting and beside organization and undertaking program named „The Year of political schooling“ they did not performed any significant activity. We have only a small number of organizations which would be able to become a leading ideological factor in school, in that sense that they would stand in front of upbringing pedagogical process in school and that activity of local organization of CPS would visibly participate on improvement of work of teachers and students."*¹⁷³.

¹⁷⁰ SNA, f. ÚV KSS – Predsedníctvo, c. 800, arch. u. 28. Správa o stave vysokých škôl.

¹⁷¹ SNA, f. ÚV KSS – Secretariat, c. 13, arch. u. 33. Materiál pre predsedníctvo ÚV KSS.

¹⁷² SNA, f. ÚV KSS – Secretariat, c. 13, arch. u. 33. Materiál pre predsedníctvo ÚV KSS.

¹⁷³ SNA, f. ÚV KSS – Secretariat, c. 13, arch. u. 34. Materiál pre predsedníctvo ÚV KSS.

The most pervasive and humiliating was incessant campaign glorifying alleged successes of The Soviet peoples in all areas of life including in the sphere of education. The Soviet youth organization – Komsomol, was portrayed as a glaring example for young Slovaks. During festivities, organized to celebrate 30th anniversary of foundation of Komsomol, deputy chairman of the Czechoslovak government V. Široký asserted, in speech which was published by *Pravda*, that „*Experience and learnings of Soviet youth are inexhaustible source of inspiration for Slovak and Czech Youth.*“¹⁷⁴ A truly religious adoration of Stalin were demonstrating delegates of the Congress of the Czechoslovak Union of Youth (Congress), held in June 1950. Delegates of the Congress in the Salute dispatched to Stalin expressed their love, devotion and loyalty to death.¹⁷⁵

Unlike school systems existing in states with a plural political systems, authoritative and totalitarian states are characteristic by ideologically and organizationally rigid form of education. A sui-generis countries were communist states, in which all aspects of life – political system, economics, social life and education were utterly controlled by communist parties. In regard to education a total conformity of teachers and students was sternly demanded. Even a small infraction was punished by expulsion from school and repressive measures.

After imposition of the Communist Regime in February 1948, such a system was installed in Czechoslovakia. This had a far-reaching consequences upon education and upbringing of young people, who were ruthlessly thrown into machinery of totalitarian state. Free expression of opinion, tolerance and unbiased access to information in school and outside of it was replaced by slavish adorations of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union and its dictator I. V. Stalin. It took more than four decades to liberate peoples of Czechoslovakia from this inhuman regime.

¹⁷⁴ *Pravda*. 13 November, 1948, Issue 262. Komsomol – vzor pre našu mládež (Komsomol – an example for our youth), p. 1.

¹⁷⁵ „*Our generation is the first genetation of our Nations, which can live its youth freely and joyfully...We know that for our new life we are thankful to the Soviet Union...We know that for our new life we are thankful personally to You, comrade Stalin, to Your genial creation, to Your friendship to our peopl. We know that for our new life we are thankful to a happiness that we can live in great Stalinist epoch.. Therefore, to the Soviet Union and to You belongs love and devotion of the whole Czechoslovak youth, love and devotion which can not be expresseed by words.*“ *Pravda*. 9 June, 1950, Issue 133. Hold československej mládeže veľkému Stalinovi (Hail from Czechoslovak youth to great Stalin), p. 1.

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So ženami - budovateľkami socializmu stretávame sa aj v radoch nášho SNB. Svojou svedomitou prácou pomáhajú chrániť výdobytk nášho pracujúceho ľudu.

















