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Slovak Resistance and Émigrés: Plans for the Post-war Era and Political Reality in Slovakia after the Crossing of the Front

Abstract: During World War II, various groups of the Czechoslovak foreign or home resistance created their own plans and visions for the post-war period. While for the Czechoslovak democratic exile in the West, as well as for the democratic resistance in Slovakia, the priority was the restoration of a democratic Czechoslovakia, for the Czech and Slovak communists it was mainly the reconstruction of a Czechoslovak statehood that would be as closely linked as possible to the Soviet Union and in which the communists would have a strong governmental position. On the other hand, however, there was also a significant contradiction between the Czech exile and the domestic Slovak resistance in reference to the question of the post-war position of Slovakia in a restored Czechoslovakia. On this issue, the Slovak democrats were closer to the Czech communists who, unlike Beneš and his entourage, were willing to give them the desired federation. This, in addition to the idea of the restoration of a democratic Czechoslovakia, also formed the basis for the resistance cooperation between Slovak communists and democrats. After the war, however, shortly after the front had crossed into the newly liberated territory of Slovakia, a new post-war reality based on the presence of Soviet military and intelligence agencies addressed the previous plans of the resistance. They were forcing the communists close to them, which resulted in the dominance of the communists in the liberated territory. However, this was relatively ably seconded by the Slovak democrats, especially when the Soviet authorities left the territory with the advancing front.

Key words: World War II, resistance, Czechoslovak relations, communists, democrats, after-war Czechoslovakia

Introduction

The general line of the foreign resistance centred around the pre-Munich president Edvard Beneš was obvious: to concentrate all activity in exile on the restoration of the Czechoslovak statehood within its original pre-Munich 1938 borders. The next aim was to prepare the ground for such restoration and reconstruction of the Republic's foreign policy and its internal structure that would prevent any similar existential threat to the state as in 1938–1939. After initial problems with the full recognition of Beneš and his Czechoslovak National Committee, especially by the French government and its representatives responsible for the Munich Agreement, the full rehabilitation of the position of the Czechoslovak exile in the West gradually took place after the fall of France and the transfer of the centre of the anti-Nazi resistance to London. In London, the exiled Provisional Czechoslovak State Establishment was enacted, headed by President Beneš and his government, and the Council of State. The activities of Beneš's exile in the West, supported by intelligence and military cooperation with the British, were subsequently aimed at disavowing the British acquiescence to the loss of the Czechoslovak borderlands at the Munich Conference of September 1938.[1] This was finally achieved in the summer of 1942 thanks to the assassination of the Reich Protector in the occupied Czech lands, Reinhard Heydrich, and the subsequent propaganda-diplomatic offensive against the British authorities,[2] which until then had still hesitated with the definite promise of restoring Czechoslovakia to its original interwar borders.[3]

After obtaining the consent of all three Allied Powers to the restoration of Czechoslovak statehood within the 1937 borders, Beneš and the establishment in exile focused on preparing for and enforcing profound internal changes in the country after the war. In particular, it was to eliminate the influence of the disloyal German

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[1] For more on the formation and plans of the Czechoslovak exile around Edvard Beneš, see J. Kuklík, *Londýnsky exil a obnova československého státu 1938–1945*, Praha 1998, pp. 42–89; *Od uznání československé prozatímní vlády do vyhlášení válečného stavu Německu 1940–1941*, ed. J. Němeček et al., Praha 2009; E. Beneš, *Paměti. Od Mnichova k nové válce a k novému vítězství*, Praha 1947.

[2] *Pohreb hyeny v Berlíne*, "Čechoslovák," 12.06.1942, pp. 1–2; *Vládne prehlásenie o zodpovednosti za nemecké atrocity v Československu*, "Čechoslovák," 19.06.1942; Národní archiv Praha, f. Hubert Ripka, k. 187. Prehlásenie československej exilovej vlády z 29. mája 1942.

[3] *Československá zahraniční politika v roce 1942*, Sv. 1, ed. J. Němeček et al., Praha 2010, pp. 220–232.

and Hungarian minorities by deporting them from the country. Furthermore, retributive legislation was being prepared to punish all collaborators with the wartime regimes in the Czech lands or in Slovakia. In particular, the prepared property laws were to have a national and punitive aspect, taking away several property rights from Germans and Hungarians or collaborators, and transferring their property to the state or to new Czech and Slovak owners. In addition, fundamental reconstruction of the system of political parties was being prepared from which the typically right-winged entities that were generally blamed for authoritarian or pro-German developments after 1938 were to be removed. This concerned in particular, the post-war ban on the Agrarian Party in the Czech lands and the Hlinka Slovak People's Party in Slovakia, which mainly represented domestic collaborator wartime regimes. The party-political scene was to be generally simplified and only political groups and parties active in the resistance were to operate in it (until 1944, according to the exile criteria, it had been mainly only the left-winged Czech National Socialists, Social Democrats and Communists, or the centre-right reformist Czech People's Democrats (Christian Democrats)). Through the uprising in Slovakia, the Slovak Agrarians were brought into this exclusive club of post-war political groups, transforming themselves into the Democratic Party and linking other non-leftist resistance groups to them.

The plans and activities of the Czechoslovak communist exile in Moscow were along roughly the same lines of securing a solution to the Czechoslovak problem, although they had to be much more complicated to work out in the face of the opportunistically changing Soviet policy. First, for the duration of the Ribbentrop–Molotov Pact, the Czechoslovak Communists in Moscow, led by Klement Gottwald, were ambivalent.[4] They held a relatively stable opinion on the question of the restoration of Czechoslovakia. However, they were considerably hesitant on the issue of supporting the exile campaign around President Beneš and the Slovak question.[5] It was only after the strengthening of Beneš's action on the international field that they gradually began to take part in Beneš's exile action and to recognise him more fully as the leader of the Czechoslovak exile. Gradually, too, in the wake of the Soviet moves, there was a rejection of any consideration of Slovak independence. Several

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[4] M. Macháček, *Mezi českým lvem a sovětskou hvězdou. Státoprávní představy slovenských komunistů v období druhé světové války,* in: *Odvaľujem balvan. Pocta historickému remeslu Jozefa Jablonického*, eds. N. Kmeť, M. Syrný, Bratislava 2013, pp. 119–122; "Hlas ľudu," 1940, č. 1; Archív Múzea Slovenského národného povstania (A MSNP) Banská Bystrica, fund (f.) III, box (b.) 2. Správa Karola Bacílka o situácii na Slovensku a práci KSS, 10. 4. 1941.

[5] Národní archiv (NA) Praha, f. ÚV KSČ – barnabitská komise, svazek (sv.) 12, archivní jednotka (a.j.) 227. Kopeckého list Švermovi z 8. 2. 1942.

emissaries were even sent to Slovakia[6] to change Slovak communists' position on the restoration of Czechoslovak statehood and the rejection of considerations of Soviet Slovakia as a separate state entity, albeit within the community of the Soviet Union.[7] After the Soviets were invaded by the Nazis in 1941, there were effectively only two or three differences between the London exile centre and the Communist centre in Moscow. Unlike Beneš, Czechoslovak communists placed more emphasis on the closest possible alliance with Moscow, as well as on the degree of political-social and especially economic-social reforms (nationalisation, growth of the influence of the trade unions). There also remains a difference in the communist and London-exile understanding of the adjustment of the Czech-Slovak relationship, with Gottwald and companions advocating the federalization of Czechoslovakia as a federation of the Soviet Union.

The thoughts and plans of the Slovak resistance naturally differed even more from those in the London or Moscow exile, which was mainly related to the completely different internal political situation at home than abroad. First of all, in order for the Slovak resistance at home to be able to think about any post-war plans at all, it was necessary to defeat the domestic pro-fascist collaborationist regime, which was inherently linked to the overall defeat of Germany and its satellites. The long-term strategic plan of the Slovak Resistance, thus in line with the foreign one, was the restoration of Czechoslovak statehood within the borders of 1937. There was also agreement on social reforms and the basic internal changes in the post-war republic – punishment (political, criminal, economic) of disloyal Germans and Hungarians or representatives of the war regimes in the Czech lands and Slovakia. While the wartime rhetoric of the Slovak communists and democrats on the above was roughly the same, the later one showed that the two political groups had respectively quite different ideas of retribution or nationalisation in industry and land reform in agriculture. It was mainly a question of the depth and breadth of post-war reforms, where the Communists were considerably more radical than the Democrats who envisioned only more moderate reforms, especially at the expense of German and Hungarian influence and ownership. Such reforms would not bring Slovakia closer to a socialist state. What they accepted, however, without much difficulty, precisely in contrast to the differences of the foreign exile, was the demand for the federalization of Czechoslovakia, or, to put it another way, the national-political equalization of Slovaks with Czechs in a common republic.

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[6] NA Praha, f. 100/24 (K. Gottwald), sv. 110, a.j. 1432. Zápisnice z vyšetrovania Viliama Širokého z mája a júna 1941.

[7] This idea was most comprehensively elaborated in the Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union as of May 1, 1944. A MSNP Banská Bystrica, f. III, b. 1.

Between 1943–1944, almost nobody in the Slovak resistance thought about the restoration of unitary Czechoslovakia or even interwar centralism and Czech supremacy over Slovakia. Czechoslovakia as the form in which the Slovak nation should develop was indisputable for the resistance. But the fact was that the Slovaks would govern Slovakia without major Czech interference and that they would have a more equal influence on the whole republic politics. This consensus to push for the federalisation of the state did not come easily, especially in the non-communist resistance, where initially the concepts and influence of the pre-war leader of the Slovak agrarians, Milan Hodža, and President Beneš as the leader of the Czech exile were still battling.[8] However, with the fall of France in 1940 and the transfer of the exile centre of gravity to London, Hodža's influence on the Slovak resistance, not only abroad but also in Slovakia, gradually weakened.[9] Beneš's authority and the dominance of the Czech part of the resistance gradually asserted itself. From the point of view of Beneš's or Czech centralist ideas about the restoration of pre-Monarch Czechoslovakia, it was essentially a Pyrrhic victory. In autumn 1943, the younger Slovak agrarians raised by Milan Hodža, who formed the main part of the non-communist resistance in Slovakia, together with the communists, formed the supreme organ of the domestic resistance in Slovakia – the Slovak National Council. On the one hand, this body copied the activities of the foreign emigration towards the merging of the pro-Western democratic exile around Beneš, with the pro-Moscow communist exile around Gottwald. On the other hand, however, it publicly declared, completely against the will of Beneš, the desire for a Slovak-Czech national-political equalization,[10] i.e. for the federalisation of the state. In this way, the Slovak agrarians in the resistance, who later formed the Democratic Party in the uprising, differed most significantly from their democratic counterparts in Beneš's exiled neighbourhood. On the contrary, they were united with them by the idea of the return of pre-Munich democracy and the easing of communist pressure on the post-war socialisation of the state or its pro-Soviet orientation.[11]

[8] For more information, see J. Kuklík, J. Němeček, *Hodža verzus Beneš*, Praha 1999; M. Hodža, *Federácia v strednej Európe*, Bratislava 1997; M. Múdry, *Milan Hodža v Amerike*, Chicago 1949; NA Praha, f. Národní výbor československý ve Francii, b. 1 and 3.

[9] J. Rychlík, *Zápisky Jána Lichnera z väzenia*, "Historický časopis," 1998, 1, pp. 111–116; J. Jablonický, *Z ilegality do povstania*, Banská Bystrica 2009, pp. 26–31.

[10] NA Praha, f. 100/24, sv. 173, a. j. 1542. Vianočná dohoda, 1943.

[11] For more see M. Syrný, *Slovenská otázka v občiansko-demokratickom odboji na Slovensku v rokoch 1939–1945,* in: *Slovenská republia 19391945 očami mladých historikov IV.*, eds. P. Mičko, M. Šmigeľ, Banská Bystrica 2005, pp. 165–180; M. Syrný, *Občiansky odboj v roku 1944 – s dôrazom na vzťah k Sovietskemu zväzu*, in: *Karpatsko-duklianska operácia – plány, realita, výsledky (1944–2004)*, eds. M. Čaplovič, M. Stanová, Bratislava 2005, pp. 75–83.

In the autumn of 1944, when the restoration of Czechoslovak statehood began to be promoted in practice – whether through a broad-spectrum uprising carried out by the Slovak resistance, or through the Red Army and the Czechoslovak army from the Soviet Union – the plans for the post-war period regarding Slovakia gradually began to be fulfilled, but also to change, under the influence of reality. The wartime dreams of the democratic, predominantly Czech exile around President Beneš were, at first sight, sufficiently satiated by the restoration of Czechoslovak statehood within its pre-Munich borders. Gradually, the gros of post-war internal political changes (building a homogeneous Slavic state without large disloyal minorities, ousting war collaborators from the political spectrum and punishing them) were pushed through. With other issues, however, there has been great disappointment. The first was the Soviet "gangster" annexation of Subcarpathian Rus. Beneš had already been willing to negotiate its transmit to the Soviets with Stalin (among other things, he needed Moscow's decisive support in resolving the German question of claiming the pre-Munich borders, e.g. with Poland, etc.), but by a classical diplomatic agreement.[12]

Beneš and his entourage had to get used to the limits of his position as the only leader returning to power in the Soviet sphere of influence after the war, not only vis-à-vis Stalin and the Soviets, but also vis-à-vis his own Czechoslovak communists. With the presence of the Nazi armies overwhelming the Red Army in Czechoslovakia, the Communists were no longer just a pre-war tormented radical opposition or a forced wartime resistance partner. They were now entering post-war politics as its main protagonist, regardless of their positions in society. In doing so, it was unquestionable that the pre-war electoral response to Communist politics, at the level of 10 to 13 per cent of the collected votes, had risen considerably over the course of the war. This was due both to their own activity in the domestic resistance and to the positive reputation that Moscow and the Communists had gained by defeating Hitler and liberating occupied Europe.[13] Beneš and his exiled entourage thus had to come to terms with the dominance of the communists in the formulation of the post-war government programme. Hepefully the democrats would later succeed in the first post-war elections in regaining the positions that the communists had achieved thanks to the war and the Soviets. In the formation of the post-war government and its programme, it was more than clear that the London exile could only return to post-war Czechoslovakia through Moscow and through an agreement with Gottwald and his Communists. It was almost an ultimatum that if Beneš

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[12] *Československo-sovětské vztahy v diplomatických jednáních*, Sv. 2, ed. I. Šťovíček et al., Praha 1999, pp. 12–20.

[13] M. Syrný, *Slovenskí komunisti v rokoch 1939–1944*, Banská Bystrica 2013, pp. 145–192.

and companions wanted to return to their homeland and have at least some influence on the post-war republic, they had to come to an agreement with the Communists. The Communists could rule Czechoslovakia after the war and they did not have to come to an agreement with Beneš.

The position of the democrats in the domestic Slovak resistance vis-à-vis the communists in Slovakia was considerably more advantageous for them and not as submissive as in the case of Beneš and the London exile. This was mainly due to the different possibilities and position that the Slovak democrats had in the resistance in Slovakia. They were not limited by Moscow's domination and had clearly more prominent positions in society than the Slovak communists, who did not enjoy as much support here as the communists in the Czech resistance and society. The Slovak democrats were united with the Czech non-communists around Beneš by the idea of restoring a democratic Czechoslovakia. Like the government in exile, they were already aware of the necessity of internal political changes, especially in the structure of the political parties, shortly after the Munich catastrophe of 1938. Initially, even in the first months of autonomous Slovakia dominated by the Hlinka Slovak People's Party (HSĽS), they contemplated concentrating the overly fragmented party system into three major parties – left/socialist, conservative-right and centrist. Reducing the number of political parties to the main ideo-political currents was supposed to eliminate the ineffective partisanship and political particularism of interwar Czechoslovakia, which were also blamed for the failure to prevent the catastrophe of 1938. The Slovak agrarians and the remaining non-leftist forces of the Slovak resistance saw their place in the political centre in the early days of the resistance, symbiotically combining left and right, liberal and conservative elements, just as the agrarians had already done.

The left party was to be represented by the united communists and socialists, and the conservative right party by the HSĽS or a similar Christian democratic derivative.[14] After the outbreak of the war, with the increasing pro-German collaboration of the People's Party regime and the growing authoritarianism and repression of the People's Party regime, it later became clear that the HSĽS (or anything resembling it) would not be able to operate after the war. Although there was a kind of internal opposition within the People's Party itself, which discreetly criticized the regime's unbridled pro-German orientation or repression, and was represented by the Minister to the Ambassador Karol Sidor or the parlamentarian Pavel Čarnogurský (both polonophiles), this never manifested itself publicly.[15] They did not get involved in

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[14] J. Rychlík, *Zápisky Jána Lichnera…*, p. 110; M. Syrný, *Slovenskí demokrati ´44–48*, Banská Bystrica 2010, pp. 17–18.

[15] J. Jablonický, *Z ilegality do povstania…*, pp. 18–27, 64–65, 147–151, 165.

the resistance in any way either, thus signing a seal of approval over the political future of their party.

While the Slovak democrats were able to agree with Beneš and the Czech democrats on the basic goal of the resistance, i.e. the restoration of democratic Czechoslovakia, with an emphasis on its traditionally strong democratic aspects, they were paradoxically closer to the communists in reference to many other issues. For the Slovak democrats, the second most important goal of the resistance and the uprising was the achievement of a national equalization with the Czechs in the form of the federalisation of the state. Neither the Slovak nor the Czech communists had any problem with this idea during the war.[16] At the Moscow negotiations concerning the new government and its programme in March 1945, however, the Czech communists were already taking a rather opportunistic compromising position between the radical demands for the immediate federalisation of the state presented by the insurgent Slovak National Council and the federalisation-resisting Beneš and his entourage. They tactically exploited the disputes between the Slovak and Czech democrats in their views on the solution of the position of Slovakia in the restored republic.[17] Gottwald tamed the ambitions of Slovak democrats and communists only into a kind of proviso in the form of the so-called asymmetrical federation (apart from the central authorities, only Slovak national authorities were established). In return, he forced concessions on Beneš and Czech non-Communists in reference to other issues of the post-war government programme,[18] for example, the issue of national committees. After the war, these were to replace the interwar system of state administration and self-government in one common institution of national committees. Their members would be selected by the party according to the results of parliamentary elections at the local level, but in practice they would be subordinated to the Ministry of the Interior in the exercise of state administration.

This system of a kind of Czechoslovak 'soviets' did not sit well with Beneš, who saw it as an attempt to dominate regional politics by the Communists.[19] The London exile supposed to use the underground national committees (set up in the resistance) just for the "revolutionary" period of transition from wartime to normal govern-

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[16] M. Syrný, *Slovenskí komunisti v rokoch 1939–1944…*, pp. 23–30, 134–138, 162–163.

[17] *Cesta ke Květnu*, ed. M. Klimeš et al., Praha 1965, pp. 425–431.

[18] Compare H. Ripka, *Únorová tragedie*, Brno 1999, pp. 43–46.

[19] This was eventually confirmed by the activities of some of the more radical communists in eastern Slovakia in the first months after the liberation. Slovenský národný archív (SNA) Bratislava, f. Ústredný výbor KSS – Generálny tajomník (ÚV KSS – GT), b. 2122. Záznam o porade ústredného tajomníka s. Friša s oblastným tajomníka KSS v Michalovciach s. Dávidom o práci strany a národných výboroch z 27. 4. 1945.

ance of the country (which was till the establishment of the parliament).[20] With the passage of time, "Londoniers" preferred a more established pre-war bureaucratic mechanism. In Moscow, however, Beneš and his supporters remained alone in their opposition to the popular national committees because the Slovak democrats also accepted the new system of state administration and self-government. This was mainly because they knew from the experience of the two months of the Slovak insurgent state that they had roughly the same positions in the insurgent national committees as the communists or the social democrats did. Therefore, they did not see any serious threat to democracy and their post-war political positions.[21]

On the other hand, however, it was evident that the Slovak or Czech democrats and the Slovak and Czech communists differed most in the emphasis they placed on the breadth or depth of the post-war changes and reforms that were being prepared. Without much difficulty, they agreed in general terms on a priority foreign policy orientation towards the Soviet Union. They accepted the reforms of the party-political (retaining only the parties active in the resistance) and economic systems (land reform, nationalisation in industry) or to eliminate the influence of the Germans and Hungarians. However, they differed considerably in how each group imagined this. The communists (with the support of the social democrats in the economic and social reforms) advocated a more radical character of the planned changes. The Slovak and Czech democrats opposed both the more intensive land reform or nationalisation advocated by the communists, as well as more radical retrenchment or greater influence of trade unions on running enterprises.

However, when the programme of the post-war government was adopted, these differences were not yet apparent and, paradoxically, in later developments they became apparent significantly earlier in Slovakia than on the Czech lands. This was mainly due to the fact that some parts of Slovakia already crossed the front at the end of 1944 and that since the beginning of 1945 civil administration already began to function in the liberated east of Slovakia. Thus, since January and February 1945, a new post-war Czechoslovak regime was already being re-established in the east of Slovakia, although it must be said that it had no influence from the central Czechoslovak authorities. In any case, for the developments in Slovakia up to the middle of 1945, it is true that the post-war political life in Slovakia started half a year earlier than on the Czech lands. Although not in its entire territory (the liberation took place since October 1944 until May 1945), at least

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[20] Archiv Ústavu T. G. Masaryka (A ÚTGM) Praha, zbierka Vladimír Klecanda, a.j. 66. Návrh ústavného dekrétu o národných výboroch zo 14. 9. 1944.

[21] A MSNP Banská Bystrica, f. VI, b. 2. Smernice Povereníctva vnútra o organizácii a kompetenciách národných výborov, 27. 9. 1944; M. Syrný, *Slovenskí demokrati ´44–48…*, pp. 189–193.

in its liberated parts, differences between the war plans of the various political groups of the resistance were already beginning to emerge, and the first major disputes about the manner and depth of the implementation of the post-war reforms were emerging.

Shortly after the crossing of the front, in fact as early as in December 1944, the first national committees as institutions of local power were formed in the territory liberated from German and Hungarian troops.[22] The post-war reality in eastern Slovakia, however, was markedly different from that of the uprising, where a parity agreement between democrats and communists (i.e. the united communist and the socialist left) operated in the governance of the state. In the liberated east of the country, local and later district national committees were no longer formed on the basis of the agreement of the former insurgent political parties, but were based on the local conditions of the moment. These were strongly influenced by the presence of Soviet military and intelligence authorities, but also by the activities of the awareness (mostly pro-Communist) officers of the Czechoslovak army-in-exile formed in the Soviet Union.[23] Thus it happened that at least two thirds of the national committees in liberated eastern Slovakia were initially dominated by communists. As far as the party affiliation of the chairmen of the national committees was concerned, the communists dominated even more.[24]

This hegemony of the communists in the local administration was also due to the virtual absence of Democratic Party structures in eastern Slovakia. The unification of non-leftist resistance groups in the Democratic Party during the uprising in September 1944 did not find its echo in the resistance in eastern Slovakia because it was already in the combat zone of the defending German troops and the population had completely different worries about how to deal with resistance politics. The Communist pendants in the national committees in the liberated east of Slovakia were, therefore, initially only unorganised democratic non-party members. It was only with the arrival of the first top representatives of the Democratic Party in early 1945 and the organisation of the first meetings with the representatives of the local non-communist resistance that the idea of not renewing the previous inter-war partisanship was accepted there as well. Thus, while in February 1945 the communists had already controlled most of the national committees, had had their district party secretariats

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[22] According to the Czechoslovak-Soviet agreement on the administration of the liberated territory of 8 May 1944, the front hinterland up to the depth of 70 km fell under the jurisdiction of the authorities of the liberating Red Army, and only beyond this zone could the political administration be carried out by the Czechoslovak authorities. *Cesta ke Květnu…*, pp. 125–127.

[23] V. Ryšavý, *Žilina a SNP*, New York 1981, pp. 115–116; Š. Šutaj, *Občianske politické strany na Slovensku 1944–1948*, Bratislava 1999, pp. 44–45; *Cesta ke Květnu…*, p. 459–463.

[24] J. Jablonický, *Slovensko na prelome*, Bratislava 1965, pp. 198–221.

and even their party periodical,[25] the Slovak Democrats were still establishing their first party organisations and forming a provisional party leadership in the liberated east of the country.[26] In the party organization of the Democrats, they were sometimes troubled by the more radical communists, who accused them of reactionism and collaboration with the People's Party regime or the Germans. As a result, several dozen democratic activists were deported by the Soviet authorities to forced labour in the Soviet Union, or at least had to give up their positions in the national committees.[27] In general, however, the Communists tended to respect the previously agreed rules and the right of the Democrats to have more relevant representation on the national committees. Occasionally, some democrats – and not only experienced hardliners like Vavro Šrobár, who had no problem replacing unilaterally pro-Communist national committees with unilaterally pro-democratic ones – even dared to oppose or ignore local Soviet authorities (e.g., to release some arrested people accused of collaboration, etc.).[28] However, these were rather isolated cases, which could appear only after the consolidation of the position of the Slovak National Council or the Czechoslovak post-war authorities after February 1945. Until then, the Soviet military authorities did not respect the rights of the domestic political authorities very much.

Even before the arrival of the Czechoslovak government in the liberated Košice as the capital of eastern Slovakia, where in April 1945 the government and its programme were inaugurated, the representatives of the Slovak National Council (composed of communists and democrats in parity) decided to fully demonstrate their exclusive national powers over Slovakia. They began to issue the first decrees on post-war reforms. Naturally, this was not met with much sympathy from the central Czechoslovak government and especially from Beneš. The truth was, however, that at that time Slovakia was virtually ungoverned by any central Czechoslovak political authorities because its natural environment, i.e. the capital Prague, was still deeply German. The Slovak National Council, for example, prepared its own land reform.[29] It differed from the plans for its solution adopted

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[25] SNA Bratislava, f. ÚV KSS – GT, b. 2119. Hlásenia regionálnych štruktúr KSS ústrediu strany, január-február 1945.

[26] See M. Syrný, *Slovenskí demokrati ´44–48…*, pp. 32–33.

[27] Štátny archív (ŠA) Banská Bystrica, f. ONV, b. 1, file 182/1945 prez.; ŠA Banská Bystrica, f. ONV, b. 5, file 709/1945 prez.; A MSNP Banská Bystrica, f. VI., b. 3, file 20/67.

[28] Архів Служби безпеки України Київ, ф. 13 (Колекція друкованих видань КДБ УРСР – Закарпатська обл. Про політичний рух на території закарпатської України в 30–40 роках), 928А. Закарпатская Украина. Литерное дело. 1944–1953 гг., Т. 2, с. 137–138.

[29] *Zbierka nariadení Slovenskej národnej rady. 1945*, Bratislava 1945. Nariadenie č. 4/1945 o konfiškovaní a urýchlenom rozdelení pôdohospodárskeho majetku Nemcov, Maďarov, ako aj zradcov a nepriateľov slovenského národa.

in exile in London, but it also did not in all respects suit the Czech communists around Gottwald. At first sight, it was too revolutionary and gave the impression that it had been prepared and pushed through by the Communists. However, the opposite was true. Its radicalism was directed only against the German, Hungarian and larger landowners associated with the war regime. However, above all, unlike the land reform promoted and implemented in the Czech lands, the Slovak land reform was mainly prepared by the democrats. When it comes to the policy of their interwar agrarian predecessors, they did not let its management be taken out of their hands, despite communist resentment. They did not allow its widespread application in the sense of the policy of "where there is a will, there is a way." Even the later Democrat-dominated agrarian sector abided strictly by the law and did not allow the allocation of nationalised land to anyone, but preferably to already farming peasants,[30] i.e., the major supporters of the Democratic Party. In return, the Communists sought to assert their influence, particularly in the security sector, where they dominated the Interior Ministry. However, even here it was more of a compromise between the wishes of the Communists and the Democrats. The Communists did push for greater recruitment of former partisans (mostly pro-Communist) into the security services. However, the bulk of the uniformed police continued to be former gendarmes, tending more towards the Democrats. For the future, however, the communist control of the secret police, to which the democrats had not initially paid due attention, proved crucial in terms of the struggle for power.

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[30] *Demokratická strana a problémy dneška*, Bratislava 1945, pp. 24–27.

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Marek Syrný

Ruch oporu i emigranci: plany na okres powojenny a rzeczywistość polityczna na Słowacji po przekroczeniu słowackiego frontu przez Armię Czerwoną

Streszczenie

W artykule opisano sposób, w jaki czechosłowacki (szczególnie słowacki) ruch oporu, skupiony wokół prezydenta Edvarda Beneša, wyobrażał sobie powojenny rozwój Czechosłowacji, a zwłaszcza Słowacji. Ukazano, jak wizje te zderzyły się z rzeczywistością polityczną, która uległa zmianie po wkroczeniu Armii Czerwonej. W tekście główny akcent położono na kwestię zarządzania oporem na Słowacji (współpracę i rozbieżności między oporem demokratycznym i komunistycznym, krajowym i zagranicznym), tworzenie lokalnych organów władzy w postaci komitetów narodowych oraz budowę powojennego systemu politycznego Słowacji w pierwszej połowie roku po wyzwoleniu spod okupacji niemieckiej. Artykuł oparto na analizie źródeł: dokumentów archiwalnych, współczesnej prasy i edycji dokumentów. Wykorzystano także wspomnienia czołowych postaci słowackiego ruchu oporu i rządu emigracyjnego w Londynie oraz wybraną literaturę przedmiotu.

Słowa kluczowe: II wojna światowa, ruch oporu, stosunki czechosłowackie, komuniści, demokraci, powojenna Czechosłowacja