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Hierarchy as the Strength and Weakness of Communist Rule. The Legacy of Communist Rule IV: A Volume of Papers from the Seminar Held in Prague on September 11–12, 2003

Martin Hájek (ed.)

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3. COMMUNIST RULE AND INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY

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The Legacy of Communist Rule IV: A Volume of Papers from the Seminar Held in Prague on September 11–12, 2003

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Abstract

This volume is comprised of the papers that were presented at the seminar "Hierarchy as the Strength and Weakness of Communist Rule", which was held on 11–12 September 2003 at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University in Prague. The general purpose of the seminar was to reveal and interpret, in so far as possible without misrepresentation or bias, the procedures on which communist rule of society was based at the end of the 1980s. The papers delivered at the seminar and presented here in this volume can be divided into three thematic groups. The first group is made up of investigations into the methods and strategies of communist rule in general. This refers mainly to the legal framework of this rule, how it fits in among the modern forms of government, which can only with difficulty separate the political from the economic and which often feature all-encompassing planning ambitions. This group of papers also covers the issue of the character of the rules and orders in "really existing" socialism. The second group is made up of papers devoted to analysing the form of rule at the highest level, the district level and the local level. The final and concluding section is comprised of one paper dealing with the subject of communist rule and individual and collective memory.

Keywords

Communist rule, real socialism, hierarchy, communist party

Hierarchie jako přednost i slabina komunistického vládnutí. Dědictví komunistické vlády IV: sborník příspěvků ze semináře konaného 11. a 12. září 2003 v Praze

Martin Hájek (ed.)

Abstrakt

Sborník sestává z příspěvků přednesených na semináři *Hierarchie jako síla i slabina komunistického vládnutí*, který se konal ve dnech 11.–12. září 2003 na Fakultě sociálních věd UK. Celkovým záměrem semináře bylo pokud možno nezkresleně a bez předsudků ukázat a interpretovat procedury komunistického ovládání společnosti na konci osmdesátých let. Přednesené příspěvky resp. ve sborníku shromážděné texty lze rozdělit do třech tematických skupin. První skupinu tvoří zkoumání metod a strategií komunistického vládnutí v obecnosti. Jde zejména o právní rámování tohoto vládnutí, jeho příslušnost k moderním formám vlády, které jen velmi těžko oddělují politické od ekonomického a mají často všeplánovací ambice. V neposlední řadě sem patří i problematika charakteru pravidel a řádů v reálném socialismu. Druhou skupinu tvoří příspěvky rozebírající podoby vládnutí na nejvyšší, okresní a místní úrovni. Konečně závěrečný pomyslný oddíl sestává z jednoho příspěvku zabývajícího se komunistickým vládnutím a individuální a kolektivní pamětí.

Klíčová slova

komunistická vláda, reálný socialismus, hierarchie, komunistická strana

Hierarchie als Vorteil und Schwäche kommunistischer Herrschaft.
Das Erbe der komunistischen Herrschaft IV: Ein Sammelband von Beiträgen zu einem Seminar, das am 11. und 12. September 2003 in Prag stattfand

Martin Hájek (Hrg.)

Abstraktum

Der Sammelband ist aus Beiträgen zusammengesetzt, die beim Seminar *Hierarchie als Vorteil und Schwäche kommunistischen Herrschens* vorgetragen wurden, welches am 11. und 12. September 2003 in Prag in der Fakultät für Sozialwissenschaften der Karlsuniversität stattfand. Das Ziel des Seminars war es, ohne Vorurteile und, soweit es geht, unverzerrt die kommunistischen Machtprozeduren zur Beherrschung der Gesellschaft am Ende der achtziger Jahre zu interpretieren und aufzuzeigen. Die vorgetragenen Beiträge bzw. die hier zusammengestellten Texte kann man in drei thematische Gruppen aufteilen. Die erste Gruppe bilden Untersuchungen zu Methoden und Strategien kommunistischer Herrschaft allgemein. Es geht insbesondere um den Rechtsrahmen dieser Herrschaft und die Zugehörigkeit zu modernen Herrschaftsformen, die nur schwer Politisches von Wirtschaftlichem zu trennen vermögen und die Ambitionen haben, alles zu planen. Nicht zuletzt gehört hierzu auch die Problematik des Charakters von Regeln und Ordnungen im realen Sozialismus. Die zweite Gruppe bilden Beiträge, die die Gestalt der Herrschaft auf höchster, auf Kreis- und auf Ortsebene untersuchen. Die letzte Gruppe besteht aus einem Beitrag, der sich mit der kommunistischen Herrschaft und dem individuellen und kollektiven Gedächtnis befasst.

Schlüsselbegriffe

Kommunistische Herrschaft, Realer Socialismus, Hierarchie, Kommunistische Partei

Introduction

Normalisation did not provide a true reflection of the communist regime. Nor did the transitional reflection generated by the Velvet Revolution and the post-communist transformation create a realistic picture of what communist rule was. *Hierarchy as the Strength and Weakness of Communist Rule* is the title of a seminar that attempted to put together a more faithful portrait of communist rule. That effort is reproduced here in the chapters of this edition of *Sociological Studies*, which are based on the papers presented at the seminar. The authors share the belief that some of the key features of modern rule can be examined in a study of communist rule and the knowledge resulting from such a study may provide better facilities for tackling the issue of institutionalised irresponsibility that accompanies modern rule/government.

The central topic of the seminar followed the objective of the research project "The Legacy of Communist Rule". That project aimed to conduct a sociological study of Czechoslovak "really existing socialism", which, in so far as possible without distortion or bias, would describe and theoretically pinpoint the procedures that lay behind the communist control over society at the end of the 1980s. This description was intended to serve as the foundation for studying the possible manifestations of the persistence of these forms of rule in the post-revolution period.

The authors were particularly interested in discovering the role that hierarchies played in the relatively stable institutional functioning of Czechoslovak real socialism at the end of the 1980s. In the research, government and rule were defined as the execution of authority, or of other forms of power, in hierarchical relationships. Government or rule defined as such hierarchically permeates society from the top down. Democratic centralism and the procedures of nomenklatura administration rendered hierarchies – despite the system's proclaimed egalitarianism – the means and the objective of communist rule. After 1989, once the Communist Party no longer occupied its exclusive position, the "totality" of these hierarchies could no longer be applied. Nevertheless, numerous indicators suggest that these earlier procedures and methods of rule, like a variety of other forms of institutionalised irresponsibility, succeeded in adjusting to the new circumstances and managed with relative ease to colonise the newly introduced forms of constitutional rule. The authors herein argue that this is a result of the fact that communist rule was founded on specific forms of controlling what had originally been constitutional institutions, and in the new post-revolution circumstances these forms can be useful for a variety of different interest groups. Communism was the school in which to learn how to rule undemocratically while maintaining the façade of democracy.

The seminar, which was held on 11–12 September 2003 at the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University in Prague just prior to the conclusion of the grant project (no. 403/01/1564), had three main

objectives: to contribute to furthering international co-operation, to critically evaluate the theoretical work resulting from the project, and to open up a discussion of issues relating to communist rule, enabling a deeper and more precise interpretation of the methods of rule in Czechoslovak real socialism described in the research.

The chapters in this volume, which are based on the papers presented at the seminar, are loosely divided into three thematic groups. The first section deals with the subject of the principles and methods of communist rule in general. Jiří Kabele demonstrates how socialist legality served to support the execution of state power primarily through the weakening of the importance ascribed to rules and laws and through the considerable strengthening of the significance of sub-legal procedures and unwritten rules. This gave rise to an environment capable of "legally" asserting the leading role of the Communist Party. Tomáš Holeček describes the assigning of Party tasks at the regional level of communist government, highlighting some specific features of this process, e.g. the repeated issuing of orders to execute otherwise obligatory tasks, which in the author's view is a feature common to modern forms of rule in general. Lubomír Mlčoch examines the "reverse control pyramid" in the economy of real socialism. The core of his argument is that the exaggerated ambitiousness of the social experiment wherein the planning and running of the entire economy and society were centralised rendered the control pyramid inoperative and at a certain stage in the evolution of the system produced the contradictory – but nonetheless self-preserving – forces of the "reverse control pyramid". Jiří Kabele concludes the discussion in this section with his analysis of communist rules and codes. Drawing in part on previous research he points to a typical feature of communist codes: the omission of certain procedural specifications of the relationships within the hierarchy and the space that consequently emerges and is defended for implementing democratic centralism and the communist nomenklatura administration.

The second thematic group of texts analyses the forms of communist rule at various levels of the hierarchy. Martin Hájek argues that communist rule at the highest level was actually a dual rule – over the party and society – wherein the attempt to control both at the same time meant that the communist leadership was confronted with difficult dilemmas. For example, a purge of the party leadership also meant a direct and indirect purge in the highest state organs, and vice versa; it was simply not possible to execute one without the other. Zdena Vajdová focuses on the gradual transformations that communist rule went through at the district level, demonstrated, for example, by the kind and level of participation in the various types of district party meetings and even by stylistic transformation of the participants' speeches and the discussions at meetings. Lukáš Valeš examines the role of local and municipal national committees and their position in the system of government in real socialism, noting that these organs were unique in the system "owing both to their legal standing and to their ability to successfully engage in local administration even citizens who at the time were outside the political structure, but also and primarily due to their steady pragmatism in managing municipal and town affairs." In his view this political pragmatism become particularly evident during the demise of the communist regime. The next two contributions look at communist rule in Slovakia. Simon Smith observes some developments in the regime of local governance that appeared in connection with the new patterning of central and marginal space, wherein "instrumental" regimes were adopted by central places with dominant industries, while "organic" regimes often emerged in marginalised places. Nevertheless, in the author's view, the development of a particular area remained dependent on its position in the administrative hierarchy. Josef Kandert examines the position of communists and communist government in traditional village communities. From the perspective of ethnographic research he provides a detailed descrip-

tion of the structure of the villages he studied during the communist period and the role of the communists within them. He argues that each community tended to be divided into two rival factions competing for power, while communists could be present of either or both of these factions.

The third and final section focuses on communist rule and individual and collective memory in the contribution by Jiřina Šiklová. Here the author uses the example of the cadre questionnaires people were required to fill in regularly during the communist period and analyses individual and group memory and the act of forgetting or distorting the past. While through the cadre questionnaires the regime was able to exercise systematic influence on the memory of the individual, the forms and consequences of these "self-evaluations" varied, and the author focuses on this subject also in her contribution.

Martin Hájek

Úvodní slovo

Normalizační zrcadlo nevypovídalo o komunistickém režimu pravdu. Ani přerodové zrcadlo sametové revoluce a transformace nám nenabízí realistický obraz o komunistickém vládnutí. Seminář *Hierarchie jako síla i slabina komunistického vládnutí* se pokusil nabídnout věrnější obrazy komunistického vládnutí. Domníváme se, že na komunistickém vládnutí můžeme studovat některé klíčové rysy moderního vládnutí a že dosažené znalosti nás mohou lépe vybavit pro boj proti institucionalizované neodpovědnosti, která moderní vládnutí provází.

Hlavní téma semináře se odvíjelo od cíle výzkumného projektu *Dědictví komunistické vlády*. Je jím sociologické studium českého reálného socialismu, které pokud možno nezkresleně a bez předsudků popíše i teoreticky uchopí procedury komunistického ovládání společnosti (uskutečňování její vládnoucí úlohy) na konci osmdesátých let. Takový popis by se měl stát východiskem pro studium možných podob polistopadové setrvačnosti těchto forem vládnutí.

Zajímal nás podíl hierarchií na poměrně stabilním institucionálním fungování českého reálného socialismu na konci osmdesátých let.Vládu či vládnutí jsme si definovali jako výkon pravomocí či jinak získaných mocí ve vztazích nadřízenosti. Takto vláda hierarchicky prostupuje celou společnost od shora dolů. Uplatňování demokratického centralismu a procedury spravování nomenklatury činily – navzdory deklarovanému rovnostářství – z hierarchií zároveň prostředek i cíl komunistického vládnutí. Po listopadu 1989 se již nemohly bez výsadního postavení komunistické strany uplatňovat ve své „totálnosti". Nicméně celá řada indicií nasvědčuje tomu, že dříve zavedené způsoby a procedury vládnutí stejně jako nejrůznější formy institucionalizované neodpovědnosti se zdárně přizpůsobovaly novým poměrům a mohly poměrně snadno kolonizovat nové zaváděné ústavní formy vládnutí. Domníváme se, že je to způsobené tím, že komunistické vládnutí bylo založeno na specifických formách ovládání původně ústavních institucí, které v nových poměrech mohly přijít vhod nejrůznějším zájmovým skupinám. Komunismus byl školou, jak při zachování fasády demokracie vládnout nedemokraticky.

Seminář se konal ve dnech 11.–12. září 2003 v hlavní budově Fakulty sociálních věd UK v Praze 1 na Smetanově nábřeží ještě před ukončením grantového projektu (403/01/1564). Sloužil především třem účelům: měl přispět k rozvinutí mezinárodní spolupráce, ke kritickému zhodnocení především teoretických prací vzniklých v rámci projektu a v neposlední míře též k diskuzi otevřených problémů komunistického vládnutí, která umožní zpřesnit a prohloubit souhrnnou interpretaci popsaných způsobů vládnutí v československém reálném socialismu.

Příspěvky přednesené na semináři může volně rozdělit do tří tematických skupin. První skupinu tvoří obecná problematika metod a strategií komunistického vládnutí. Jiří Kabele ve svém textu demonstruje, jak socialistické právní rámování poskytovalo oporu výkonu státní moci především

oslabením důležitosti pravidel-zákonů a výrazným posílením významu podzákonných norem a nepsaných pravidel. Vzniklo tím prostředí, které garantovalo „zákonné" uplatňování vedoucí úlohy komunistické strany. Tomáš Holeček popsal zadávání stranických úkolů na krajské úrovni komunistické vlády. Ukazuje na některé charakteristické rysy zadávání úkolů, např. opakované nařizování toho, co již stejně je povinné, které jsou podle jeho názoru vlastní modernímu vládnutí obecně. Převrácené řídící pyramidy v ekonomikách reálného socialismu objasňuje ve svém příspěvku Lubomír Mlčoch. Jádrem jeho argumentu je myšlenka, že „přehnaná ambicióznost společenského experimentu s plánováním a řízením celé ekonomiky a společnosti měla za následek nefunkčnost ‚řídící pyramidy' a v určitém stadiu evoluce systému i zrod protichůdných – ale také vlastně i sebezáchovných – sil ‚převrácené řídící pyramidy'." Tematiku obecných metod a strategií komunistického vládnutí uzavírá Jiří Kabele svou analýzou komunistických řádů a předpisů. V určité návaznosti na svůj předchozí příspěvek ukazuje na typický rys komunistických řádů – opomíjení jistých procedurálních specifikací vztahů uvnitř hierarchií a tím vzniklý a hájený prostor pro uplatnění demokratického centralismu a komunistické správy nomenklatury.

Druhá skupina textů rozebírá problematiku strategií komunistické vlády na různých hierarchických úrovních. Martin Hájek se pokouší argumentovat, že komunistické vládnutí na nejvyšší úrovni bylo vlastně dvojí vládnutí – straně a společnosti, přičemž snaha zvládnout obojí současně vedla nejvyšší vedení často k těžko řešitelným dilematům. Například čistka ve stranickém vedení znamenala i přímo i nepřímo čistku v nejvyšších státních orgánech a naopak; udělat jedno bez druhého prostě nebylo možné. Zdena Vajdová se při svém vystoupení soustředila na postupné proměny, kterými procházelo komunistické vládnutí na okresní úrovni. Dokládá to například na množství a druhu účastníků různých stranických schůzí nebo na stylové proměně příspěvků a diskusních vystoupení. Roli místních a městských národních výborů a jejich postavení v sytému vlády v reálném socialismu popisuje Lukáš Valeš. Zjistil, že „byly výjimečné jak svým právním postavením, schopností zapojit do místní správy i občany jsoucí mimo tehdejší politické struktury, tak především věcným pragmatismem při řízení obcí a měst." Tento politický pragmatismus národních výborů se podle jeho názoru plně projevoval zvláště ke konci komunistického režimu. Další dva příspěvky se věnují vládnutí a komunistům na Slovensku. Simon Smith zjistil některé nové tendence v režimu lokálního vládnutí, které se objevily v souvislosti s novým uspořádáním jádrového a okrajového prostoru. Jednak centrální území s dominantními průmyslovými podniky měla sklon přijmout „instrumentální" režim, zatímco pro marginální území byly charakteristické „organické" režimy. Nicméně i tak byl, podle autora, rozvoj určité oblasti závislý na postavení v administrativní hierarchii. Josefa Kanderta zajímalo postavení a vláda komunistů v tradičních vesnických komunitách. Ve svém příspěvku podává detailní a na etnografickém výzkumu založený popis politické struktury zkoumaných vesnic a role komunistů v nich. Tvrdí, že komunita byla vždy rozdělena do dvou o moc soupeřících klik, přičemž v obou mohli být komunisté zastoupeni.

Závěrečnou část sborníku tvoří text zabývající se vztahem komunistického vládnutí a pamětí jednotlivců i kolektivit. Esej Jiřiny Šiklové vychází z analýzy vlastní minulosti těch, kteří zapomněli nebo se snaží zapomenout, že komunistické vládnutí udržovali když už ničím jiným, tak poctivým vyplňováním kádrových dotazníků. V textu uvádí různé podoby a přehlížené důsledky těchto „sebehodnocení".

Martin Hájek

Ein Wort zur Einführung

Der Spiegel der Normalisierung zeigte nicht die Wahrheit über das kommunistische Regime. Nicht einmal der Spiegel der samtenen Revolution und Transformation bietet uns ein realistisches Bild der kommunistischen Herrschaft. Das Seminar *Hierarchie als Vorteil und Schwäche kommunistischer Herrschaft* versucht, ein getreueres Bild kommunistischer Herrschaft zu zeichnen. Wir meinen, dass wir an ihr einige Schlüsselelemente modernen Herrschens studieren können und dass die gewonnenen Erkenntnisse uns für den Kampf gegen institutionalisierte Unverantwortlichkeit, die modernes Regieren begleitet, ausstatten.

Das Hauptthema des Seminars leitete sich von den Zeilen des Forschungsprojekts *Das Erbe der komunistischen Herrschaft* ab. Es ist das soziologische Studium des tschechischen Realsozialismus, welches, ohne Vorurteile und soweit es geht unverzerrt die kommunistischen Machtprozeduren zur Beherrschung der Gesellschaft (die Erfüllung ihrer Regierungsaufgaben) am Ende der achtziger Jahre interpretiert, aufzuzeigen und theoretisch zu erfassen. Eine solche Beschreibung sollte den Ausgangspunkt für das Studium möglicher fortdauernder Arten dieser Herrschaftsformen auch nach der Novemberrevolution darstellen.

Uns interessierte der Anteil von Hierarchien am weitgehend stabilen institutionellen Funktionieren des tschechischen Realsozialismus am Ende der achtziger Jahre. Herrschaft bzw. Herrschen defininierten wir als Ausübung von Befugnissen oder anders erworbener Macht aus der Position eines Vorgesetzten heraus. So durchdringt die Herrschaft hierarchisch von unten nach oben die gesamte Gesellschaft. Die Anwendung des demokratischen Zentralismus und die Prozeduren der Regelung der Nomenklatura machten aus der Hierarchie, trotz deklarierter Gleichheit, sowohl das Mittel als auch den Zweck kommunistischer Herrschaft. Nach dem November 1989 konnten sie sich, trotz der bedeututenden Stellung der kommunistischen Partei, nicht mehr in ihrer „Totalität" bezahlt machen. Trotzdem gibt es eine Reihe von Indizien dafür, dass diese früher eingeführten Methoden und Prozeduren der Herrschaft, wie verschiedenste Formen institutionalisierter Unverantwortung, sich erfolgreich an die neuen Verhältnisse angepasst haben und relativ einfach neu eingeführte verfassungsmäßige Formen der Herrschaft kolonialisieren konnten. Wir glauben, dass das dadurch bedingt ist, dass die kommunistische Herrschaft auf spezifischen Formen der Beherrschung ursprünglich reiner Verfassungsinstitutionen begründet war, die in den neuen Verhältnissen verschiedensten Interessengruppen gelegen kamen. Der Kommunismus war die Schule, wie man unter Wahrung der demokratischen Fassade undemokratisch herrschen konnte.

Das Seminar fand am 11. und 12. September 2003 im Hauptgebäude der Fakultät der Sozialwissenschaften der Karlsuniversität in Prag 1 am Smetanaufer, noch vor der Beendigung des Forschungsprojekts (403/01/1564), statt.

Es diente drei Zwecken: der Entwicklung zwischenstaatlicher Zusammenarbeit, der kritischen Bewertung, hauptsächlich der theoretischen Arbeiten, die im Rahmen des Projekte entstanden und schließlich der Diskussion offener Probleme der kommunistischen Herrschaft, die es ermöglicht, die Gesamtinterpretation der beschriebenen Arten der Herrschaft im tschechoslowakischen Realsozialismus zu vertiefen und zu präzisieren.

Die vorgetragenen Beiträge kann man in drei thematische Gruppen aufteilen. Die erste Gruppe bilden Untersuchugen zu Methoden und Strategien kommunistischer Herrschaft allgemein. Jiří Kabele demonstriert in seinem Text, wie der sozialistische Rechtsrahmen die staatliche Machtausübung unterstützte, insbesondere indem die Wichtigkeit von Regeln bzw. Gesetzen abgeschwächt und die Bedeutung untergeordneter Normen und ungeschriebener Regeln verstärkt wurden. Es entstand damit ein Umfeld, welches das „rechtliche" Geltendmachen der führenden Aufgabe der kommunistischen Partei garantierte. Tomáš Holeček beschrieb die Vergabe von Parteiaufgaben auf Bezirksebene kommunistischer Regierung. Er zeigt einige charakteristische Eigenschaften der vergebenen Aufgaben auf, wie zB. das wiederholte Anordnen von etwas, was sowieso Pflicht ist, das seiner Meinung nach für moderne Herrschaft allgemein gilt. Die Umkehrung der Leitungsfunktionspyramide in den Ökonomien des realen Sozialismus erklärt Lubomír Mlčoch in seinem Beitrag. Der Kern seines Argumentes ist der Gedanke, dass die „übertriebenen Ambitionen des gesellschaftlichen Experiments mit dem Planen und Steuern der gesamten Ökonomie und Gesellschaft das Nichtfunktionieren der ‚Leitungsfunktionspyramide' zur Folge hatte und in einem gewissen Evolutionsstadium des Systems sogar gegenläufige, aber eigentlich auch selbsterhaltende, Kräfte der ‚umgekehrten Leitungfunktionspyramide' entwickelte". Die Thematik der allgemeinen Methoden und Strategien der kommunistischen Herrschaft beendet Jiří Kabele mit seiner Analyse kommunistischer Reglements und Verordnungen. In gewissem Zusammenhang mit seinem vorangehenden Beitrag zeigt er eine typische Eigenheit kommunistischer Reglements, nämlich die Außerachtlassung bestimmter prozeduraler Spezifikationen der Beziehungen innerhalb der Machthierarchie und dem damit verbunden entstandenen und verteidigten Raum für die Geltendmachung des demokratischen Zentralismus und der kommunistischen Leitung der Nomenklatura.

Die zweite Textgruppe beschäftigt sich mit der Problematik der Strategien kommunistischer Herrschaft auf verschiedenen Ebenen der Hierarchie. Martin Hájek versucht zu argumentieren, dass die kommunistische Herrschaft auf höchster Ebene eigentlich eine Doppelherschaft von Partei und Gesellschaft war, wobei der Versuch beides gleichzeitig zu bewältigen, die oberste Führung oft in schwer aufzulösende Dilemma führte. So bedeutete eine Säuberung innerhalb der Parteiführung direkt und indirekt auch eine Säuberung innerhalb der höchsten staatlichen Organe und umgekehrt. Das eine ohne das andere durchzuführen war nicht möglich.

Zdena Vajdová konzentrierte sich bei ihrem Vortrag auf die Veränderungen, die das kommunistische Herrschaftssytstem auf Kreisebene durchmachte. Sie belegt das anhand der Art und Menge der Teilnehmer an den Parteitreffen oder an den Veränderungen im Stil der Rede- und Diskussionsbeiträge. Die Rolle der Orts- und der städtischen Volkskomitees und ihre Stellung im Herrschaftssystem des realen Sozialismus beschreibt Lukáš Valeš. Er stellte fest, dass sie „eine Ausnahmestellung innehatten, was sowohl ihre rechtliche Position und ihr Vermögen betraf, in die örtliche Verwaltung auch Bürger einzubinden, die in die damaligen politischen Strukturen nicht eingebunden waren, als auch durch ihren sachlichen Pragmatismus bei der Leitung der Städte und Gemeinden". Dieser politische Pragmatismus trat seiner Meinung nach insbesondere gegen Ende des kommunistischen Regimes zu Tage. Zwei weitere Beiträge widmen sich der Herrschaft und

den Kommunisten in der Slowakei. Simon Smith stellte einige neue Tendezen bei der lokalen Herrschaft des Regime fest, die im Zusammenhang mit der Neuordnung der Zentral- und Randgebiete auftraten. Auf der einen Seite hatten die Hauptgebiete mit ihren dominaten produzierenden Industrien die Neigung, ein „instrumentelles" Regime zu akzeptieren, wohingegen auf der anderen Seite für Randgebiete „organische" Regime charakteristisch waren. Trorzdem war, dem Autor nach, die Entwicklung einer Region auch so von ihrer Stellung in der administrativen Hierarchie abhängig. Josef Kandert interessierte sich für die Stellung und die kommunistische Herrschaft in ländlichen Kommunitäten. In seinem Beitrag gibt er eine detaillierte, auf ethnografische Forschung gestützte, Beschreibung der politischen Struktur der untersuchten Dörfer und der Rolle der Kommunisten in ihnen. Er behauptet, dass eine Kommunität immer in zwei, um die Macht kämpfende, Cliquen aufgeteilt war, wobei in beiden Kommunisten vertreten sein konnten.

Den abschließenden Teil des Sammelbandes bildet Text, der sich mit der kommunistischen Herrschaft und dem individuellen bzw. kollektiven Gedächtnis beschäftigt. Das Essay von Jiřina Šiklová geht von der Analyse der eigenen Vergangenheit derer aus, die vergessen haben, oder versuchen zu vergessen, dass sie die kommunistischen Machthaber unterstützten, wenn auch nur durch nichts anderes, als durch das ehrliche Ausfüllen der Kaderfragebögen. Im Text führt sie verschiedene Formen und die übersehenen Folgen solcher „Selbstbewertungen" an.

Martin Hájek

1. The Principles and Methods of Communist Rule in General

1.1 How Socialist Legality Served to Guarantee the Influence of the Communist Party and Socialist Organisations

Jiří Kabele

Abstract

Under "real socialism" the normative framework governing the activities of people and organisations comprised four hierarchically ranked levels: (i) the constructivist digest of regulations and legal provisions (Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, international Eastern bloc treaties, the constitutional Declaration, the first chapter of the Constitution on the "Social Arrangement", and the post-August 1968 "Lessons from the Crisis … "), (ii) the other parts of the Constitution, (iii) socialist legal codes, and (iv) the rest of the laws and regulations. The Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia defined the leading role of the Communist Party by ascribing it with extensive competences for intervening in the lives of citizens and organisations as an external force. The legal system was founded on the now obsolete labour theory of value. It reckoned that the source of a society's wealth lies in the economy of socialist organisations (the economic code). These organisations provided the working people with employment and wages (the labour code) in order to satisfy their material and cultural needs (the civil code). Economic-legal relations were laid out as hierarchical relationships, which lacked the appropriate procedural descriptions for protecting those involved in the relationships. Labour-legal contractual relationships were replaced by quasi-feudal relationships. The civil code "codified" the patriarchal relationship of the socialist state toward its citizens mainly via economic socialist organisations. The role of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia lay entirely outside this legal configuration.

Keywords

The Broader Normative Framework of the Life of Socialist Society

According to the Czechoslovak Constitution of 1960, socialist law was intended to ensure that it was the working people who executed state power. Whom or what this law really served is a question that we will address in this study. At the same time, we will focus on the role of socialist law in defining the scope of the powers of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) and the omnipresent socialist organisations.

This chapter presents a selection of the results from a larger study titled "The Normative Framework of Power Execution in Real Socialism" (Kabele 2003). That study describes the broader normative framework on four hierarchically ranked levels comprising:

- The Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, international Eastern bloc treaties, the constitutional Declaration, the first chapter of the Constitution, on the "Social Arrangement", and the post-August 1968 "Lessons from the Crisis … " (1970) (hereafter only the "constructivist digest");

- The rest of the constitution describing the division of power;

- Socialist legal codes, along with laws related to association, army and security service relationships, and economic arbitration;

- Selected legal norms regulating the execution of audit, the protection of state secrets and the addressing of complaints.

References are made herein to the Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, representing the most important part of the constructivist digest, and to the positions and jurisdiction of non-military socialist organisations, which were generally defined by the codes. The bylaws and rules of order of these socialist organisations will be the subject of another chapter titled "Socialist Rules and Orders: The Case of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia".

The question of the role of law in the constructivist regime was previously addressed in the monograph, *From Capitalism to Socialism and Back* (Kabele, forthcoming). The subject is tabled again further on in a study on socialist rules and orders.[1] We discovered early on in the research that it would be impossible to gain an understanding of the design of the orders and the rules with which they were drawn up without first describing the broader normative framework in which they were applied. Socialist orders, like any other set of rules today, always refer, either explicitly or implicitly, to such a normative framework. Without respecting this framework we would be unable to describe how the orders were strategically understood and how they consequently shaped the regime. We therefore turned to the strategy of making a synchronical study of the socialist legal framework and the design of orders, because this promised to provide the best answers to our research questions: How did these norms determine in advance what the structure of hierarchies and the nature of government in real socialism would be like? And what kind of room for manoeuvring did they create for the main players in the constructivist regime: socialist organisations, state organs and the Communist Party?

Czech socialist law, influenced by Soviet legal models, was thus a re-moulded version of the law that had been passed down from the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the First Czechoslovak Republic. Important additions were made to it in the form of the agreements and treaties bind-

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1 See "Socialist Rules and Orders: The Case of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia", also in this volume.

ing first the Nazi-occupied and later the People's Democratic Czechoslovakia to the Soviet bloc.[2] But owing to the considerable inspiration that the Czechoslovak Constitution of 1960 drew from Stalin's Soviet constitution of 1936, the law went principally incomplete. It established the leading role of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the universal scope of powers of the National Front in the sphere of all interest organisations (Art. 4 and Art. 6). It stipulated that the principles of the communist construction of the party and democratic centralism from the Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia be applied not only to the party but also to the socialist economy (Art. 11). And it did all this without any of these principles being specified in any way within the constitution or in bylaws. Consequently, even though they were not officially a legal source and referred only to the internal composition of "one organisation of many", it became possible for the Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, together with the "bloc" agreements, the constitutional Declaration, the first chapter of the Constitution on the "Social Arrangement", and the post-August 1968 "Lessons from the Crisis", to form part of an integral digest of regulations that occupied a superior normative standing vis-à-vis the rest of the constitution and all other legal sources.

The demolition of the many protections of the game frameworks typical for constitutional regimes left its mark on the constitutional separation of power as it was described in the rest of the constitution, a point that has already been demonstrated in *From Capitalism to Socialism and Back* (Kabele, forthcoming). Consequently, "unconstitutional" types of protections of the privileges of the Communist Party were able to assert themselves: (i) control over entry, (ii) the narrative rooting of the Communist Party's leading role in the context of its historic mission to construct communism, (iii) systems of anonymous complaints, and (iv) the disciplinary enforcement of loyalty.

The socialist division of power was characterised by the constitutionally based or at least allowed:

- Division of the executive power into economic-administrative components and the armed forces;

- Abolition of any autonomous features of all self-governing associations, from interest groups through to representative bodies;

- Judicial power closely bound to the armed forces via prosecutors and the criminal judiciary.

There thus emerged a "new" separation of power between the party, the state power (government), and the armed forces, which we have referred to elsewhere as hierarchical balancing (Kabele 2002). This balancing ensured the hierarchical ordering of components of power, in which the Communist Party occupied a superior position over the two remaining, balanced components of power.

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2 The first of these was the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance concluded between the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Soviet Union, signed in 1943 and reconfirmed in 1970. In January 1949 the Council for Mutual Economic Aid – or COMECON – was established in Moscow. The Declaration on the COMECON's Charter and its Convention on Legal Competence, Privileges and Immunities only entered into Czech law however in 1960 (no. 115/1960 Coll.). There followed in 1955 the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance first among six and eventually among nine socialist countries, an agreement that was founded on the Warsaw Pact (no. 45/1955 Coll.). Its legal standing was specified by another declaration making public the Convention on Legal Competence, Privileges and Immunities of the Joint Staff and other Organs in the Command of the Joint Command of the Armed Forces of Warsaw Pact Member States (no. 20/1974 Coll.). Finally, after the occupation of Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops, a Treaty between the Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was reached over the conditions relating to the continued temporary presence of Soviet troops on the territory of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic (no. 11/1969 Coll.).

The legal counterpart to the constructivist digest lay in the other parts of the Constitution and in the associated legal codes, specifically, the labour, economic, and civil codes, the administrative rules of order, and the penal and civil judicial codes. All of these legal norms emerged with the first socialist Constitution of 1960. But unlike that Constitution, which established the constructivist regime that arose in the first half of the 1950s, these codes already showed clear signs of being influenced by the reform efforts that were surfacing in the 1960s. The majority of these legal codes are still valid and applied even today. In our analysis of the way the execution of power was configured within the codes, we selected the findings that generally determined the jurisdiction, standing, and internal order of socialist organisations.

The assumption that the study at hand is based on is that socialist legality was actually an important component of the socialist regime, even though, at the time, the idea of the legal state or rule of law had been discredited as a tool of the exploitative bourgeois concept of law. Socialist laws either directly shaped the life of society, or, conversely, made room for the simultaneous, shadow application of unwritten rules of the game, which possessed an alternative content. However, the way in which the life of society was really determined by law lies somewhere between these two poles.

In the analyses of legal texts we focused systematically on uncovering and identifying the asymmetries and symmetries established by these texts that referred to the position and the execution of the influence of the key players – organs and organisations – in real socialism. This charting and contextualising of asymmetries and symmetries facilitates the utilisation of sociological, economic and politological knowledge of hierarchies and equities (i.e. formations of equal social relations) in this study. Social hierarchies and social equities express and – if we take into account their constructive force (Kabele and Hájek 2002) – complete the complex concurrence of symmetrical and asymmetrical influences in social relationships. Social hierarchies and social equities are both an instrument and a product of governance, but also of ownership and knowledge. Their ultimate form is significantly influenced by their co-existence.

The Scope of Powers of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

The Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia define the leading role of the Communist Party and invest it with specific competences for intervening as an external force in the lives of citizens and organisations. These Statutes evolved in a different manner than the Czechoslovak Constitution of 1960.[3] Up until 1952 the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia had an organisational code that was considerably altered at the 11th Party Convention in 1948. It introduced articles that would become typical of the Statutes of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union – for example the article of the party candidate. At the same time the section on party factions was eliminated. Conversely, sections on the Slovak Communist Party and party groups in the armed and security forces were added to the Statutes. However, this organisational code allegedly contained flaws that were "a reflection of the pernicious influence of enemies of the party who took part in draw-

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3 The Czechoslovak Constitution of 1948 was prepared prior to the political overthrow in February and in close collaboration with remaining pro-democratic parties of the National Front. It therefore preserved many typical constitutional elements. It was only with the writing of the Czechoslovak Constitution of 1960, which was strongly inspired by the Soviet Constitution, that it became in this sense genuinely constructivist. The Constitution of 1968, which was conceived in the spirit of the reforms of the 1960s, turned the Constitution back in the direction of legal diction.

ing up the organisational code but have now been exposed and removed" (Rykl 1958: 29). Therefore, in 1952 the Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia were drawn up, thoroughly inspired by the Statutes of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.[4] The Statutes continued to change over time – in particular, they became more verbose in form – but they remained the same in spirit up until 1989.

In the preamble to the Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia from 1971 there is the following description of the party's leading role: "The leading role in society, which is grounded in the Constitution of the Republic of Czechoslovakia, resides in the fact that it is the party that organises, plans and scientifically substantiates the constructivist efforts of the working people and their struggle towards the ultimate victory of communism". At the same time, "the party constructs a programme and basic concepts for the advancement of socialist society on the basis of scientific analysis, and through everyday propaganda and the organisational work of communists it wins over the working people in support of its policy and promotes their creative constructivist activities". There follows an exact description – as our research reveals – of the two basic methods of leadership: "The management of cadre work and the leading of social control by the party establish the main organisational preconditions for the purposeful and harmonious development of the political, economic, ideological, and cultural life of the country".

The diction used in the Statutes borders between declaring, describing and actually legally stipulating competences. It generates a peculiar linguistic situation in which what is, should be, and vice versa. The people being led chose the party's leading role. This role is also demanded on the basis of higher humanitarian principles and scientifically grounded social laws. Similar apodictic language can be found in the preambles of all sorts of statutes and codes even in constitutional regimes. But language of this kind takes on entirely different significance when it is lodged in conditions where a single organisation maintains the exclusive privilege of leading the others, and it is just this apodictic language that establishes such a general privilege.

The Statutes ensured that the party was present practically everywhere: in people's minds, and in all organisations. They were more an exhaustive inventory of the duties and tasks that party members and hierarchically ordered party organisations and organs were committed to than they were a list of competences.[5] These duties and tasks were deliberately not differentiated into party and society spheres. Instead a description was made of what could be called the "total mission" of the party, which expanded to take in more and more "items" on the agenda over the course of the period of real socialism. It is possible to obtain some idea of the different capacities in which the party was able to intervene in society in connection with the "total mission" from the following selection of these tasks:

4 The Statutes were adopted in 1952 at the level of the Central Committee. They were not passed, however, until the 10th Convention, held in 1954.
5 A descending order of hierarchical control applied everywhere, following a straight line from the centre, to the republic, the administrative regions within the republic, the districts, the local and plant organisations, and down to the basic-level organisations. The armed forces, run directly by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, were an exception. The role of the Central Committee was also stressed in the case of party organisation in the ministries, in the national committees, in the management bodies of the "corporation of industries and enterprises" (VHJ), and in the cultural and scientific institutions that were required to "adhere to the directives of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and assist it and other relevant bodies in overseeing these administrative offices and their directors".

The Communist Party was able to intervene in society in the following capacities:

WHO	DUTIES AND TASKS
Party member	• To participate in party political and public work at one's area of residence; to fully adhere to the principle of democratic centralism, • To strive for the advancement of production and the means of production, • To be thrifty and to contribute to the growth and protection of socialist collective ownership, • To actively participate in political life, administration and the management of state and public affairs, • To strive to increase one's party awareness and learn the rudiments of Marxist-Leninism and to contribute actively to the education of man in communist society, • To be an example in one's personal life, in relation to one's family, and in caring for one's children, • To strengthen the unity of Czechs and Slovaks and cement brotherly relations between the Czechoslovak people and the people of the Soviet Union, • To observe Lenin's principles on the correct selection and distribution of cadres by political maturity, professional knowledge, organisational abilities, moral qualities and skills, • To maintain party and state discipline, • To contribute in every way to reinforcing the ability of ČSSR to defend itself and to fight tirelessly for peace and friendship among nations
Basic-level organisations	• To implement party policy, • To organise the active participation of communists in addressing and ensuring the execution of all tasks and resolutions of the party organisation, • To organise effective mass political work, • To carry out campaign and educational activities among the workers and cultivate them in the spirit of communism • To create the conditions for the advancement of criticism and self-criticism, (...) to fight against bureaucratic practices, etc., • To devote purposeful attention to the preparation of the people, to the correct selection, education and placement of cadres in enterprises, etc., • To actively take part in solving the main tasks in the development of the town or community. To strive to establish a socialist way of life, • In the sphere of production, party organisations (...) have the right to monitor how the management of the enterprise or institution is implementing the tasks of the economic policy of the party and the state, • Party organisations in the ministries, (...) in administrative offices, in the management bodies of the VHJ, and in cultural and academic institutions are required: to implement party policy, monitor the of workers' complaint processing, monitor (financial) management and take care to ensure that the principles of the selection and placement of cadres are upheld

Local and enterprise committees	• To lead and focus on the implementation of party policy, • To lead communist-functionaries from the national committees (NV), social organisations, and the management of the enterprise, and to oversee their selection … • To organise ideological work • To propose candidates for the town committee and to solve cadre questions in collaboration with the district committee (OV)
Regional and district committees	• To guide and monitor the work of the NVs, trade union bodies, and other social organisations, • To carefully select and place cadres in accordance with the principles set out by the Central Committee
Central Control and Audit Commission	• To review the management of party organisations, firms, institutions and establishments
Central Committee	• To work out and solve (…) issues relating to the further development of society, domestic and foreign policy, • To head the People's Militia,[6] • To guide and monitor the activities of the federal organs and representative bodies of the republic, its governments, and other central state organs, the National Front and the central organs of social organisations; (…) leading functionaries delegated by the central committee with work in state, social, economic and other organs answer to the central committee for the implementation of party policy in the delegated sector, • To approve proposals for members in the federal government and other leading functionaries in central organisations

Targeting its own ranks, the party Statutes emphasise initiative, and also criticism of functionaries, organs and organisations, along with the exercise of "supervision", or reciprocal checks, from both the top down and the bottom up. Nevertheless, communists usually occupied all key public functions in the system of the administration of the nomenklatura. Those double bonded appeals for reciprocal accountability – one paragraph even reads "criticise and be loyal" – were connected with the empowerment of the party to intervene in the life of society. It is also worth noting two other points. Party discipline could take the form of the temporary removal of a functionary from public office. It is only in the Statutes that we discover that the Central Committee runs the People's Militia, but they offer nothing more on the relevant provisions relating to this arrangement.[7]

According to theoretical hypotheses on the constructivist system published earlier (Kabele 2002), the practices of nomenklatura administration and party supervision were founded on the principle of democratic centralism. This organisational principle was originally formulated by Lenin. It decreased the transaction costs of the leading role of the Communist Party – of the execution of parallel superior power – and thus made it practicable. The Statutes of the Communist Party of Czecho-

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6 The People's Militia was an armed force controlled exclusively by the Communist Party.
7 Otherwise, the People's Militia entered the legal books via two decrees issued by the Ministry of the Interior on charging members of the People's Militia with the fulfilment of certain security tasks (no. 30/1971 Coll.) and on sending for members of the People's Militia to carry out tasks on behalf of the National Security Corps (no. 67/1977 Coll.).

slovakia indicate the guiding principle of the party's construction to be democratic centralism. According to this principle: "a) all leading party organs are elected from the bottom up; b) elected organs regularly account for their activities to the organisations that elected them; c) there is strict party discipline and deference of the minority to the majority; d) resolutions passed by higher organs are unconditionally binding for lower organs, e) party organs and organisations are able to validly adopt resolutions as long as at least one-half the members or delegates are present". It is possible to demonstrate that democratic centralism emerged out of the grafting of bureaucratic hierarchical elements onto an originally autonomous, equitous substrate (Kabele 2002). Through an internal contradiction – democratic centralism was connected with both a horizontal loyalty to voters and with an absolute vertical loyalty to superior ranking organs – it systematically generated areas of uncertainty. Control over these areas by higher components in the party enabled effective supervision over the entire party and, by extension of this principle, over all of society.

The basic "advantage" of democratic centralism was that it effectively ensured voting loyalty. Owing to this loyalty the party was able to control all "apparently" democratically constituted decision-making bodies. It also of course controlled decision-making that related to the construction of the social hierarchies by means of the codes and rules of order, which will be discussed in the fourth chapter of this volume. Mainly, however, the party maintained its role in the nomenklatura administration of having the key say in filling positions in the hierarchy, which was in direct contradiction of the first principle of democratic centralism: "all leading organs are voted from the bottom up". This practice of course corresponded to the contradictory nature of the principle, in which functionaries were bound by complete loyalty to both superior units and their voters, without the Statutes actually establishing any order of preference for these incompatible commitments.

Also associated with democratic centralism was a territorial principle that "a party organisation, whose scope of powers refers to a certain prescribed area, is superior to all other party organisations operating in any part of that area, or a party organisation that, according to the resolutions of the Central Committee, operates in an entire working branch is superior to all party organisations functioning in any part of that working branch". Subordinate organisations with their own organs addressed their local tasks at the same time autonomously, and "in agreement with the resolutions of higher organs". This principle is raised here because it became a model not only for the construction of all umbrella social and administrative organisations, but also for the construction of hierarchies in the economy.

The Scope of Powers and the Relations among Socialist Organisations

The codes of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic were inherited from the First Republic, which had in turn received them from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. But some were an invention of constructivist regimes. To the newly pruned civil code was added an economic code, replacing the former commercial code. Also, a labour code was drawn up for the first time. The socialist version of substantive law recognised three basic types of legal relations: economic, labour and civil. European procedural law distinguishes three codes that regulate administrative, criminal-judicial and civil court procedure. In practical terms, socialism added to these the legal regulation of arbitration not by a code of procedure but merely by law.

The diction employed in all of the codes was fundamentally shifted through relatively simple alterations of key words. These are presented without comment below:

Altered vocabulary used in the codes

Socialist vocabulary	Capitalist vocabulary	Relevant codes
Economic activity and its management	Business and trade	Economic-commercial code
Economic disputes	Trade disputes	Law on arbitration – civil-judicial code
Citizens	Physical persons	Civil code
Workers	Employees	Labour code
Workers	Citizens	Criminal code
Prosecutor	State attorney	Criminal code
Member of the National Security Corps	Police officer	Law on service relationships
National Security Corps	Police force	Law on service relationships
Socialist organisations, organisational units and organs of socialist organisations	Business person	Law on arbitration – civil-judicial code
Socialist organisation	Businesses	Economic-commercial
Socialist organisation	Employers	Labour code
Socialist organisation	Legal persons	Civil code
Social organisation	Public interest groups	Criminal code

The legal term "socialist organisation" originated in such codes.[8] The most important codes were the new constructivist ones: economic and labour. The civil code "merely" defined and established the rights and obligations of citizens and socialist organisations in the area of satisfying the material and cultural needs of citizens. The socialist legal system was founded on the labour theory of value. Therefore, the source of a society's wealth lay in the management of socialist organisations (economic code). These organisations provided the workers not only with work, but also wages (labour code) in order for them to be able to satisfy their material and cultural needs (civil code).

8 In the bylaws and in the Czechoslovak Constitution of 1960 references were made only to organisations of the working people and social organisations. Only one mention is made of a socialist organisation, in connection with the national committees.

Economic-legal relations

The pre-war commercial code was abolished by the post-February civil code of 1951, and in 1960 it was de facto replaced by the economic code, which primarily codified the legal relations that had emerged over the course of the years between 1945 and 1964, following the nationalisation of property (Kabele 2003). Specifically, it regulated the following relations:

- The planned management of the national economy and collective socialist property,

- The organisation of economic activity, the position of socialist organisations and their (financial) management,

- Cooperation between socialist organisations and their property liability for the infringement of established obligations,

- Payment and credit relations of socialist organisations.

As established in the constitution, the socialist republic was founded on the solid union of the working people – labourers, peasants and the intelligentsia. Its foundation lay in the economic system. This system "ruled out any form of exploitation of one man by another, where the means of production were socialised, and all of the national economy was directed by the state in accordance with an established plan. In the planned management of the national economy and in their economic activities the organs of the socialist state and all socialist organisations applied the laws of the advancement of society and the socialist economy in order to ensure that on the basis of the progress of science and technology and the use of scientific knowledge in industrial processes and in the organisation of work… all resources and reserves were employed effectively and the social productivity of labour increased". At the same time, on all levels of this management "the participation and creative initiative of the workers and their social organisations, especially the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement, were asserted to the widest possible degree".

This opening declaration, taken from the preamble, and the general provisions in the economic code are not presented here merely as examples of the constructivist discourse. They also reveal that, in addition to the socialist organisations, the state, or more precisely its hierarchically ranked organs, also partook in the execution of economic activities and the management of the national economy. While the national economy of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic was of course "an integrated whole, run by the state under the leadership of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in accordance with the principle of democratic centralism". The main management tool was the state plan for the development of the national economy (hereafter only the "state plan"), which all management and economic activities on the part of all organs and socialist organisations were based on and had to comply with (Art. I).[9] The state plan was elaborated on the basis of the directives of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (§ 4). Our interest of course lies with both these asymmetries established by the superiority of position: (i) of the Communist Party vis-à-vis state organs and (ii) of state organs vis-à-vis socialist and economic organisations, among others. The first asymmetry stemmed from the authorisation accorded the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in its own direc-

9 The task of the state plan and its specifications, which established the obligation of the supplier to supply goods, conduct work or execute services for a certain customer, were, according to the relevant regulations in the economic code, an act of planning. The obligation to enter into an economic contract or the right to issue an order for supply arose on this basis. Entering into an economic contract in connection with planning was thus understood to be a duty, and therefore the economic code – otherwise laconic with regard to determining the rules of the game – laid out the rules of procedure for entering into such a contract.

tives to determine the form and content of the state plan and was also based on a magic formula pertaining to the application of the principle of democratic socialism. This principle is not described any further in the codes. The second asymmetry – state organs vis-à-vis socialist and economic organisations – is established in detail just by the codes themselves. The legal institute of socialist collective ownership played a significant role in establishing this state superiority.

The economic code defined collective socialist ownership as a form of ownership that is all-society and cooperative, as well as being an ownership that is exercised by social and other socialist organisations. According to the economic code this ownership resulted from planned economic activity executed by working collectives of socialist organisations, and they were the owners of their own property: they possessed "things and property rights including the rights to the results of research, development, project and other similar activities to which the organisation has either right of ownership or right of control". A thing could simultaneously be the property of society and also the property of a cooperative or some other socialist organisation. The Constitution described this multiplicity of ownership as follows: "The state establishes economic organisations, especially national enterprises, and it entrusts a part of the national property to their administration as though to independent legal persons". The economic code thus alleged that state organisations exercised the right of management of individual things, debts and other ownership rights of the state.

What was important with regard to these ownership rights – which were described not in the civil but in the economic code (!) – was the way in which the competences of socialist organisations or the organs of the state were regulated with regard to their use of owned goods (*usus* and *usus fructus*) and their exercise of ownership rights. The economic code addressed this point with the axiomatic requirement that "socialist organisations fulfil the tasks they are given by the organs of economic management: ministries or national committees".[10] Specifically, these tasks were fulfilled by "the collectives of workers or members of socialist organisations". Their activity is organised on the basis of bylaws, articles and organisational codes that define which of their statutory organs are authorised to act on behalf of the organisation in all matters" (§ 16). The legal acts relating to these statutory organs were of course to be interpreted at all times "in accordance with the interest of all of society in the advancement of the national economy and in accordance with the demands of comradely cooperation between socialist organisations" (§ 25).

Prior to the introduction of the amendments that emerged out of the Czech "perestroika", the economic code established the legal form of the economic organisations run by the ministries or the national committees and provided a concise outline of how they were to be set up. It determined in advance how the state economic organisations in the ministerial branches were to be organised and determined where they were to be concentrated in the VHJ or other similarly organised economic units run directly by the ministries. State economic organisations were set up by the relevant minister or head of the central organ of state administration following discussions with the relevant regional or district national committee, or directly with the national committees in its sections (§ 42). The organ that was authorised to run the state economic organisation could transfer

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10 No. 145/1970 Coll. § 23 "The basic form whereby the objectives of state plans and economic plans are fulfilled is for the government or allocated organ (organisation) to lay out the tasks of the plan in a planning process. The task of the plan establishes the obligation to act in a certain manner, or refrain from action, especially in the case of a binding task or binding restriction, the setting of priorities, binding rules, procedures, and bans. The Government of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, in the case of certain kinds of tasks in a given plan, may stipulate special procedure."

that organisation or any of its parts to the competence of another organ (ministry or national committee) upon agreement to do so with that organ. It could also decide to merge, split up, or abolish the state economic organisation (§ 48). The founder was required to determine the nearerest superior organ (§ 43).

A single director in charge of the organisation's activities and acting on behalf of the organisation in all matters headed each state economic organisation. The director, acting as a statutory organ, took decisions in the affairs of the state economic organisation independently, as long as it was not a decision that lay within the competence of a superior organ (§ 44). Relations within the VHJ, which formed organisations or organisational units that participated in economic relations on their behalf, were governed in accordance with established legal regulations by their bylaws (§ 46).

An amendment that emerged during the Czech perestroika and was introduced in 1988 initiated the dismantling of the roughly asymmetrical relationship between central and "middle" organs and organisations, in which the organs of economic management took decisions but bore ambiguous responsibility. This amendment stipulated that not only are these organs able to establish, change, abolish or confirm the obligations and powers of organisations (here state enterprises) within the scope of their powers, but also, as newly established by law, they bear property accountability for these relations. The amendment of course changed little with regard to the fact that socialist collective ownership, from the perspective of the theory of property rights, remained a hybrid, combining ownership with representation. This type of ownership established the direct superiority of state organs over economic organisations, but also indirectly established the crucial superiority of the Communist Party over state organs. The following table gives an indication of what the exercise of socialist ownership looked like:

Competences of socialist ownership

TYPES OF COORDINATION → PARTICIPANTS ↓	DISPOSAL	DISTRIBUTION OF COMPETENCES
SOCIALIST ORGANISATION	Management as the fulfilment of tasks	
ORGANS OF MANAGEMENT *(Government, ministries, national committees)*	Economic assignments, i.e. exchanging, returning and supplying, etc.	Establishing, merging, splitting, and abolishing organisations + central planning
PARTY	*(Unwritten rules of party assignments)*	Position appointments + directives for central planning and setting up the legal institute of socialist ownership

While the legal institute of private ownership rests on the symmetry between owners and on the asymmetry between owners and non-owners, in the legal institute of social ownership the asymmetry between owners and non-owners is completely overshadowed by the asymmetries between the positions of the party, state organs of management, and socialist organisations, as discussed above. It is dubious to speak of ownership at all when this legal institute is addressed as a matter of disposal over people and organisations. In this sense the comparison of the socialist economy to a single large factory is highly apt. The problem of this comparison, however, is that replacing ownership with

representation requires that all economic activities are centrally planned. That of course is a utopia. For this reason the real-socialist economy secretly formed quasi-ownership rights (Mlčoch 1990).

Let us remember that the role of the party is guaranteed in the Constitution and the economic code through the application of the principle of democratic centralism. Our analysis of the key legal institutes of economic law shows that, taking into consideration the laws alone, one of the key initial conditions for the application of this principle was not fulfilled: the consistent application of collective decision-making. In formal terms, collective decisions on directive acts and plans were only taken at party committees, in the government, or in the national committees, but never in the ministries or in the management of socialist organisations. If this principle of democratic centralism could not be applied in the line of economic assignments, it could be applied in the concurrent line of party assignments and it was.[11]

Labour-legal relations

In important points the labour code did not change considerably after November 1989. The relationship of superiority – the agency – as described in chapter two of the code apparently remained unchanged: "The head workers in an organisation (or the head employees of the employer), by which is meant its Organs (par. 1) as well as other workers charged with management functions at particular levels of the organisation's management, are authorised to devise and distribute work tasks to subordinate workers in the organisation (or employees) and to organise, direct and monitor their work and for this purpose to provide them with binding instructions". The relationship between employer and employee, or between supervisor and subordinate, thus changed only indirectly with the introduction of protections relating to the rules governing this relationship. The employee relationship was declared as a contractual relationship, and therefore in its creation decisive weight was born by the circumstances that govern the emergence, change and termination of employment, i.e. by entry/exit types of protections. In legal terms entry into employment hardly changed at all after November 1989. The state at that time was of course practically a monopoly employer. Consequently, the law lacked any protections for employees against the abuse of this monopolistic position. Once a person had entered into a position of employment it was not easy to then get rid of that person (it required the agreement of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement), nor even to have the person transferred from one position to another. At the same time, however, it was also difficult for a worker to quit a socialist organisation (substantiating reasons had to be submitted and quitting was encumbered by complex terms of notice). The most significant effect resulted from the fact that the state was a monopoly employer. While it was possible to find part-time employment on the side, the mother socialist organisation had to agree to this. These circumstances rendered employment a quasi-feudal relationship, in which a key role, as we shall see, was played by disciplinary measures.

It was only easy to fire an employee if the person in question represented a threat to the security of the state or when there occurred "such a flagrant infringement of work discipline that to retain the individual within the organisation up until the end of his/her notice period was impossible owing

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11 On the question of what motivated the director of the Regional Agricultural Administration Uhřína to carry out the plan, and whether it was the supervision by the plant organisation, he answered: "Everything was covered by a Party decision, which had to be executed. I was in the nomenklatura of the Secretariat of the Central Committee and in the Presidium of the Regional Committee (KV). I answered to them. The plant organisations practically never interfered in such matters."

to the need to maintain work discipline within the organisation". The threat to the security of the state or to work discipline usually referred to the revolutionary myth and the story of building up communism, which was still plagued by inveterate enemies.

In the labour code work discipline was defined as "the conscious fulfilment of tasks that for workers follow from their participation in the collective work of society". This lay in the use of initiative at work, the raising of ideological and professional standards, drawing attention to observed shortcomings and eradicating them, assisting in the struggle against elements disruptive to work discipline, and observing legal regulations and the principles of socialist conduct in collective work. In the context of this declaration a detailed definition was also made of the obligations of both workers and their heads, the non-observance of which was subject to the application of disciplinary measures. The labour code laid these obligations out in standard terms as valid in all socialist organisations. The code also provided for the regular evaluation of all workers and stipulated what kind of disciplinary measures could be imposed: (a) reprimand, b) public reprimand, c) a reduction or even withdrawal of bonuses and other forms of remuneration (...) for a period of up to three months, d) a transfer to lower-paid work for a period of up to three months or a reduction of the basic or functional wage of up to 10% for a period up to three months.[12] It determined the disciplinary responsibility of senior workers at an organisation towards even higher ranked workers. Appeals could be made to a board of arbitration. The Central Trade Union Council assigned union organs to conduct these arbitration proceedings. The labour code also bid all organisations to adopt (internal) labour codes "with the objective of ensuring internal order, proper work organisation, and the reinforcement of work discipline for the purpose of the successful fulfilment of the tasks of the organisation".

Civil-legal relations

At first glance it might appear that prior to 1989 the civil code was even more civic than after 1989. The socialist civil code regulated relations between citizens and between citizens and socialist organisations, while the current civil code regulates relations between physical and legal persons. The word *citizen* hardly appears at all in the (current) civil code. The proposed distinction between physical and legal persons is of course a crucial one for confirming the key right of physical persons to form associations of physical and legal persons or "purposeful poolings of property", which are also able to possess rights and obligations, just like other legal persons established in the civil code. These rights and obligations must at the same time be essentially equal to the rights and obligations of physical persons. Only in this way is it possible to fulfil the precondition for the emergence of contractual relations that are capable of being submitted to judicial review and which develop dynamically in a wide variety of different types of business. In the constitutional arrangement the rules of such an economic enterprise are usually set in the commercial code. Political enterprise is defined by electoral laws and laws on political parties, etc.

The socialist civil code abolished this symmetry between physical and legal persons. It was replaced by the asymmetry between the citizen and the socialist organisation.[13] This asymmetry stems from the fact that the code does not address the matters of the emergence of socialist organisation or the relations among them. As indicated above, only the economic code defined socialist

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12 Hearings on infractions by a People's Court were already abolished.
13 Even in this socialist civil code at one point a reference is made to a "legal person": "Organisations other than socialist ones can enter into civil-legal relations if they are legal persons".

organisations from this perspective in more detail. There they were interpreted as legal persons, and regulations were laid out for their reciprocal economic-legal relations and their relations to the state. Disputes occurring in these relations were addressed in the law on economic arbitration (no. 121/1962 Coll.). This procedural law contains practically no procedural description of the arbitration process (!), like that which exists on judicial proceedings.[14]

There is no question that under socialism economic and other organisations did enter into bilateral contractual relations. However, like the very concept of *socialist organisation*, these relations were extremely ambiguous. A definition of the legal institute of the contract – which is based on the assumption of equality – was provided in the socialist civil code (§ 43–51), which even made a general reference to the participating parties in a contract. However, it was not intended to refer to relations between socialist organisations, which were not governed by the regulations contained in this code. The problem was that no detailed description of the legal institute of the contract was to be found anywhere else in socialist law. What can of course be found in the socialist civil code is the constructivist discourse on mutual cooperation, the advancement of initiative, the extension of the participation of the workers in management, the effective assertion of the interests of society as a whole, the obligations of fulfilling the plan and overcoming residual forms of thinking in people's minds, etc., the provision of which was the responsibility of the socialist organisations together.

The law of 1962 on economic arbitration (no. 121/1962 Coll.) stipulated that disputes between socialist organisations were subject to the decisions of federal, national and regional arbitration. These were disputes in which two potentially very strong parties faced each other and in which quite a great deal could actually be at stake. The disputes reviewed could refer to: agreements on economic contracts, changes to or termination of economic commitments (pre-contractual disputes), the fulfilment of contract terms, the release of an item, and property and declaratory disputes, etc.

The arbitration process was described in the law in five lines: "An arbitrator reviews an economic dispute with the representatives of the organisations involved and directs the negotiations towards achieving a solution in common that is in harmony with the interests of all of society. An economic dispute over a particularly complex issue can be discussed and reviewed by several arbitrators in a session presided over by one of them". The law did not provide for circumstances in which the organisations did not reach an agreement, nor did it guarantee the rights to due process of the participants, and in this sense it was an "anti-procedural" regulation. In its description of the entire arbitration procedure, including the process of review, the relevant law made do with twenty-three rather brief paragraphs, which is approximately one-tenth the number of paragraphs that the current civil judicial code requires for the same task.[15] Let us recall that the legal regulation of economic-legal relations did not allow for a judicial review of arbitration decisions. The law thus indirectly assigned arbitrators or arbitration commissions a very strong position. They could hardly occupy such a position if their decision-making was not also referring to an extra-legal, exter-

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14 The law provided for the legal institute of review by arbitration proceedings. Even after this review it was possible to appeal to the State Arbitration Presidium of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic to change the outcome of arbitration proceedings.
15 "Arbitration was an entirely different procedure. It was not a trial but rather an administrative process, in which the state and the Party were in unequal positions (…). Before that they had made decisions over coffee, the decisions were not substantiated and no proper records of the meeting were even maintained. Only once an appeal was made did the arbitrator passed the file to a higher instance with a written opinion." The chair of the regional court in 2000.

nal power inciting the socialist organisations to reach an agreement. This authority was represented by the Communist Party.

Conclusion

In the theoretical hypothesis about the constructivist system presented in a separate publication (Kabele 2002) we confirmed in the conclusion that the Communist Party, as the "vanguard" of the proletariat, managed to assert its leadership privileges and its planning monopoly by occupying the key game positions in the framework of the double hierarchical structure of society, where the party hierarchy and the pragmatic hierarchy permeate one another. This study shows that this manner of governance was facilitated by the serious restrictions put on the right of association, which was connected with the complex legal institute of socialist organisation and social ownership as defined in the codices.

Economic-legal relations were regulated as hierarchical relations, which in practically all key matters (planning, arbitration, etc.) lacked adequate procedural descriptions to protect both subordinate socialist organisations and organisations of superior ranking. Relations sorted out procedurally were of course regulated by numerous sub-legal norms and unwritten rules of the game. The role of the Communist Party stood outside any regulation, even though its position of superiority over both the state organs of economic management and socialist organisations was established without any ambiguity.

Quasi-feudal contractual relations replaced labour-legal relations. The civil code defined individual private ownership as a derivative of socialist ownership[16] and protected it as one of the important means of satisfying the personal needs of citizens. The main task of this code was to "lay down and define the rights and obligations of citizens and organisations as they emerge in the area of satisfying material and cultural needs, to protect those rights, as long as they are in accordance with the interests of society, and contribute to the thorough observance of the socialist legal order in civil-legal relations". This legal construction not only "codified" the patriarchal relationship of the state towards its citizens, mediated in particular by economic socialist organisations, but it also focused attention on the social ownership of the means of production as the key pre-eminence of the constructivist system. In reality, this ownership monopoly became a persistent problem in all constructivist arrangements.

16 §123 Items that are intended for the personal use of citizens are transferred from socialist ownership to their private ownership, or they are left for their personal use.

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1.2 Party Tasks and the Modern Age

Tomáš Holeček

Abstract

This chapter describes the delegation of party tasks at the regional level of communist government at the end of the 1980s. The author shows what bodies were responsible for delegating party tasks and what form these tasks took. He presents the most significant types of tasks using specific examples and goes on to reflect on three features of tasks in relation to the modern age: the amount of latitude people were left with in relation to the execution of tasks, the repeated ordering of that which was obligatory anyway, and the amount of latitude accorded to the very formulation of tasks. The author also reflects on these matters in relation to government today.

Keywords

Task, communist rule, region, modern age, actuality, action

Introduction

The following structure applies to most tasks: it is necessary to determined *who* is to perform a task, *what* the task is that is to be performed, and *by when* it is to be done. Without these three specifications the task is useless; another condition of its usefulness – but one that need not be expressed explicitly in the task itself – is control over the fulfilment of tasks, i.e. monitoring to ensure the task is executed.

Examples of tasks presented in this chapter are drawn from the regional level of rule of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, dating from the end of the 1980s.

The Bodies Responsible for Assigning Tasks

At the regional level tasks were primarily delegated by the following bodies within the Communist Party: the regional conference, the regional committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KV KSČ), the secretariats of the regional committees, and the presidia of the regional committees.

- The regional conference was comprised of 750 delegates.
- The regional committee was comprised of 62 members and 22 candidates.
- The presidium of the regional committee was comprised of 15 members, including the chief secretary of the regional committee, the two secretaries of the regional committee, and the chair of the regional national committee.
- The secretariat of the regional committee was comprised of 8 members, including the chief secretary of the regional committee and the four secretaries of the regional committee (the secretary for political-organisational work, the secretary for party work in industry, the secretary for party work in agriculture and the food industry, the secretary for ideological work).[1]
- The regional committees of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia headed several commissions and its apparatus consisted of approximately 100 people[2] in several departments.[3]

Types of Tasks

On the basis of the resolutions and proceedings that resulted from the meetings held by these bodies it is possible to draw up the following brief – though by no means exhaustive – typology:

- *General tasks* – these tasks were essentially declarations of some slogan or programme, and they gave no clear indications with regard to who was meant to do what. They generally applied to all members and all bodies of the party, or applied to all in some generally defined area.

1 The information presented here is drawn from the Minutes of the South-Moravian Regional Conference of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 14–15 May 1988.
2 See "Informace o Stavu a Vývoji Stranického Aparátu" (Information on the State and Development of the Party Apparatus), in the South-Moravian Region 1987, 1988.
3 For a closer look at the relations and content of work among the above-mentioned bodies see "Late Communist Rule at the District Level".

An example of this is the tasks that the regional conference assigned to all communists, for instance:[4]

"To ensure, in cooperation with the manufacturing enterprises, the direct participation and the role of the scientific research base in the reconstruction and modernisation of the technology applied in the production base of the region."

or,

"To devote systematic attention within economic organisations to the quality of manufacturing and production, to increasing the proportion of products at an advanced technological-economic level, to the minimising of losses owing to low quality manufacturing, and to ensuring a balance in the processes of production."

- *Designated general tasks* – these tasks differed from the simply general tasks in that they included a more precise indication of who was meant to execute them. The specification of assignees was based on the functional or positional rank of party members, and this also indicated to some extent what means the party member was meant to employ for execution of the task.

An example of this is the task the regional committee assigned to all "communists in charge of economic workers":[5]

"To ensure the execution of tasks in their entirety that stem from resolutions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia with regard to the complex reconstruction of the economic mechanism of the ČSSR."

- *General remedial tasks* – these tasks declared what kind of error was in need of remedy. They charged those responsible for the particular error with the task of correcting it.

Again, an example of this can be found in the task assigned by the regional conference:

"Those enterprises that in 1986–1987 were unsuccessful in the fulfilment of economic tasks are required to adopt necessary measures for ensuring the fulfilment of tasks stipulated in the 8th Five-Year plan."

- *The tasks of specifying general tasks* – these tasks usually referred to general tasks and were assigned to party members or party bodies for specification.

An example of this kind of task is the task assigned by the regional committee to all party "bodies and organisations":[6]

"To stipulate in the content and in the resolutions of the annual member meetings and party conferences a specific approach for the realisation of conclusions reached at the 7th Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in real terms."

- *Designated performance tasks* – these tasks were assigned to a very precisely specified group of assignees and related to the fulfilment of the State Plan or some other task adopted at an earli-

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4 The following examples are drawn from the Minutes of the South-Moravian Regional Conference of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 14–15 May 1988.
5 See the Meeting of the South-Moravian Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia 1988.
6 This example is also drawn from the Meeting of the South-Moravian Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia 1988. It would be useful to explain here that the phrase "realisation of the conclusions from the 7th Meeting" specifically means the "Reconstruction".

er date. The assignees were specified according to the field their function was in and most often according to the enterprise in which they were employed.

An example of such a task can be found in the tasks set by the regional conference, which, during construction of a tractor factory, assigned "communists in the region's investment and supply organisations"[7] with the following task:

"Through the fulfilment of the construction plan to establish conditions for the smooth progress of the work of construction contractors and technology suppliers with the aim of adhering to the planned deadlines for putting the buildings into operation and to achieve the projected production capacity for the manufacturing of tractors UŘ III."

- *Designated remedial tasks* – these tasks differ from the previous type in that instead of the fulfilment of a plan or some task the assigned task referred to correcting or redressing a particular error. What this kind of task usually referred to was that someone had not done their work properly.

An example of this type of task can again be found in the regional conference. Communists from two furniture production enterprises mentioned in the text are assigned with the task of:

"…seeing to the achievement of an increase in the proportion of high quality products in the required assortment."

- *Isolated tasks* – these tasks referred to specified functionaries and involved the execution of a single action.

An example of such a task is that assigned to the chair of the regional national committee and contained in a resolution passed by the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in reference to cooperation between schools and their patron enterprises:[8]

"…to see to the execution of the measures assigned to the state education administration."

The Assignment of Tasks

The tasks assigned by the above-mentioned bodies slightly differ from one other. While the regional conference was more inclined to set general tasks or designated performance tasks or designated remedial tasks, the regional committee (which in interim periods stood in for the regional conference) was more inclined to assign tasks aimed at specification of general tasks, designated general tasks, or isolated tasks. However, in the assigning of tasks both bodies were only actually endorsing and confirming proposals that had been put forth in the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

The Presidium assigned designated general tasks, designated performance tasks, tasks for the specification of general tasks, and isolated tasks. The Secretariat assigned isolated tasks and tasks for the specification of general tasks. Though this distinction does not apply without exceptions, it does to a certain extent characterise the orientation of individual bodies.

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7 Which at the regional level is a specific designation.
8 See "Zpráva o Činnosti Předsednictva a Sekretariátu" (Report on the Work of the Presidium and the Secretariat) South-Moravian Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia 1988.

To complete the picture of the role occupied by the regional communist government, it is necessary to add that tasks, usually designated or isolated, also emerged out of various commission meetings (e.g. the Agricultural Commission of the Regional Committee). The regional committee also directed the work of the district committees with the aid of various practices and "recommendations", but these of course took a different form.

The deadlines for the execution of tasks ran into months and even years. Some tasks were continuous and ongoing. Tasks assigned by the conferences had no deadlines at all.

The fulfilment of tasks was usually checked via the annual review of the fulfilment of the State Plan and by means of the "complex personal assessment" that was conducted on every person in the nomenklatura.

The Modern Age

Academic literature offers a large variety of definitions of the modern age, but for the purpose of the discussion below the following description should suffice:

The foundation of the modern age is that people regard their situation as "actual".[9] This – in relation to tasks – means that we situate our actions and decisions in our time and within our power, and not with regard to the time and power of some plan or historical process.

In other words, as modern people, we are masters over our own actions and we ourselves bear the responsibility for our actions. Tasks do not exempt us from this.

Defining Tasks

In addition to the generally known fact that people do not have to fulfil tasks,[10] it is possible to document other consequences of the modern age using the various types of tasks presented above:

By no means everything is ordered with the aid of tasks. If we take into consideration the general nature of many assignments and the fact that as tasks increase in specificity their numbers decrease considerably, it possible to note that there is a good deal of room left over for subordinates to act independently. Given that, even despite this, the (communist) regime of government functioned, it is clear that a large proportion of the actions that occurred under communist rule – and evidently the predominant part of these actions – was left up to the independent action of individuals.

It is worth noting that very often the subjects referred to in the tasks discussed here were actions that the assignees were bound to fulfil anyway, such as the fulfilling the state plan, working well, etc. This demonstrates that the very act of assigning tasks recognises that it is possible and not uncommon for tasks not to be fulfilled. This feature of tasks, even despite the element of exasperation it expresses, indicates a certain acknowledgement of the fact that the people over whom the rule was being exercised were modern people.

9 A better description of "actuality" can be found in Habermas' lecture "Modernity: An Unfinished Project".
10 Here I am referring to the discussion that relates to "banal evil".

From a reflective perspective, the very problem of the formulating of tasks also warrants attention. How this or that body or person preparing the proposal for a task will formulate its task is not usually determined by any other task. Nonetheless, the tasks throughout the entire ruling hierarchy are formulated in a roughly similar manner, and the rounds of tasks always ran throughout the entire hierarchy, from the top down and back up again. However, this was by no means established by or inherent to the task itself.

In short, if these modern people were ruled, they were so willingly.

The Legacy of Tasks

The grant project on which this chapter and the entire volume is based is titled "The Legacy of Communist Rule" and therefore mention should also be made of the connection between the reflections on tasks presented herein and governance in the Czech Republic today. In the 1980s the regime had already abandoned the effort to create "the new man", which had been intended to replace modern man. Therefore, in assigning tasks it was itself to a certain degree on the same principle that today's regime draws on.

Even today rule is executed with the aid of meetings and tasks and is done so at all levels of the state hierarchy and other hierarchies. Although for the most part rule today is no way near the state of decline it was in at the end of the regime of "really existing socialism", and therefore today's tasks do not reveal their weakness as clearly, essentially all the above-mentioned features still apply:

People do not have to fulfil tasks; a large part of their work is not the subject of tasks; it is common to order the execution of matters that are obligatory anyway; the actual formulation of tasks is not usually itself the subject of an order.

Materials from the Regional Archive in Brno

Minutes from the South-Moravian Regional Conference of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 14–15 May 1988
Meeting of the South-Moravian Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 20 January 1988
Report on the Work of the South-Moravian Presidium and the Secretariat Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, 20 January 1988
Information on the State and Development of the Party Apparatus in the South-Moravian Region in 1987, 25 February 1988 (for a meeting of the Secretariat of the South-Moravian Regional Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia)

1.3 The Reverse Control Pyramid of the Socialist Economy

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Abstract

In this chapter the author offers a retrospective reflection on his own descriptive studies, written on the basis of his personal experience of the functioning of a hierarchically ordered planning system. With the passage of two decades and in the light of additional theoretical study, especially of institutional economics (R. Coase, O.E. Williamson, the "property rights theory"), the author takes this opportunity to consider the validity of the "games" described in his earlier studies as fixed patterns of socio-economic behaviour in the hierarchical planning system, and on their possible informative value in the changed circumstances following the transformation from state socialism to a capitalist market economy, including the "latest" version of this system. The author distinguishes the differences between open and closed hierarchical systems and indicates the basic features of the peculiar logic, functions and dysfunctions of the closed hierarchical system. The concept of the "reverse control period", which forms the core of the author's arguments, aims at questioning the traditional understanding of hierarchy, relations of superiority and subordination, "the command economy", and even the role of the apparently omnipotent plan in the economies of "really existing socialism". In the perspective of the new institutional economics the earlier animated debates over "the market versus the plan" become less ideological and are transformed into comparative calculations of transaction costs stemming from contractual relations "on the market" and bureaucratic transaction costs "within the corporation". The urgent problem of the effective performance of "corporate governance" in today's world shows that past experiences with ownership structures are of instructive and even cautionary value today.

Keywords

Introduction: Looking Back Twenty Years Later

I must admit that Jiří Kabele had to talk me into making this contribution: I wasn't interested in looking back in the "rear-view mirror". Only once it began to appear to me that a retrospective reflection on my previous work could provide analogies for today's economic world did the prospect of looking back make sense for me. I also realised that my original studies had often not been published at all, or only in limited quantities as internal publications ("Chování čs.podnikové sféry" (Behavior of the Czechoslovak Enterprise Sphere), EÚ ČSAV, Prague 1990), and that they need not necessarily be familiar or even accessible to today's generation of researchers. I picked up one essay of mine from 1983 ("Planning Process in a Company: An Analysis"), which was written at the request of the Research Institute of Economics and Management of the Advancement of Science and Technology, thanks to the courage of my friend Josef Vavroušek. The English version of this study, which was published after November 1989 with the financial support of Charter 77, was expanded to include a brief commentary on "The Company Planner Facing the Future", which was also originally written over twenty years ago for a small, unofficial seminar on the ethics of social forecasts, organised by a young sociologist at that time unknown to me named Jiří Kabele (the English version however never came out – in the atmosphere of the time it already seemed to be "passé"). Only with the passage of time has the interest in "vintage labels" returned.

I wrote the 1983 essay after having gathered ten years of practical experience working in an industrial enterprise, where the normalisation regime sent me on some sort of extended sabbatical. There I was first employed in a small economic research department, which managed to survive during the few years of a relaxed environment at the end of the 1960s, after which it was abolished, as suspicious, through reorganisation, and then I worked directly in the planning unit. When I arrived at the enterprise I was already equipped with a good deal of knowledge about neoclassical and mathematical theories of the firm, thanks to my teacher Luděk Rychetník (my textbook *The Theory of the Firm* (in Czech), EÚ ČSAV 1970, was apparently the first educational text on Western microeconomics to come out in the Soviet bloc). However, practical experience of the planning system affected me like genuine "shock therapy"; after having emerged from the world of theory, it suddenly appeared to me to be useless. I already knew something about behaviourism (Cyert and March) and about the behaviour of people in bureaucratic systems (Herbert Simon: *Administrative Behavior*), but I had not yet come across institutional economics – and so I had to learn for myself on the basis of everyday experience. That my reasoning at the time resembled that of American institutionalism became evident to me only after I had returned to the academic sphere much later. At the Faculty of Social Sciences of Charles University I founded the Department of Institutional Economics, wrote a textbook (1996), and I now run a bachelor's course in this subject for students of economics. My perspective today, when looking back on things, is clearly influenced by later study and reading, and its merit may lie in that.

In the socialist economy the hierarchical structure of planning and management was a given, or at least it became so from the moment when the attempt was made to turn this construct into a social reality. The pathological ambitiousness of the project itself demanded such an arrangement: there was nothing that the monstrous national economy could do but decompose along hierarchically ordered, multi-layered lines. This was also an attribute of the attempts at reform, and later it even seemed possible to substantiate the manifestation of this principle at the level of exact mathematical science: the problems of the theory of optimal planning and control of the socialist economy were based on decomposition algorithms and examined the behaviour of superior and sub-

ordinate links in the planning system. Within a different type of totalitarianism, the Nazi regime had already had similar experience when attempting to control the market economy. The hierarchical management structure of both types of totalitarianism indeed featured numerous similarities and analogies; in the Czech Republic after 1948 some institutions were even inherited from the Protectorate (the ration-card system, the price control office, heavy industry cartels).

"My" firm was a mid-sized firm with around 5000 employees and divided into eight, and later nine, production enterprises. I was subordinate to the "general headquarters" in the so-called middle-management link, which in turn was part of a supervisory level in the Ministry of Electrical Industry. Above this was the next hierarchy comprised of the departmentalised "planning centre". The hierarchical organisational and management structure had a deep impact on the socio-economic behaviour of people. In the language of theory today it was a multi-tiered "principal-agent" type of game, founded on an asymmetry between information and risk, and on moral hazard. The system generated information distortions, and the local opportunism of "players" evoked major interest frictions within the system, or enormous transaction costs. It became more than obvious that "homo oeconomicus" does not behave in an abstractly economic way, but in a concretely economic manner: in relation to existing institutions.

When Josef Vavroušek generously proposed that I pursue my research without any ideological restraints I had already produced several descriptive studies on aspects of the business sphere under real socialism. In methodological terms I was attempting to generalise the experience I had drawn from one local link in the planning system – the Tesla Holešovice firm – and apply it to the entire system. Whether it was possible or correct to do so remains a question today: my colleague Jiří Hlaváček – the author of the concept of "homo oeconomicus se assecurans" (self-sustaining or self-providing man) – argues that the way firms behave can be described in two categories of models in connection with their bargaining strength. His model of the behaviour of the firm in dialogue with the planning centre corresponds to the smaller, weaker firms that lie on the periphery of the system, while the "reverse control pyramid", which I intend to return to further on, applies to firms of at least a certain requisite size and informal economic power. In any case, my perspective on the behaviour of the planning system was grounded in experiences "from below" – I only came to have person experience with the behaviour of the planning centre (and its sub-systems) later, when at the "peak" of my academic career I was the head of the commercial price formation unit and thus was required to deal with the Federal Price Control Office. This later experience did not, however, lead to the need for me to revise in any fundamental way the view of the world as I had acquired it "from below".

The direct inspiration for my analysis came from a book published in a very different field of the social sciences – psychology. At the time a translation had just been published of the book *Games People Play*, written by the American Eric Berne. The fixed paradigms of psychological (and psychiatric) games relating to partnerships, marriage, and the family caught my interest to such a degree that I began identifying analogical game paradigms in the hierarchical organisational structures of the planning system; that is, I began unravelling how the planners in the firm play with the planners at the general headquarters and the planners at subordinate enterprises, and how the men of "real economics" in "real socialism", that is, the suppliers, "sellers", "producers" and "dispatchers", play with the planners.

The view "from below" was of course also a view "from within" the planning machinery. In order for a person to be able to describe it well they must participate in the games themselves. The view

"from without" was a serious barrier to understanding the logic of the behaviour of the "players". This difficulty was encountered not only by Western experts on comparative economic systems, but even by domestic researchers from the academic frontline, that is, those who were "more fortunate" and never found themselves called into the realm of practical experience. As an amateur researcher in the firm I had the sense of being free; as a member of the army of planners I was unable to avoid playing the rather dull games of real socialism. Creative work, the description of the system that was stifling me, helped me endure the everyday reality of planning work. It also provided a sort of hope: expressed in the language of system theory, I managed through my work "in" the system to acquire experiences that helped me to describe its functions and dysfunctions and thus prepared the groundwork for future work "on" the system.

The Closed Hierarchical System

The economic-political system of real socialism acquired over time a number of attributes and labels. "Centrally planned economy", as *terminus technicus*, survives to date in studies on comparative economic systems dating from the times when research was conducted from without and in regard to a certain dangerous adversary. Another term of reference that long survived, especially in American attempts at understanding the peculiar logic of the (socialist economic) system, was the term "command economy". Both these terms – the centrally planned economy and the command economy – appear as though they subscribe to the ideology of the system, accepting its claims about itself, and thus even the ideology of the omnipotent plan. This seemed to me an incomprehensible paradox: after all, Ludwig von Mises, back at the start of the 1920s, had already clearly and logically demonstrated the impossibility of rational economic calculation in a system with no private property, as it necessarily lacks prices for the assessment of alternatives for decision making. How could Western economists subscribe to the existence of a system that in reality could never actually function or therefore even exist? It occurred to me that the only logical explanation for the existence of such a system is the apparent abolition of private property and the apparent replacement of the market by the plan. It was of course necessary to back up this interpretation with a description of the reality of the planning process that would be capable of debunking the ideology of the system.

I gave preference to using the term "closed hierarchical system". An open hierarchical system would be any organisation with two or more levels of management, which operates – to use F.A. Hayek's terms – as a "coagulate" of the taxis type in the cosmos of the market type. In the global market economy, organisations can take on enormous proportions, and through their activities, turnover, and the number of their employees they are even capable of eclipsing some of the former, smaller states of "centrally planned economies". Nevertheless, they remain open hierarchical systems, as the possibility exists that even they could go bankrupt, succumb to "unfriendly takeovers", or simply go under in the market. The closed hierarchical system attempted to secure itself against the risk of the economic (and political) demise of each of its hierarchically ordered links by means of the "universal insurance company" (J.Kornai) in the form of the socialist state, which did not allow any entity to perish. What's more, at the time when I was defining the system in this way, Czechoslovakians had already experienced for themselves the application of the Brezhnev Doctrine of the so-called limited sovereignty of the socialist state. Even the state was not allowed to go politically bankrupt: when the regime was doing poorly, allied armies intervened on its behalf. A defin-

ing feature of the closed hierarchical system was thus the absence of any "exit"; the non-existence of the institution of bankruptcy. A system that ensured economic survival for each of its local links through the redistribution of sources could only go bankrupt as a whole – and in the end that's what happened.

The closed hierarchical system reconciled in itself the dual and internally inconsistent character of the "control vertical" and the "reverse control pyramid". It was the outcome of the social experiment in liquidating private property, whereby the political authorities attempted to dominate the economy. This experiment, inspired by Marxism, went even further (deeper) than the attempt at the domination of politics over the economy under the Nazi regime: there the institution of private property remained, at least formally, intact. (Or such was the case in so far as private property in "Aryan hands" was concerned. But stolen Jewish property under Nazism came to acquire the form of private property, even though Aryanisation involved political subjects such as Hermann Göring Werke). "Real socialism" attempted to establish real political hegemony over the economy by means of the eradication of the very institution of private property, and this attempt was particularly rigorous in Czechoslovakia – even in comparison with its socialist neighbours.

The purpose and substance of my descriptive analysis of the firm was the substantiation of the fact that this attempt was not successfully achieved. The political authorities only succeeding in carrying out "formal nationalisation", while the firm remained "the basic economic cell of society", whose private-property character inexorably broke through the formal existence of the vertical control axis. Even more significant in the analysis was that it demonstrated that the economy of real socialism was after all coordinated by horizontal "supplier-buyer relations", that is, by the socialist market, no matter how artificially monopolised, rigid and ineffective a market it was. Planning procedures and planning games occurring along the vertical hierarchical organisational structures were in reality of far less significance than it seemed on the surface: planning was looked upon as an ideology rather than an actual coordination process. But in order to substantiate these somewhat surprising and for many still provocative claims, it is necessary to give at least some indication of the reciprocal influence of the forces of the control vertical and the reverse control pyramid.

The Control Pyramid and the Control Vertical

The economy of real socialism was organised according to the principle of functional departments: the industry ministries oversaw the industrial sectors, the sectors oversaw the general headquarters of so-called middle-management links (economic production units, industrial complexes, specialised enterprises), the middle-management links were in charge of their particular enterprises, and only after that the management hierarchy within the enterprise came into play.

The multi-level organisational hierarchy of the economy was paralleled by the hierarchically ordered pyramid of state and public administration, which through its territorial breakdown (borough, town, district, region, republic) was intended to assist the control vertical of the economy in a number of aspects, such as territorial planning, allocation of labour force quotas, and agricultural administration, at all levels; this, incidentally, led to the paradox that cooperative agricultural enterprise – at first glance seemingly autonomous of "collective social ownership" – had in the end the highest degree of hierarchical "gearing". The cornerstone of both hierarchies was the

Communist Party itself, which was also hierarchically ordered. The "nomenklatura principle" meant that various levels of party leadership executed "official policy", that is, they made decisions relating to who was to occupy top functions at individual levels of state administration and the economy. The director of the enterprise was "part of the nomenklatura" of the party district, while the director of the economic production unit was part of the nomenklatura of the party region, and so on. It was typical that the relevant "head of department" at the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia had more political power than the relevant industry minister – in terms of informal economic power, however, the reverse control pyramid of the enterprise sphere dominated. This is the core argument of my paper.

Overseeing the coordination of planning relating to some 1.5 million products, components, systems, and materials was a mammoth task. The construction of the control axis along hierarchical lines was an inevitability, and thus ultimately also an attribute of the system. The informational aspect of the matter itself demanded the aggregation and disaggregation of information along the control axis; *eo ipso*, however, room also necessarily emerged for information distortions and for the exercise of opportunism by the local planning sections. The control pyramid was built on the planner's deontological declaration: hierarchical man was meant to be loyal, obedient, and respectful towards superior authority, he was meant to observe planning discipline, and the announcement of the plan was to have the force of law. In the first stage of the system's evolution, the superior links challenged the natural opportunism of man with two powerful instruments: intoxicating demagogic ideology – which would go as far as to announce the discovery of the "new man", one with a sense for social ownership – and, as in every totalitarian regime, threats, intimidations, and severe penalties. Being caught in a state of "non-observance of planning discipline" in the 1950s was reason enough to be accused of "sabotage", and sabotage was enough to put a person in prison. In the second stage of the system's evolution it softened and abandoned the "stick" for the "carrot": the economic interests of local links in the planning system came to be accepted as an unavoidable fact, and the instrument for harmonising those particular interests with the interests of all of society was meant to become the dexterous construction of systems of material stimulation and "*khozraschet*", or the system of self-supporting financial operations. Through financial stimuli the firms and individuals were to be prompted towards fulfilling the objectives of the hierarchy. One way or the other, the objective of the system of real socialism was to turn economic man, insofar as it was possible, into a perfectly programmable robot, loyally executing tasks in the field of its capacity. In this very deep sense the system was in conflict with the requirements of human dignity.

Here it is necessary to mention a point that takes us back to the distinction between the open and closed hierarchical systems. The existence of several levels of control is usually a normal occurrence even in large private corporations. However, given that these organisational units evolved naturally in the competition between "markets and hierarchies" (R.Coase) there is a chance that the natural sense of solidarity and "local patriotism" experienced among members of the individual levels of control does not go beyond sustainable limits, and the perception of "superiority" and "subordination" remains in principle preserved (reference will be made to possible excesses in this respect in the concluding part of the text). The closed hierarchical system of real socialism, however, created, through its pathological ambition to run the whole economy from "one single centre", such high "gearing" of hierarchical control and planning that the local patriotism of individual links was able to exceed its natural limits, and it turned its informal economic power against the higher ranking parts of the hierarchy. It was in this way that the behaviour I have designated with the term reverse control pyramid emerged.

The Reverse Control Pyramid

The basis of the negotiating strength of the firm was the fact that it was this level of management that possessed – often to a monopolistic extent – all the necessary economic and planning information: about "its" productive function, about investment and rationalising potential, and about the capacity to sell and supply. It was simply unrealistic to try to concentrate in a single "planning centre" knowledge that in a society is distributed and spread out among different sources, along with information on thousands of products, tens of thousands of parts, structures, sub-structures, materials, raw materials, all from hundreds of suppliers, information susceptible to change over time and space.

This huge ambition of central planning was what resulted in "subordinate" enterprises acquiring such massive informal economic power: the superior organs along the control vertical were often capable of obtaining this information by means of turning to the subordinate links in the system. The information asymmetry, the inseverable dependence of the planning hierarchy on the base of the control pyramid, it was this chronic illness in the system that led to vain attempts to uncover the "philosopher's stone" – the kind of motivational system for enterprises that would coax them into providing superior organs with accurate information; experience with the functioning of the closed hierarchical system was such that all "subordinate links" provided higher organs with distorted information, semi-truths, and even outright socio-economic lies. The enterprises were led to the distortion of information by their own opportunistic interests, and thus the distortion of information came to be an inherent attribute of the system.

Among the institutional features of the hierarchical planning system was also the fact that the assessment of any given link in the planning system – e.g. the VHJ – was dependent on the "fulfilment of the plan" in the units subordinate to that particular link, that is, in enterprises belonging to, in this case, the economic production unit. This dependence extended in a chainlike manner, recursively from the enterprise, through the economic production unit and the sector to the specialised industries of the State Planning Commission and other central organs. The interdependency, institutionally and in terms of interests, of higher and lower links in the hierarchy resulted in a very specific way of understanding the sense, functions, and objectives of the planning process, best expressed as the "reverse control pyramid". According to this concept, the economic production unit, the sectors, and even the professionally relevant parts of the central organs of the hierarchy, all served as representatives of the enterprises, like their "extended hand". In a system with this kind of situation, the traditional understanding of hierarchy and relationships of superiority and subordination falls apart like a house of cards, and there remains only the superficial image of the control vertical, which in this case surprisingly managed to survive through all the failures in the implementation of the plans.

The official political economy of socialism entirely overlooked this analysis of power and political-economic structures. The interpretation of the closed hierarchical system aided by the concept of the reverse control pyramid indicates that there were evidently enough reasons to abandon the idea of undertaking such a description: reality could not bear its own reflection. The very concept of the reverse control pyramid was of course too one-sided. Political power, represented in the state and the planning centre, did not form an independent and organically autonomous authority, as it rested on the power-political structures of the reverse control pyramid, whose interest lobbies often reached up to the highest links in the hierarchy. On the other hand, this very state, and thus also the planning centre, if they were to fulfil their function as the owner of social

property, in the sense of the "universal insurance company", had to, like it or not, endeavour to see that the control vertical functioned.

Not only the planning centre found itself in this ambivalent, internally inconsistent position, but all the links in the hierarchy: "upwardly" they had to pretend that they were diligently trying to fulfil the tasks and functions of the control vertical, while "downwardly" their interests were built on the reverse control pyramid of subordinate planning links, the fulfilment of whose plans ensured their own positive economic and political assessment. While the plan was the general criterion of success in the closed hierarchical system, it was a simulacrum that everyone – proportionate to their own "negotiating strength" – shaped in their own likeness. The entire planning system moved in a kind of vicious circle: the effort to enforce the control vertical meant that the planning process acquired the character of "games for the plan", in which the plan was at stake, while the simultaneous influence of the forces emerging out of the reverse control pyramid imbued that very same planning process with the character of "planning games". The influence of these forces, characterised by a distortion of information and high interest "shake-ups", in the end had very little effect on the effectiveness and dynamics of the enterprise's behaviour. The influences of different forces mutually interfered with each other and demonstrated thus the irrationality of the institutional arrangement of the closed hierarchical planning system.

In the circumstances of the closed hierarchical system planning was an extensive cooperative game that suffered from the profound dichotomy of real and official rules. The official objective of the game as declared in the control vertical was "to achieve the greatest degree of satisfaction of the needs of society by the most economic means of use of society's resources". In reality, however, local links of the reverse control pyramid strove to get as much control as possible over society's resources, and they used planning as a front for secret, veiled activities aimed at the aggregation of the power stemming from the monopolisation of the material, information, and decision-making circumstances involved in social reproduction.

The institutional structure of the closed hierarchical system in the end caused planning to degenerate into a "shadow game of numbers accompanying developments in reality" and into a costly social ritual that helped preserve the social structure and reproduce the circumstances for the distribution of resources. In the final years the "planning centre" fulfilled its function as the "universal insurance company" with growing difficulty, as there were not enough resources to support the unlimited liabilities. And long before that what growth there was had been "financed" at the expense of serious and long-term negative externalities with regard to natural resources and the environment.

But evidently the closed hierarchical system bequeathed its harshest legacy in the area of "social ecology", in the damage inflicted on the character and moral integrity of the long-term "players" in the planning games, where the distortion of information, the prefabrication of lies and alibis, and schizophrenic attitudes became the everday practices and requirements of behaviour. The country's social capital, the sense of mutual trust, the ability and willingness to rely on the word of another suffered badly. Responsible action was lost, as everyone over the years learned how easy it was to "nationalise" the failures and inaccomplishments stemming from our own inadequacies. The closed hierarchical system gave birth to institutionalised irresponsibility.

All these fixed patterns of behaviour inherited from real socialism of course also exhibited a tendency to reproduce themselves in the new conditions that emerged during the transformation

and privatisation processes after 1989. An understanding of the peculiar logic of the way the previous regime functioned would have provided some opportunity to confront these tendencies – if in no other sense, at least the risk of the continuance of habitual games would have been publicly described and declared as socially inferior. That did not happen, and thus the reverse control pyramids acquired the chance – often on a multiple scale – to conquer the weakened centre of a new kind of wealth and to gain in a more veiled manner and on a scale that was previously unfathomable, and to "nationalise" the losses and misappropriations of the privatisation games. This is where we come to the lessons for today's world.

Institutional Economics and the Lessons for Today's World

Ronald Coase came up with the simple but brilliant idea that competition does not take place just within the market, but that competition also occurs between the organisation and the market, between hierarchical structures of control and horizontal contractual relationships, and that the relative efficiency of orders that arise spontaneously and orders that are artificially constructed determines where the line "between the firm and the market" ultimately runs. This was a first rank innovation for classical economics, which had previously introduced two extreme models addressing the question of the economy that had one feature in common – neither took hierarchies into account. Here I am referring to Walras' model of general market equilibrium and Marx's "collectivisation" of the economy, run as "one big workshop". Using the terms of institutional economics, Walras' model describes the atomised and perfect competition of individuals in the market. In this world, transaction costs in the market are disregarded (therefore, there is no need here for any commercial courts, or state arbitrators, or even the "visible hand" of the law), while transaction costs for the organisation and control of the firm are implicitly considered to be prohibitively high: therefore organisation-firms are not envisioned in the scenario. Conversely, Marx, in his ideological blindness to the market strongly overestimated the transaction costs of contractual relations, considering them so prohibitively high that he had to come up with the idea of abolishing the market altogether. And in order to abolish the market it was necessary to abolish the institution of private proverty. However, he did not devote an ounce of his attention to the potential transaction costs for the organisation and control of the "collectivised" economy as one "big workshop".

However, even in times of competition between two antagonistic blocs, the real worlds of economics drifted away from these extreme theoretical models. Because it does take institutions into account, institutional economics is far more suitable for a description and analysis of real worlds. It performs a comparison that is far less ideological, as it estimates the transaction costs "in the market" and "inside the corporation" and recommends qualitatively superior alternatives. In the world of institutional economics hierarchies are a standard part of the analysis. The delegated authority of "operative administration" of so-called social ownership leads to the rise of quasi-ownership structures and to coalition structures of *de facto* ownership, while the absence of rule of law and *de jure* ownership only increase the transaction costs from "operating" the closed hierarchical system. One of the strongest claims made by the theory of property rights is the statement that the effectiveness of any system is critically dependent on how clearly and how sharply property rights are specified.

The knowledge that institutional economics provides, however, also refreshes our understanding of how advanced, "late" capitalism functions. The theory of the market economy is based, among

other things, on the recognition that competition in the market has a tendency to negate itself if it is left to its own devices. Therefore, anti-monopoly and anti-trust legislation and protections of market competition became one of the founding stones of this kind of economy. The half-century of experience of Germany and all of Western Europe is surpassed by more than a century of this kind of experience in the United States. When market competition is imperfect, the competition "between the firm and the market" is necessarily also deformed, and corporations incline towards monopolistic behaviour, with all the negative aspects associated with that, such as the abuse of market forces and the abuse of a corporation's standing in the market, and with the accompanying phenomena of internal organisational slack. Transaction costs for organisation and management can take on malignant forms even in the open economy.

The experiences of giant corporations however reveal that there is an "inclination" towards the monopolisation of economic power inside the corporation itself and in relation to top managers and owners. The information asymmetry that we are intimately familiar with from real socialism even in corporations favours managers over formal owners: and that is the cardinal problem of "corporate governance" in our times. Top managers have a tendency to try to maximise their presumed value in the eyes of owners, thus marginal product of management. In reality they are interested in maximising their own benefits drawn from the corporations they manage. In addition to subsidising their income in the form of perks concealed in the costs of managing the company (again reminiscent of the behaviour of socialist managers), one such route of "managerial capitalism" is the excessive tendency towards mergers (the term usually used is mega-merger). The theory of vertical integration first developed in the pioneering study by Coase, and later elaborated further by O.E.Williamson, analyses this question by undertaking a technical comparison of transaction costs within the firm and on market standing. However, the distortion of information and the control of managers over information flows leads to the distortion of the comparison itself. And as the level of salaries and bonuses received by top managers correlates with the size of the corporation, the asymmetric comparative information advantage of managers (in relation to owners) changes, as does the opportunistic nature of their behaviour with regard to their inherent tendency towards excessive mergers, exaggerated acquisitions, and inclinations towards unfriendly takeovers, all of which have a common outcome, in that they lead too often to an overall reduction in the efficiency of the new business giant. Fortunately these tendencies appear in systems that are hierarchical but nonetheless still open and exposed to competition in global markets. It is, however, necessary to take into consideration the existence of this type of risk and moral hazard.

The experiences of the behaviour of subjects in the closed hierarchical system would appear to be useful also for the study of technical, territorial, and network monopolies, whether with regard to corporations in public ownership or monopolies that are private, regulated, or – and more likely – unregulated. Research into the conduct of multi-national corporations and reciprocal hierarchical relationships between financial centres and branches distributed over several continents, in various countries with various tax and customs regimes, but also diverse business environments and established business ethics represent special case studies. In all of them the study of hierarchical structures of real socialism could be extremely inspirational: despite all endeavours towards perfecting information and communication technology the risk of the abuse of informal economic power remains considerable.

Finally, there is no need to go that far. Our experiences today with the financing of Czech post-secondary schools out of the state budget often remind me of things I am intimately familiar with

from the past. I erroneously believed that budget and planning games had vanished into the graveyard of history. However, bureaucratic, hierarchically ordered structures have a tendency to reproduce their own internal laws independently and without the input of declared ideologies, even contradictory ones.

And lest I forget: individual nation states, their coalitions, and even individual big players and private corporations with powerful information and negotiation potential have long been engaged in "games with Brussels" as part of the process preceding the Czech Republic's accession to the European Union. Everywhere there is warrant for concern over the risk of the emergence of games that have elements of moral hazard and fixed patterns of "rent-seeking" from Brussels. It is only possible to hope that such a massive political-economic group as the European Union does not cede to the tendency to create a closed hierarchical system, as it must face equally powerful players in the world and global markets.

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1.4 Socialist Rules and Orders: The Case of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

Jiří Kabele

Abstract

This study offers a preliminary description of hierarchical statutory codes and the rules of procedure that complete them. The full description would render transparent the form and "effectiveness" of the events realised after these codes and orders come into effect. The study draws inspiration from the structuralist study of myth. In the case of statutory codes and rules of procedure the study first presents the descriptive apparatus for its textual overall structure – Greimas' armature – and then the formulated apparatus is applied to the description of the Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Rules of procedure of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The armatures of both types of codes are used to demonstrate the relative ease with which they can be used and misused to support the leading role of the party. Autonomous associations here de facto became established organisations. The codes did not guarantee a clear division of responsibility and left enough space for the application of the unwritten rules of party leadership. The rules of procedure for the most part did not regulate proceedings, and they guaranteed the privileges of the presidia explicitly fixed in the rules of procedure of the Central Committee.

Keywords

Introduction

This study is based on a larger study about Socialist Rules and Orders (Kabele 2004), which compared the socialist orders that were in effect at the end of the 1980s in the fields of state administration and in the Communist Party with the capitalist orders dating from the end of the millennium. The study draws inspiration from the structuralist study of myth. It aims to create the first rough out-line of a description of hierarchical statutory codes and their complementary rules of procedure. This description is intended to render the form and "effectiveness" of the order of events realised after these codes come into effect transparent. The study is based on the conviction that knowledge acquired in this way can contribute to a more textured and multi-faceted – not just black and white – understanding of communist rule and its legacy. In connection with the hypothesis of the constructivist arrangement, presented in an earlier publication, we were specifically interested in (Kabele 2002b) discovering how the composition of the texts of socialist codes – their modifica-tions and eliminated passages – made it possible to construct a party-state hierarchy in which the leading role of the party was applied through the mechanism of democratic centralism, nomen-klatura administration, and party supervision.

The descriptive apparatus for the so-called textual armature,[1] which respects the division of texts into main parts, but not into particular institutes and paragraphs, will be presented for both statutory codes and rules of procedure at first. This apparatus will be then applied to describe the orders and codes of the Communist Party itself. In this study the information that was derived from a description of the Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Rules of Procedure of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is disclosed.

Knowledge of the armature of a code and of its individual rules would not in itself allow us to say something about the actual "message" of the code, i.e. about its strategic interpretation of events, in accordance with which the participating actors conduct themselves. The reason for this is sim-ple. The orders we studied on the whole refer to rules in the broader normative framework of the execution of power in the state. This broader framework was the subject of discussion in another study, "How Socialist Legality Served to Guarantee the Influence of the Communist Party and Socialist Organisations", (in Chapter 1 of this volume). For a thorough interpretation of socialist statutory codes it is necessary to understand that the broader normative framework[2] both ousted the eco-nomic and the political competition from the sphere of official affairs and restricted association in a fundamental way. Overall it strengthened the significance of the disciplinary protections of col-lective interests at the expense of the judicial protections of the rights and freedoms of individuals. Under these circumstances the practice of building up statewide hierarchies through the use of hier-archical statutory codes and the rules of procedure took on a peculiar form. The organisation of the Communist Party based on the principle of democratic centralism became its universal model.

Myths were of key significance for the existence of traditional societies. The role of statutory codes and rules of procedure in modern societies is of no less significance. Their role relates to the application of the right of association. The advancement of interest-based associations liberated the individual from belonging only to dynastic, tribal or other traditions tied up in social configu-

1 See the section on A Structuralist-Inspired Description of Codes.
2 Key role here was played by what we call the Constructivist Digest – Statutes of the Communist Party of Czecho-slovakia, international Eastern bloc treaties, the post-August 1968 "Lessons from the Crisis …", the constitutional Declaration, and the first chapter of the Constitution on "Social Arrangements" – and by the socialist legal codes.

rations or units. The activities of the liberated autonomous associations and established organisations became the motor for the so-called great transformation, which introduced the traditional world into increasingly dynamic changes, and created a permanent task for social scientific research.

Association gave rise both to internally structured organisations and communities and to the social network of individuals and organisations vibrant with transactions. All the positive and negative aspects of modern societies are connected with association. The typical illnesses of ownership and governance, beginning with quasi-ownership rights, and ending with corruption, are all in a body connected with the influence of these internal organisational structures and external networks (Kabele 2002a).

Organising became a medium for loose association. It made possible to effectively coordinate intervention into the social matters of multiple persons on the basis of a voluntary contractual, or on an involuntary power basis. According to North's hypothesis (North 1981) in traditional societies the "genie" of organisation was kept in the bottle as a result of the high transaction costs connected with association, i.e. the costs of negotiating social actions and of enforcement of authority for new institutions. The reduction of transaction costs linked to organising was based on the effort to assert generally applicable rules of the game (universalisation) and on the transformation of individuals and organisations into self-pertaining entities, i.e. relatively independently acting persons (subjectivisation).[3] The hierarchical statutory codes and rules of procedure that this study is looking at are of course a typical manifestation of the concurrence of universalisation and subjectivisation.[4]

In addition to the relevant specialised laws (e.g. Act no. 8/1951 Coll. on voluntary organisations and assemblies and no. 83/1990 Coll. on the right to assemble) the content of the right of association is also usually expressed in the civic code (the origin and termination of legal persons), in the commercial/economic code, in the law on churches, and possibly also in the law on political parties and political movements. Here and in a number of other laws relating to a certain type of organisation[5] we can find the rough definition of the content of statutory codes: statutes, constitutional deeds, and contracts. The right of association of course does not only establish a need for hierarchical statutory codes; in order for the resulting association to be able to act as (legal) persons they must be able to reach decisions that bind them as a whole. The transaction costs of these kinds of decision-making processes can be reduced if they are conducted collectively through electoral gatherings or other variously constructed deliberative assemblies in accordance with the rules determined by the rules of procedure.

Hierarchical statutory codes and rules of procedure represent the sets of written and unwritten rules formed by partial legal institutes. They are codes because, together with the most important

3 Theories of the concurrence of universalisation and subjectivisation elaborate Weber's well-known theory of modernisation (Weber 1968).
4 In the background to our theoretical considerations on codes-texts and their relationships to the order of events is the concept of institutionalisation, which is inherent to dual social constructivism. The duality of construction is here referred to because institutionalisation always proceeds hand in hand with narrativisation. Institutionalisation imposes an accountable and given orderliness on social worlds through the negotation and restoration of the rules of the game or agreements. Along with the rules of the game there also arise of course stories, biographies, histories and myths, which in describing events in a riveting manner contribute also signficantly to the accountability of its game frameworks. Institutionalisation occurs heuristically, i.e. through a trial-and-error method, strategically and as it goes along. It is put into motion by the effect of force, through the negotiation or enforcement of rules. Its course is determined by opportunity costs and transaction costs (Kabele, forthcoming).
5 For example, the law on post-secondary schools or on the Auditor General's Office, etc.

game frameworks, they stipulate and establish also the forms of their protection, and thus they pre-determine the distribution of competences and commitments among the participating persons. They define in a certain area of performance or conduct the areas of both freedom and responsibility. The codes-texts[6] as sets of written rules of the game must therefore fulfil two conditions: first they must be relatively complete, internally consistent and, where necessary, mutually interconnected, and second they must serve the purpose of imposing order on some area of human activity.

Between the code-text and the order of the events realised on its basis there always exists a certain disproportion. The small disproportion between the code-text and the realised order of the events is not of course an obstacle for us to be able to consider the given code-text as a source of the order of events. A certain disproportion is even regular, as Émile Durkheim pointed out in his distinction between ideal and real culture. If, however, the disproportion between the code-text and the realised order of events is large and if it affects at the same time some sensitive rules, the situation can be characterised in multiple ways. The code-text can fail, because either does not impose any order to events or despite the given code they assert a different order. Elsewhere, the code-text from the start fulfils more of a declaratory function. It was consciously set up in such a way that alternative rules of the game can apply.

At first glance statutory codes and rules of procedure would appear to be more worth studying, when we try to understand to the rules of formation of many other types of codes. Statutory codes are capable of establishing complex institutions, such as equital competitions (elections, markets) or hierarchical configurations with a legal person, and even their combination, e.g. states. They are as a rule complemented by an entire series of other codes, which regulate the relationships and approaches of their activities within the institutions set up in this way, or regulate their relationships with other institutions. Among such complementary codes of hierarchical statutory codes are the rules of procedure we are considering here, too.

In the study of the rules of code formation it is necessary to interpret the texts in their entirety. In their parts and in the particular institutes they should be arguable or defendable from the perspective of the way in which they predetermine the order of events. When we mentioned above that the code-texts are comprised of institutes, what we were referring to of course was only our opening assumption, according to which it is always possible to find in the text of the codes sub-units that are created out of sets of regulations and rules, which predetermine events in a certain way. They are these sub-units that we call institutes.[7] For example, the comprehensive institute of elections predetermines the way in which representatives of associations are chosen.

6 Hierarchical statutory codes can take the form of constitutions, legal codes, or laws (so-called primary legislation), or they can be issued in the form of declarations, orders, or directives by a unit that has been delegated with the competence to formulate regulations on the basis of law (so-called secondary legislation). The submerged part of the iceberg of the institutional regime of society of course is made up of codes that are required by law or which have no legal follow copy. They must not of course be in contradiction with the law (the so-called tertiary sphere of rules) (Baldwin 1996).
7 In legal writings, *legal institutes* are either understood as sets of legal norms regulating homogenous relationships: for example, private ownership or public representation, or as rules that represent the used legal solutions enabling in a partial way the regulation of the most varied types of relations, for example, the institute of the pledge, the institute of the incompatibility of functions, etc. Boguszak and Čapek: *Teorie práva* (*The Theory of Law*) (1997).

Hierarchical Statutory Codes

A structuralist-inspired description of codes

In the effort to achieve a comprehensive description of codes I drew some inspiration from the structuralist studies of fairytales and myths. Therefore, I here distinguish between three levels of the description of codes: in relation to armature, in relation to the code's message (the description that expresses a strategic understanding of events acquired in the applications of the code), and in relation to the coordination coding scheme (a characterisation based on the used types of protections of game agendas).

The armature of a code is made up of the verbal specifications of the architecture of game frameworks, which are contained in the paragraphs. The armature is a tool that helps the reader to obtain a strategic understanding of the code, but it is not the same thing as a strategic understanding and definitions of the situation that the code communicates. The content of the communication or the message of the code emerges with the strategic and situationally conditioned interpretation of the code.

A strategic reading of the code is only possible owing to the fact that the reader has acquired knowledge of the coordinative coding scheme. This cognitive equipment is used to assess how the game frameworks are protected, and therefore they must be or need not be accepted as accountable and given. Anyone who would fail to adhere to the accountable game framework – whether written or unwritten – would find themselves fighting windmills.

Both Algerdis Greimas and Claude Lévi-Strauss understood the armature as (i) a supersegmental discursive unit and as (ii) the structure of a content that is expressed through narration. In this way, as a form of narrative model, it is meant to express the sum of structural qualities that are common to all myths. In so far as the content is concerned Algerdis Greimas drew on Lévi-Strauss' idea that myth as a narrative is determined or shaped through inversion. Myth describes how the inverted world returns to its original state. In this way the mythic BEFORE and AFTER are created. The armature of myth also shows that the topical contents (the actual core of the mythic narrative) are lodged in correlative contents, as the following diagram indicates:

The armature of myth

Contents	Inverted (BEFORE)		Original (AFTER)	
	Correlated	Topical (REVERSAL)		Correlated

In this study we understand the armature of the code analogically (i) as a variant supersegmental discursive unit and (ii) as the structure of content, which of course is expressed primarily through argumentation. As a sort of argumentational model the armature should express the sum of the structural qualities common to all statutory codes. The description of the armature should point out which passages belong to the code and what place in the argumentational interpretation of game frameworks they occupy. They should also establish what the particular passages in the text are about, and where the particular permissions and prohibitions are located and why. The proposed description of the armature of hierarchical statutory codes will, for the time being, be based only on an analysis of their contents of general schemes, which express the main division of the code's sub-

ject matter. It did not really proceed on to the level of institutes. In the case of rules of procedure our study was considerably aided by the fact that we were able to adopt the description of meetings that is contained in *Robert's Rules of Order*. The basic institutes are proposed therein. Robert's rules arrange them preferentially (Foresman 1990).

The hierarchical statutory codes and rules of procedure start with introductory provisions and end with transitional and closing provisions. Analogically they also thus respect the division of fairytales into correlated and topical contents. In the case of hierarchical statutory codes and rules of procedure the introductory provisions usually introduce the founder of the unit. There are two basic types of founders. From the perspective of modern societies the primary type is the membership of an autonomous association that has been established through the exercise of the right of association. The secondary type is that of varied external founders: owners, executors of state power, etc., of established organisations. We can assume in advance that the armatures of the codes of autonomous associations and established organisations would differ. The description of the armature that we obtained on the basis of a comparison of several dozen Czech pre-revolution 1989 and post-revolution statutory codes confirmed that assumption:

The armature of statutory codes

Contents	Autonomous associations	Established organisations
Correlated	Introductory provision	Introductory provision
Position based on the purpose	Scope of power	Scope of power
Internal governance	Membership rights and obligations	
	Division of competences in governance and the distribution of competences to govern	Division of competences in governance and the distribution of competences to govern
	Internal division of activities	Internal division of activities
	Principles of governance	Principles of governance
	Principles of economy	
Position based on external relations		Constitutive external relations
	Position and management of subsidiary units	Position and management of subsidiary units
Correlated	Concluding and transitional provisions	Concluding and transitional provisions

The core of the armature of statutory codes is formed by the description of the competence hierarchy, of roles, organs, and units in the section "internal governance". This description establishes membership rights, and the division of competences in the execution of governance and in the distribution of the competences to govern. It also determines the internal division of activities and the principles of governance. These may be followed either by the principles of economy or by constitutive external relations regulating the integration of the unit into the broader division of competences and activities. The position of subsidiary units is next specified. From our perspective what is important is that the competence hierarchy of roles, organs and units predetermines all the

key sources of governance that the bearers of these roles and organs have available to them. Christopher Hood characterises them as the central node (nodality), authority, treasure, and organised human capital (organisation) (Hood 1988).

In autonomous associations there are founders, or the rights of formation lie with the membership corpuses (hereinafter we will speak of associations). The code must describe the way in which the membership corpuses are established and how they can apply their rights of formation. In established units (hereafter organisations) the execution of rights of formation need not be interpreted because it is usually normatively regulated by other regulations, e.g. in firms primarily by the commercial code and the labour code, in the former national committees by special law and the labour code.

The armatures of both recognised types of unit – associations and organisations – differ in that in the case of established organisations there are not usually sections devoted to the rights and obligations of members or to the principles of economy. Self-government that would not be based on relative economic independence would from the outset have to be conflicting or contentious. Conversely, there is usually a section on Constitutional External Relations, which is something that is not typical for autonomous associations.

If we were to go down to the level of articles and paragraphs and look at the institutes that are used there, we would obviously find other differences, too. In the original study we drew attention to some of these when we described the characteristic repertoire of roles, organs, and formations for particular types of units.

The core of the armature of hierarchical statutory codes, the competence hierarchies, primarily distributes competences – i.e. the entitlements to decide and act. The specification of the commitments and the protections of the distributed competences, i.e. also the division of responsibility, are not asserted on the level of the content or general scheme. Therefore the question of responsibility can be incidentally ousted from the game. Here it is also a factor that the division of responsibilities is usually, or to a substantial degree should be, established by the valid laws and codes that form the normative frameworks of statutory codes. This is the way it should be, but the socialist codes often made sure us that it need not necessarily be so.

The armatures of socialist hierarchical statutory codes

After November 1989 all spheres of life in society witnessed a dramatic increase in the number of legal persons. From the tens of thousands there was a shift within a year to a figure in the millions. The segmentation of socialist society in practical terms meant probably hundreds of thousands of such entities. It was nevertheless concealed within the umbrella hierarchical associations – economic manufacturing units , unions, art federations, etc. Both the umbrella organisations and the units subsumed within them as a rule possessed their own statutory codes. The production of these codes was therefore indispensable component of communist rule.

Continual reorganisations were an inherent part of communist rule. Usually this involved activities that meant a change in form rather than actual content, but they were nonetheless the focus of exceptional attention. They made use of the combinatorial opportunities that are peculiar to the organograms and organisational trees of the administrative offices, enterprises, and other socialist organisations. They unified, absorbed and divided roles, organs and units. Relationships of subordination were changed, and competences were moved around. At the time a well-known

reason for initiating reorganisation was based on a paragraph in the labour code, which rendered reorganisation the most useful tool for getting rid of uncomfortable employees or functionaries. The nomenklatura administration produced a similarly reinforcing effect, as the party needed to find ways to create opportunities for young cadres while at the same time also looking after elderly communists of outstanding merit. A deeper reason behind the reorganisation games was the use of the strategy of institutionalisation,[8] which was widespread at that time, and the general simulation of the planned implementation of scientific progress. Reorganising and re-reorganising always promised the movement in the direction of "further reinforcing the leading role of the party, expanding socialist democracy, increasing work productivity, etc.".

Within the party itself, it was not so much the cult of work that applied as it was the cult of organisation. According to Lenin *"The proletariat has no other weapon in the struggle than organisation"* (History… 1945: 48). The party directed itself, while society was led by the party according to the way its leadership was established in the constitution. In both cases the party offered the masses its exceptional and "scientifically grounded" organisational skills. All the functionaries we interviewed saw the essence of their work in organisation, and they expressed their conviction that today organisation is underappreciated and on the decline. The cult of organisation is based on a deep faith in Hayek's criticised constructive rationalism or in Popper's holistic engineering (Hayek 1991, Popper 1992).

The armatures of the statutory orders are presented here using the contents of the organisational codes of two socialist "autonomous" associations and one established organisation (see table on the following page).

The Communist Party conceived itself as the "highest form of socio-political organisation".[9] At first glance the Party Statutes appear to adhere to the armature of autonomous associations. With a closer look, however, it becomes evident that the Party represented a very exceptional "total" organisation. When we look at the organisational code of the Municipal National Committee in Philipstown it appears that the code was created on the basis of one official model codes applied at all levels within the state administration. From the armature of this organisational code it is evident that the national committees were only semblances of autonomous associations. The organisational code contains section on the rights and obligations not of the members but workers and functionaries of the MěstNV (municipal national committee) and inappropriately section on Constitutive External Relations. Conversely, there is no section on the Principles of Economy. When we look at the organisational code of the Central Administration of the State Counter-Intelligence Forces and the organisational codes of all the divisions and departments of the Ministry of the Interior, including the ministry itself, it is clear that they were all set up according to a single model, too. All that is notable about them is that they present the clear allocation of long lists of competences to perform something: to uncover, to ensure, to carry out, to run, to coordinate, to organise, to apply, etc. The action form of these orders appears as though it were based on an otherwise naive assumption, that the distribution of competences goes hand in hand with the distribution of responsibilities and is equal to a simple assigning of a task.

8 This is a strategy of solving problems that does not deal with their sources but rather consists of the creation of specialised institutions for their solution.
9 Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia from 1976

The armature of statutory codes	Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia	Organisational code of the Municipal National Committee (MěstNV) of Philipstown	Organisational code of the Central Administration[10] of the State Counter-Intelligence Forces
Introductory provision	I. (No title)[11]	Introductory provision	Introductory provision
Scope of power		Art. 2 Position and influence of the MěstNV	Art.1 Basic tasks of administration
Membership rights and obligations	II. Party members, their rights and obligations III. Candidates for party membership	IV. Rights and obligations of the delegates freed up for the execution of a function V. Rights and obligations of workers of the MěstNV	
Division of competences in governance and the distribution of competences to govern	V. Highest party organs VI. Organisations and the highest organs of the party in Slovakia VII. District and municipal organisation of the party	II. Organisational structure of the MěstNV	Art.2 Organisational structure, position of the chief officer of administration, his deputies
Internal division of activities	VIII. Basic organisations of the party	Art. 8-16 Commissions, unions, civic committees, other actives	Art.3 Content of the activities of the organisational units of administration
Principles of governance	IV. Construction of the party. Internal party democracy	III: Organisation and management, forms and methods of work of the MěstNV	
Principles of management	XII. Financial resources of the party		
Constitutive external relations	IX. Party and social organisation X. Party organisation in the armed forces XI. Party groups in extra-party organisations	VI: Relationship of the MěstNV to the basic organisations of the Revolutionary Trade Union Movement	Art.4 Relationships of cooperation and collaboration
Position and management of associated units			
Concluding provisions		VIII. Concluding provisions	Art.5 Concluding provisions

10 The National Security Corps was divided into more then ten specialised administrations.
11 The influence of the party is here expressed in the historical narrative of the victory of the working class party together with the vanguard of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. In addition to this the "party employs scientific analysis to work out the programme and the basic conception for the advancement of socialist society, through everyday propagational and organisational work of communists it wins the workers' support of its politics and it advances the creative constructivist activity". Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia from 1976

The Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

The Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) and the key principle behind them – democratic centralism – are introduced in the study in the first chapter in this volume, "How Socialist Legality Served to Guarantee the Influence of the Communist Party and Socialist Organisations". Here it is also worth noting the vocabulary that is used in the Statutes. In addition to the fact that in the Statutes the world is described in terms of *abuses and crimes against the party,* selected vocabulary is also indicative of the cult of organisation. The basic units referred to in the text are *organisations.* In addition to *organs*, references are made to *apparatus*, to *secretaries* in place of chairs, to *secretariats*, ad hoc *functionary conventions* of the KSČ, and of course also to the *systematic organisation of work.*

In this study we are focusing on the Statutes primarily as a statutory code, and we are particularly interested in the armature of the Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

The pre-november 1989 and post-november 1989 statutes

Armature of statutory codes	Pre-november communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ)	Post-november communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM)
Introductory provision	I. (no title)	I. Name, territorial competence, and seat of the KSČM
Scope of power		II. Programme goal and character of the party
Member rights and obligations	II. Members of the party, their rights and obligations III. Candidates for party membership	III. Membership in KSČM IV. Basic rights and obligations of a member of KSČM
Principles of governance	IV. Construction of the party. Internal party democracy	V. Creation and activities of the organs of KSČM
Division of competences in governance and the distribution of competences to govern	V. Highest organs of the party	VI. Internal organisational units (structure) KSČM
Internal division of activities	VI. Organisations and highest organs of the party in Slovakia VIII. District and municipal organisations of the party IX. Basic organisations of the party	VII. Acting in the name of KSČM
	X. Party organisations in the armed forces	
	XI. Party groups in extra-party organisations	
Principles of economy	XII. Financial resources of the party	VIII. Principles of economy of KSČM
Constitutive external relations		IX. KSČM in a pluralist political system
Concluding provisions		X. Concluding provisions

What stands out in the content of the Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia are: the section on candidates for party membership, the absence of concluding provisions, and the two next-to-last sections on party organisation in the armed forces and party groups in extra-party organisations. Party candidatures established a specific procedure for accepting members, wherein the candidate had a year to demonstrate to the party organisation that he would "prove himself to be a valid member of the party".[12] The institute of the candidate co-contributed to instilling awareness in party members not only of their party membership but also of their exclusivity. The party was very careful about ensuring that the subsequent admission of a candidate to the party after the trial period never became a mere formality.

The passage on party groups was connected with the party's arrogation of the competences to be present within all organisations in society, as was mentioned elsewhere. In relation to the specific case of the armed forces and in the representative bodies and social organisations this rights is explicitly asserted. These two sections of the Statutes of course go well beyond the armature of any statutory code, as they unacceptably establish relations inside other non-party units that have their own statutory orders.

Rules of Procedure

The armature of the rules of procedure

The simple rules of procedure for congregations, committees, houses of parliament, clubs, councils, boards, etc. – generally deliberative assemblies, form the contents of the codes that complement the statutory codes. The comparison of the armatures of hierarchical statutory codes and rules of procedure presented in the table below shows that the armature of the rules of procedure would appear to be based on the insertion of three new sections into the armature of the hierarchical statutory code – meetings, proceedings, and auditing activities.

The content of the rules of procedure of the Czech National Council (ČNR) and the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (ÚV KSČ) illustrate how their topical content can be thematically split into two parts. The actual core of the rules of procedure, as its names suggests, is made up of a description of the rules of the game that determines the course of the proceedings. According to the scope of power and complexity of the organisation, the rules of procedure can encompass rules not only for main but also for special types of proceedings. The section of control or audit activities is characteristic only for the deliberative assemblies that have rights of formation.

The substance of the rules of procedure of the Czech National Council is made up of the provisions relating to the establishment of the council, its scope of power, member rights and obligations of members of parliament, their functionaries and organs, and disciplinary procedures or the demarcation of relations between the council and other subjects. This however is not the substance of the rules of procedure of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the formation or establishment of which is laid out rather in the Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

12 The institute of candidacy became part of what was then still the organisational code of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in 1949. Absurdly, it asserted itself even in decisive central organs: the committee and the presidium.

Comparison of the armatures of the hierarchical statutory codes and rules of procedure

Hierarchical statutory codes	Rules of procedure	Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (ÚV)	Czech National Council (No. 35/1989 Coll.)
Correlated	Correlated	(Untitled)	Introductory provisions
Position established by function	Position established by function		Scope of power
Internal governance	Foundation and internal governance I		Regulating meetings Organs
	Meetings	Convening the Central Committee	Meetings
	Proceedings	Programme and rules of procedure Preparation of the sessions of the ÚV Discussions at the sessions of the ÚV Invitations to the sessions of the ÚV Presidium and working commission of the sessions of the ÚV Reports on activities, the fulfilment of resolutions and information Adopting resolutions and their binding force Conclusion of proceedings Other resolutions	Meetings on proposed bills Meetings on programme declarations and on confidence in the government of the Czech Republic
	Audit activities		Audit activities
	Foundation and internal governance II		Disciplinary Procedures Office of the CNC
Position established by external relations	Position established by external relations		Cooperation between organs and other organs and organisations
			Associated commissions
Correlated	Correlated	Concluding provisions	Concluding provisions

Generally, rules of procedure differ not only in terms of how detailed their rules are but also in terms of which elements of the armature are more emphasised: the rules of procedure themselves (sections on meetings, proceedings, and audit activities) or the provisions that describe the circumstances surrounding the proceedings. Many rules of procedure – particularly the socialist ones – are de facto just statutory codes of deliberative assemblies. When reading them, one learns nothing about the rules of their proceedings. The above-mentioned rules of procedure of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia represent, from this perspective, a blatant exception to the rule.

For the study of the key section of the armature – Proceedings – we can draw inspiration from Robert's description of the rules of the game that are inspired by the course meetings of the British Parliament and determined hundred thousands of deliberative assemblies in the USA. In the Czech Republic, *Robert's Rules of Order* are not well known. Nevertheless, in terms of its significance, this is a work that nearly join the ranks of texts such as the French Declaration of the Rights of Men and Citizens or the American Constitution.

Robert's Rules of Order evolved out of several centuries of practice in the English Parliament. Major Henry Robert (a military engineer by profession) published them in 1876 in Chicago. He compiled older rules of procedure in a comprehensive text and gave them a strict logical order. This new version of rules of procedure is clearly intended to ensure that all members have the same rights, advantages and obligations in the process of collective decision-making during meetings. At the same time it ensures the relatively low transaction costliness of proceedings and, as such, also their realisability and acceptable effectiveness. Henry Robert recognised that the essence of collective decision-making consists in the making of motions, their debate, and voting over their accept-ance or amendment. The rules of procedure must serve to ensure that the opportunities for manip-ulation are limited, both on the part of the chair and on the part of the majority or any agile minor-ity. In this conception the rules of procedure establish thus a fair competition for the motions that are discussed, amended, and submitted to the entire deliberative assembly for approval. In order for Henry Robert to describe an effective order he needed first to thoroughly classify the types of motions, which characterised both the types of interventions that may occur in a meeting and also their firm procedural ordering. This ordering determined in the sequence in which the motions could be debated when tabled, and in the sequence in which the motions under consideration could be voted on in the end.[13]

Henry Robert identified thirty-two types of motions, and he divided these types into four basic groups. "A *Main* or *Principal Motion* is a motion made to bring before the assembly, for its consider-ation, any particular subject." (Foresman 1990) *Privileged motions* (e.g. the motion to adjourn debate) are so urgent that regardless of the item being addressed in debate they are accorded preference. *Subsidiary motions* present the methods for modifying, delaying action upon them or otherwise disposing of main motions. *Incidental motions* arise from an item pending debate that must be decid-ed before any other item is taken up. The groups of motions differ not only in terms of whether or under what circumstances they are privileged from the perspective of preferential order, but also in terms of whether the motions must also be supported by another delegate (so-called seconding), whether amending motions can be applied to the motion at hand, and finally, how they are voted on. For example, in making a motion outside the order of business, the member putting forth a motion must in Robert's rules obtain two-thirds of support of the assembly in order for the motion to be car-ried.

13 In the English-speaking countries voting is done not according to the order of motions raised, as is the custom in Europe, but in the opposite order, from back to front.

The rules of procedure of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

The popular version of the principle of democratic centralism sounded like this: "It had two components, democracy and centralism, which were balanced. Up until a motion was decided on everyone was able to comment on its subject, but once the motion was carried it was binding for all subordinate components".[14] The popular version of the principle described here was supported in the Statutes, in the section on the Construction of the Party. Internal party democracy is described in the same place as follows: "The open and direct discussion of issues of party policy in the particular organisations and at the whole of the party is the inalienable right of every member of the party, which is based on the internal party democracy. Only on the basis of internal party democracy it is possible to promote criticism and self-criticism and strengthen party discipline, which must be conscious and at no time automatic. However, broad internal party democracy must be applied in such a way as to avoid it resulting in attempts on the part of a negligible minority to enforce its will on the larger majority of the party, or attempts to foment foreign enemy ideologies and arguments or to create fractional groups, that would disturb the unity of the party…"

In addition to this principle of democratic centralism, the rules of procedure of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia also gave internal party democracy a specific form. We analysed the Motion for Amendments to the Rules of Procedure of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, dating from July 1988 (Presidium of the Central Committee (PÚV) 77/1988 item 3). This document presented the old rules of procedure and the newly proposed ones in parallel. In this motion, the proposed rules of procedure of the Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party were made considerably more democratic. Nevertheless, even after the amendments that were made to the rules they were still oriented more towards discouraging debate, especially when compared with the aim of *Robert's Rules of Order* to establish a fair competition for the making of motions. Mainly they served the interest of the Presidium, so that it was able to retain firmly within its grip the debates that went on in the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

Here we can present only a portion of the competences of the presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The Presidium put forth the programme of debate. The new rules of procedure of course were intended to ensure that members and candidates had the right to propose additions or changes to the order of the programme. All types of motions – from those put forth by members of Central Committee to those from the basic organisations – were assessed by the Presidium, which expressed its position on the motion to the Central Committee for the Committee's decision. The Presidium was also responsible for the preparation of reports, presentations, and motions for resolutions, which it distributed to the members and candidates in advance of a meeting. It took decisions regarding the establishment of permanent commissions and it elected their members and chairs. It determined the sequence in which the parties in the debate could address the assembly and determined which of these addresses would not be including owing to time limitations. It took a position on the items for discussion and submitted them to the Central Committee for assessment and decisions. It ran the entire session, and from its own circles selected the chair of the sessions. It submitted motions put forth by cadre members relating to nomenklatura functions and also, in the new rules, motions regarding the principles of publicity of the Central Committee.

14 Secretary of the District Committee in the Dubno District.

In the proposed new rules of procedure there came into play a good number of motions that served to reinforce the rights of regular members and candidates. For example, the right of members and candidates to submit questions to the members of the Presidium, the Secretariat, and communists in central organs relating to their activities (the institution of interpellation) was a newly introduced right. Also new was that not only the Presidium and the Secretariat but also the commissions of Central Committee were required to submit a report on their activities. The necessary quorum was raised from one-half to two-thirds. The selection of the general secretary, the members and candidates of the Presidium of the Central Committee, the secretaries of the Central Committee, the members of the Secretariat of the Central Committee, and co-optations to these organs was supposed to be decided on in vote by ballot (!!!).[15] The institute of factual comments and objections to procedural issues was introduced. Motions relating to infractions of the statutes and the rules of procedure were to be heard and discussed immediately. Despite these significant improvements of course the code remained an example of "anti-rules" of procedure.

Conclusion

The description offered here of the armature of the hierarchical statutory code and rules of procedure respects their divisions into main parts within the framework of content, but it does not descend to the level of individual institutes and paragraphs. The armatures of both basic types of units, autonomous associations and established organisations, share in common with myths a similar inclusion of topical content into correlated components. Correlated components of code are created with opening, transitional, and closing provisions. Of key importance in the case of codes, of course, are the topical components that present the rules of the game and their possible protections. We have shown that the armatures of autonomous associations and established organisations differ in that some parts are constitutive only for associations (sections of Member Rights and Obligations, Principles of Economy) and others for organisations (section on Constitutive External Relations). Similarly, the section on Audit Activities is usually found only in the rules of procedure of the deliberative assemblies which have rights of formation and which are typical particularly for autonomous associations.

The armature of hierarchical statutory codes makes it possible to constitute the competence hierarchies of roles, organs and units by means of the distribution of competences, but it does not force the code to be composed in such a way that the code itself provides for the protections of these competences or demonstrates that this protection can be found in the broader legal framework of the execution of the state powers. In this sense the armature conceals the problem of the division of responsibilities and can even contribute to institutionalising irresponsibility. It makes it possible for other rules in addition to the rules presented in the code to come into effect: these rules may be written or unwritten, but they are nonetheless extra-legal. The similarity of the armatures of autonomous associations and established organisations then makes room for the construction of "as if" autonomous associations, inserted tightly within centrally ruled hierarchies.

The armature of the rules of procedure appears to result from the insertion of three other sections – meetings, proceedings, and audit activities – into the hierarchical statutory code that

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15 In discussions in the Presidium of the Central Committee there emerged a dispute between Vasil Bilak and Milouš Jakeš. The first opposed secret ballots and the second conversely asserted it with his authority as the general secretary.

applies to the deliberative assemblies. It makes it possible to reduce the rules of procedure to the level of a statutory code of the deliberative assemblies without any binding regulation of their own proceedings. If, moreover, the rules of procedure are secret, it is possible to set up the rules in such a way that they provide privileges to a narrow group or even just individuals.

Using the example of the codes and rules of procedure relating to the Communist Party we illustrated that socialist codes benefited or took advantage of the described risks that are an inherent part of the armatures of these codes and rules. Autonomous associations thus de facto became established organisations. The codes did not guarantee a clear division of responsibility and left enough space for the application of the unwritten rules of party leadership. The rules of procedure mostly did not regulate proceedings, and they guaranteed the privileges of the presidia explicitly fixed in the secret rules of procedure of Central Committee. The party thus offered a type of rule that did not place great demands on the workers. In order to pass muster they needed only to have knowledge of the organisational codes of their own worksites and to be loyal to the unwritten rules of party leadership. Knowledge of law was something they did not have to take any interest in. In fact that was something that might just make their lives more difficult.

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2. The Forms of Communist Rule at Various Levels

2.1 Party Rule at the Highest Level – Selected Issues

Martin Hájek

Abstract

Communist rule at the highest level was actually a dual rule – over the party and over society. While rule over society was certainly demanding, it was also relatively simple in the sense that neither society nor its representatives were able to dismiss the party leadership. Rule over the party was, in certain regards, more demanding, because the rulers were less sure in their positions – members of the presidium could be removed from their functions if they were indicated as dissatisfactory. Furthermore, dissatisfaction with party leaders could have a dual source: poor management of the party and poor leadership of society. The most demanding task of course was ruling both the party and society at once. On the one hand, measures and tactics of ruling party members complicated the task of ruling society, and on the other hand the nature of managing the state, the economy and the life of society complicated the maintenance of party loyalty and discipline.

Keywords

Introduction

The purpose of this study is not to provide an exhaustive account or analysis of party rule at the highest level but rather to point out some of its characteristic aspects. I consider one key aspect to be the dual or duplicated character of the rule. Party leadership (presidium, secretariat, and secretaries of the Central Committee) ruled on two fronts: over society and the party. Party rule over society was grounded in the great narrative of the historic mission of the Communist Party and in the article in the Constitution that established its leading role. While ruling society was demanding, it was also easy in the sense that party leadership could not be dismissed by society and its representatives. For citizens in the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic it was legally possible – at least in theory – to not elect the Parliament, or, by extension, the government or the president, on the basis of dissatisfaction with their performance, but it was not possible to not elect the presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, which was the body that pulled all the strings in Parliament and in the government, and even controlled the actions of the president. The party's role of leading society was grounded in the Constitution, and the only way of withdrawing this "licence to rule" (short of regime change) was if the party renounced this power itself and of its own accord.

Ruling over the party was also demanding, and in certain regards even more so, as the rulers were not as secure in their positions – members of the presidium could be dismissed if the party was dissatisfied with them. Moreover, the source of dissatisfaction with party leadership could have a dual source: poor management of the party and poor leadership of society. There were therefore many possible reasons for dissatisfaction to arise among the party members who were ruled over, and the leadership occupied a much less secure position in relation to its own party members than in relation to the rest of society. However much the principle of democratic centralism secured the presidium and the Central Committee a strong position of power, there always existed the legal possibility of toppling the leadership, whether through majority disagreement or by means of behind the scenes manoeuvring.

The most demanding task of all was of course that of ruling the party and society at once. On the one hand the measures and tactics involved in ruling over party members complicated the rule over society, and on the other hand, the nature of the management or administration of the state, the economy and the life of society complicated the maintenance of party loyalty and discipline. It was not possible to purge the party of all disloyal members if only competent people were to remain in positions of leadership – a purge in the party also meant a purge in the decisive state, economic, and cultural functions. On the other hand, for example, asserting principles of qualification for filling and occupying functions in the economy meant a weakening of the position of the party. The poor level of economic management that resulted from the effort to keep only functionaries loyal to the party leadership in decisive positions led to growing dissatisfaction among party members, which in the 1980s represented 15.1% of the adult population in the Czech lands, and they were the ones who had to pay the price for the poor management of the economy.

In this study I attempt to point out the problems that were involved in this two-in-one form of rule at the highest party level. Although it is clear how far-reaching an influence on the sovereignty of the highest functionaries and the entire leadership that the Soviet Communist Party had, I will here leave aside the role and impact of the Soviet Union and its representatives on Czech territory, and I will also leave aside the security aspect of rule, even though objections could be raised that in reality party leadership was required to rule on three fronts – over society, the party,

and over the security forces – and that the task of asserting the leading role in the armed forces may have been the most difficult task of all. It is therefore not my aim here to provide a full and complex description of rule as such, but rather only its internal, civic aspect.

First I will briefly characterise the leading role of the party in society and the main institutional actors of party rule. I will then point to some prominent features of the way in which the highest leadership ruled the party, and in the subsequent section I will also point to the methods of rule outside the party, that is, the methods used to rule over society. In the conclusion I will focus on the problem of dual rule and how the party leadership dealt with this problem.
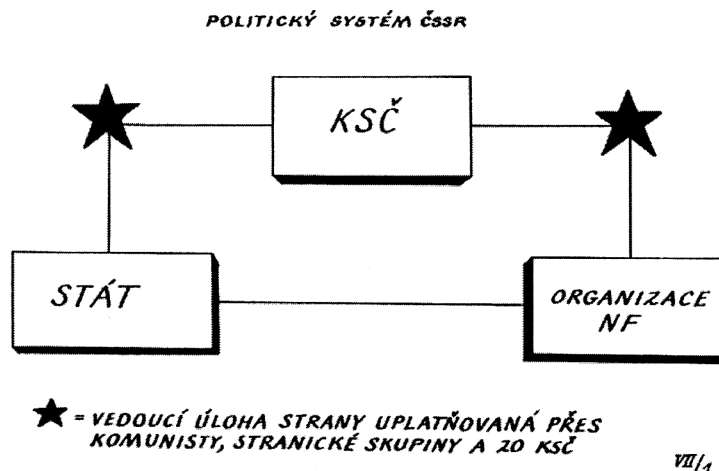
Leadership of the Party, the State, and Society

The leading role of the party

One of the basic preconditions of the rule of the Communist Party was its self-conception as a historically and "objectively" essential leading force in society and the intensive, persistent, and general assertion of this self-conception. "The objective necessity of the leading role of the Communist Party in socialist society is determined by a number of factors. One such decisive factor is the leading role of the working class in this society, determined by its position in manufacturing and social relations. The working class cannot lay claim to the leading role in society directly itself, but only on the condition of the existence of its own capable or operational political party as the medium of their leading role" (*Leading Role* 1983: 11). However, the party's leading role was not just a necessity but also a commitment to the socialist project. Socialism cannot merely be tabled, it must be sustained, kept alive, and protected against its enemies, and it must be built up and advanced. Therefore, "after the victory of the socialist revolution the leading role of the party continues to grow. It is no longer just a matter of capturing political power and installing the dictatorship of the proletariat but rather of leading and managing all of society" (ibid: 12). In this way the leading role of the party descends from the great narrative and enters into the actual politics of governance.

The main and the most powerful tool of Communist Party rule was the state. There were two methods of party management of the state – direct and indirect. The management of state bodies was exercised indirectly through the communists (Communist Party members) who worked in them; management was exercised directly through the assignment of tasks to the officials in decisive positions. "The leading role of the Communist Party in socialist society is applied at all levels through communists (individuals, party groups, and the elementary organisations of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia) and executive officers" (*A Collection of Visual Aids* 1981: II/3).

Another party textbook also presents the forms of management in state organs: "1. The party sets the political line, strategy, and tactics, and draws up the basic guidelines or directives, which are binding for the operations of all state organs (authorities). 2. The party trains and prepares the staff, especially for leading or top functions, carries out inspection or control of their work, and through its activities arranges the modification of these cadres and their proper placement. 3. The party directs the work of communists in the representative bodies through the clubs of communist delegates (in the FS (Federal Assembly), the ČNR (Czech National Council), and the SNR (Slovak National Council)) and through the party groups of delegates-communists in the national (people's) committees. 4. Party bodies analyse the basic problems involved in perfecting the system and struc-

Figure 1. The leading role of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) in the political system of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic ČSSR (A Collection of Visual Aids, 1981: VII/1).

POLITICKÝ SYSTÉM ČSSR

★ = VEDOUCÍ ÚLOHA STRANY UPLATŇOVANÁ PŘES KOMUNISTY, STRANICKÉ SKUPINY A ZO KSČ

VII/₁

ture of state bodies, and adopt resolutions aimed at perfecting the forms and methods of work of this apparatus" (Skřenek 1978: 24).

The third component in the political system, after the party and the state, consisted of the political and non-political organisations associated within the National Front. No civic organisation was allowed to operate outside the National Front. Rule over the National Front was organised in the same manner as rule over the state.

The testimony of lists

The diagram above illustrates the system of government according to how Communist Party propaganda declared it to be. In order to help us put together a rough image of the hierarchy of power in the socialist state, various lists of dignitaries may also serve as a suitable tool for illuminating the party's leading role: lists of guests at ceremonies, lists of recipients of a confidential document, the order of the nomenklatura, etc. In all these lists the first position is occupied by members and candidates of the presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the chair of the Central Control and Audit Committee (ÚKRK), and secretaries and members of the secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Only after these dignataries have been named are other functions in the state bodies, such as the president, chairs in the government and the parliamentary presidium, etc., also named. It is possible to observe a similar order in the inventory of functions occupied by individuals: comrade AB, chair of the presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party and president of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic; comrade CD, member of the presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, chair of the FS ČSSR and member of the presidium of the Central Committee of the National Front ČSSR; or comrade EF, general secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and chair of the Central Committee of the National Front ČSSR. On the surface of things it appears that the party hierarchy overrode the hierarchy of the state. This of course was not absolutely

true, and for two reasons. First, the boards of other parties sometimes hierarchically ranked above functions in state organs, for example, comrade XY, chair of the Czechoslovak People's Party, was ranked higher than the deputy chair of the FS ČSSR. The second reason is that superior rank in the state hierarchy applied only at a given level; it is not possible to compare the chairs of the basic-level organisation of the party with functionaries in parliament or the National Front, but it is possible to compare the chair of the District National Committee (ONV) with the secretary of the District Committee of the Communist Party (OV KSČ), who were nominally at the same level in the hierarchy.

Another indicator of the decision-making hierarchy in the political system can be found in the process whereby particular resolutions were submitted for approval by other institutions. The highest-placed committee was that which did not need to submit its decisions to anyone else for approval and, conversely, which was involved in approving the resolutions of the highest number of other important committees. According to this indicator, the peak of the approval hierarchy is clearly occupied by the presidium of the Central Committee. The presidium approved "the plan of the main tasks of the FS ČSSR and its organs" and "the plan for the work of the presidium of the National Front ČSSR". Its position was slightly closer to being on a par with that of the government, from which it received the latter's work plan and some significant resolutions only as information. The government, however, did not receive the presidium's or the secretariat's work plan even as information.

These facts would justify us in assuming that the peak of the hierarchy of rule was occupied by the Presidium of the Central Committee, followed by the secretariat and its secretaries.

The Presidium

According to the Communist Party Statutes, the presidium of the Central Committee was elected by the Central Committee "for the purpose of the administration of work between the plenary sessions of the Central Committee". The presidium had just over ten members and between three and five candidates; the chair of the ÚKRK also took part in the meetings. Also invited to attend the discussions were the head of the general secretary's secretariat, who also took the minutes of the meetings, the head of the general departments, and usually several other people, such as, for example, the editor-in-chief of the newspaper *Rudé právo* (*Red Right*) and secretary from the Central Committee, etc. In reference to the individual items addressed at the meetings it was also at times necessary to invite other people to attend the meetings – the heads of particular departments, ministers, and other functionaries. The total number of participants at a meeting was in the end around twenty. The main tasks of the presidium were established for an entire year (and approved by the plenum of the Central Committee), but the timetable for the items discussed at the meetings was planned for a half year and after discussions in the secretariat this plan was approved by the presidium itself. The main subjects discussed (in 1988) were issues of "internal economic relations" (57 tasks; 6 tasks related to external economic relations); the presidium also addressed work inside the party (16), issues of state administration, the National Front and social organisations (13), defence and security policy (11 tasks); less often also tasks of international policy (4; this does not mean that the contemporary international situation was not discussed in the presidium only that it did not become the subject of tasks), propaganda (3) and education (2). The presidium's agenda also covered cadre issues (1413 nomenklatura functions), the convening of meetings of various commissions and assemblies, meetings of leading secretaries, etc., approval of the conferral of awards and prizes, and extend-

ing invitations and sending delegations and visits, etc. Also, the work programmes for the governments, Parliaments, and the Central Committee of the National Front, along with important government regulations and important proposed legal bills, all passed through the presidium, which in some cases were required to comment on them and in other cases only received them as information. What can be said is that all important measures and norms, before they were approved by their relevant organs, had first to go through the presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. It was to this end that the members of the presidium were also the highest ranking representatives of the main social organs: the president of the Republic, the chairs of the federal and the national governments, the chair of the Federal Assembly, the chair of the ČNR, and, in the person of the general secretary, the chair of the Central Committee of the National Front.

The Secretariat

The secretariat was elected by the Central Committee for the "administration of general work, mainly the organisation of inspections of the fulfilment of resolutions and the selection of cadres". There was a good number of participants: 13 members of the secretariat (all the secretaries of the Central Committee, the chair of the Central Committee of the SSM (Union of Socialist Youth), and some other important fucntionaries), the chair of the ÚKRK, the heads of the departments of the Central Committee (15–20), and in connection with selected items other participants, too; a total of around 30 people took part in the meetings. With regard to its main tasks the programme of the secretariat was set for one year and approved by the plenum of the Central Committee, but the timetable was set for half a year and had to be approved by the presidium. In terms of content, attention was devoted primarily to issues relating to the internal functioning of the party (24 tasks for 1988), issues relating to propaganda and the media (17 tasks), the national economy (10 tasks), education (7), the organisation of state administration and the National Front (7), defence and security policy (7); relatively the least attention was devoted to issues of international politics (4). In addition, the secretariat dealt on an ongoing basis with cadre proposals pertaining to its nomenklatura (4016 functions), sending and receiving delegations, both within the state (domestically) and internationally, party, and non-party delegations, approving travel for a selected group of functionaries, and conferring awards and prizes on Czech and foreign citizens, etc. The secretariat met once a week.

The Central Committee and the apparatus of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

While the Plenum of the Central Committee was formally a very important committee, one to which the secretariat and the presidium answered, in reality, however, it only put its approval on whatever was submitted to it by the presidium. It would be possible to say even that the members of the Central Committee were among the least valued functionaries.

However little the significance of the plenum of the Central Committee actually was, all the more significant was the apparatus of the Central Committee. I will not elaborate on this point here because it has already been well discussed in another publication (Kaplan 1993). I only wish to emphasise that the apparatus formed a parallel structure to decision-making organs. This arose out of the definition of its work: "The apparatus (…) in agreement with the principles of exercising the leading role of the party and according to the instructions of the party organs fulfils the tasks in securing the implementation of party resolutions in state, economic, and social organs and organisations, wherein it may not substitute for them or their apparatus" (62nd meeting of the plenum of the Central

Committee (PÚV), point 3, appendix 4, page 2). At the level of the Central Committee the apparatus was responsible for the administration of party organisations in the relevant central state and economic organs and institutions. This therefore involved a sort of substantive parallelism, where for each institution of any significance there was an official in the apparatus of the Central Committee who was responsible for it and who through personal contact was familiar with the conditions that dominated within the organisation.

Rule over the Party

Democratic centralism

The key to understanding the centre-based administration of the massive corpus of party members is the principle of democratic centralism. Jiří Kabele interprets the organisms that are based on it as "coordinative hybrids, half hierarchically administrative and half equitably autonomous" (Kabele 2002: 73). I believe that this is too optimistic a comparison, and what would correspond more to the reality of late socialism would perhaps be a ratio of four-fifths hierarchically administrative and one-fifth equitably autonomous. Succinctly put, democratic centralism means that: party organs are elected from the bottom up; elected organs answer for their activities to both their electors and their superior organs; the minority is subordinate to the majority; and resolutions passed by higher organs are binding for lower organs. To these attributes the party brochure adds a more specified explanation. "In order for democratic centralism to come across as a harmonic whole it is necessary when asserting this principle to preserve the optimum degree of individual aspects that primarily determine the concrete historical conditions in which the party implements its policy. In practice this then means that between democracy and centralism there is never an absolute balance" (Mrhal 1984: 16). In other words, the rules were very flexible and rendered democratic centralism a useful tool for ruling the party, because it enabled the leadership, according to need, to increase or decrease the degree of democraticness within the party. A typical example is the issue of elections and electability. Although all party organs were elected from the bottom up, the candidates for the elected positions were approved from the top down. The party organisation could thus elect to its head only the kind of comrade that would be acceptable to a superior organ. Democratic centralism also made it impossible for any opinion platforms to form that were not in agreement with the political line promoted or asserted from the centre. The central party organs thus became sovereign in terms of political-organisational and political-ideological dimensions of rule. Nevertheless, even democratic centralism did not guarantee easy governance for the party. While it provided solid support for directive cadre policy (which of course in the long-term perspective proved noxious), it did not enable the party to directly enforce the fulfilment of resolutions from higher organs (in the organs below). The highest party spheres produced a large amount of various directives, principles, procedures, etc., which were binding for the lower party organs, but the latter were able to quite successfully circumvent them by proceeding with the maximum amount of formality, and the centre did not dispose of the tools to enforce their general and practical implementation (for example, the perestroika requirement of electing with a secret ballot and from among multiple candidates). Often a stalemate situation resulted, where neither the organs of the Central Committee nor the ruled organisations of the party were able to take the decisive step towards asserting their will.

Structural similarity

An interesting feature in the structure of the Communist Party was the uniformity of structure that was internally reproduced – the structure of various party levels and units was very similar, and there was a very specific reason for each difference that did exits. The archetypal structure for this was, by all appearances, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and the transformations of its structure continued to be copied here up until the final months of the year 1989. The reason for the internal similarity according to one of our respondents was in order to facilitate "the coordination of activities along a vertical line". When the leadership issued certain orders, which, for example, regulated the relationship between two departments in the party apparatus, then this order could without any fundamental alterations be applied at all levels and in all party units that it was intended for. It also made communication between individual functionaries and apparatuses at various levels easier – if a meeting was convened between the political-organisational secretaries of the regional committees and the political-organisational secretary of the Central Committee, then an analogical meeting could also take place at one level below. To a large degree this made it possible to oversee the entire party hierarchy, because any deviation from this standard would have stood out and drawn attention to itself. One of the unintended but accepted consequences of the organisational similarity was a reduction in the significance of the regional committees of the party to the level of a mediator between the central and district organisations, which meant that it served as a mediator between the global and local government.

Figures 2 and 3: Organisational diagrams of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) and the Union of Socialist Youth (SSM) (A Collection of Visual Aids, 1981: IV/1 and VII/8)
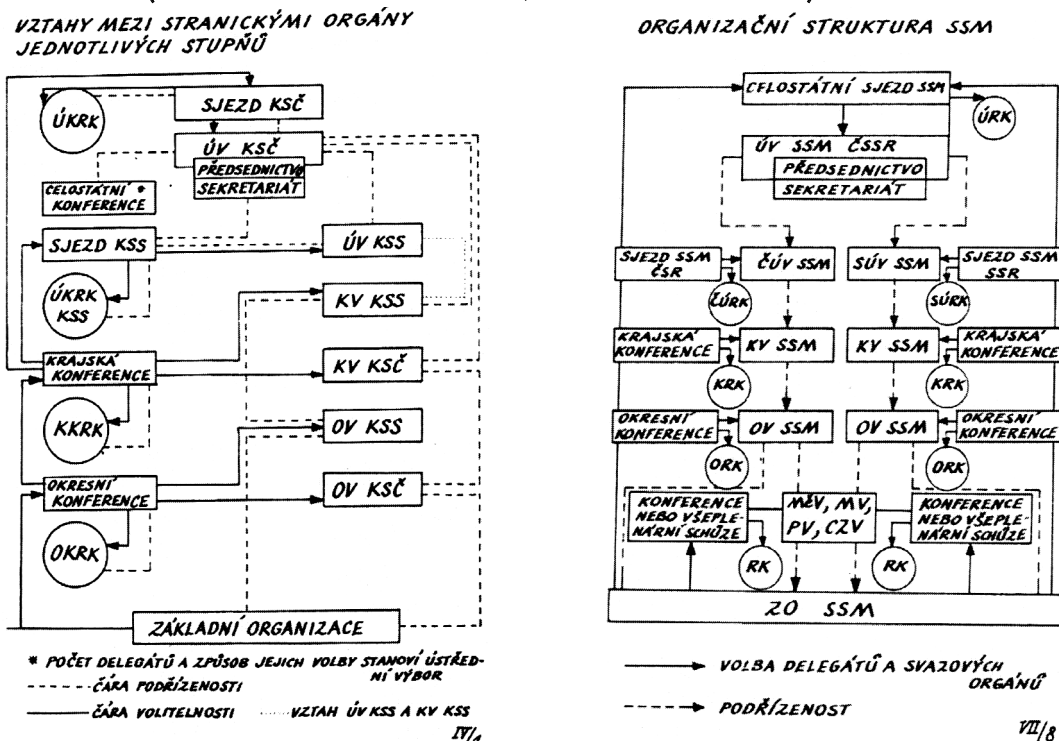
The organisational structure of the Communist Party was also functionally adopted by the Union of Socialist Youth. As a result, the Union functionaries, after moving into the positions of party functionaries, were already very well acquainted with the organisation and methods of party decision-making and governance.

Reinforcing the centre

The third feature of rule of the highest party organs that warrants mentioning was the reinforcement of the centre. The purpose of this was to establish a distance between the mass of the membership body and the leadership of the party. I see the origin of this effort on the part of the party leadership to remove themselves beyond the reach of regular members as based in the historical circumstances of the end of the Prague Spring and the beginnings of normalisation. In brief, although after the screenings of all party members anda large part of the public in the early 1970s, the mass of the membership body was extremely loyal to their leadership, the new leadership was suspicious of its regular members and its newly instated lower functionaries, as the period of disturbances was still a vivid recent memory. One effective means of disciplining the membership body was through screenings, or what was referred to as the exchange of party membership cards. Another, less obvious method of reinforcing the power of the ruling group at the centre was by maintaining a distance between the centre and the masses. It almost seemed that, for the highest party members, in terms of trustworthiness there was little difference between regular party members and the rest of the population. One manifestation of the reinforcement of the centre as apart from the rest of the party was the concentration of power in the hands of a very small number of people. For example, in 1988, 23 people were responsible for making decisions – the members of the presidium, the secretariat, and the secretaries of the Central Committee – according to the "cadre order" (the nomenklatura system) for occupying the 8990 highest positions in the party, state, economic and other organs. Even the personal changes at the party district level were directly controlled by the secretariat of the Central Committee. Party statistics show that 77% of members of the Central Committee of the Communist Party occupied more than three other elected functions, and of them almost one-third occupied more than six functions. Among the members and candidates of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, over 20% were in senior positions in the state's representative bodies and governments.

The strategy of reinforcing the central power group also included the attempt by the normalisation leadership to weaken the regional committees of the party. The reasoned statement on the new systematisation of the apparatus dating from 1972 states:

"The standpoint of not increasing the number of party officers at the level of the regions (*unlike the case of the district committees and the centre – author's note*) does not indicate a reduction in the role of the regional committees, which occupy a significant position in the overall effort of the party in the implementation of party policy. (…) The apparatus of the regional committees will necessarily be required to cease engagement in those activities where they are often actually addressing a number of operative tasks that fall within the area of responsibility of officers at the district committees of the party. Some experiences also indicate that, in connection with increasing the accuracy of the concept of the work of the apparatus of the regional committees it is necessary to address issues that are connected with the content and activities of the presidia and secretariats of the regional committees. According to the Statutes the secretariats of the regional committees are meant to deal with the administration and control of the work of the departments of the region-

al committees and their workers. Often, however, they discuss a broad range of other issues, which ought to be relegated to the presidia of the regional committees, for example, issues of ideological work, eduction, science, culture, economics, etc. This is then necessarily reflected in the profile of the work of the apparatus of the regional committees, which often prepare documents which ought to emerge and be prepared by other institutions" (62nd meeting of the presidium of the Central Committee (PÚV), 1972, item 3).

Even this outcome, which stems from a discussion in the presidium relating to a letter from the *Obroda* (*Revival* – a group of ex-communists around Alexander Dubček) to the elementary organs of the party, provides a good illustration of the lack of trust that was placed in the lower organs and the regular members, which the party leadership maintained up until its collapse: "the letter from *Obroda* to the basic-level organisations should be confiscated and its distribution prevented; the letter has the capacity to turn the Annual Members Meetings towards making demagogic demands; make copies of the letter from *Obroda* for the leading secretaries of the Regional Committee of the Communist Party (KV KSČ); distribute it to members of the leadership" (Jakeš, 134th meeting, Presidium of the Central Committee (PÚV), 1989, discussion).

The consequence of the reinforcement of the power group in the Central Committee was the acute unwillingness or inability of lower-ranking organisations to initiatively participate in addressing accumulating problems, and in the end it led to the proverbial situation of being "out on a limb", which is where the power group found itself at the end of the 1980s.

Rule over Society

Let's begin here with a quotation from the (former) secretary of the Central Committee: "Before we declared perestroika, before what took place in Moscow, here the system was like this: to exercise political leadership through the cadres, communists, reliable cadres, regularly pass on information, and issue guidelines on the basis of the negotiations of the presidia of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. I have to say that it worked. Now things are different. The mechanism of that system ceased to function. (…) The mechanism that worked here just simply ceased to function. I must say the television and the radio are genuinely the state's communication media. In peaceful times few were concerned about that. Everything worked for us. And then there emerged, as it were, the question of areas of responsibility. That we have to work through those people, through the responsible cadres" (Jan Fojtík; *The Final Hurrah* 1992: 61–2).

The party leadership ruled over society for the large part by filling all the functions of any importance at all in state, economic, and other institutions with reliable party members. These people were appointed to their functions either directly, on the basis of a proposal put forth by someone in the party leadership, or at least following an agreement with someone in the party leadership. The party members that were placed in these functions were directly accountable to the party and answered to them for their activities. Given that there was no need to address the question of areas of responsibility, which state organ therefore had the authority to direct another state organ. As indicated above, the state was a tool for realising the leading role of the Communist Party in society, and thus the question of areas of responsibility only referred to the relationship to a certain organ of the party, e.g. a department. Disputes took place over which department was responsible for which extra-party institution.
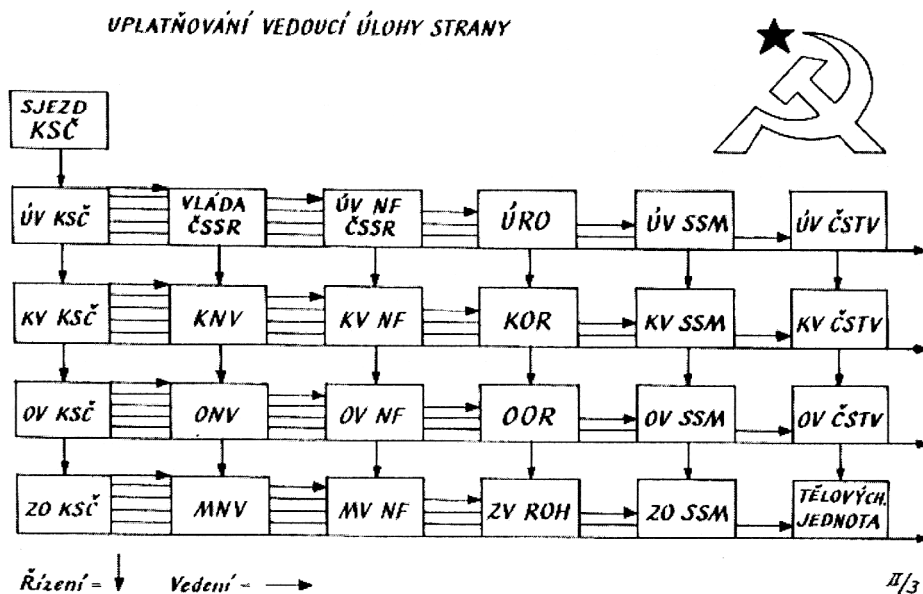
Directly controlled party organisations

"Directly controlled party organisations" formed an exception in the general hierarchy of the party structure. As the administration of the party organisations in the central organs and institutions through regional (town) and district (constituency) party organisations would have involved very high coordination costs and would have been inefficient, these important organisations were run directly from the centre. Analogically there also existed organisations at the level of the regions that were directly run from the centre. Hundreds of these party organisations fell under the authority of the Central Committee (roughly one-third were made up of enterprise committees, e.g. in television, radio broadcasting, or at the ministries; the remainder were elementary organisations in smaller administrative offices). Given that the central organs and institutions were almost one-hundred percent organised in favour of the party, the basic-level organisations operating within them associated all workers. The chairs of these organisations as a rule did not overlap with top functionaries at the relevant administrative offices and institutions. The significance of the former lay partly in that they mediated the influence the centre exerted on running the institution and partly in that they represented the institution in communication with departments or other organs of the Central Committee. According to statements from respondents (interviewed in this study) they were in active and intensive contact with workers in the department(s) of the Central Committee. Proposals or nominations for their appointments were approved by the secretariat of the Central Committee. The administration of party organisations in the central organs was the responsibility of the department(s) of the Central Committee, according to individual regions. Sometimes, as part of the power shifts that could occur within the system/hierarchy, the departments responsible for a certain central organ were changed. For example, in December 1988, likely at the initiative of the General Secretary, administration of party work in the Office of the President of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, the Office of the Government ČSSR, the Committee of Popular Control, and the State Arbitration Board were shifted to the competence of the departments of state administration (which the general secretary was in charge of). In the discussion surrounding this he argued that these bodies were apparatuses of power organs (80th meeting secretariat of the Central Committee (SÚV), 1988, item 8, and discussion). This very minor fact actually shows that the act of merging the departments with the basic-level organisations in the central organ or institution was probably quite important from the perspective of power. In running the party organisations in the central organs and institutions the basic work of the departments of the Central Committee of the Communist Party was "primarily that of maintaining direct contact between the leaders and other workers in the departments and functionaries in party organisations, and the purposeful personal participation in important meetings of enterprise committees, member, committee and public meetings, enterprise-wide activities and other important party events" (66th meeting of the Presidium of the Central Committee (PÚV), 1977, item 6). Party organisations in central organs regularly passed on information regarding the fulfilment of directives and resolutions issued by the presidium and the secretariat of the Central Committee in the particular administrative office or institution.

The hierarchical structure of all organisations

A characteristic feature of the system of communist rule was the enforced hierarchical structure of all legally functioning organisations. Every office, every association, and every voluntary organisation represented (by law) in the National Front had some central committee and local organisation. For the most part these were "unions": unions of artists, unions of physical education and sports, union of housing associations or collectives, unions of stamp collectors, unions of the disabled, and so on.

Figure 4. The application of the leading role of the party – the hierarchical structure of all organisations

UPLATŇOVÁNÍ VEDOUCÍ ÚLOHY STRANY

SJEZD KSČ					
ÚV KSČ	VLÁDA ČSSR	ÚV NF ČSSR	ÚRO	ÚV SSM	ÚV ČSTV
KV KSČ	KNV	KV NF	KOR	KV SSM	KV ČSTV
OV KSČ	ONV	OV NF	OOR	OV SSM	OV ČSTV
ZO KSČ	MNV	MV NF	ZV ROH	ZO SSM	TĚLOVÝCH. JEDNOTA

Řízení = ↓   Vedení = →   II/3

The hierarchical structure of all organisations made it possible for them to be controlled and ruled with much greater ease. If the centre or head office was run by the party, it was possible to leave the other administrative work mainly on the shoulders of the institutions themselves, as responsibility for the actions of their lower components was always born by the centre or head office. A basic-level organisation (ZO) of the party functioned in each head office or centre of these organisations and it acted as a sort of "transmission lever" for implementing the leading role of the party. It was through the ZO that the responsible department at the Central Committee received information, and in the case of unions the relevant departments of social organisations and national committees.

There also existed a parallel structure of party administration at the level of the regions and districts, as is illustrated in the image above/below, but as we are examining the rule of the party leadership, what is of key importance from our perspective is the rule of the "central committees" of all organisations that were legally operating on the territory of the state.

The Problem of Dual Rule

Having outlined some of the properties and methods of rule from the party centre, I will now try to show what kinds of problems arose out of the simultaneous rule over both the party and society. I will focus on the issue of the merging of party and state leadership, the problem of individual responsibility for decision-making, and, using two case examples, I will try to illustrate the difficulties involved in dual rule. Finally, to demonstrate some of the consequences of dual rule, I will present an example of the conflicts that arose over areas of responsibility at Czechoslovak Television in November 1989 and the ungovernable state that it was in.

The union of the party and the government at the level of senior leadership

In his interpretation of the constructivist system, Jiří Kabele argues that the superior power of the Communist Party was facilitiated primarily by coordinative parallelism, i.e. the merging of party and non-party (practical) functions, wherein almost everyone who occupied some more important decision-making position was at the same time a party member or even a party functionary. This we can agree with. It was on this principle that the application of the leading role of the party functioned, through the communists working in state, economic, and social institutions at all levels. This was also related to the dilemma that these particular workers were sometimes faced with, as to whether in some areas they should be acting on behalf and for the benefit of the organisation "entrusted in them by the party", or on behalf and for the benefit of the party itself, which had placed them, or had at least agreed to their placement, in the particular position.

It is of course necessary to distinguish this kind of coordinative parallelism from the merging of party and non-party functionaries in decision-making party committees, such as the presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (ÚV KSČ). There is after all a difference between the case in which someone was installed in a state or economic function as a party member or was only required to "implement party policy" in a disciplined manner there, and where someone was installed in this manner in a significant function and on the basis of this non-party function they became a member of a decisive party committee. This was the case of the president of the republic, the chairs of the governments, the chairs of the Federal Assembly, and others, who only on the basis of the title of their function were elected to the presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (ÚV KSČ). Even though these people were no doubt party functionaries who had proven themselves and had been tested over time, they were neither payed by the party, nor "at home", as it were, in the party. In the presidium of the Central Committee in 1988 there were six state dignitaries and only five full-party functionaries out of the eleven members, which means that during voting the secretaries of the party could be outvoted. (In 1989 the ratio switched to 7:6 in favour of the party functionaries, but this came about through the structurally enforced inclusion of the chair of the newly established Committee for Party Work in the Czech Lands.)

In a way we could view this arrangement as the most direct form of administration, wherein all the intermediary links between the inner circle of party leadership and the state organs were removed, and view it as the narrowest form of coordinative parallelism. The chairs of the governments and the parliaments received their tasks and assignment from the presidium and were also required to answer to the presidium. When necessary, it was possible to request explanations from them (the chairs), and thus the highest party functionaries received their information first hand. Some evidence (e.g. the similar personnel structure of the presidium of the party in Prague's City Commitee) even suggests this directly. It is also possible to interpret this situation in a different manner. State dignitaries were party members with a great deal of authority, and they were responsible for co-creating the policy of the party. Based on this view, it was not a matter of a parallelism, but rather one of a merger or fusion of the party and the state at the highest level. It could even be said that the state was not run by the party, as embodied by its highest representatives (i.e. it was not subordinate to the party), as it was in fact at the lower levels, but rather by means of these representatives the state was actually a part or component of the party. The presidium issued guidelines or directives both for the government and for the party; what was intended to apply to the party was to a substantial degree determined by the representatives of the state. We should not of course underestimate the fact that the Presidium of the Central Committee met in the same

building as the Central Committee itself, and that the decisive voice in the Central Committee lay with the general secretary of the party. Even so, in my opinion, the hypothesis about the coordinative parallelism of the highest leadership is questionable.

One of the respondents in the study expressed himself in a spirit similar to that in the previous statement cited above, although not altogether in the same sense, when he rejected the phrase "party and government" as characterising the leadership of the Czechoslovak state: "'party and government', that image was a product of the pioneering era that followed February 1948, but otherwise it was actually the government of the party, and that government was just some executive committee of the apparatus, it was just the application of power". According to this notion the government has lost any kind of independence and is considered to be a particular component in the party apparatus. With some exeptions, the people who worked in the government were all party members, its highest representatives were members of the highest party organ, and the policy of the government was essentially the embodiment of the policy of the party. By all appearances this method of organisations applied in the Soviet Union. In this way the problem of dual rule was partially reduced to one of unified rule.

The problem of responsibility

It is only possible to rule when it is possible to lead an individual to take responsibility for bad decisions or for the fact of decisions not being carried through. In the case of the Communist Party, determining the responsibility of an individual (functionary) was theoretically possible (individual responsibility was established in the Statutes), but in practical terms it was hard to enforce, owing to the application of the principle of collective decision-making at all levels. Let's take one real example: the government passed an evidently erroneous decision and it began then to look for who to blame; it was clear that the guilty party was actually the government, or more specifically the minister within whose decision-making authority the decision lay. The guilty party is of course instead sought out from among lower ranking officials – someone who specifically wrote the approved text or perhaps even re-wrote it. In the end, solving the problem has been left in the hands of the government. (The General Secretary: "If it were an individual, then it is necessary to render him accountable." The chair of the Czech government: "The responsible party is the person who definitively formulated the decision of the government." The chair of the federal government: "Here the government is to blame. The presidium was not supposed to act without the participation of the relevant member of government.") The difficulty involved in determining responsibility was acknowledged also by Milouš Jakeš at one meeting with a functionary in 1989: "Yes, I can admit one thing, we are not consistent, as we don't enforce accountability enough, or rather, it's not that we don't enforce it enough, we do enforce accountability, but we don't always arrive at any conclusions because we haven't as yet worked out any precise and clear system capable of determining the exact responsibility of one person for one thing and another person for another thing, and so on. There are always dozens of people hovering around that must have had something to do with it, and sometimes it's a matter of a certain collective violation that proved to be false. So these things are more complicated."

The second factor that made it difficult or impossible to determine direct responsibility was the manner in which functions were filled – the main criterion for this procedure was the political quality of the worker: "The clearer the idea the worker has about socialism the more deeply he is able to understand socialist social relations and interests, and the more developed his sense of responsibility for party policy is, the more then that he will be able to act to the advantage of society and

the greater confidence he warrants" (Kadeřábek and Mrhal: 106–7). Other important criteria were, in order of importance, class character, expertise, and, the final criterion, moral and character qualities. It was very difficult to punish workers for professional errors if they had been chosen for their political qualities. Furthermore, the system was characterised more by a dearth of cadres than by a surplus of suitable cadres for qualified positions. Compounding this further was the fact that the higher the position the harder it was to punish a person or eventually even to get rid of a person: in part because it was necessary to mobilise a sufficient amount of power leverage in order to be able to ensure that the punishment would not harm the punisher more than the one who was to be punished, and in part because, in the case of a person who was to leave a particular function, it was necessary to look after that person, which meant finding him another function in which he wouldn't feel his nose had been put out of joint, but where also he would be incapable of doing much damage in the future. It was, for example, very difficult to punish the chair of the government, who was a member of the Presidium of the Central Committee.

Finally, it is also necessary to consider the way in which communism understood and interpreted the role of the individual in history. Individualism, and all its related concepts, invested the individual with significance as such, and that idea was naturally repugnant to the Communist Party. This was by no means owing to communism's declared condemnation of the cult of personality, but rather because of its existentially collectivist approach to the goings on in society. The party and society are everything; the individual is nothing. An individual opinion was always suspicious for its "subjectivism". Therefore, emphasis on the responsibility of the individual in an organisation that was soaked in this kind of collectivist spirit was not an easy notion to put across.

The example of the reorganisation of the central state organs

During the reorganisation of the state and party apparatus in 1988 a shift of workers from the original organisations (primarily the federal and Czech ministries and the general headquarters) was supposed to occur, along with a reduction in their numbers. That this was actually a very big problem is evident in the extent of the changes: "They are particularly strongly in evidence in the capital city of Prague, where there are 39 federal central organs with a total number of 14 501 workers, 38 central organs of the republic with 8996 workers, and 46 general headquarters of the VHJ with 12 714 workers" (52nd meeting of the secretariat of the Central Committee (SÚV), 1988, item 2, justificaton of the proposal for the resolution). For the party these changes signified a dual task: on the one hand, they had to ensure that the "wrong" people did not get into the new positions, while on the other hand, and above all, they had to solve the problem of what to do with the party members – which in the central organs were the absolute majority – for whom there would no longer be any place? To this end a party approach to making use of the labour force freed up in connection with the reconstruction of the central sphere and the general headquarters in Prague was established. In it, the party took on the responsibility itself for filling functions (controlling who would be in the new admininstrative offices), but it wanted to leave the problem of what to do with the unused workers for the governments to solve. "Responsibility for taking control over this process, to effectively and purposefully make use of the workers who lost their positions, and to do so in agreement with the needs of society as a whole, for creating conditions for considerable growth in the quality and efficiency of administrators and organs, and for observing the principles of cadre politics, is born by the organs of state and economic administration. Commitments and responsibility for the organisations being shut down are to be taken up, even in this area, by the delegated (established) central organs or state enterprises, eventually by the liquidator. They are to proceed in accor-

dance with generally valid norms and the procedure in appendix IV of this material" (ibid.). The approach was a typical reconstructionist party approach: responsibility is born by the state and economic organs, but they in turn are required to proceed in accordance with procedure worked out by the Central Committee of the Communist Party. Why is this responsibility explicitly mentioned in this way when it was non-party institutions that were being reorganised? Because the top party leaders and apparatus wanted to give orders but did not want to bear responsibility for any of the undesirable consequences, grudges or displeasure evoked by the effects of their orders. The party leadership thus approved a confidential and binding procedure according to which communists that occupied senior functions in state organs were required to act and were required to bear responsibility for their actions. This responsibility was actually dual. Whenever their deeds were to the advantage of the state organ and to the detriment of the party they bore responsibility before the party (automatically and without exception), but when they acted in accordance with party directions and failed they were to bear responsibility for themselves as the head of a given office. Among the opinions to be heard during this discussion were: "Difficult to control, mustn't be allowed to take over the party, or then we'll never be able to extricate ourselves from it". "We cannot turn our backs on the use and placement of the nomenklatura of the Central Committee of the Communist Party"; "Don't give vent to backward sentiments, especially in the media, that the officials are freeloaders and that they have to be sorted out because of this. Control the interpretation. The proportion of party members is high"; "[the party commission] must not direct but observe and control"; "Let the government do it [the reconstruction] itself, after, all the secretaries and the individual departments follow it. To keep their hands free and save face"; "The government should submit it, how they are going to do it, and a group will provide information weekly to the Secretariat of the Central Committee, so as to ensure it doesn't come back to haunt us" (ibid., discussion).

The shift evoked problems in the party also owing to the fact that each worker in the central office was also someone's political capital; it was not just a specialist playing for himself, but a member of some larger faction; so that someone's departure from their function always signified a weakening of the position of a certain power group (faction). The reorganisation of a certain institution was sometimes the only opportunity – and everyone looked at it like this – whereby one faction was able to get rid of important figures belonging to another faction. This of course was not something specific to communist rule alone.

The example of Czechoslovak Television during the revolution in November 1989

I will present here selected relevant passages of a discussion taken from a meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party held on 24 and 26 November 1989. In this case it is not necessary to add any commentary, the minutes provide a clear account.

November 24, 1989:

Vladimír Herman: Comrades, let us grant everyone that which is his. I have a question for the chair of the federal government. Czechoslovak Television and Radio are state institutions. How does the federal government ensure that these media do not work against the party, against socialism, but on the contrary to its advantage? This is a question of vital importance.

Ladislav Adamec: Comrades, I must disappoint you. Czechoslovak Television is directed by the federal government only with regard to its budget, and the actual practical management is car-

ried out by the Central Committee, specifically by comrade secretary Fojtík and his department. As the government we do not interfere in the management of the television, radio, press, science, the army, or the Security Forces.

Vasil Biľak: (…) Politically, ideologically, the television has been managed from the Central Committee, but the government is threatened, the socialist state is threatened, the government is an organ of power and the government cannot say, let the media departments address the issue there. The government is supposed to adopt such measures so as to ensure that even greater manias do not break out. (…)

Matej Lúčan: Dear comrades, it also used to be the pratice that ideologically, politically, these media were managed from the Central Committee of the Party. (…) Of course, in the situation at that time, after agreement with comrades at the Central Committee, I was personally asked to undertake the necessary steps in this direction. And I did so (…)

(*The Last Hurrah* 1992: 59–60).

November 26, 1989:

Vladimír Herman: Comrades, at the last meeting we heard the response that Czechoslovak Television and Radio is managed through the budget. This means that it is not managed at all. Therefore, I have two questions. The first question is for the deputy chair of the government, comrade Lúčan. (…) Has any organ adopted, I know that the government didn't meet, or any government functionaries, or the presidium or anything else, have you adopted any measures targeting television and radio? So that there isn't such a mess there?

Matej Lúčan: Yes (…)

Vladimír Herman: Aha, a commission. That means that nothing has been done. (…) The second question is for the chair of the Federal Assembly, comrade Indra. Comrade chair, please, is it possible for the Federal Assembly to charge or assign the government not to set up a commission but to submit within the shortest possible period specific measures aimed at limiting the nonsense or excesses that are going on, as clearly the Central Committee is too feeble to do so? (…) There isn't. Please, then, it is not possible to do so through the presidium of the Federal Assembly. Well, that is indeed sad. (…)

Jaromír Obzina: Comrades, I cannot agree with what has been said here, that a commission has been established in order to address these things. This is a commission that is meant to give directions to the directors in order for it to be sure what the issue at hand is. And the requirement of addressing the problem in the media was referred to at the meeting of the government, but has not been decided on" (ibid: 184).

Conclusion

In this study I attempted to point out one characteristic feature of communist rule at the highest level, that it was actually a matter of dual rule – over the party and over society. While the party leadership did create a strategy for partially handling this problem, it was a strategy only designed to

work in a situation of relative calm. In the case where changes occurred in connection with perestroika,the party leaders were incapable of finding new strategies that could help them to succeed on both fronts.

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2.2 Late Communist Rule at the District Level

Zdenka Vajdová

Abstract

It is possible to interpret some of the phenomena evident in the internal workings of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the national committees in the 1980s as expressions of the receding capacity of the Party to maintain control over the socio-economic space at the district level. Examples of such developments include the district bodies of the Communist Party opening up their meetings to other entities of economic and social life in the district, expanding the sphere of discussion at district meetings of the national committees and the Communist Party, and making changes in personnel policy. This study is based on Nobert Elias' concept of power, which allows for an understanding of these phenomena as manifestations of the process of a reduction of the differences between the power of the government – the rulers – and the power of the ruled. Some of these phenomena are described in detail in the study.

Keywords

The Theoretical Concept and the Specific Situation Examined in the Study

The concept of power is the central concept in the sociology of Norbert Elias. Power is a structural representation of interdependent relationships; these relationships form a fabric, into which individuals and groups are woven in various types of figurations. A characteristic feature of relationships that are interdependent is the imbalance of power chances. This, however, is not a constant, but rather changes over time: at a certain point in a certain situation, after some conflict of greater or lesser intensity, the question arises again – who is stronger? In every situation after a certain amount of time, a sort of balance is reached, a sort of relationship, which, depending on the social and individual circumstances, either becomes stable or unstable. One thing, however, is certain – that sooner or later even this relationship will be challenged, and after some time more and some other conflict, a new relationship will be established. According to Elias, over the course of the 20th century, in Europe and North America, the differences in power chances between the rulers and the ruled, and between various social strata, grew smaller. Nevertheless, this process of social change, consisting of the reduction of differences in degrees of power, is subject to local fluctuations. This means that it is not true that as time passes and with each new conflict the differences in power between the rulers and the ruled become smaller. There are periods when the differences in power are reinforced or become even larger. One clear example that needs no argument is Stalin's seizure of power in the Soviet Union, or the formation of Nazi Germany. I believe that this was also the case in Czechoslovakia after the Second World War, and especially after February 1948, when the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, took power in the state, maintaining in reserve the possibility of using state and even extra-state force – the armed People's Militia. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia managed quickly to render the country's population subordinate to and fully dependent on the state. The party set up a centralised, dictatorial form of government in Czechoslovakia, demanding complete submission to the state – a totalitarian regime.

A brief though perhaps incomplete list can be made of the processes and actions whereby the Communist Party succeeding in rendering the population fully dependent on the state: the nationalisation of industrial sectors, the collectivisation of agricultural land, the abolition of the institution of private ownership. As a consequence of these steps the economically active population became employees in state or collective enterprises. The confiscation of property also played a part in ownership changes. The social structure of society was disrupted and people's social networks destroyed. The independence of the judiciary, legislative, and executive powers was abolished, and the division of labour between the state's political and economic systems was dissolved. The impatient enthusiasm shared by a part of the population for the rapid construction of a just, communist society, sanctioned the communist leadership's control over the property, lives, and the minds of the population.

With great haste and frequency the institutional tools were drawn up and ratified for ensuring the complete dominance of power chances on the side of the rulers.

A browse through the pages of the *History of the Lands of the Czech Crown in Dates* (Čapek 1999) confirms that the actions taken in this direction were very swift. For example, in 1948:

– 25 February: the Central Action Committee of the National Front was established and in the following days became the initiator behind a series of actions taken towards the homogenisation of society;

– 4 March: the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia established its so-called Economic Council which it designated as its economic secretariat and which became a superior organ of rule (particularly of the economic ministries);

– 20 March: the Central Action Committee of the National Front decided to unify all organisations of physical education;

– 21 March: the constituent National Assembly passed agricultural laws primarily referring to the collectivisation of land over 50 ha;

– 10–11 April: the National Culture Congress called for the creation of a "new socialist culture";

– 21 April: the "schools" act was passed, unifying all education and educational institutions;

– 28 April: a series of laws on nationalisation were passed;

– 9 May: Constitution of 9 May;

– 30 May: elections to the National Assembly, with a unified body of candidates;

– 27 June: the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the Social Democratic Party merged;

– 9 September: the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia adopted the policy of taking a "hard line against reactionaries", the result of which was the ensuing adoption of laws aimed at the protection of the republic, the setting up of forced labour camps, ….and eventually led to the political trials;

– 20 September: the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia set up its own cultural advisory, which became the decision-making body for all cultural issues and ideology, including personal affairs (in 1950 its function was taken over by the party apparatus);

– 27 October: Parliament approved the first Five-Year plan, the objectives of which were to reconstruct the economy into a state-run, strictly planned system, to nationalise remaining industries, meaning the remaining small and middle-sized enterprises, to advance the metal industry, especially heavy engineering, to industrialise Slovakia, and to collectivise agriculture;

– 17–18 November: the Central Committee accepted a document on escalating the class conflict;

– 1 December: the new principles were laid out for the National Security Corps;

– 1 January 1949: the law adopted for setting up the system of administrative regions and abolishing the provincial system came into effect, which de facto meant the abolition of territorial self-government (Hájek et al. 2001: 61).

It is possible to use Elias' game models in the following analysis. It may helps to clarify the issue of the weakening of communist power after "Victorious February" 1948. In Elias' terms, the population of the Czechoslovak Republic – the ruled – are located on the first level or tier, and the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – the rulers – is on the second level. It is worth recalling here briefly what, according to Elias, this model looks like: The small circle of players on the second level is in terms of power massively (and for a certain brief while even totally) superior to the large circle of players on the first level. However, the state of interdependence places some limitations on all the players, and none, not even the strongest on the first level, has complete control over the game. Even the player on the highest level (e.g. Gottwald or Slánský) must respect at least the power chances of

the other players on their level, which limits their ability to control the game. Insufficient control over the first level of players and the consequences of this can be illustrated in a quotation from the Minister of Education in 1971, Václav Hrbek (Gímeš 1996): "Yesterday we put an end to the ideological struggle, today unbridled liberalism and eclecticism rule, tomorrow the revisionist onslaught will begin, and the day after tomorrow the counter-revolution. Developments – unfortunately – confirmed that that prediction was accurate." Hrbek was referring to 1968, when a portion of the players on the second level began to form a coalition between themselves and the players on the first level, and thus threatened the power chances of the entire second level.

The events of the years 1968–1971 clearly indicate that even despite the collapse of the Prague Spring, and despite the intervention of external military force to preserve the totalitarian regime, a new balance was established between the first level (the population) and the second level (the leaders of the Communist Party), which no longer accorded power chances to the second level as it did in 1949. A re-grouping occurred between the first and second levels. In the years 1969–71 the Communist Party purged itself through vettings and membership card exchanges of a large number of its educated and creative players, capable of reflecting on the limitations inherent to the interdependent relationship that exists between the rulers and the ruled and to endure the restrictions on power chances for the benefit of stability in the new power relationship (approx. 350 000 party members had their membership withdrawn during this vetting process; but by 1 April 1976 the party had 1 382 860 members and candidates in its 43 506 primary organisations, and in the period from the 14th Congress in 1971 until this date 333 952 new party candidates were admitted). The normalisation period, as the years after 1971 have come to be referred to, was certainly not stable, as, to cite one particularly illustrative example, in 1977 Charter 77 was founded as a society of people publicly protesting the Communist Party's way of rule.

With regard to the ruling party, it may be said that the normalisation period ended for it when party membership cards were again exchanged for new ones in 1979; this time it occurred not with the aim of purging the party but rather with the intention of "increasing the level of involvement and activity of each party member". The impulse for this step was likely the worsening situation in the national economy. Evidence of the decline of the economy was no longer found just in macro-economic indicators, but also in the shortages that existed within the internal, COMECON market, which could hardly be compensated by one-off imports from European countries outside this market. Despite all efforts the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was unable to control and direct all social processes in a state in the middle of Europe. It attempted to acknowledge partial autonomy of the economic system (from the publication of the document "The Perfect System of Planned Management of the National Economy" in 1980 to the publication of the document "The Decisive Approach to Economic and Social Reconstruction" in 1988) and also of the administrative apparatus of state administration (references again began to be made of the national committees in speech and writing as organs of territorial self-government). But the institute of the "leading role of the Communist Party in society" doomed all efforts toward autonomising any elements of the social system to failure (and so even as late as 17 June 1988 the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist Party was discussing the issue of the severe shortage of toilet paper; see Suk (1999)). It would seem to be clear then that the post-normalisation years, i.e. the 1980s, were host to the narrowing power chances of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

I would like to point to some evidence that indicates or manifests the gradual reduction in the power differences between the rulers and the ruled in the 1980s at one tier of Communist rule,

the district tier. The district tier in the hierarchy of rule represented the first direct contact between the rulers and the ruled in the Czech Republic. The aim here is to help explain how it occurred that the "total omnipotence of the state of real socialism" (Šimečka 1979: 171), which, as indicated above, existed in 1971, had by 1989 ceased to exist, and without the interference of extra-state force.

Experiences and Empirical Data at the District Tier

The data collection method used in the research was the study of documents, especially documents from the State District Archives. Some documents were scanned and saved in electronic format, so that it was possible to look at the original texts repeatedly. The documents include minutes from plenary sessions and from the meetings of the council of one district national committee in the 1980s, along with minutes from the meetings of one district committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the presidium of a district committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in the 1980s. The preliminary examination of the documents covered all the archived volumes, and more detailed study was devoted to the majority of documents from the years 1980, 1984, 1988 and 1989. The final step involved going back to the documents and seeking out data for selected cases. My colleague, Jana Stachová, took part in this archive work, looking for excerpts from the archived volumes and photographs, along with Michal Tošovský, who covered attendance at the plenary meetings of the District Committee of the Communist Party. In this article I at various points draw on the work put together by Jana Stachová, and I also use the table on attendance that was prepared by Michal Tošovský, expanded to include some additional data.

According to the last approved Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, which were passed at the 17th Congress in 1986, the district organisation of the Communist Party was comprised of all the primary organisations of the party in the district. According to this document also the district committees of the Communist Party were in charge of the primary organisations, and the town, local, factory, and enterprise committees on the territory of the district. In addition, one of the main responsibilities of the District Committee was "to direct and control the work of the national committees, trade union bodies, and other organisations in society through communists and party groups" (Art. VI). These party groups could be formed on any platform of any organisation where there were at least three party members. Their task was to implement party policy at their location and strengthen its influence among non-members (Art. IX). These statutes portray the authority that the District Committee possessed over the territory of the district, consisting in:

a) Direct management and control over all party organisations on the territory of the district, wherein such party organisation on the territory of the district included (quoted from §69 Art. VIII Statutes): "Party organisations in manufacturing, transportation, and trade factories and enterprises on state farms, in unified farmers' cooperatives, and in other agricultural enterprises, in planning organisations, construction offices, and scientific research institute, in housing management, communal services, schools, cultural, educational and health facilities …" and these "have the right to inspect how those in charge of the factory, enterprise or institution carry out the tasks of the policy of the Party and the state, and provide solutions for substantial …". Here the individual member of the population is under the direct management and control of the Party as an employee. Membership in the Revolutionary Trade Union Mouvement (ROH), the unified trade union organi-

sation that existed in every institution (and was a part of the National Front), made control over the employees complete, as almost all employees were members of this organisation.

b) Overseeing all other organisations in the district. Any other organisation was a part of the National Front. Whether it was a pseudo-political organisation, like the Czechoslovak Peoples Party (ČSL), the Czechoslovak Socialist Party (ČSS), an interest group like the Czechoslovak Women's Union (ČSŽ), the Czechoslovak Breeders and Gardeners Union, the Czechoslovak Firefighters Union (ČSPO), etc., a children's or youth organisation like the Pioneers and the Socialist Youth Mouvement (SSM), a physical training and defence organisation like the Czechoslovak Physical Training Union (ČSTV) and the Union for Co-operation with the Army (*Svazarm*), or a professional association like the Czechoslovak Sociological Society, or the Czechoslovak Science and Technology Society, etc. Here the individual is under the supervision of the party outside working hours and during leisure time.

The highest-ranking organ in the district organisation of Communist Party was the district conference, and between conferences it was the district committee. The district committee was elected by the district conference and the "inspection and revision commission"; the district committee elected the Presidium from among its own members and the secretaries of the district committee. The position of head secretary was considered the highest function in the district organisation of the Communist Party. The district committee met six times annually, and between its meetings work was directed by the presidium. The Statutes did not determine the number of members in the district committee or its presidium. Nor did the Statutes regulate who was to take part in the meetings of the district committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. All that the Statutes stated is that the candidates in the district committee and the chair of the District Inspection and Revision Commission take part in the meeting of the district committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in an advisory capacity.

Example 1 – Meetings of the district committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in district N. are made more accessible

In district N. in 1980 (72 thousand inhabitants in 80 municipalities) there were 43 members and 11 candidates in the district committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. This situation lasted until 1988, when 43 members were again elected at the district conference in April 1988, but the number of elected candidates increased to 14. With regard to the number of people in the district committee, its composition did not change over the course of the decade. While we are not dealing here with the occupants of positions in the organ, it should just be noted that the head secretary of the district committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovak in N. at the beginning of the 1980s was the head secretary of the relevant regional committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia at the end of the 1980s. Meetings of the district committee were held, as stipulated in the Statutes, once every two months. Throughout the decade these meetings never took longer than 5–7 hours; the minutes always indicate the time when the meeting started and finished.

What changed over the course of the decade was the number and functions of those invited to the meetings of the district committee (here we are not considering the concurrence of functions, e.g. the chair of the district national committee was simultaneously a member of the Presidium of the district committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia). With some fluctuations the number of those invited to the meetings over the course of the 1980s increased. Members of the district "inspection and revision commission" and the apparatus of the district committee became regular members of the meetings. Other functionaries invited to the meetings varied from among

members of national committees, the National Front, and party organisations in the district, depending on what agenda was being discussed. The rise in the number of invited functionaries was gradual and uneven, but in the years 1987–88 there was a large increase, which took in head economic management, along with a larger number of participants from the media. Here we can present some running data on the period: the meeting of the district committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 4 June 1980 included the participation of 5 chairs of municipal committees of Communist Party, 8 members of the board of the district national committee, 3 chairs of the municipal national committee, 15 heads of departments from the district national committee, 3 deputies from the regional national committee, and 8 others; a total of 42 people. The meeting lasted from 8:00 to 15:30. At the meeting of the district committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held in January 1984, 70 people from various sectors and parts of the economy in the district were invited. Four years later, the meeting of the district committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia held on 9 December 1988 included, in addition to members and candidates from the district committee, the district "inspection and revision commission", and from the apparatus of the District Committee, a further 109 functionaries invited from the district, who held discussions in sections in different rooms of the building where the meeting was convened. The meeting ran from 8:00 to 14:30.

A similar observation can be made with regard to the content of the meetings of the district committee. In 1980, 6 contributions were tabled for discussion at one session of the district committee, while in 1988 there were 22. Though there were some fluctuations, the number of contributions tabled for discussion grew. It may briefly be noted with regard to their content that while they became more pertinent, they also became more verbose, as though trying through a flood of words to camouflage or make light of problems that the participants in the discussion may or may not have wished to hear identified.

This observation can be interpreted as follows: inviting functionaries from various areas of economic and social life in the district to participate in the meetings of the district committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was the "fulfilment and elaboration" of resolutions carried by the central and regional organs of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, which were pursuing a certain policy. What this was about was a perfected system of management and about attempts at innovating it further toward "more rapid socio-economic development". It was about the aims of autonomising the economy and state administration. It was not easy to fulfil this new focus in party policy at the district tier in any other way than by simply inviting guests to the meetings of the District committee: "The attempts of some leading workers to separate the professional organisational work related to the execution of a function from the political leadership of the collective in its charge must be resolutely rejected". (The quote is from a report on the "Results of the Process of Improving the Quality of Life within the Party", from the March meeting of the district committee in 1984.)

It is clear that discussions between so many people within a limited amount of time – between six and eight hours – could only be formal in nature and would only contribute to carrying through the pre-arranged conclusions and resolutions formulated beforehand, and that work was carried out by the Presidium and the apparatus of the District Committee of the Communist Party.

Example 2 – The results of meetings from the presidium of the district committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia are made more accessible

The presidium of the district committee in N. had 15 members and met once every two weeks. It is only in the course of the first half of the 1980s that information in these meetings reached the

broader public of the party via official routes: the item of "Information on Discussions of the Presidium" appeared on the agenda of the regular session of the district committee. By 1984 this item had already become a regular agenda item, and in the years that followed it became even more expansive. In 1988 the structure of this information was reflecting the breadth of the economic, social and party life that the party organs dealt with; information encompassed economic policy, agriculture and the food industry, internal party life, ideological and political work among the masses, the political system and cadre and organisational issues. The presidium addressed this broad issue at the customary 3–4 meetings it held between the two regular sessions of the district committee; these meetings lasted 3–5 hours.

Also invited to presidium meetings were the functionaries whose agenda was being discussed (i.e. their performance was controlled and evaluated), and who were also assigned tasks by the presidium (they and their agenda were managed). The closed nature of the presidium meetings, which can still be clearly discerned in the documents dating from 1980, was gradually replaced over the course of the decade with the practice of informing the plenary of the district committee about the content of the presidium's discussions. It would seem that even these steps conformed to the "fulfilment and elaboration" of the resolutions passed by higher party organs. This is indicated by the fact that on 12 June 1989 the presidium of the district committee in N. discussed the inspection report on "the process of perfecting the communication of internal party information in the district party organisation". The report included information on the implementation of the new "Annotated Principles for Work", which had been approved by the Secretariat of the Central Committee in 1988.

Conclusion

The study of documents in the State District Archives drew attention to some phenomena in the internal life of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the performance of the national committees. The way these phenomena developed over the course of the 1980s can be interpreted as expressions or manifestations of the declining capacity of the Communist Party's control over the socio-economic space at the district tier. This chapter attempted to describe how access to the discussions of the district organs of the Communist Party – the district committee and the presidium of the district committee – opened up to other subjects in the economic and social life of the district, and the discussion space at meetings of the district organs expanded. The background for such an interpretation is provided by Norbert Elias' concept of power, which makes it possible to interpret these phenomena as manifestations of a process wherein the power differences between the rulers and the ruled, between the organs of the Communist Party and the population, is reduced.

It is clear that the phenomena presented above were only a part of the "fulfilment and elaboration" at the district tier of the resolutions passed by the Central Committee and the regional committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The trend towards decreasing the power differences between the rulers and the ruled was established in documents that emerged at the centre; for example, the resolution of the Central Committee on the process of perfecting the communication of internal party information in the district party organisation, the development of the new "Annotated Principles for Work" and on the implementation of the scientific and technological revolution, and the new Statutes and new Constitution that were in the process of preparation. But how this actually was implemented and how this occurred in the district, which in the

hierarchy of communist rule represents the direct contact between the rulers and the ruled, was the contribution of those individual district functionaries of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the national committees. And this is the point where rule itself in the various individual districts could differ in the Czech Republic, and a comparison of these processes in two different districts could help suggest some of their consequences.

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2.3 The Organs of the Local and Municipal National Committees in the System of Communist Power

Lukáš Valeš

Abstract

February 1948 signified the pervasion of the mechanisms of totalitarianism through to the local and municipal level of Czech villages and towns. The local self-government that had existed to that time was abolished and local (later local and municipal) national committees[1] were fully subordinated and became the lowest link in the chain of state power. This meant they became subordinate to the superior ranking components in state administration, lost control over their own economic resources, and were subject to the decisive authoritarian influence of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia on their activities. Their position, however, began to change as the regime evolved, and as it became necessary to address practical non-political problems. Here significant roles were played by the ideological viewpoint of "engaging the wider masses in the management of the state" and by the tradition of Czech regional autonomy. The national committees at the lowest level – local and municipal – were unique organs in the system, owing both to their legal standing and to their ability to successfully engage in local administration even citizens who at the time were outside the political structure, but also and primarily due to their steady pragmatism in managing municipal and town affairs. This became fully evident towards the close of the communist era, when the economic and structural difficulties of the regime were particularly evident at the local level, and when, unlike the local party representatives, the leading functionaries of these local bodies showed themselves to be fully aware of these difficulties. For this reason, in November 1989, it was they who were in a considerably better position to assess the situation, and they were the first representatives of communist power to establish ties with the forming opposition. These negotiations resulted in the smooth and uninterrupted transition of public administration into the new democratic environment. Local and municipal national committees also played a specific role in the process that gave rise to the formation of the seeds of civil society before 1989.

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1 Czechoslovak and Czech law use "municipality" as a general term to refer to both a self-governing community in the narrowest sense of the word, i.e. a village, and in the broader sense of the word, i.e. a town. Under communism the administrative organs that headed the municipalities/villages were the "local national committees" (MNV), while the administrative organs that headed the municipalities/towns were the "municipal national committees" (MěstNV). In Czech law a town is defined as a municipal community with at least 3000 inhabitants or possessing the historical status of town. During the years between 1948 and 1954 the differentiation was not employed, and both towns and villages were headed by the local national committees.

Keywords

The rise of the communist regime in February 1948 led to the introduction of profound changes even at the local and municipal levels of state administration. The new Constitution (Constitutional Act No. 150/ 1948 Coll., May 9, 1948) designated the national committees as "the conveyors and executors of state power in the municipalities, districts, and regions", and it thus de jure abolished the regional self-government that had existed to that time in Czechoslovakia. Local national committees became the lowest links in the chain of state administration.[2]

This act was not just a change in the system of public administration. The system of regional self-government that had taken shape over the course of the 19th century was an important Czech political forum. Local and municipal administrative bodies possessed significant administrative authority, reinforced by their capital resources. This ensured local administration a relatively independent standing in the political system of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and to a lesser extent also in Czechoslovakia prior to Munich. But the communist system demanded total subordination of all components of society. Local self-government – accompanied moreover by a tradition of political and economic independence from the overall system of government – was no exception to this requirement. As early as 1945–48 the national committees that were beginning to be set up – even at the local level – fulfilled tasks of state administration. Up until February 1948, however, the distinction between state administration and local self-government was fully observed.

National committees at the lower level were fully subordinate to the decisions taken by the organs of any higher-ranking national committee. The executive bodies of these local national committees were moreover subordinate both to the chief body of their own national committee (council, plenum) and to the relevant executive body of the superior national committee (a district or regional national committee) in accordance with the principle of dual subordination. This organisational subordination functioned in relation to legal rules, too – the bodies of local national committees were not only required to comply with the valid laws and regulations at the state level, but also had to observe the guidelines and orders emanating from bodies of higher rank at the district and regional level.[3] The entire system of the power hierarchy then reached its peak in what was essentially the total subordination of all lower administrative bodies "to the power of the executive and the government, and especially the Ministry of the Interior" (Mates and Matula 1999: 29). If these requirements were not observed the national committees could be dissolved.

The general principle of democratic centralism, which further entrenched the subordination of lower-level national committees (de jure state administration) to superior ranking bodies, applied to national committees at all levels – even in relation to matters that formally lay within the juridiction of the location national committee (MNV) (Vodička and Cabada 2003: 100).

With the administrative subordination of local national committees, their political subordination naturally followed. Authority over the national committees was primarily executed by the relevant party committees – by the local or municipal committee of the Communist Party and by the district committee of the Communist Party. They provided the "political leadership" for the national committees, laid out (particularly in the case of the district committee of the Communist Party)

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2 With general applicability.
3 The superior organs of the local and municipal national committees at the district level were the district national committees and the regional level the regional national committees. Local, municipal, district and regional national committees made up the regional system of state administration, at the head of which stood the Czech government and which was overseen by the Minister of the Interior.

the main tasks of their work, and checked that they had been fulfilled. They also of course had the decisive word in personnel issues relating to membership composition.

Personnel policy was the third tool of power that the regime wielded over the local and municipal national committees.[4] As the activities of the national committees had a direct influence on the everyday life of citizens, whose satisfaction, at least in relative terms, was the alpha and the omega of the communist regime's stability, particularly in its later years, considerable attention was devoted to the selection of the leading representatives of the national committees. There was a tendency to choose reliable and thoroughly vetted party members with strong ties to communist authorities (for example, members of the StB) to sit on the town national committees. However, owing to the preference given to the political perspective in choosing the leading representative for the town or municipality the professional side of management often suffered as a result and the location's development stagnated.

The local or the town committees thus appeared to function simply as the lowest component in state administration, fully subordinate to the decisions of both the superior-ranking organs of state administration (higher ranking national committees and central state organs) and the Communist Party organs at the local, district and regional levels. This appearance was further reinforced by the careful selection of the national committee representatives with close ties to the communist regime, which provided for a sort of internal check on the national committees in relation to the other parts of the communist system.

Reality, however, was somewhat different, and it could be said that the national committees at the local level actually occupied quite an unusual position in the system of communist power. According to Act no. 5/ 1965 Coll. on national committees they were the: "broadest based organisation of workers, organs of state power and administration in the municipalities".[5] This definition illustrates well the dual standing of the national committees in general. On the one hand they were meant to be a part of state power,[6] while on the other they were supposed to be an organ of "popular administration", enabling the participation of the "broadest strata of citizens" directly in the management of the state.

"This structure fulfilled the Marxist-Leninist demand for the unity of the legislative and the executive power" (Vodička and Cabada 2003: 96). One important aspect was that it expressed the "popular" character of socialist Czechoslovakia. Briefly put, Czechoslovakia was meant to be a state of the workers who execute their power through state organs. The national committees (at all levels) served the purpose of enabling them to do so directly, and in this way the principle of socialist democracy, which is to enable the participation of all components in society in the administration of the state, was meant to be fulfilled.

A manifestation of this was the new definition of the national committees contained in the third in the series of new acts on national committees, Act No. 69/1967, where the national committees were defined not only as bodies of state power and administration but also as "state bodies of an autonomous nature". However contradictory this definition may appear from a legal-administrative

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4 Here I use this distinction with the awareness that the Constitution of May 9 only refers to local national committees; their further division into local (*obecní*) and municipal was introduced with the act on national committees of 1954.
5 In addition to local or municipal national committees there were also district and regional national committees.
6 The Constitution of May 9 (Act on the Constitution no. 158/ 1948) abolished the principle of local self-government that had existed to that time.

perspective,[7] it nonetheless accurately describes the unique position that the national committees occupied in the system, especially at the lowest levels, in the towns and municipalities. In the 1960s their autonomous character was further reinforced, as the national committees were accorded independent areas of authority within which they were able to issue binding legal regulations, and their responsibilities were expanded especially within the area of economic management. Though this process subsided over the course of the 1970s, it was strengthened once again in the new act on national committees in 1983 (Act no. 31/1983 Coll.)

In addition to the acquisition of independent areas of jurisdiction and the extension of their competences the national committees were also interesting for their composition in terms of political personnel. Each national committee was comprised of a plenum, a council, a commission, and the individual divisions of the national committee. The plenum was the representative body of the national committee whose competence was the deliberation and approval of the main conceptual materials, issuing legal regulations within the framework of the committee's jurisdictional areas, budget approval, and activities such as monitoring the execution of tasks, etc.

The plenum (the plenary sessions) of the national committee was its main organ, and it was an elected organ. The elections to the plenum were based on what, with just some exaggeration, could be referred to as the majority principle – for example, in the elections to the municipal national committee the particular town was divided into a large number of small, single-mandate, electoral districts (e.g. in a town with a population of 20 000–25 000 there were 100 such districts). Of course, such an analogy is ultimately incorrect, as in each of these electoral districts there was only one candidate for election, and that candidate had been selected at a session of the municipal committee of the National Front. Political control over the selection of candidates lay in the hands of the Communist Party organs. According to political criteria each component of the National Front, that is, each approved social organisation, had the right to delegate a certain number of candidates. Although Communist Party members predominated,[8] non-party members were also strongly represented. The two other political parties that were allowed to exist during the communist period – the Czechoslovak People's Party and the Czechoslovak Socialist Party – occupied entirely marginal positions.[9] What were important were the selection criteria, which included, in addition to being "politically reliable", the willingness, in particular, to become engaged in a public office, as demonstrated through prior activity in an organisation of the National Front. This was by no means of course the absolute rule – the majority of delegates to the plenum and the council of the town and the municipal national committees were unelected functionaries, who reaped no profit from the execution of their mandates. Moreover, while the average district town had a hundred-member plenum, there were only a limited number of people who were actually willing to become engaged in public activity before 1989.[10]

7 Public administration is generally further subdivided into state administration and self-government. The basic principle regarding them is their strict separation and the independence of self-government from state administration. The joining of the two is a "blatant conflict" – see Mates and Matula (1999: 35).

8 For example, in the hundred-member plenum of the MěstNV in Klatovy there were 60 Communist Party members. This did not mean however that all of them were nominated by the Communist Party – often they were members of other social organisations that they represented.

9 There were 35 non-party members and only 5 members of any of the political parties cited here in the above-mentioned plenum (Valeš 2003: 86).

10 Even from today's perspective the prescribed quotas for women would appear modern. But this presented the representatives of power with a nearly impossible problem – to find a sufficient number of women candidates who were also interested in public affairs.

The majority principle calls to mind the other functions of elected delegates. Wthin their electoral districts, civic committees could be (and often also were) set up. These committees were in permanent contact with the delegate from their district, and either through him or even directly themselves they promoted the demands and proposals of citizens in the electoral district during discussions with the organs of the national committee.[11] There existed thus a strong tie between the voters and their representative. In the system of communist power this was a rare instance during which democratic principles were actually applied. The elected representative continued also to be a representative of the organisation of the National Front on whose behalf he had been elected and he was thus also a representative of that membership base.

The commissions of the national committee were another important organ that facilitated the engagement of primarily active citizens with particular professional skills in the local administration of the town or village. While the divisions of the national committees were made up of officials, the commissions were their elected counterparts, and they were where the delegates to the plenum of the national committee (who were knowledgeable in the issues being addressed thanks to their particular occupations or skills) and professionally concerned citizens met. The commissions dealt with the development of the town or village in the particular electoral district (health care, social issues, transportation, etc.) and monitored the work of the divisions and the organisations of the local or municipal national committees. Their importance in the system of national committees was underscored by their independence from the main executive body – the council. A decision taken by the commission could be annulled only by the plenary session of the national committee.

The council of the national committee was comprised of a chair, a deputy chair, the secretary of the national committee, and members, and it was fully subordinate to the plenum – which also meant that the plenum could dismiss its (the council's) members. This, however, was only a theoretical possibility, and in practice, given the Communist Party's dominant power position, such a move was out of the question. Furthermore, the party held the executive of the towns and municipalities firmly in its grip. The composition of the council and especially the inner circles of leadership in the town and the local national committees (the chair, deputy chair, secretary) were politically unequivocal. The absolute majority of members of the council were members of the Communist Party. For example, there were fifteen people in the council of the national committee in Klatovy, eleven of them were members of the Communist Party. All persons in the head positions were also Communist Party members. Conversely, neither of the other two officially permitted parties had a representative in the council. The Communist Party also retained control over the staff composition of the bureaucratic apparatus of the national committees. Even there party members were strongly represented and occupied all of the top functions.[12]

Nevertheless, through the elected and advisory bodies of the national committees this system successfully managed to engage dozens of people in the work of administration, however much this fact may have been be circumscribed by the continuous presence of the dominant power of the Communist Party. And it was not just people with particular expertise. The spectrum of organisations associated under the National Front was extremely broad – from political parties and interest groups to specially defined organisations like the Union of the Disabled. Although membership in the National Front was mandatory for all organisations and it was run by the Communist

11 Civic committees were established only within national committees at the lower level – the municipal national committee (MěstNV) or the local national committee (MNV).
12 From an interview with Václav Turhober (chair of the MěstNV of the Town of Klatovy up until January 1990), conducted by Lukáš Valeš, in Klatovy, in March 2002.

Party,[13] the work that went on within these organisations was in many cases quite a free or at least non-political, and despite the authoritarian and restrictive regime members could assert themselves therein. Thus although the organisations together with the National Front were part of a system, this formally pro-regime grouping of organisations enabled the organisations' members to associate relatively freely on the basis of their interests (environmental protection, gardeners' unions, automobile clubs). It is a paradox that the National Front ultimately formed an umbrella framework for the development of civil society. In their own way the organisations within it were "islands of freedom"[14] that facilitated activity in the public sphere. Especially in the second half of the period of communist rule, when it was no longer necessary to continually make outward demonstrations of one's support for the communist regime, it was the practical content of the organisations' activities that was clearly their dominant feature. In addition to such activities the organisations also prepared numerous cultural and social activities for their members, and organised educational talks and even voluntary work teams, the "Z-event",[15] and other events. Through this the "civic awareness" of members was strengthened and projected into the activities of the bodies of the local national committees. Positive collective activity of this kind played a significant role later in the rapid renewal of a free civil society after 1989. The organs of the National Front cooperated closely with the organs of the local national committees and in addition to the membership of representatives of National Front organisations in the organs of the local or municipal committees this also involved holding joint meetings and the participation of National Front organisations in the preperation of conceptual development programmes for the towns and villages, and similar activities. By means of such mechanisms the communist regime succeeded in drawing people into participating in "local politics", people who were willing to become involved at the local level without harbouring any power-political ambitions (in a number of cases volunteer functionaries of the National Front). Their motivation was their civic awareness, the effort to improve the way in which affairs in the community operate, or even to defend the interests of members of their organisation and the views of their organisation on the administration of public affairs.[16] This kind of integration of group and political activities at the local level was nothing new in Czech politics – Czech communal politics had functioned along the same lines before 1948, or, more precisely, even before 1938.

In the second half of the 1980s, the representatives of the local and municipal national committees[17] came to consider a person's willingness for civic engagement to be a priority in their

13 The communist system of power manifested itself here in that every committee of the National Front at any level – town, district, etc. – was headed by a senior secretary or chair from the relevant committee of the Communist Party. This was intended to symbolise the leading role of the Communist Party as the leading component in society (see Article 4 in the Constitution of 1960 on the leading role of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia).
14 See Vaněk (2002).
15 The "Z-event" was a self-help public works event for citizens organised by the National Front and intended to compensate for shortcomings especially in the area of construction capacity. State organs and organisations covered the provision of construction and other materials and the citizens in their free time as part of so-called "work brigades" used this material to build, for example, a school, a children's playground, a food shop, etc. These events were of significance mainly in the countryside, where they had some real sense. In the towns they were more of a formality.
16 The effort to improve the operation of local administration and to defend the interests of members of the given organisation need not have been in conflict. A very active organisation of the National Front was, for example, the Union of the Disabled, whose members looked after matters in the bodies of the municipal and local national committees such as the construction of housing accessible to the disabled, the improvement of accessibility for the disabled throughout the transportation network, the allocation of the limited number of personal vehicles for the disabled, etc.
17 See, for example, the interview with the pre-1989 chair of the MěstNV of Klatovy, Václav Turhober, conducted by Lukáš Valeš, Klatovy, February 2002, and the interview with the secretary of the MěstNV of Klatovy, Václav Řeřicha, conducted by Lukáš Valeš, Klatovy, February 2002.

selection criteria regarding candidates for the positions of delegates in the local or municipal national committees' plenum or for becoming council members. Even this aspect distinguished the way in which local and municipal national committees operated from the way in which other components of the power hierarchy functioned. The organs of the Communist Party did not share this view (not even the district national committees), and it became a source of tension between them and the local national committees. One chair of a municipal national committee put it in these words: "We did communal politics for people, not big politics. It was more a matter of practical issues wrapped up in politics. That was the religion of the time. … Our view was different from that of the apparatchiks in the district committee of the Communist party or the regional committee of the Communist Party. They lived politics; the town had to live its problems."[18] The secretary of the same municipal national committee added: "We were interested in active people who were an advantage to the town, not primarily party members. People capable of speaking in the plenum. On the contrary, the party was interested in promoting the political perspective. This led to some conflicts between us."[19]

The fact that clashes occurred among the various components of the regime – moreover, in this case, unmotivated by power interests – is remarkable. Among other things, it testifies to the need to distinguish between the 1969–89 period (normalisation) and the 1948–67 period. In the normalisation period – especially in the second half of this period, in the 1980s – it is no longer possible to speak of a totalitarian system. In the study titled "The Transitions to Democracy" (in Czech), Doc. Jiří Kunc and Prof. Vladimíra Dvořáková are inclined to use the term "post-totalitarian authoritarian regime" for this period (Dvořáková and Kunc 1994). The above-mentioned conflicts between different components in the regime, the method of selecting candidates for the representative bodies at the local level, the relatively independent activities of the organisations of the National Front (for example, the Union of Environmental Conservationists), the predominance of practical and technical viewpoints in local politics – these are examples of the "de-totalitarianisation" of the regime at the local level. This process is similar to the way in which small businesses were permitted to exist towards the end of the 1980s (since 1988), mainly in order to solve the inadequate supply of services. "Politics was not the top priority – it was mixed in, sure, starting with the Constitution, but political decisions of the "So there, and that's the way it's going to be" type of order did not apply. Money and people's activities were what mattered."[20]

Long-term factors also came into play, especially local patriotism. In the towns and municipalities that had been settled for a long time, and which in this sense were very stable settlements with a relatively intact social and economic structure, there was a strong local consciousness and strong emotional ties to the settlement that existed independently and beyond the ruling regime – felt both by the citizens themselves and by the representatives of the municipal or town national committee.[21] This factor played a role in addressing the practical issues of running the town and also in the actual course of events in November 1989. One form of local patriotism before 1989 was the establishment of so-called directors' councils.[22] A directors' council was an informal meeting between representatives of local administration and directors of enterprises located on the territory of the particular town or village. The biggest problem faced by local administrative bod-

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18 Interview with Václav Turhober (and Mgr. Šrámek), conducted by Lukáš Valeš, Klatovy, March 2002.
19 Interview with Mgr. Šrámek (and Václav Turhober), conducted by Lukáš Valeš, Klatovy, March 2002.
20 Interview with V. Turhober and Mgr. Šrámek, conducted by Lukáš Valeš, Klatovy, March 2002.
21 If however they were locals.
22 These councils of directors were not, however, a mass phenomenon, and their existence can only be traced in several towns in Czechoslovakia.

ies was insufficient "means".[23] Although, for example, in a district town there was a construction firm, the plan (the work plan that each enterprise had for the coming year) assigned the firm construction activity outside the particular location. However, this inhibited the progress of development in the "home" town or village. The purpose of these informal meetings was so that the directors of local enterprises could offer their enterprise's resources (machines, employees, fianancial resources, etc.) to address urgent problems in the community's development. This primarily related to housing construction, transportation networks, public works, "Z-events", etc. The means for securing their involvement "beyond the plan" was by appealing to their local patriotism. Local patriotism can thus be ranked among the specific elements of local politics that existed in the period before November 1989.

In addition to the elements of formal democracy that existed in the operational structure of the local national committees they also deviated from ranks of the totalitarian system in terms of the content of their activities. National committees, primarily those at the lowest level, addressed issues of everyday politics (politics as the administration of public affairs) – housing construction, infrastructure construction, transportation, health care, etc. They thus dealt with the "non-political" political subjects, where practical rather than "political" (power) criteria were the decisive factors. Power-political factors did, however, interfere in these issues in significant ways. Satisfying the existential needs of the population was an issue of key importance in the maintenance of the regime. If the basic premise of normalisation was to be met, i.e. that all the main social needs of the population would be satisfied (particularly housing, a good living standard, etc.) in exchange for the non-involvement of the population in politics against the normalisation regime (backed by the authoritarian, repressive security bodies of the state and the continued presence of the Soviet army in Czechoslovakia), then the function of the local and municipal national committees was, from a power-political perspective, of serious importance. But there was no way that the national committees, given their limited capacity, could come close to meeting the political indent of the Communist Party, which was often elevated even beyond the limits of the economic capacity of the local or municipal national committee. As a result, sharp clashes occurred between Communist Party functionaries and representatives of the local national committee,[24] – even though they, too, with some exceptions, were Communist Party members (subordinate to the higher bodies of the Communist Party in accordance with the principle of democratic centralism). These clashes were not merely superficial, and they even impinged on other parts of the communist regime.[25]

The significance of this issue grew especially during the final years of the communist regime. In the 1980s it was evident that the regime was incapable of meeting its commitment to satisfying the needs of the population in the social sphere. The long-term problems of the Czechoslovak economy (including the decline in GDP growth and the failure to meet the goals set out in the 1987 plan) fully manifested themselves. The Czechoslovak economy failed to hitch onto the rise of modern technological trends (the introduction of computer technology, the rise in the signifi-

23 According to the statements of functionaries from the MěstNV, however, financial resources were available. See the interview with Václav Turhober, conducted by Lukáš Valeš, Klatovy, March 2003.
24 Ibid.
25 It is possible to cite as one example the relationship between the local national committee and the army. Despite the general lack of flats the army had priority rights in the assignment of flats. Given that the army laid down its biggest requirements in those very areas where there was the greatest lack of flats (e.g. in the border regions of western Bohemia) areas of sharp disagreement surfaced between the local national committee and the army command, and especially between soldiers and the general population, which sometimes culminated in verbal assaults on professional soldiers. See Valeš (2003).

cance of services, etc.). This led to a decline in housing construction and total investments into those spheres that were of particular importance for providing social infrastructure. Alongside this the demands of society in the late 1980s also grew as Czechoslovakia experienced a rise in consumption and the onset of the consumer way of life. The population's increased demands were further augmented by the relaxation of travel restrictions; by the end of the 1980s tens of thousands of people were making trips to "capitalist" countries each year. These people were able to compare the facilities and the selection of goods in stores abroad and at home. The ability to follow West German or Austrian television in the Czech border regions also had a similarly catastrophic effect on the regime's future.

In this connection, representatives of the national committees, to that time loyal to the regime, reached a stalemate – on the one hand, despite all their conflicts they remained a part of the regime, while on the other hand it was they who through their everyday work were best able to see the deterioration of the regime's position. Their knowledge of the situation on the ground contrasted with the "optimistic ignorance" and ideological perspective of the Communist Party functionaries, who refused to acknowledge what was happening – in their eyes the main blame for the growing number of problems lay with the increased activity of the opposition, and they maintained this view despite the fact that they possessed information on the real state of the economy.

The inability of the regime to address and solve the basic everyday problems faced by citizens had other consequences. While up to November 1989 the sphere of authoritarian politics remained a taboo subject and any criticism whatsoever in that direction was severely penalised, in the second half of the 1980s it became possible to express "appropriate" criticism of the regime's practical shortcomings. This was enabled by the changes that occurred inside the Soviet Union – Perestroika and Glasnost. Through its "openness" the regime wished to confront the growing economic problems. Even in the official regional press discussions were initiated on issues such as the quality and selection of services and goods, the state of local transportation networks, and so on. Criticism of economic and political conditions was the natural next step.

The disparity between the view of the representatives in the national committees and the view of the Communist Party is evident in their diametrically opposed reactions to the developments in the country shortly after the events of November 17. Functionaries from the local and especially from the district committees of the Communist Party were fully dependent on the directives issued by the Central Committee and their own activity was minimal, restricted mainly to warding off general strikes. Conversely, the representatives from the local and municipal national committees (not, though, from the district committees) who were aware of the real state of affairs attempted at the end of the first revolutionary week to make contact with local opposition groups. While after the resignation of Milouš Jakeš, the changes in the Central Committee, and the successful implementation of a general strike, the party functionaries found themselves paralysed, and the removal of Article 4 of the valid Constitution only confirmed this, the top members of the local and municipal national committees, who were formally also representatives of communist power, began negotiating with the emerging or already formed opposition over the transfer of power at the local level, or, more precisely, over "the changes to the composition of the bodies of the local national committee (town national committee) according to the current distribution of political powers".

In addition to the above-mentioned pragmatism and real knowledge of the state of affairs one motive for their behaviour was also the effort to preserve the smooth running of the administration and their above-mentioned sense of local patriotism. In this connection the minutes of

the first meetings are particularly interesting,[26] as they feature the unambiguous refrain "after all it's the town (municipality) that we're all interested in"[27] – being uttered by both former representatives of power and by the opposition. A shared public interest supported by a strong local consciousness was an important feature in the changes that took place in November 1989. The presence of these attributes contributed to minimising the occurrence of problems in the negotiations over and ensuing execution of the transfer of power, which was important for ensuring the uninterrupted, smooth operation of local administration. Personnel changes among council members and the municipal leadership began in December 1989 and continued through January 1990, while positions in the bureaucracy (with only some exceptions) remained unchanged – including the heads of divisions. Even later on there were no political purges within the local administration that would have threatened the operation of public administration.[28]

The interest on both sides in maintaining a smoothly functioning local administration was not just a concomitant feature of the political change of November 1989 – it is a feature that is typical for local politics and administration in the Czech lands under all regimes and at all moments of historical significance. A maximum of effort has always been exerted to ensure that the transfer of administration from one political regime to the next occurred without problems, so that the continuity of the administration of local affairs was secured and no ensuing chaos resulted, either in the public order or in the administrative agenda, or anywhere in between. At these historical turning points public administration has commanded special respect – unlike the state itself.

It was public administration and the knowledge of how it operates that influenced the new political composition of top positions in the municipal and local national committees. While in some locations people from Civic Forum often lacked even an elementary notion of how the bodies of the national committees functioned, the floor (and the political functions) was taken by the representatives of the parties of the National Front (Socialist and People's parties) that existed to that time, and they occupied the top positions in the local and municipal administrations. In general Civic Forum was more successful in occupying the politically more influential district national committees.

In this study I have attempted to show that although during the first stage of the communist regime the local national committees in particular were an integrated component in the hierarachy of communist power, as its lowest link in the power chain, as the regime gradually evolved over time, the practical need of tackling everyday administrative problems and the tradition of Czech local self-government worked in combination to gradually alter the position that the local national committees came to occupy in the communist sytem. The national committees at the lower level – local and municipal – were exceptional owing to their legal standing and to their ability to engage

26 See, for example, the Minutes from the Meeting between the municipal national committee in Klatovy and representatives of Civic Forum, dated 7 December 1989; from the private archives of Ing. Jan Vrána (the first post-1989 chair of the municipal national committee of Klatovy and the first post-1989 mayor of the town of Klatovy).
27 Ibid. The first discussions began as early as 1 December 1989, and the first meeting was mostly about "getting acquainted", while the second, in the case of Klatovy held on 7 December, already turned to practical matters; See Valeš (2003) and Valeš (ed.) (2003).
28 The author is aware that it is necessary to take into account the specifics of the course of the changes that occurred in November in the individual towns and villages in what was then still Czechoslovkia. In the case of the town of Klatovy, the positions of division heads changed after the communal elections held in the autumn of 1990. On the other hand, changes in the district national committees took a different course owing to the closer ties between that body and the exercise of power politics and the stronger connection to the district committee of the Communist Party.

in local administration people who were otherwise outside the politial structure of the time, and also and especially owing to their pragmatic approach to running towns and municipalities. Through the execution of "small", i.e. non-political, politics they differed from the other types of national committees – at the district and regional levels – which, despite their formal similarity, were more closely tied up in the political and party structures of the ruling power. The operations of the municipal and local national committees thus created the conditions for the eventual development of civil society at the local level – especially towards the end of communist rule. This, combined with the pragmatism of local functionaries that was based on their knowledge of the real state of affairs, contributed positively to the smooth transition of local politics and administration from the communist to the democratic regime. A significant element of continuity in this political change was the practical functions of the towns and municipalities. In a number of cases the newly elected democratic representatives were able to smoothly pick up the work of the predecessors where the latter had left off. And even in this respect the position of the local national committees was exceptional.

Note: This study drew on information from the author's dissertation "The Process of Political Change 1989–1999 in Klatovy", the preparation of which involved interviews with over twenty people from the leadership before and after 1989 in the National Committee of the Town of Klatovy, Civic Forum, the Czechoslovak Socialist Party, the Czechoslovak People's Party, and regular members of the Plenum and of the Council of the MěstNV.

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2.4 Territorial Governance, Settlement Hierarchies and the Project for the Urbanisation of Slovakia

Simon Smith

Abstract

This paper discusses the relationship between territorial governance, spatial planning and administrative settlement hierarchies in communist Czechoslovakia. It focuses on Slovakia, where an interventionist spatial planning system was constructed and enforced, especially following the adoption of the Project for the Urbanisation of Slovakia in the early 1970s. This presupposed strong central regulation and reflected an ideological commitment to a particular model of industrial urbanisation based on growth pole and central place theories. In practice it produced the concentration of population and economic activity without stimulating the democratising developments normally associated with urbanisation. The 1970s and 1980s saw rapid changes in settlement structure which reconfigured existing urban and rural spaces and depleted the social capital of local communities. New types of local governance regime emerged in accordance with the new patterning of central and marginal space: central places with dominant industries tended to adopt "instrumental" regimes, whereas marginalised places often saw the emergence of "organic" regimes, but development remained most dependent on position within the administrative hierarchy. Communities are still to a large extent locked into hierarchies configured during the communist era, which is an important explanatory factor in the endurance of strategies of territorial governance.

Keywords

Introduction

"There is a difference between urbanisation occurring as a largely spontaneous process in a democratic society and as the centrally planned concentration of the population in towns … population concentration in itself need not be automatically associated with a fundamental qualitative social transformation of society." (Gajdoš and Pašiak 1995: 77) This fundamental difference was poorly reflected in spatial and regional planning discourses before 1989, which treated urbanisation essentially as a demographic, technical and urbanistic process, while neglecting the massive social, cultural and civilisational processes implied and the democratising possibilities offered. Such an approach culminated with the Project for the Urbanisation of Slovakia, launched in the 1970s, which accelerated the rural-to-urban shift in Slovakia's settlement structure. One of its aims was for 50% of the population to live in towns of 5000 or more inhabitants by the year 2000, a target which was achieved by the mid-1980s (Gajdoš 1999: 123). But the cost of such "success" was a literal drain on the social and demographic potential of the countryside and the concentration of 'high social potential' in the towns (Gajdoš and Pašiak 1995: 101), which were implicitly conceived as a qualitatively higher form of socio-spatial organisation, entitled to exploit, rather than service, the surrounding countryside.

Regional and spatial planning previously amounted to little more than a combination of industrial location policy and more or less forced labour migration (MESA10 1999: 4). Some of the drawbacks of the dominance of industrial interests were recognised among urban planners in the 1970s, including the URBION team which drew up the Project for the Urbanisation of Slovakia, who criticised the "limited use of spatial planning by means of variables and alternatives; spatial plans took key planned investment location decisions as given and therefore could only concentrate on the coordination of consequential, related or additional investments" (Michalec 1974: 32). Spatial plans were typically drawn or re-drawn by national committees only in the event of impending industrial or infrastructural investments, and provided no overall coordination or long-term vision for the integrated development of a region. This was one of the ambitions of the Project for the Urbanisation of Slovakia. However, the terms laid down by the 1971 republic government resolution 'Principles of the conception of the main urbanisation trends in Slovakia' undermined any such attempt because it stated as its intention to assess the urbanised space of the country *with a view to planning productive investments, especially industry*. Although the authors speak of an evolution from an initially "static" to a "dynamic" understanding of the development of the settlement structure during the years in which the conception was worked out (Michalec 1974: 34), the final recommendations clearly reflect the practical, classificatory needs of the central planning system. In fact it could be argued that in striving for greater coordination the document represented a strengthening of central regulation of spatial development: the hierarchy of urban areas, regions, cores, agglommerations, etc., and the identification of particular spaces as suitable or unsuitable for development for industry, housing or recreation, is explicitly linked to the administrative classification of central places, which necessarily compromised the ability of planners' to independently assess the development potential of particular spaces.

This paper argues that the interface between administrative, urban and economic-industrial hierarchies was determining for spatial development in communist Czechoslovakia, and especially Slovakia, but not in the intended sense of a rational economic landscape of growth poles and urban districts. The spatial outcomes were more differentiated and the strategies available to local communities more variegated than planners anticipated. The paper examines the National

Committee system, the central place hierarchy and the dominant spatial planning concept of the time, the Project for the Urbanisation of Slovakia, in terms of their influence on the formation of territorial governance regimes.

National Committees

Hierarchical integration

Communist regimes, in keeping with Marxist-Leninist ideology, denied the very possibility of conflict between local (or any other partial) interests and the all-society interest which they constructed and represented. Translated into administrative procedure this meant the unification of the state administration and the abolition of separate specialised administrations (labour offices, finance offices, land reform offices, etc.), as well as the strict subordination of lower-level to higher-level territorial units of this unified administration. Communist territorial governance explicitly contested the "bourgeois" principle of distinguishing between state or civil administration and self-government (professional or local). Another key instrument of communist regimes was democratic centralism, institutionalised by 'twin accountability' within the state administration: each office was accountable not only horizontally – to the relevant representative chamber – but also vertically, to the equivalent office in the next higher echelon of the administrative hierarchy. National committees, as the territorial embodiment of this unified administration, thus functioned as transmission belts: "Your mission, as a powerful transmission system, is to connect and transfer the will and the efforts of the highest state organs with the people and to the people, and conversely to be a seismograph picking up the slightest oscillations of the people's will and feeling and to become interpretors of its interests and needs" (Gottwald (speech to the national congress of NV in Kroměříž, June 1948) 1961: 174). Effectively, however, the system was not unified, since national committees were incorporated in both territorial and a set of branch hierarchies, as vertical accountability was ultimately to the relevant ministry in respect of their various competencies. This frequently led to conflicting pressures.

This pattern of incorporation constricted their ability to play an active role in regional or spatial planning, especially given the determining role of economic resorts in the planning process:

> Three tiers of planning activity (national-economic, area and spatial planning) were supposed to together create effective interactive relations, but in practice they mostly failed to do so. Moreover the administrative system of direction, based upon the enforcibility of plans, was in reality dominated by a sectoral principle, whereas regional and spatial structures and inter-regional ties were formed under its determining influence. The result was a state of spatial imbalance, arising as a consequence of overcentralisation and the suppression of the role of national committees as organs responsible for the socio-economic development of a given territory. (Búšik 1998: 4).

National committees (NV) were supposed to be the actors that coordinated the spatial articulation of different branch plans. But their decision-making powers were weak, and they operated in an environment where their own plans and policies were strictly circumscribed by priorities determined at higher levels of the administrative hierarchy. A compounding factor was poor coordination: planners, often badly informed about local conditions and views and lacking an overview of the unintended spatial effects of decisions taken at ministerial level, made ad hoc decisions, for exam-

ple about the location of social and administrative facilities, which bore little relation to the "real" economic geography of a region or city (Rehovorský 1984).

The administrative reorganisation of 1960 which reduced the number of regions in Czechoslovakia (from 19+1 to 10+1) and districts (from 306 to 108), and which also gave the legislative impulse for subsequent merging of municipalities (a process which could henceforth be initiatied by district NV) was legitimised in terms of bolstering the territorial coordination of social and economic planning, and was accompanied by the transfer of competences both from resorts to NV and from regional to district and local NV (in housing, health, water, transport and education). "Regional borders no longer matched the responsibilities of regional national committees for the development of the economic and cultural construction of the country, especially in respect of their responsibility to harmonise the development of the sector of the economy they controlled directly with [the sector controlled by] centrally directed enterprises" (Škoda 1975: 120). In particular the new, enlarged district was conceived as the ideal size for rational economic spatial planning regardless (or because) of the ahistorical nature of many of the new district boundaries.

After 1960 attention then turned to the local level. A 1967 government resolution required regional NV "to work out and put forward suggestions for the creation of settlement centres of local, subregional and regional significance as places with prospects for settlement expansion, for which the full range of civic and technical infrastructure should be planned" (Škoda 1975: 192). When these suggestions were finally approved after the onset of normalisation, the respective republic governments approved a total of 1772 settlements as suitable for development as central places with the clear intention that investment and civil administration should be concentrated exclusively in these places among the roughly 9500 settlements which then had NV. Four main arguments were made in favour of such a rationalisation of the settlement structure and administrative hierarchy:

- socio-economic modernisation dictated the progressive integration of local economies, and it was logical that the administrative system should evolve in a parallel fashion, most especially in the countryside, where the consolidation of cooperative farms into larger units meant the organisation of agriculture (socially as well as economically) no longer matched the organisation of local government;

- "partnership" between local government and local enterprises was increasingly unequal – NV would be better placed to coordinate economic development in an area if they were bigger and better-resourced, and the structure of local interest coalitions would therefore be less dominated by industrial or agricultural enterprises attached to central resorts (it would be instructive to research the relationship between the structure of local elite networks and coalitions and the size of settlements or territorial units);

- the goal of equalising town and countryside would be more readily achieved by amalgamating the administrations of towns and their rural hinterlands (here the example of East Germany was cited approvingly (Škoda 1975: 196));

- amalgamating local government into larger units would enable the continued "decentralisation" of administrative competencies which often ran into the problem of inadequate suitable personnel in small villages.

Continual tension between local and national, territorial and sectoral interests was an unavoidable feature of the hierarchical system governing regional and spatial planning. Verbally, NV repeat-

edly criticised the "resortism" which impinged on their legal competences or by-passed them altogether in economic and especially industrial planning (Škoda 1975: 104), criticisms which were supported by party and government resolutions. On the other hand, NV were repeatedly subject to criticism of excessive "local patriotism", prioritising local needs over "all-national" priorities (Škoda 1975: 118, 136). The unity of local and national interests was a fundamental principle of communist regimes, and the extent to which local identities were to be promoted or suppressed was a sensitive political problem: the natural solidarity of a neighbourhood or wider territorial community was sometimes advanced as an important socialising factor in building a socialist identity and counteracting trends towards the individualisation of lifestyles or the privatisation of free time and living space (Černý 1985), but the danger of fragmenting the proclaimed "harmonious coexistence" of social groups at the macro-level was paramount for regime ideologists.

Territorial and resort interests were particularly difficult to "harmonise". The 1960 constitution bound resort-directed enterprises to cooperate more with the relevant NV, and notionally established NV, especially regional and district ones, as the coordinators of a united coalition of interests at their respective territorial level. In practice this was an impossible task since it was territorial interests themselves which came into most frequent conflict with those of particular resorts. Nevertheless, the 1971 Law on National Committees strengthened the role of NV in area planning, and made this the main task of regional NV, with the aim of ensuring the "proportionate development of the economy and the cultural, health and social structure of the region" (paragraph 28). Each regional plan, however, had to respect the "tasks and limits" given by the national economic plan and by the state budget. Regional (spatial) plans were theoretically binding for resorts and enterprises (Škoda 1975: 172), only this principle was never fully enacted in law, where there remained a distinction between activities and services fully devolved to local government and the sectors of the economy (mainly industry) where the influence of territorial administrations on investment decisions was at best consultative, and in many instances even this prerogative could be by-passed. Indeed the 13th Communist Party Congress in May 1966 criticised the lack of leverage NV had over local enterprises, and resolved to strengthen their 'coordinating and control' function in keeping with trends in other socialist states; conversely it required "sectorally directed enterprises and firms" to make a greater contribution to the social development of localities and regions (Škoda 1975: 145). But as the same author conceded, even a decade afterwards, notwithstanding similar resolutions passed at the following Party Congress, "[t]he coordinating function of national committees with respect to centrally directed organisations in territorial units remains a legally unresolved problem in Czechoslovakia" (ibid.). In comparison with other socialist states Czechoslovak local government organs continued to have limited powers over centrally-directed enterprises and organisations: in the Soviet Union from the 1970s local soviets shared the profits of all enterprises in their territory, discussed all planning proposals for the development of economic activity (including industry) affecting their wards, and had certain powers with respect to management appointments and dismissals in centrally-directed organisations (Škoda 1975: 223–4).

Local coalitions

The highly dependent position of Czechoslovak local government had important implications for the *coalition-building potential* of NV. This varied considerably depending on the degree to which the activities of powerful enterprises impinged on the territory they were responsible for. If we examine the powers of NV from the point of view of self-governance, the greatest room for local innovation was in areas of 'independent' prerogative (*samostatná působnost*). Here (concerning issues

of "lesser" significance to the socialist regime, such as the environment, culture, sport and recreation) they were empowered and formally encouraged to delegate powers to "voluntary" organisations, to make use of "direct democracy" through public consultations, to co-opt representatives of social and cultural organisations onto committees, citizens' councils and "actives", which could be established ad hoc according to local priorities, and to pool resources with social organisations for public works, all this in keeping with the ideological commitment to increase public, especially working class participation in the management of society. The legislation on territorial government thus did leave room for local coalition-building with a strong corporatist direction but nonetheless open to local solutions (see for instance sections IV, V & VI of the template for a City NV statute – resolution of the Czechoslovak parliament no. 109/1967). The board, council and the various commissions established were officially charged with increasing public participation in line with Leninist principles. In this they were relatively successful, if half a million people, or one thirtieth of the population, held some or other function in the NV administration in the 1970s. Direct participation by the public in local governance provided the basic legitimation of the communist system of administration against the bourgeois representative system of "self-government", and the proportion of the population with experience of local government functions in communist-era Czechoslovak towns and villages exceeded the numbers involved in local government today. Councils were responsible for establishing cooperative relationships with social organisations, especially trade unions, youth and women's organisations, as well as for co-opting "active citizens" (essentially by virtue of functions held in local enterprises, social and cultural organisations) into local decision-making. Commissions co-opted non-members of NV, community councils and other "actives" were likewise designed to incorporate the public life of a given community into co-responsibility for building socialism, particularly in managing the housing stock (through tenants' associations) and mobilising citizens for public works (*Akce Z*). These corporatist-type arrangements also had a legitimating purpose in accordance with the "public educational" role specified for NV in the constitution.

The Polish sociologist Sagan has analysed the dynamics of local governance regimes during the socialist era, concluding unsurprisingly that in industrial towns a growth-oriented regime typically coalesced around dominant enterprises, with local authorities and social organisations, including trade unions, playing a subordinate role, supporting the development requirements of the enterprise because the prosperity of the town depended on the latter in so many ways. Yet her argument is unusual in its insistence that local governance regimes, even under socialism, could be effective and durable only on the basis of a coalition between different actors. In most urban settings the consent of other actors (local authorities and social organisations) was readily obtained by dominant enterprises because there was no conceivable alternative development strategy, but the securing of that consent was nonetheless an important moment in establishing a local governance regime (Sagan 2000: 99). Bargaining techniques, however, were underdeveloped, which limited the ability of such "coalitions" to mobilise independent resources and reduced their scope to a handful of formal actors, with little or no spontaneous "civic" involvement (Sagan 2000: 178). Given the extent of enterprise paternalism, and the limited independent resources available to local authorities to invest in social and technical infrastructure, competition between towns for industrial investment was intense, regardless of how well the interests of the investor really coincided with local and regional interests, how well-integrated a new large enterprise was with the existing economic profile of the town in terms of prospective multiplier effects (often very poorly, given the central organisation of distribution networks), or how well-integrated a development was spatially (again usually poorly, given the preference of industry and construction for large-scale, isolated and exten-

sive industrial enclaves with large land reserves for future expansion, which resulted in the fragmentation of the urban landscape) (Sagan 2000: 105).

Yet logically, not all regions or towns could benefit from such a growth model. In regions and settlements of marginal significance to the industrialised economy there was thus an "opportunity" (if only out of sheer necessity) for more balanced coalitions to emerge, and to promote development strategies not based wholly on industrial expansion. This would seem a plausible interpretation for Czechoslovakia too. Large enterprises were clearly in a position to dominate the structure of local governance in towns where they were the major employer. But the subsidiarity provided for in the national committee laws had a greater relevance in the absence of dominant centrally-directed enterprises, notably in spaces outside the urban growth corridors of the Project for the Urbanisation of Slovakia. An important research question remains whether there was greater stress on self-help, more reliance on the activity of social organisations, a more equal partnership between different local stakeholders and in a certain sense a greater independence in determining local development, even if the corollary was a highly disadvantageous set of circumstances in comparison with industrial towns and districts in terms of revenue-raising powers and access to central resources.

A similar situation pertained in certain micro-spaces such as historic town centres, since these were unattractive spaces for the construction industry as its mass production technologies were unsuitable. For much of the post-war period development focused on the outskirts of towns, whereas historic centres were neglected. Their only development resource was often the local patriotism and historical awareness typical among long-term residents, who were sometimes able to utilise slowly improving planning procedures to promote historical, cultural or environmental considerations, in a natural alliance with environmental organisations and state heritage conservation offices (Musil et al. 1985). Examples of how such coalitions made tentative headway in the mid- to late 1980s can be found in Karlovy Vary and in Bratislava (Staré Mesto), where the interests of industrial enterprises were not strong enough to prevent the partial victory of "alternative" development strategies. The former case saw the local construction company working with the heritage office to produce materials and revive construction techniques appropriate for the restoration of historic buildings in the spa town (Matoušková 1985); the latter saw the emergence of environmental, consumer and user groups, mostly under the auspices of the Slovak Union of Landscape and Nature Conservationists (SZOPK), but penetrating decision-making bodies thanks to sympathetic ties with individual architects, archeologists, and sociologists (see Huba 1994: 84–100). These initiatives constituted, or at least proposed, organic as opposed to instrumental city governance regimes. In Bratislava, as in other cities in the socialist world (Sagan 2000: 107), the enactment of such an alternative was essentially a self-help phenomenon amounting to the partial reclaiming of micro-spaces such as neighbourhoods and parks by local communities. Activists' demands for its application in the city-wide governance of Bratislava presupposed a more fundamental regime change which was not compatible with communist rule. Nonetheless they are interesting to recollect precisely because they point to the limitations of the self-governing capacity of local regimes under the pre-1989 system and address local authorities as potential allies in a civic coalition against the might of industrial resorts:

> We demand that the elected organs of the city come to the defence of the interests of their voters, the citizens of Bratislava, against the interests of ministries and industrial enterprises, [whose prevalence] would lead to a significant worsening in the quality of the living environment of Bratislava. We suggest the creation of a "khozraschet" system for regulating the relation between the city and local enterprises … Similarly industrial

enterprises should be obliged to pay rent for the land they occupy (only then can we expect the effective use of land) ... We demand a change in the way the development of the city has hitherto been planned, such that citizens can participate more widely, such that the decision-making process is preceded by public discussion, and so as to create effective mechanisms for feedback and control of the realisation of plans once approved. ("Tips, suggestions and demands of the Citywide conference of SZOPK addressed to the board of the Bratislava National Committee, the City Committee of the Slovak Communist Party and the City Committee of the National Front", 22.4.1989 in Huba (ed.) 1994: 99)

The strength of the movement behind this platform was sufficient to block or modify some construction projects threatening historic sites in the late 1980s.

The Construction of Central and Marginal Spaces

There is a strong relationship between the formation of particular types of local governance regime and the spatial manifestation of the hierarchies governing development at the supra-regional (national) level, meaning in our case the industrial and administrative hierarchies of the central planning system. These came together to a large extent in the central place hierarchy established in the early 1970s. It introduced a new degree of dependency between settlements because investment decisions were strictly rationed by central and regional authorities. The effects were twofold. Most obviously there were pronounced changes in spatial patterns of social and economic activity, with a concentration of industry (and therefore employment opportunities) and infrastructure (especially transport systems and housing) in areas earmarked for development by central and regional planners. Some centres were completely new, while others were historically important settlements: in the short-term they became centres for commuting (which increased to much greater levels in the Slovak than the Czech Republic), and then in subsequent years the starvation of investment in non-central places led to more permanent migration flows.

No less important were the implications for modes of governance adopted at the local and regional levels. In essence, development strategies became highly dependent on position within the settlement hierarchy, which strongly conditioned the bargaining opportunities available to local elites and their choice of partners. Given that the actual settlement hierarchy was never fixed in stone, lobbying and networking activities were particularly intense around decisions over administrative "investments" (e.g. the choice of site for almost any new office), since these conferred status and were likely to attract industrial and infrastructural investments. Growth became strongly concentrated in "area-level" central places (of which there were 77 in Slovakia); local-level central places (of which there were initially 606, but 621 by 1989) experienced differing fortunes, with many continuing to stagnate, suggesting that at this level administrative status alone was not sufficient to confer growth potential irrespective of other factors. However the legacy of the central place system is clear: "Sub-regional settlement centres in particular became crucial for the development of economic activities" (Hrdina 1994: 142). The results of a wide-ranging study characterising the regionalisation of Slovakia according to multiple social, economic, demographic and other indicators showed that "regions preferred or prioritised by industrial urbanisation enter the current transformation process with significantly better preconditions, real and latent dispositions, and thereby a much better starting-point for a more rapid and less conflictual transformation phase" (Gajdoš and Pašiak 1995: 178). In other words, the deformations of the process of directive urbani-

sation (principally the suppression of the self-regulative qualities of territorial communities) are probably outweighed by the sheer advantage of occupying a privileged position within the settlement hierarchy and urbanisation conception in terms of industrial, social and infrastructural investments and the ability to attract the "best" social potential from less favoured regions. Ironically, the 1996 administrative reform, which increased the number of district authorities, was open to criticism because of the marginality of some of the new districts, especially in eastern Slovakia, which were not seen as viable (Pašiak, Gajdoš and Falťan 1998: 493–5). Their present marginality, of course, is largely a function of patterns of investment which favoured the administrative centres of the large districts in the 1960–89(96) period. This only confirms how the status of district capital during the key years for the urbanisation of Slovakia created comparative advantages which remain relevant today, and on the contrary areas which were marginal in districts of that era continue to carry a development handicap, in the medium-term, even after acquiring district status (in a regime where development is less determined by administrative hierachisation and more by market mechanisms, including urban and regional marketing activity). The latent influence of administrative hierarchies is also indirectly corroborated by the observation that districts and not regions are the more powerful repositories of social-spatial identification in Slovakia today (Gajdoš and Pašiak 1995: 90). Even the formation of loose elite coalitions to lobby ministerial offices for investment tended to coalesce around the interests of a district (capital) rather than around regions (ibid.: 90–1). This can be interpreted in terms of the dominance of a purely administrative form of capital allocation and redistribution: regions were defined as active planners, districts as administrative-statistical units, so the penetration of the latter more deeply into public consciousness and into elite development strategies is logical in a centralised, paternalistic mode of governance. District capital status had a strong correlation with urbanisation, and the period of intense concentration of people into towns also saw a significant increase in the "population centrality" of most district capitals (the proportion of the population of a district living in the capital). There were very few districts where urban growth was spread between more than one town. This led to a fundamental change in the settlement structure of Slovakia, where traditionally many small towns of comparable size had co-existed: thus whereas in 1961 (one year after the last major administrative reorganisation before 1996) only four districts out of 34 had a population centrality higher than 20%, by 1991 30 had more than 20% living in their capital, and 18 more than 30% (Gajdoš and Pašiak 1995: 169–70).

Hierarchically-determined spatial development has similarly left a legacy in the strategies preferred by territorial communities and particularly by local and regional decision-makers. This is very effectively illustrated by the recent dispute between Svidník and Stropkov over which town was to be the site of the new area office of the general state administration (i.e. for those administrative tasks which have not been devolved to regional self-government or taken over by the new territorial offices of various ministries) following the abolition of district offices in 2004. Both towns saw the mobilisation of local elite networks, the lobbying of central government by local MPs and the launching of petitions among the general public in campaigns loaded with local patriotism, ethnic antagonism (Svidník has a large Ruthenian population whereas Stropkov is more Slovak) and the general breakdown of constructive dialogue over what is supposedly an insignificant issue given the new offices' limited agenda. But in such an economically marginalised space, development strategies based on securing central patronage through administrative status are still viewed as the most valid task of local governance regimes.

In most areas, as described above, the key players in driving local development were large industrial enterprises (as the providers of jobs and the various social and recreational benefits which were

associated with the socialist enterprise). Obtaining administrative status had important symbolic meaning, but the real prize for local authorities was to obtain industrial investments, which dictated a bargaining strategy oriented primarily to the key economic resorts. However, not all settlement types and territorial spaces had equal access to such a strategy. The Svidník-Stropkov region, as a border region within both republic and regional planning unit (*kraj*) suffered from under-investment during central planning, and was marginal to the industrial mode of development. As stated in the Regional Operational Programme for the Prešov region produced in 2000, the Bardejov sub-region (including the Bardejov, Svidník and Stropkov districts) "in terms of the development of industry in this area, the quantity and size of industrial centres, is among the most under-developed in Slovakia", without any significant branch specialism. Correspondingly it is saddled with inadequate road and rail networks (neither the Svidník nor the Stropkov district has a single kilometre of railway), low levels of educational provision and attainment and today suffers from high unemployment (peaking at just under 30% c. 2000). This legacy can be related directly to the application of the Project for the Urbanisation of Slovakia, according to which the main urbanisation belt within the Šariš urbanisation area (one of thirteen identified in Slovakia) was the Prešov-Sabinov agglomeration, augmented by Bardejov as an urbanisation pole of medium significance, whereas the Svidník-Sabinov "agglommeration" was only projected as a "basic" urbanisation zone, with Svidník as its core. No prospective industrial zone was located in this part of the urban region, and the priority for housing construction was also to be Prešov-Sabinov (Hrončok 1974: 79).

The saving grace for such towns was the possibility of winning administrative status. The two towns have historically alternated as district capital, although there have been periods, including the present (1996–2004) when both have been the centre of small districts. In 1968 Svidník attained district capital status, after a short period when both towns belonged to the Bardejov district. According to proponents of Stropkov's cause today, the result was the concentration of housing construction in Svidník at Stropkov's expense, plus the abolition of the maternity unit in Stropkov as health facilities were centralised in Svidník (J. Mondik, *Spektrum* (Stropkov weekly paper) 34/03). In Sagan's interpretation, such towns were often characterised by "organic" local governance regimes which mobilisilised traditional, often very conservative local pride and exerted extraordinary efforts to maintain their position within the administrative settlement hierarchy. Equivalent Polish examples would be Suwalki, Skierniewice or Sieradz, which acquired voivodship status in the 1975 administrative reorganisation even though none are important economic centres (Sagan 2000: 48; 136). The recent dispute may well reflect an inability to switch to a different development strategy following the change of regime given the social capital-draining effect of marginality. Neither organic nor instrumental regimes are typically adept at handling social transformation, where the primary function of governance is to establish a consensus around a vision of what the city or community should and can become: "*symbolic* regimes often play the major role during periods of transformation … [where] symbolism is the means of tackling problems which are difficult to address without broad social support and engagement, or which demand new, non-standard approaches" (Sagan 2000: 52, 58). The regulatory framework for spatial development has become essentially marketised, and therefore in theory the prospects for development through patronage diminished. But in the absence of a viable market-oriented strategy, and unable to formulate a convincing symbolic vision, local elites still compete for patronage (especially from local representatives in government and parliament) at moments such as the present, when administrative systems are in flux and opportunities therefore arise for gaining an artificial advantage by rising up through the administrative ranks (or at least preventing a fall).

Even in more central spaces such a step has been difficult to take. Here, instrumental local regimes often persist, partly because local authorities seek to prevent public access to the planning process (local elites are not yet ready to embrace a culture of partnership-based governance), but mainly because of the economic weakness of most municipalities in relation to large private investors and developers which makes private capital a necessary ally in planning and projecting in much the same way as national committees were dependent on large state enterprises. The fragmented structure of local government in the Czech and Slovak Republics and the absence, until recently, of a regional tier produced inter-municipal rivalry (rather than coordination) for the patronage of domestic and international capital in desirable real estate locations with little effective public regulation especially in the early 1990s. The situation was exacerbated by the disorganisation of civil society, such that the voices of small entrepreneurs, local communities and other interests have not been heard, and planning processes have remained the preserve of elites and specialists instead of developing into a more complex communicative process incorporating a plurality of stakeholders (Maier 2003: 219, 228).

Glimpses of a "symbolic regime"-building project can be found in Stropkov, where a recent exhibition by local amateur photographer Jozef Andrejko, depicting the changes in the town over the past century, "All the Things Time Erased", was seized on by local politicians to stress the nobility and tradition of the town. MP J. Šimko drew a link with the recent dispute in a speech at the vernisage, "I think you know what is about to happen in the reform of public administration, and this is the best possible contribution we could wish for at the outset of a struggle of sorts, because it demonstrates that Stropkov has its history, has its background." (*Spektrum* 31/03) Given similar comments in the visitors' book (eg. "Stropkov has a beautiful past, which it is especially necessary to stress right now") it would seem the local public is also keen to grasp historical confirmation of the justice of its cause, but also to take the opportunity to raise local self-esteem and self-awareness (there are appeals to make use of such archives to promote a historical awareness among young people as well as to promote a better image of the town externally). However this rather nostalgic, 'authenticating' (but nonetheless 'imagineering') return to the past always invokes arguments documenting the historical injustices supposedly suffered by Stropkov under Svidník's 'rule' – of which there were examples in the local press every week (one correspondent claimed to have a tape recording of Biľak's speech to workers at TESLA Stropkov in which he admits his own role in lobbying for Svidník in 1968, thus confirming Stropkov's sense of having been betrayed by high politics). Few if any voices dispute the legitimacy of basic pork-barrel lobbying politics, whilst the government displays a similar paucity in thinking beyond the limits of an outdated strategic planning regime and has hidden behind pseudo-objective criteria: the official justification, which could be direct from Central Place Theory textbooks, is that Stropkov is "9% more central" than Svidník within the proposed region (*Podduklianske noviny* 34/03). There is little attempt to foster inclusive partnership-based approaches either from above or from below.

Conclusion

The Project for the Urbanisation of Slovakia and the central place hierarchy were two facets of a centralised, hierarchical regime governing spatial and regional development in Slovakia with increasing intensity during the 1970s and 1980s. Their effects should not be conflated, but in combination they produced a marked differentiation in the medium-term socio-economic fortunes, and in the

long-term development potentials of Slovak regions and towns. Moreover the context for this differentiation was a process of industrialisation and subsequently tertiarisation of the economy which, due to the operation of central planning, took place much faster than anywhere else in contemporary Europe: the "social time of industrialisation", as indicated by the changing balance between employment in different sectors, took around 100 years in most European nations, around 80 in the Czech Republic, but was condensed into just 40 in Slovakia (Gajdoš and Pašiak 1995: 70–1), which is arguably not enough to allow territorial communities to adapt while remaining socially integrative and capable of self-regulation (in fact it was only possible through the inception of hybrid "urbanised villages" and "ruralised towns" based on new forms of mutual dependency – between expanding industry in the towns and a "surplus labour force" in the surrounding countryside, or between recent migrants to towns and the communities they had left in terms of food supplies and work on family plots). Urbanisation in Slovakia was incomplete in both a technical and a social sense, and instead of being a liberating force actually increased the dependence of communities on the state: "it was the use of the settlement structure – the intermediating structure between the individual and the state – for the strengthening of the mechanisms [typical] of a totalitarian state" (Gajdoš and Pašiak 1995: 79). Far from promoting the diversification of civil society and fostering the self-governing capacities of towns and regions, as was the case in western Europe, urbanisation was a tool of social control. In the process, the social potential of regions, their civilisational infrastructure and their economic base became polarised between favoured core settlements and areas and neglected peripheries, existing at different spatial scales (borders of the country, border areas of districts, the rural hinterland of many towns). These differentiations are visible today not only in socio-economic indicators (objective regional disparities are larger in Slovakia than in any European country of comparable size) but also in the activity or passivity with which territorial communities and local and regional coalitions are able to respond to development chances (Gajdoš and Pašiak 1995: 99).

The prioritisation of a policy of industrialisation in Slovakia meant that it was towns, and especially larger industrial towns, which enjoyed the greatest development advantages, whereas villages, even with "central" status, often continued to stagnate. The countryside became increasingly dependent on nearby towns for work opportunities and lost nearly all vestiges of traditional rural self-sufficiency. The differentiation between core and periphery in the settlement structure was especially steep where marginality in terms of administrative divisions was compounded by marginality in relation to urbanised spaces (the urban corridors demarcated in the Project for the Urbanisation of Slovakia). Not only did communities face a central planning system which regarded them as places "without development potential" but the patterns of migration which were stimulated by urbanisation gradually drained them of social capital as younger and better qualified groups abandoned their home villages and towns. It was thus the combination of central planning and rapid urbanisation that produced various distinct forms of spatial marginality which are likely to be more enduring than in situations (as in most of the Czech Republic) where core-periphery patterns were administratively imposed on the settlement structure, but that structure itself did not alter very much. By the 1980s Slovak planners were slowly abandoning the purely quantitative conception of urbanisation which had hitherto prevailed in favour of the discourse of concentrated deconcentration, with stress on the functional integration of settlement groupings or urban regions (Gajdoš 1999: 134), a discourse which has strongly informed the current national spatial planning conception (KÚRS 2001). However, strong patterns of dependency had become established based on actual economic flows, producing a hierarchy which did not always match the official central place hierarchy, but where the disadvantages of peripherality are likely to be highly enduring.

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2.5 Communists in Central Slovakian Villages

Josef Kandert

Abstract

In villages, small groups of communists had to defend their position in cooperation with members of local factions, and also in cooperation with representatives of district and regional party organisations. Cooperation with members of factions provided legitimacy to the execution of power on site, while cooperation with the representatives of higher party organs legitimised the privileged standing of the communists in general.

The central Slovakian villages[1] in which I conducted my research in the late 1960s and early 1970s were the smallest administrative units within a state that declared itself to be socialist and was led by individuals and groups of communists. Communist rule – at least on the general level – was challenged by no one, the socialist system of rule appeared to be solid and the leading role of the party indisputable. At the village level, however, the situation looked somewhat different.

The northern villages in the Horehronie region covered in this study had an industrial and communist background. In some of these local villages, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was already winning elections in the 1930s, thus even before the Second World War, and membership in the Communist Party was considered by local villagers to be no different than membership in any other political party. Although in official state propaganda all of the Horehronie region was associated with the Slovak national uprising and partisan activities during the Second World War, the villagers did not associate membership in the Communist Party with partisan activities. On the contrary, in a number of villages I heard accounts that took a very negative view of partisan activities, as part of a period in which individuals and groups settled personal scores and a general state of anarchy predominated. A communist was perceived as someone who bore a certain political opinion, but not necessarily a certain ideology (many simultaneously considered themselves to be active Christians). Alongside them, however, there existed a category known as "hard communists" – i.e. members of the Slovak Communist Party who were also known to be atheists. In the villages the hard communists were exceptions; villagers could usually only name one, two, or three such local individuals.

Historically, the southern villages covered in this study, located in the Štiavnica Hills and foothills, were primarily agricultural, and their experience of communism began only in the 1940s and was strongly linked to the establishment of unified farmers' cooperatives. In these villages, my hosts and information sources distinguished between three kinds of communist.

In the first category were communists who, according to the opinion of their neighbours, truly believed in the socialist ideology – they were usually described as "hard communists". Their strong convictions, at least in the villagers' views, stemmed from their own pasts, in which an important role was played by their involvement as real partisans in partisan groups. The villagers believed that all former partisans were automatically communists and therefore also atheists, fully in keeping with communist ideology. This type of communist was rare in the southern villages, too. The characteristics and numbers of hard communists were the same throughout the region.

The phrase "real partisans" deserves some explanation. In collectivised villages in the 1970s and 1980s there were many villagers who, approaching retirement age, had not worked off enough years for their pension entitlement; the years when they had worked as private farmers didn't count in the base calculation. Former partisans, or better put, those who participated in the Slovak national uprising, however, were given preferential treatment in the pension claim calculation and were entitled to claim a pension after having worked fewer years. For this reason some villagers solved the problem of being in such a position by seeking evidence or confirmation to prove they had participated in the resistance during the Second World War. The other villagers understood and tolerated this kind of activity, but understandably these people were not considered to be "real" par-

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1 I conducted these research studies in 1967–1968 and 1974 – 1984, first as a researcher at the Institute of Ethnology and Folkloric Studies at the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, and later as an employee of the Náprstek Museum in Prague.

tisans. In practice this meant that far from all the members of the local organisation of resistance fighters were considered to be real anti-Nazi fighters, or real partisans.

In the second category were communists – supporters of a certain political opinion, though not necessarily supporters of a certain ideology. Similar to the situation in the northern villages, they were members of the Communist Party who simultaneously continued to be Christians.

In the third category of communists were people who had joined the Slovak Communist Party for their own gain. These people were usually attributed as the source of all sorts of misdeeds that the state machinery had committed at the villagers' expense. In their accounts the villagers mentioned especially the pressure tactics employed during the collectivisation process and then the forced eviction of the family of a wealthy farmer and their subsequent expulsion from the village into exile somewhere in the Czech border regions. It was the local careerist type of communists that were responsible for the actual course of the process of eviction from the village, and according to other villagers they took advantage of the situation. Their behaviour was motivated by the desire to settle personal scores and overcome feelings of inferiority. Until that time, within the village community, these were individuals who had occupied a subordinate social position in society, and therefore they applied their newly acquired power all the more vehemently. The villagers added usually that none of those people were still in a position of power, as it soon (not long after the collective was set up) became evident that they were incapable of occupying a position of responsibility in the cooperative or in the national committee, and that "today" (meaning at the time of the conversation) they were of no importance.

In the northern communities I did not encounter this third category of communists – the careerists. Perhaps because, at least in the villages where the research was conducted,[2] collectivisation took place very late on – in the 1970s and 1980s – when the majority of the male population of productive age earned a living as workers in the local factories,[3] and so the loss of secondary income from private farming did not make such a serious difference. It was not therefore necessary to exert as much pressure during the collectivisation process, and consequently the communists – careerists did not necessarily surface.

The official political structure of all villages was derived from the form of state administration. Public affairs were administered by an elected body – to 1990 the local national committee (MNV), comprised of elected deputies and headed by a committee chair. The running of this office actually lay in the hands of the MNV secretary. The composition and activities of the MNV council were controlled by political parties, and during the period of my research that meant by the Slovak Communist Party (KSS). The MNV council was chaired by someone who was both a deputy (of the local national committee) and occupied some more important function in the local administration. Individual candidates were submitted by the political parties (mainly the KSS) and other local organisations termed as "social organisations" (Fire Safety Union, Czechoslovak Red Cross, Women's Union, Union of Anti-Fascist Fighters, Union of Socialist Youth, etc.). The candidates were approved by the party organs of the KSS even before the elections (there was a so-called uniform candidate list) – especially in the case of the individual who would eventually become the chair.

Although the electoral system employed by the state in the villages during the time of the research took the apparent form of democratic centralism, and at the theoretical level it anticipated and

2 Sihla, Drábsko, Lom nad Rimavicou, Látky, Detvianska Húta, Polianky, etc.
3 Brezno, Podbrezová, Hriňová, Detva etc.

arranged the selection of candidates in the spirit of the ideology of the ruling Communist Party, the reality was something else entirely. The research in the villages showed and confirmed the existence of two village factions, between which there existed an ongoing struggle for power. This struggle can be traced back to the end of the 19th century, to the period under Hungarian rule, and it certainly existed even before, there is just no way of documenting it. The competing factions also maintained a decisive voice in the choice of local functionaries and their election. The village faction system may be said to have existed under the monarchy (to 1918), under parliamentary democracy (1920–1939), in the time of the clerical democracy (1939–1945), and during the proletarian dictatorship, that is, in the period of popular democratic and later socialist Czechoslovakia, and it exists now in the time of the newly reconstructed democratic system (after 1989).[4]

Faction membership mainly followed the lines of the family and friendship ties of its members. As godparents were viewed as family relations (comparable to the relationship between parents and children), this institution played an important role in the formation and maintenance of necessary political ties between faction members. In communities where members of two different churches lived side-by-side it was possible to observe the additional criterion of religious affiliation as a recruitment principle in a faction. Each faction had an "active" core made up of about twenty to thirty people. There was always only one faction in power, and its members controlled all the important offices in the village, which included voluntary organisations and associations and even political parties.

Members of the other faction were in the opposition – naturally they included the biggest critics of the current village representatives, and also contained the "best experts", who could claim to know how to run the village better. Usually they passed around long inventories of the mistakes and errors of the ruling faction. If a member of the opposition faction was in the end elected to occupy some function (usually some insignificant position), that person was usually designated as the scapegoat for any and all complaints and blamed from within as the "real source" of all the ruling faction's failures. Even despite the convenient nature of this role, members of the ruling faction continued to try to get the opposition member removed from office as soon as possible, while the opposition faction cried slander and complained of the persecution of innocent people.

Wherever it occurred that two power centres emerged, ruled by members of the two separate factions, there also emerged a certain power stalemate. For example, in Sebechleby, members of one faction ruled in the MNV (the political-administrative centre) and members of the second faction ruled in the JRD (the economic centre). This automatically resulted in zero cooperation between the two centres and the occasional complete boycott of events organised by the other faction, though of course only in the case of matters and event contained within the village boundaries. In the case of events that affected the reputation of the village in its entirety, the two factions cooperated marvellously.

Each of the two factions (ruling and opposition) claimed the right to rule the village on the basis of "better experience", past merit (public works, advantages acquired from higher state bodies for the benefit of the "whole village", etc.), the right of settler seniority (the top families in each faction were usually considered the oldest families living in the village), stronger moral values (only "we" are honest, do not engage in nepotism, do not take bribes, have made no mistakes in the past), and also on the basis of an awareness and a declaration of the negative features of mem-

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4 This was revealed in the repeated research in Sihla, which I conducted in 1994.

bers of the other faction. Only the members of "our" faction were capable of truly working without pay and in their leisure time for the public good and without regard for the personal expense to their financial or family life.

If we take a look at the composition of the political factions in a historical perspective, before the Second World War they contained representatives of all the professional groups that inhabited the village (peasants, and also workers and craftsmen), and also contained members of the various political parties that existed in the village. Even with regard to the period before the Second World War I was unable to find any unambiguous political orientation espoused by one or another faction. The position of power occupied by the ruling faction was renewed in elections. In interim periods, after the death of a dignitary or their departure due to illness or old age, etc., the members of the core of the faction (non-dignitaries) were co-opted into the positions of the former.

After 1948 an important role began to be played in all the village factions – and not just in the northern villages of Horehronie – by communists (members of the local branch organisation of the KSS). At the time of my research the membership of each of the factions consisted of both communists and former wealthy farmers (or still existing wealthy farmers in villages inhabited by privately managed farms) or their descendents, workers and craftsmen (professional and amateur), members of village religious congregations, educated people, and old and young people. On the whole each of the factions had a similar type of composition. What is interesting here is the fate of the family members of the biggest farmers in the cooperative villages – during the collectivisation process they were expelled from the village (some families were sent to the Czech border regions, usually to state farms, where they worked as agricultural labourers), and they were only allowed back in the 1960s. After returning they again came to occupy a prominent position in society in their native, but now collective villages and thus also a prominent position in the factions, and their children, if not the original farmers themselves, became important functionaries in the presidia of the JRD. The power factions, composed of representatives of all possible political parties, churches and interest groups, who in reality were relatives, friends, and neighbours with links to one another, came to form a mimesis of the power groupings that existed in the towns and generally in the "outside world".

The ruling faction could be certain of the support of all the inhabitants of the village in cases where it acted "in the village's general interest" or defended its interests. In such cases all local conflicts temporarily ceased. The faction in power would try to control all the information leaving the village, which means that it tried to latch on to all official or official-looking visitors that came to the village. This applied both to visits from various party and state organs and to visits from delegations, tourists, and of course any professionals temporarily working in the village – including researchers. Members of the faction tried to ensure that all foreigners met only with the ruling faction members (and their families), who were very friendly, hospitable, and willing to help. All the villagers respected this effort – but as soon as things settled down again and the external interference was deflected and sent on its way, the battle for power between members of the two factions was taken up again.

It was this environment, established by tradition, and by the effort of the villagers to preserve some sort of political independence (the effort to not let village affairs be interfered in from without), that even local communists were required to operate in. As indicated above, communists were members of both competing factions in the village, so their representation in numbers would be similar. This was true also, for example, with regard to the representation of members of the

Socialist Youth Union. Though not many communists lived in the villages – on average they made up between one-fifteenth and one-twentieth of the village population, including children – in the "cores" of the village factions they made up between one-tenth and one-fifth of all members, out of the roughly thirty to forty members of the "core". I was able to find a larger relative representation of communists in the "core" of the power factions than corresponded with their numbers in the village. Of course, the same disproportion existed also between the number of members of other political parties and their relative representation in the core of the faction – in simple terms, each faction had to have the right representatives for each situation. The activities of the power faction and its members were evaluated as a whole; villagers did not evaluate the members of the Slovak Communist Party separately. Thus the villagers did not ascribe the successes and failures of rule in the village to members of the KSS particularly, but to the entire ruling faction.

Village communists of course cultivated their own political activities in the village. This meant holding regular party meetings to discuss village matters and prepare recommendations for members of the council and the national committee, and sending reports on the local situation to their superior organs, which were prepared by party members in the ruling faction in a manner not damaging to the ruling faction or to the village as a whole. Party meetings open to the public were held two to three times a year, and though they were public the participation of non-party members was not much more than at the meetings convened by the national committee – in other words, public participation was marginal. The public expressed equally little interest in pre-election meetings. Although the resolutions that arose out of party meetings were equally binding for all local party members, the communists that belonged to the opposition faction tended to criticise the resolutions during discussions, and over the course of the party meetings it was they who most often criticised the proposals submitted by communists from the ruling faction.

In peasant villages an important role was played by the division between the farmer ("gazda" in Slovak) and everyone else, even in those villages where collectivisation had taken place in the 1950s. Even despite the considerable difficulties they went through in the 1950s, during the period of collectivisation, farmers' families (their members) maintained a more prominent position in society up until the 1970s (i.e. to the time when I began my research), and, for example, the younger generation from such families, if they remained in the village, often reached top positions in the council of the JRD (as agronomists, group leaders, etc.). These people were also capable of influencing public opinion in the village. In those villages where "private farming" was still going on even at that time, it was still a desirable goal to reach the position of a farmer. In all villages – as with united farmers' cooperatives – it was relatively easy to determine the features of the status of a true farmer's family, along with any reasons that prevented acknowledgement of this status.[5]

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5 First and foremost the villagers indicated the greater amount of property possessed by farmers in the past: farmers had their own horse team, they had land listed even in the land registries of neighbouring villages, they owned property in general, for example, they owned the property leased to the local pub, shops, butcher, etc. In the case of settlements in cleared areas, farmers always had two homes, one in the village (close to the church and the local offices) and one in the clearing. They wouldn't let themselves be hired out for agricultural work, and they had sufficiently large homes to lend space for organising dances, and they baked their own bread.

In second place the villagers mentioned characteristics of more lasting significance, which survived into the socialist period: farmers would act as a godparent to anyone, even the poorest inhabitants of the village and even gypsies. Owing to their education some members of a farmer's family held or represented various official functions unconnected to the village community. These families had their own priests (meaning there was a tendency for a member of the family to study to become a priest); in the past they had had their own notaries, and at present they had their own functionaries in town, etc. Many members of farmers' families studied and had secondary or higher

Members of farmers' families had the opportunity to influence public opinion not only formally (as officeholders) but also by informal means. Individuals with this kind of family background were successfully able to introduce innovations into the village and were able to stand up in defence of those inhabitants in the village who exhibited deviant behaviour or belonged to some marginalised group.

If a member of the local KSS organisation was also a member of this kind of family, he was able to take advantage of his inherited status in the party organisation's favour; if, however, a local communist did not have this family background, his opportunities for having an informal influence on people were quite limited.

Despite the official party line, or regardless of the official party programme of the KSS, local party members acted at times counter to the requirements of the official party line (or official party programme), but they always did so in the interest of the village as a whole.[6] In cases of this kind they were able to count on the support of the entire village, including the opposition faction and its members. Party members acted in the same way also in cases where higher ranked party or administrative organs attempted to interfere in village affairs.[7]

Within the village the same evaluative criteria was applied to individual communists as was applied to all the other – non-communist – members of the power faction. Subject to evaluation was their behaviour towards the other villagers (politeness, willingness to help, industriousness, leadership skills, and problem – or crisis-solving abilities). Any communist who was evaluated poorly in regard to these criteria was unpopular and could not, for example, become the acknowledged leader of the entire power faction, even if he held some particular local function. On the other hand, it was also assumed that the leader of a faction must also be a member of the KSS; this kind of membership helped secure for the particular individual a better negotiating position for dealing with "people from the outside", but for the person's own position within the village KSS membership was not important. When some promising young candidate appeared for the role of faction leader – of course, sometime in the future – members of the faction tried to convince that person to become more "active" and involved, first, for example, in the Socialist Youth Union and later in the KSS. The local policeman was also always a member of the KSS – if he was a "foreigner" though he remained on the periphery of events, both in relation to the power factions and in relation to the local organisation of the KSS. If he was a local he was certainly a member of the core of one of the power factions.

The villagers perceived membership in the KSS as an important plus for all interaction and negotiations with higher-ranked offices, and thus important for the village's representation in the out-

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education. The farmers' families were generally considered to be the oldest settled families in the district. The farmsteads of farmers' families were situated in the best locations in the village. Members of farmers' families held and continued to hold official functions in the village.

A farmer could lose this privileged position for example: by behaving in a miserly fashion, if family marriages occurred too frequently between close blood relatives, by neglecting family solidarity, or if members of the family maligned one another or argued with one another in public.

6 This was the situation, for example, when villagers built a church without permission, or, as it were, under the guise of building a morgue.

7 This was the case when the district committee of the KSS decided to recall the chair of the local branch of the KSS, otherwise also a member of the ruling village faction. The decision of the district committee met with resistance, which was only overcome after many months of negotiations that brought the village compensation for the interference in the form of unplanned investments financed by the district national committee.

side world. From the perspective of the villagers and members of the village faction, communist members of the faction had one fundamental advantage: they were able to boast contacts at higher levels of the administrative and party apparatus, both in regional and state circles. However, I never encountered in any of the villages any indication that these contacts went beyond the borders of Slovakia; by "state" level the villagers meant contacts among a broad range of officials in Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia. There was a general awareness that through membership in the KSS a person could attain a highly ranked position "in town" and would then be in a good position to do things to benefit the village. In the southern villages, for example, there were rumours about a certain state functionary who in Bratislava had successfully arranged for his native village to be accorded the status of a district town.[8]

All villagers, and in particular all the members of both power factions, followed the careers of their native sons and daughters who left to work and live in the towns, and each faction maintained contacts with their people in administrative functions and, especially, with "their" communists. The village and the faction viewed these people as envoys who could be turned to in reserve. It was not, for example, possible for members of the ruling faction to turn to an official that belonged to the opposition faction without agreeing on this move first with members of the opposition faction. If the village interests were at stake, the members of the opposition faction were willing to be of assistance, but this fact was immediately brought to the attention of the entire community. When a faction managed to secure some advantage for the entire village through the help of "their man", the faction that managed to achieve it was the only one to be given credit for it.

The small groups of communists in villages were therefore only able to apply their political power with the aid of the entire power faction they belonged to, and they were not particularly visible within the framework of the work they performed addressing the everyday affairs of the village either. The significance of party membership – or the significance of party contacts – only surfaced beyond the village borders, in interactions with the "outside world". The vision of possible cooperation with representative officials in the offices and secretariats of higher party and state organs helped legitimise the position of communists in the village.

If we think in hierarchical categories, then membership itself in the Slovak Communist Party did not raise the status or position of an individual in the village. Like the other village inhabitants, the communist was evaluated according to his behaviour and on the basis of what could be called family history – on the basis of the notions that other villagers had about the deeds of his ancestors, from which they also derived their views on his future behaviour. Membership in the core of one of the village factions indeed distinguished a person somewhat from the remaining mass of villagers, but all the other members of that faction – a group of twenty to thirty people – were similarly distinguished. It was only "in contact with the outside world on behalf of the village's interests" that it was possible for anyone to emerge out of the ranks of individual communists and become a more prominent village representative, and consequently also a person in a higher hierarchical position. This hierarchical relation though was not necessarily permanent. Overall, the communists in central Slovakian villages were only able to sporadically and slightly detach and distinguish themselves from the mass of inhabitants of the village.

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8 The villagers had in mind the district town of Velký Krtíš.

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3. Communist Rule and Individual and Collective Memory

3.1 The Use of Personal Biographical Information under the Communist Regime in Czechoslovakia

Jiřina Šiklová

Abstract

The memory of an individual or group, or the collective memory of a nation, is selective and defensive in nature. The act of forgetting or distorting the past, similar, for instance, to the way in which we retain notions of our parents, families, or partners, contributes to the formation of a desirable (better) personal or collective self-evaluation, which enables the person or group engaged in this activity to live and survive with greater ease. Deliberately or not, the ideology of every society has taken advantage of this fact. But it was only the totalitarian systems in the 20th century – the fascist, and especially the Soviet socialist type – that systematised this process by introducing mandatory and regular "cadre" questionnaires. In this manner they attempted to exercise systematic influence on the memory of the individual. Some sections or boxes in the questionnaire were altered to correspond with the current political situation. This study describes the questionnaires, their content, and the nature of the changes that were made to them.

Keywords

One of the most quoted ideas from Orwell's *1984* is the sentence "He who controls the past commands the future". The previous political regime appeared to adhere to this idea, as historiography was perhaps the most controlled scientific field and historians the professional group most subject to persecution under the communist regime. During the 1990s, both in the Czech Republic and in the other post-communist countries, it became necessary to come to terms with the past and with the fact of the considerable collaboration that went on with the previous regime. But here "collaboration" is a relative term, because, as this study will show, at least 98% of the population collaborated with the regime by "letting" themselves be screened and by not protesting against the questions they were asked, but also by just filling in the cadre questionnaires, writing up their biographies, and providing responses to the questions they were asked, so that they would be able to get a certain job or be allowed to study. Obviously there was and is a big difference between citizens who presents facts about themselves in their own biographies (that is, informing or "denouncing" themselves, as it were) and citizens who pass on information about someone else whom they have been asked about, and whether this is done under pressure, in exchange for something else, or entirely voluntarily. Over the past decade, lustration lists, i.e. the lists of persons who are recorded in the files of the State Security Force as collaborators, have surfaced repeatedly as an issue for discussion. The differences in the manners of participation that determined a person's power position (including membership in the Czechoslovak Communist Party and in other organisations of the National Front at a time when the existence of other organisations was not permitted) are distinctions that the older generation today are thoroughly versed in. They are capable of subtly distinguishing between whether membership in one organisation or another was helpful in obtaining a power position (and at which points this was so!) and whether another kind of membership was useless and of irrelevant to a person's later political career or position of power in society. The outgoing generation is very familiar with such realities, and they know how to precisely assess or, as the case may be, condemn different types of action. For the future it would be useful to learn and record what purposes were served by all the data gathered from the biographies and cadre questionnaires that practically every citizen of adult age (unless employed in the manual professions) was required to fill in when applying for a position of employment, for the opportunity to study, or in order to obtain a responsible and better paid position.

The lustration process, which began in the 1990s, and the appropriateness or inappropriateness of the adoption of the lustration law, are issues that have continued to be the subject of discussions and writings (Šiklová 1999). In the early 1990s, when a list of StB collaborators – both voluntary and involuntary – was published, a number of personal tragedies and breakdowns occurred in this regard, and at the time these matters were written about and discussed in the public sphere. In addition to the factual information that was made public in the so-called "Cibulka List" of collaborators (named after the person who published them) and then in the list published by the Ministry of the Interior, the moral issue that individuals and groups found themselves confronted with was repeatedly addressed publicly, even in the form of personal testimony from individuals (Salivarová-Škvorecká (ed.) 1993); there are even some works of fiction that have dealt with the subject (e.g. by Josef Škvorecký, Pavel Kohout).

The StB tried to secure collaboration particularly from those citizens who had a certain amount of public influence and charisma and were well trusted by others. If they succeeded – by means that have already been frequently described elsewhere – in breaking someone morally and securing their collaboration, it was a success that not only brought them information but also subsequently damaged contemporary society by rendering moral criteria relative. When seeking out potential col-

laborators, the StB did not turn to the individuals who were passive, unremarkable, non-distinctive, and unknown to the wider public; consequently, the temptation for the average citizen to become an StB collaborator, and thus also part of a certain power hierarchy, was quite minor. A similarly sharp moral dispute exists between former members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and non-members, or, in some cases, between members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia from different periods in history. People who had less of a need to be publicly involved or active and who were more introverted, were understandably also less publicly engaged, and were therefore less often members of the Communist Party at any period; they were also the people who were less likely to be contacted by the StB and therefore also less likely to have "made a mistake" of this nature or to be compromised by their opinions and past. These are all generally well-known facts that during the first decade after the re-establishment of a democratic system came to form, once again, criteria of differentiation. Many very capable individuals from the older generation were as a result "eliminated" from or were simply turned off from participating in public life or joining the political elites.

While the process of coming to terms with the collaboration with Nazi Germany was relatively easy, as that was a period of only six years, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was in power for more than forty years and communist rule affected several generations of adults. Moreover, as an authoritarian force it changed and evolved over the period of its existence. Recently there was a discussion in the pages of *Literární noviny* (*Literární noviny* Vol. 14, no. 34) on this subject, which paradoxically prompted President Václav Klaus to issue a statement, declaring that he had never been an anti-communist, just a non-communist. The response to this question, i.e. what an individual's position was in the past, influences the attitudes that form towards the new, the remade, and the future political elites. Consequently, our past, our past stances, and our prior membership in various organisations become resuscitated forms of differentiating criteria for determining the current hierarchical order of power elites.

We Czechs often accuse ourselves of not being able to come to terms with our own past or morally evaluating our position. But in Germany, the real discussion about guilt and co-blame under the Nazi regime only finally emerged in the second half of the 1960s, more than twenty years after the fall of the Third Reich. And the Nazi regime only lasted 13 years! Moreover, it is only now, almost 60 years after the end of the Second World War, that evidence and proof are coming to light that in Nazi Germany it was not just the political elites, the members of the NSDAP, SS, SA and others, who were responsible for crimes against humanity, but that even regular members of the Wehrmacht had committed such crimes, and that the majority of the civil population had indirectly condoned their actions (Goldhagen 1997).

Today, of course, things develop more quickly, and so the issues of StB collaboration, Communist Party membership, or membership in National Front organisations are being raised and discussed now, along with how these facts affected or affect the career of the individual.

By writing up our biographies and filling in the staff questionnaires we, all of us, were actually participating in the maintenance of the regime and taking part in a form of "self-denouncement". Everyone who was of adult age in the years 1948 – 1989 and worked in qualified positions went through such an experience. For example, everyone who was employed, except those who worked at lower posts in the manual trades, were required, during the screenings that were held after 1968 (to which not just members of the Communist Party were subjected), to express their individual position on the issue of the Warsaw Pact troops entering into Czechoslovakia in August 1968, or at least by remain-

ing silent to indicate their agreement with the troops' arrival. A record of such interactions was maintained for all employees at all places of employment (it would be possible to categorise these records according to the degree of an individual's involvement and according to the degree of influence their profession had on the public). But the moral responsibility of Communist Party members – for the very reason that they were active – was much greater and of more significance. Their penalisation or, conversely, their reward for expressing, respectively, disagreement or solidarity with the Communist Party's declared programme was much greater than the penalisation inflicted on citizens who had never been Communist Party members. However, even non-members, the "perennial" non-party members (i.e. all employees in education, in scientific institutions, in positions within the health system, etc.), were required to ask themselves this question or it was posed to them, and their response was recorded in their biography and entered into the records in the official personnel departments and in the departments of the Special Task Unit.

When a person transferred to another place of employment these cadre records were passed on, just the way a person's health records are, and sent to the next place of employment. Every applicant to higher education and anyone who changed their employment was required, on each occasion, repeatedly, to fill in the cadre questionnaire. The sections of the questionnaire were altered over time according to what the contemporary political situation was like. A citizen applying for a higher position also was required to take part in this game, filling in the staff questionnaire and writing up their biography. If a person did not do this, or refused to, by their own doing they minimised their chances of being accepted for the position, and through their refusal they were instrumental in ensuring they had no chance of making their way through the power hierarchy. Membership in the Communist Party, or in any of the other political parties subordinate to the National Front and permitted existence during the communist period, and putting one's signature on the document that pledged cooperation with the StB, were not the only tools whereby power could be distributed and re-distributed. Just expressing formal agreement with the "international aid" provided by the Warsaw Pact troops, or disagreement with the so-called Hungarian events or Polish Solidarity, or even filling in the blanks in the cadre questionnaire, these were all preconditions for the social inclusion of citizens in the hierarchy of society. In the midst of the current "cadre mania", or the obsession with records and files from the past, this fact is forgotten. But has it been forgotten? What is this – conscious denial, a conscious lie, or memory failure?

To illustrate this point I can present an example that all of the public was able to follow three years ago. At that time, there were tens of thousands of similar cases, but none was as medialised as this one. In the elections to the Senate of the Czech Republic in 1999 only candidates that could demonstrate they were not conscious collaborators with the StB were allowed to run, and as proof they provided their lustration certificates. A candidate from one of the large political parties was accused in the press in 1999 of collaboration when his name was found on the list of StB collaborators (where he is indicated as having cooperated with the StB in the years 1976–1984). It was therefore suggested that he ought to withdraw from the race. The candidate denied the accusation and stated he would lodge a legal complaint against the journalist who was responsible for the story. He even denied cooperating with the StB in a televised debate held before the elections – at the very same time as a facsimile of his commitment to the StB (dated 22 May 1976) was being published in the newspapers, which read "Through cooperation with the bodies of the Ministry of the Interior I would like to actively participate in the elimination of anti-socialist and subversive elements among youth in the sphere of music, but also in other spheres of our society. I will maintain a serious and objective position over the course of my cooperation".

One commentator at the time noted that the candidate in question, aiming for a seat in the Senate, had forgotten that he himself collected his first lustration certificate, testifying to his collaboration with the StB, in 1992; the second certificate was delivered to him in July 1999, at the time he made the decision to run for a Senate seat, and the commentator added, "That someone could tell such a lie and play such a risky game just boggles the mind, and evidently the person behind it intends to continue with this suicidal lie to the better end".

I don't consider this unfortunate candidate to be a liar, and I think this situation can be explained. He simply, repeatedly forgot. Memory is not just a "warehouse of information". It is rather a complex system in which various operations of selecting, storing, recollecting, and retrieving information take place, and this entire process is conditioned by emotions and mechanisms of self-preservation. Memory is necessarily selective, and it has mechanisms that are intended to protect us. From what we have experienced we mainly recall those memories that enable us to better adapt to our living conditions, and we tend to drive out those memories that seem threatening. For example, amnesia is a protective reaction that can appear in an otherwise psychologically healthy person. The same is essentially true for social memory, which retains what is in some way of benefit and useful for the group primarily be means of repetition. And it diminishes all other information. There are other processes, however, whereby we can again evoke and revive that other information.

It is not just individuals that can be affected by this kind of "amnesia". It is useful to bear this in mind when looking at the distribution of political power under the previous regime. In August 1999, the Czech television stations broadcast a number of programmes that in effect served as a reminder of the fact that 30 years earlier, in 1969, one year after the occupation of socialist Czechoslovakia by Warsaw Pact troops, people had demonstrated in the streets, and that they had been shot at, while armoured vehicles ran along Wenceslas Square and 146 tanks and helicopters waited on the outskirts of town, having transported in from all over the country members of the People's Militia, which was a sort of army of the Communist Party. On the second day of demonstrations, 23 August 1969, what was commonly known as the "truncheon law" came into effect, which allowed the police to employ brute force to disperse demonstrators and to disband and dissolve organisations, schools, theatres, and editorial offices, and to arrest organisers without any substantial explanation. One of the signatories of this law was Alexander Dubček, who in 1969 was no longer the secretary of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, but "merely" the chair of the Federal Assembly. When these images from the streets of Prague were broadcast on television in 1999 people refused to accept the news that Alexander Dubček has actually been a signatory to that law. People saw him in a black-and-white shot dating from 1969 on their television screens in one of the 1999 programmes, and yet they still wrote indignant and vulgar letters to the creators of the programme (including me) claiming that Dubček was being slandered. In their minds people wanted to preserve the image of this man as an ideal person. They refused to accept the facts, and so they drove them out of their memory and adopted a state of denial. They were not lying. Even I was sad when I read about Dubček's role in the adoption of the "truncheon law" in 1969, an act that proved us all guilty of having deluded ourselves. We didn't want to know, so we chose not to notice.

When we behave in such a manner in relation to the traumatising stories that occur in our own personal lives, psychiatrists and psychologists consider it to be a positive response. In psychoanalysis and psychotherapy there is a method known as "life review" that is commonly used, wherein older people are systematically assisted in a process of recalling and re-telling their lives, the aim being to have them "re-write" their lives and re-arrange their memories, so as to delete trau-

matising experiences and to compare their memories with their current conception of life and the possibilities that life still has to offer. Similarly, when we idealise the memory of a deceased person who we were once close to, people support us in doing so. It is this way of thinking that helps a patient to regain the integrity of their personality and restore the basic axis of "I was, I am, and I will be", and it is the point where the therapeutic process reaches a positive climax.

If such an approach is applied to forms of social or group memory, such as history, or if a public official applies such an approach in their autobiography, we find it fraudulent. History aims to be faithful to reality, and it demands that the individual be almost masochistic about self-incrimination and confession (e.g. London 1968), and many submit themselves to this with gusto. Socialist self-criticism, and even the forcing of prisoners to frequently and repeatedly compile biographies while in custody in the political trials in socialist states during the Stalinist period are both examples of this.

The process of forgetting is closely connected with the process of the forced recollection and recalling of certain events, which we then believe to be points of key significance in our lives as individuals or as a group, e.g. as a nation. In this manner we create an image of ourselves and form our self-evaluation. For individuals, the acceptance of these significant points in life is projected into their evaluations of life and how they evaluate themselves.

The "forced writing of biographies" was a very widespread procedure in the socialist states and was used in the interrogation and psychological manipulation of accused prisoners in political trials. The accused prisoner would be given a list of questions, a sort of outline of their lives, and would be required to fill in the information themselves. The biography would be returned to them and they would be forced to re-write it and fill it in again, and again, and again, and through this they contributed to a process of self-incrimination. Literature provides us with examples of this procedure. What is less well known, however, is that the cadre questionnaires mentioned above were constructed in the same manner, as were the outlines for creating the biographies that we wrote by and about ourselves, thus providing information on our own persons. What was or was not of importance in our lives was indicated in the questions contained in the sections of the cadre questionnaires or in the biographies, and this was repeatedly used as a tool for differentiating between people and distributing positions of power. Having a "good cadre standing" or, conversely, a "poor cadre standing", were common terms among my generation, and even more so among the previous generation. The cadre questionnaire differed from the common Western curricula vitae in that the state, represented by the Communist Party, stipulated what questions all citizens, party-members or not, were required to answer. As such the individual "confessed" and "gave evidence" on themselves. And this began in childhood.

I saved copies of my biographies and often also the questionnaires I filled in. Not out of piety, but so that the next time I would know what I had written about myself and wouldn't mix it up in years to come. The formats used in the biography and in the questionnaire sections were prescribed.

I filled in my first questionnaire when I was 15 and was applying for admission to an academic secondary school. In addition to submitting my marks I was required to answer such questions as: class origin, relatives abroad, who you correspond with abroad, and what relationship that person has to you. My father was a doctor, and so in the section on class origin I wrote "working intelligentsia", and in my more expansive biography I wrote that my father was from a poor family, that his father had died when he was six, and that my grandmother had made a living for many years

as laundress working for wealthy families. That they had once owned a butcher shop (which later went bankrupt) was something I didn't mention. Not only I but also the rest of my peers wrote like this, as they suspected or knew what was the right thing to emphasise. Small tradespeople, even those deceased for half a century, were suspect under communist rule. It was from them that future capitalists could evolve. Even at the age of 15 I knew how to stylise myself. And so did everyone else.

The cadre questionnaires that we filled in over the next decades altered their content according to what political event was at the time considered to be important. The directions for filling in questionnaires, however, always remained the same: "All sections of the cadre questionnaire must be filled in with words, no piece of information may be omitted." For example: political party membership to 1945, to 1948, after 1948, etc.; membership in the organisations known as Flag, Hitler Youth Corps, or other fascist organisations; medals and orders – enter the exact title, inscription, date and name of the person who signed the order. And the same was also asked in relation to a person's spouse, parents and in-laws, even if they were no longer alive. Some sections contained a note to provide a list of persons who could confirm the particular matter at hand (e.g. a partisan movement, examples of merit in the process of collectivisation in the countryside, and similar such things).[1]

The questions that dealt with relatives abroad were particularly thorough, and each question was elaborated by two sub-questions, which I will cite here: what is your relationship, who do you exchange correspondence with abroad, who from abroad visits you, how often, and when was the last visit.

After several years the content of the section intended to ascertain opinions and evaluations of certain events always changed. Either the general evaluation of the particular events had changed, or particular events were no longer significant. The following types of questions could be asked:

• How would you evaluate Josif B. Tito and his followers.

• What is your opinion on the Zionist traitors around Rudolf Slánský.

• What is your position on the Hungarian events of October 1956.

Later, questions on the following types of issues were inserted: what is your opinion on the building of the Berlin wall, on the Cuban missile crisis, on the war in the Suez Canal, and so on.

After 1968 certain questions disappeared. Tito was no longer important, Czech fascists had usually already retired, and so the questions in the cadre questionnaires focused on ascertaining whether one agreed or disagreed with statements that had been made by writers, with the declaration "2000 Words", with the "brotherly aid provided by Warsaw Pact troops against the counter-revolution in Czechoslovakia in 1968", and with the post-1968 Lessons from the Crisis, i.e. a condemnation of the Prague Spring, and later also whether one agreed with or condemned the declaration of Charter 77, etc.

1 An example of some of the headings of the sections used in the cadre questionnaire are: "class-social background of the parents, determined by the father's occupation; political affiliation of all members of the family is indicated in full, do not abridge your statements; if either of your parents was a member of any political party, indicate which party; if he or she is no longer a member, indicate the reason why and the year membership was terminated; if your parents were not members of any political party indicate for both the following information: formerly non-party, now non-party; fill in the same information on your spouse's parents as for your parents, as indicated in the form; indicate the names of all the relatives you have abroad; indicate all the trips you have made abroad, either for work or recreation, and who you met with abroad outside of work-related meetings".

The way in which the questions were formulated often unambiguously inferred what the answer should be. Either a person wrote down their true opinion – and as such denounced him or herself – or refused to fill in the questionnaire at all, and as such failed to meet the requirements for obtaining a job or gaining admission to a school. Or a person responded as was expected of them, according to the current party line, and as such actually put their signature on a declaration of support for or some sort of conformity with the regime. I now realise that through this process we were all actually submitting to a sort of permanent police interrogation. The accuracy of the content of the biographies was sometimes verified. There were cases in which someone from the district committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia asked directly in the departments of the Special Tasks Unit whether your grandfather really was a member of that committee in the party organisation or whether he really fought at Buzuluk. This had the effect of convincing people that the cadre questionnaire had to be filled in truthfully. Discrepancies discovered in the questionnaire, say, that your mother had a stepbrother in exile, but you didn't know it, were reason enough for you to lose your position or to come under pressure for suspicion of deceit, or to be subject to some other course of action. Almost everyone considered it normal and wrote the truth. For example, in 1968, the employees of Charles University were called on to make a list of all the articles and publications they had published during the "crisis years" of the 1968–69, and as far as I know all the teachers at the Faculty of Philosophy and Arts, including myself, did so. Or at least I cannot remember that anyone publicly condemned this demand. Only some of the more far-sighted or shrewder faculty members omitted many of their texts from their lists. If such obedience had not existed, the vetting bodies would never have been able to justify the dismissal of three quarters of a million people from their jobs on the basis of so-called political unreliability. They would have lacked the facts to do so. We handed over the evidence against us ourselves.

When we listed our own articles, which were considered to be anti-socialist, by doing so we also denounced the editors of the periodicals they were published in. This, however, is something that I am able to realise now. At the time I didn't perceive my personal acknowledgement of what I had written in that way.

I once had a great sociological dream. "One day, once we're further along…" I'll conduct a qualitative-quantitative analysis of these cadre questionnaires, and from that I'll try to determine how totalitarian states, including their legislation, deformed people and how ordinary citizens (including me) allowed themselves, more or less voluntarily, to be controlled through these legally required biographies, which were part of every application for a job, every request to travel abroad, every application to study at a particular school, and even every request for relocation to a better retirement home or to receive a slightly above-standard pension. I believed that such research would reflect the historical changes that occurred in the socialist regimes and also the means they employed not to grasp but to maintain power. Among other things, such an analysis would make it possible to discover what was important or threatening for the ruling-party establishment and at which stage it was so.

I never did this research. The questionnaires were destroyed by the people who wrote them. They no longer exist. For the purpose of this study, in addition to my own documents, I was able to draw on only several other biographies and cadre questionnaires, which managed to survive or which friends of mine had at home and lent me.

In France, 215 years ago, the masses of the population attacked the Bastille as the symbol of their oppression. In Albania, at the start of 1990, the citizens set alight the buildings of their own schools

and in many areas destroyed the irrigation system (a surface aqueduct) because these were things that the reviled Enver Hoxha had built. Similarly, in December 1989, the people of Czechoslovakia rushed the cadre departments and demanded the immediate return of their cadre questionnaires. They waved them victoriously in their hands and set fire to them in the courtyards of the factories; for the people, the destruction of these documents was proof of their freedom. Now no one could blackmail them! Employees in the Special Tasks Unit were happy to return the questionnaires and biographies to the people. In this way they legally managed to get rid of the evidence against themselves and against the StB. However, interesting confessions, or facts that could be used against someone later, were no doubt copied or even saved in the original. But even if they weren't saved, the people who wrote them know what they wrote about themselves, and they cannot be certain that that information hasn't been saved somewhere. Many have forgotten about this information from their biographies and about everything they had to write down in the cadre questionnaires. They have genuinely forgotten! It was only when I showed some people the blank form and presented some sample sections that they remembered that they too had probably answered such questions. This wasn't a ploy, and they weren't lying; their memory had simply ousted from their minds something that for them was very unpleasant information.

During the "normalisation" period, i.e. from 1968 to 1989, we were no longer controlled by brute force, as under Stalinism, but primarily by words, and often by the very words that we ourselves had uttered or written. Therefore, we believed that with words we would again be able to liberate ourselves. According to Marxism-Leninism, man is determined by his class origin, in other words, by his past. For this reason the interpretation of history played such an important role in all of the now post-socialist states. And for this reason also people were arrested for simply translating Orwell or Amalrik, for owning books by Zamyatin, Isaac Deutscher, or Milovan Djilas, or for borrowing Trotsky. If a person loses faith in God, he seeks the transplantation of his own existence in history. He is concerned with how he himself will be viewed and evaluated in the future. I know the case of one historian (who later emigrated to France) who was literally tortured in prison by his interrogators by their promise to publicise his statements, which had been falsified by them. Personal history, as recorded in the form of questionnaires and biographies, was then, and indirectly also is now, an instrument of the distribution of power.

In this country the discussion about lustration is regularly re-opened prior to elections, and, as "election slogans", calls are made, for example, to put a stop to the work of the Institute for the Investigation of Crimes Committed by Communism, to recognise no terms of limitation for crimes of communism, to abrogate the validity of the lustration law and cease the publicising of related information. And gradually, even without censorship, we form the new "blanked out" spots in the memory of history. There are some such spots in contemporary society that we do not aspire to see because we are afraid of being confronted there with our own past and with what we wrote or signed. The evaluation of our past proclamations and signed statements has now been reversed, but the substance, i.e. the information from the cadre questionnaires and the biographies, as a tool of the distribution of power (a tool wielded masterly by the previous, communist regime) continues to have an influence and even in the present serves the distribution of influence and thus also of power.

The writer and playwright, post-war poet-communist, and later dissident and emigrant, Pavel Kohout, published a provocative article in *Literární noviny* titled "Blue Shirts, Red Hearts", in which he gives thought to the following fact: when in the company of Germans of his own age he finds that

they are able to calmly point to themselves in old photographs, in which they are attired in black uniforms and caps with a Totenkopf emblem, and sprightly say, "That was when we were young". And Pavel Kohout asks why is it that we behave so differently towards our own past? In this country, photographs of socialist youth in their blue shirts (who weren't even in the war, they were just engaged in the construction of what were often purposeless "peace" dams or "peace" railway lines, or the really eager ones among them screened their colleagues with the help of the above-cited questionnaires!) are no longer shown today. On the political stage the career of a politician or someone aspiring to an important position will not suffer even a fraction as much if they are portrayed in a snapshot in some erotically awkward situation or under the influence of alcohol or drugs as it would if photographs of them were published in which they are seen, for example, embracing Gustáv Husák, in the company of Brezhnev, or standing on the rostrum next to Klement Gottwald or Milouš Jakeš, flag in hand. In response to Pavel Kohout's rhetorical question I would say: fascism in Germany was defeated, but the communist states just collapsed themselves as a result of their own incapacity to exist any further. There are no real victors here.

After the change in regime in 1989 I returned, after 20 years, to Charles University and began lecturing there. During the early 1990s the students who applied to the faculty continued to attach their biographies to their applications. These biographies were merely the converse versions of what had been demanded before 1989: "I'm of bourgeois origin, my parents owned a factory that was nationalised without compensation by the communists, and we were moved out of Prague and settled in the border regions. Neither my mother nor my father were ever members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, nor did they ever occupy a political function…" For several years I repeatedly told applicants for study that we no longer inquire into class origin, and we're not interested in the party affiliation of their parents. No one writes them now, but instead they mimic the format of the curriculum vitae that is used abroad and primarily by American companies in the Czech Republic. Today, young people learn how to write a biography as a means of self-presentation while they are still in school. I hope that another sociologist will come along with a dream similar to the one I once had and will be interested in interpreting the facts, information, and values that people today try to assert about themselves, and from this will try to deduce what kind of criteria are emphasised in the current distribution of power.

Our fascination with the legalised evil of the previous regime is something we seem unable to get over. We are more inclined to believe what the StB recorded about a person or what someone wrote about themselves under direct or indirect pressure than to believe what we know about our fellow men and women. Entire books have been published on this topic and they are read like bestsellers. We're hostages to the past.

Milan Šimečka, the great political scientist, dissident, and advisor to President Václav Havel, wrote the following words on 16 November 1988 (published after the revolution in his book titled *The End of Inertia*): "I dread to think of what we are going to have to clean up after ourselves should a democratic revolution occur, what moral tangle we will need to untie, who to forgive and who to blame, who will repent and who will avenge. For everyone over the age of forty, a trail of moral trauma will follow them to their death."

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Summaries

1.1   How Socialist Legality Served to Guarantee the Influence of the Communist Party and Socialist Organisations

Jiří Kabele

The paper presents selected results from a larger study, "The Normative Framework of Power Execution in Real Socialism" subtitled "How Did the Socialist Legal Order Enable the Working People to Execute State Power?" This preliminary study described real socialism's broader normative framework, which comprises four hierarchically ranked levels: (i) the constructivist digest of regulations and legal provisions – Statutes of the Czechoslovak Communist Party (KSČ), international Eastern bloc treaties, the constitutional Declaration, the first chapter of the Constitution on the "Social Arrangement", and the post-August 1968 "Lessons from the Crisis … ", (ii) the other parts of the Constitution, (iii) socialist legal codes, and (iv) the rest of the laws and regulations. The study is based on the assumption that socialist legality was an important component in the socialist regime, even despite the fact that the idea of a legal state had already been discredited by the regime as a tool of the exploitative bourgeois concept of law. This means that socialist laws either directly shaped the life of society, or, conversely, they created room for simultaneously applying unwritten rules of the game with alternative contents.

Systematic analyses of legal texts were made in an effort to uncover and identify asymmetries and symmetries established by the texts and referring to the position and the execution of influence of the key players – organs and organisations – in real socialism. This mapping and contextualising of asymmetries and symmetries helped the author to utilise sociological, economic and politological knowledge of hierarchies and equities (i.e. formations of equal social relations) in this study. Social hierarchies and social equities express and – if we take into account their constructive force (Kabele 2002) – complete the complex concurrence of symmetrical and asymmetrical influences in social relationships. Social hierarchies and social equities are both an instrument and a product of governance, but also of ownership and knowledge. Their ultimate form is significantly influenced by their coexistence.

In this chapter, reference is made to the Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia as forming the most important component in the constructivist digest, to democratic centralism as a key principle of the party and the state construction, and to the positions and competences of socialist organisations as defined by the legal codes. The bylaws and rules of order used in the socialist organisations will be addressed in another chapter on "Socialist Rules and Orders: The Case of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia".

The Statutes of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia ensured that the party was present everywhere: in people's minds and in any kind of organisation. Therefore, instead of providing an overview of competences, the Statutes can be characterised as more of an exhaustive inventory of the duties and tasks that both party members and hierarchically ordered party organisations and organs were committed to. These duties and tasks are deliberately not differentiated into party and society spheres. What is described here is what could be called the "total mission" of the party, which over time expanded to take in more and more "items" inventorised on the agenda – when we trace the Statutes' evolution – throughout the period of real socialism. The Statutes also openly characterised the basic methods of leadership, consisting in the privileged management of cadre work and heading social control. Democratic centralism became the principle behind this leadership, the essential "advantage" of which lay in its ability to secure voting loyalty.

The study goes on to show that the communist method of government was facilitated through a serious restriction of the right of association. This restriction was connected with the complex legal institute of socialist organisation and social ownership as defined in the legal codes. Economic-legal relations among socialist organisations were laid out as hierarchical relationships, which, in practically all key matters, lacked adequate procedural descriptions designed for the protection of both subordinate and superiors socialist organisations. Instead, these relationships were governed by numerous sub-legal norms and by unwritten rules of the game. The role of the Communist Party lay entirely outside this legal configuration.

Labour-legal contractual relationships were replaced by quasi-feudal relationships. The civil code defined personal property as a derivative of social ownership and defended it as one of the important means of satisfying the personal needs of citizens. The main task of this code was to "establish and define the rights and obligations of citizens and organisations which emerge in the area of satisfying material and cultural needs, defend these rights, if they are executed in agreement with the interests of society, and contribute to the observance of socialist legality in civil-law relations". This legal construction not only "codified" the patriarchal relationship of the socialist state towards its citizens, mediated by economic-socialist organisations, it also focused attention on the socialist ownership of the means of production as the key and pre-eminent aspects of the constructivist social arrangement. In reality this ownership monopoly of the state became a permanent problem for the constructivist arrangement.

1.2 Party Tasks and the Modern Age

Tomáš Holeček

This chapter describes the delegation of party tasks at the regional level of communist government at the end of the 1980s. The author shows what bodies were responsible for delegating party tasks (the regional conference of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, the regional committee, the presidium of the regional committee, and the secretariat of the regional committee) and what forms these tasks took: general tasks, designated general tasks, general remedial tasks, the tasks of specifying general tasks, designated performance tasks, designated remedial tasks, isolated tasks. He presents the most significant types of tasks using specific examples drawn from

the year 1988 and goes on to reflect on three features of tasks in relation to the modern age (defined with the aid of the actuality of the human situation and the power over individual action emanating from it): the amount of latitude people were left with in relation to the execution of tasks, repeatedly ordering that which was obligatory anyway, and the amount of latitude accorded to the very formulation of tasks. The author also reflects on these matters in relation to government today.

1.3   The Reverse Control Pyramid of the Socialist Economy

Lubomír Mlčoch

In the introduction the author takes a somewhat personal approach to familiarising the reader with the circumstances under which his initial research on the hierarchical structures of real socialism originated and indicates some reasons that justify returning to reflect on the subject once more twenty years later. The new institutional economics (the American institutionalism of R. Coase, D. North, and O.E. Williamson, and older work from the theory of property rights and human behaviour in bureaucratic systems (H. Simon)) offer new stimuli for assessing earlier research, but they tend to confirm rather than overturn the findings in the descriptive studies prepared by the author under circumstances of forced social and academic isolation.

He identifies the closed hierarchical system as the key concept for analysing the economy of real socialism and notes that the description "from within" the system better calls into question well-known concepts in the world that emerged out of comparative economics, i.e. "from without", concepts such as "the centrally planned economy" or "the command economy".

The actual "dialectics" of the effects of internal forces in the hierarchical planning system represented a sort of paradox in the dialectic reasoning employed by the system's originators. The attempt to put politics in a dominant position over economics led to "formal collectivisation", operationalised through the socialist state (and the power structure of the Soviet bloc). The hierarchical and organisational structure of state power and administration, the economy, and finally the Communist Party itself as the keystone, assigning persons to functions and delegating power and authority ("the operative administration of social ownership"), resulted in a coalition structure of a "de facto" type of ownership.

The exaggerated ambitiousness of the social experiment in planning and managing the entire economy and society led to a dysfunctional "control pyramid" and at a certain stage of the system's progress to the rise of the contradictory – but also self-preserving – forces of the "reverse control pyramid". In the chapter's individual sections the author describes both parties in the underlying institutional structure of the closed hierarchical system of real socialism.

The most burdensome legacy of four decades of playing "planning games" in hierarchical structures is the damage to the country's social capital, the warped personal and moral integrity of those participating in economic (and political) life. It is natural that there has been a tendency to reproduce learned behavioural patterns even in new circumstances, but establishing an understanding of these risks would at least have contributed to combating them – had there been a desire to do

so. However, the asymmetry between information and risk and the inclination to play games with a moral hazard at the expense of a weakened state (and by extension at the expense of taxpayers) are not just the prerogative of transition economies: it is possible to come across these kinds of risk elements even in "standard" late and global capitalism. As a result, the previous and dearly paid for experience of the transition societies may be valuable into the future – and not only for them.

1.4   Socialist Rules and Orders: The Case of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia

Jiří Kabele

The study is based on a larger study on Socialist Rules and Orders, which compared the socialist orders that were valid at the end of the 1980s in the fields of state administration and the communist party with the capitalist orders dating from the end of the millennium. The study draws inspiration from the structuralist study of myth. It aims to create the first rough outline of a description of hierarchical statutory codes and their complementary rules of procedure. This description is intended to render the form and "effectiveness" of the order of events realised after these codes have come into effect transparent. The study is based on the conviction that knowledge acquired in this way can contribute to a more textured and multifaceted – not just a black and white – understanding of communist rule and its legacy. In connection with the hypothesis of the constructivist arrangement, presented in an earlier publication (Kabele 2002b), we were specifically interested in discovering how the compilation and composition of the texts of the socialist codes – their modifications and eliminated passages – made it possible to construct a party-state hierarchy in which the leading role of the party was applied through the mechanism of democratic centralism, nomenclature administration, and party control.

The descriptive apparatus for the so-called textual armature, which respects the division of texts into main parts but not into particular institutes and paragraphs, will be presented for both statutory codes and rules of procedure at first. This apparatus will be then applied to describe the orders and codes of the Communist Party itself.

The armatures of both basic types of social configurations, autonomous associations and established organisations, share with myth their common division into correlated and topical content. Correlated contents are created with opening, transitional, and closing provisions. Of key importance for codes and orders, however, are the topical provisions, in which the rules of the game and their potential protections are presented. It is shown that the armatures of autonomous associations and established organisations differ in that some parts are constitutive only for associations (sections on Membership Rights and Obligations, Principles of Management , and others are constitutive for organisations (the sections on Constitutive External Relations). Similarly, the section on Control Activities can usually be found only in the codes or orders of deliberative assemblies, which have rights of formation and are typical for autonomous associations.

The armature of hierarchical statutory codes facilitates the establishment of a jurisdictional hierarchy of roles, organs, and units by means of the distribution of competences. Unfortunately,

it does not force the code to be composed in such a manner that the code itself provides for the protection of these competences, nor does it require the code to indicate that such protections can be found in the broader legal framework of the execution of state power. In this sense the armature conceals the problem of the division of responsibility, and may even assist in the institutionalisation of irresponsibility. It makes it possible for other rules to come into effect alongside the rules that are written and contained in the specific code or order: these additional rules may be written or unwritten, but they are nonetheless extra-legal. The affinity between the armature of autonomous associations and the armature of established organisations creates room for the construction of "as if" autonomous associations, inserted closely in centrally ruled hierarchies.

The armature of rules of procedure arises by means of the insertion of three sections – meetings, discussions, and auditing activities – into the hierarchical statutory code of the particular deliberative assembly. When these sections provide only poor specifications of the rules this enables a reduction of the rules of procedure to the level of a statutory code, which practically does not modify or govern the meetings or discussions of the unit. If moreover these rules are secret – it becomes possible to establish them in such a way that they privilege a narrow group within the unit or even an individual.

Using the codes relating to the Communist Party the study illustrates that the socialist codes benefited from the above-described risks. Autonomous associations thus de facto became established organisations. The codes did not guarantee the clear separation of responsibilities and they left room for applying the unwritten rules of the game of party leadership. The rules of procedure did not regulate discussions or openly guarantee the privileges of the presidia.

The Communist Party of course offered the type of government that did not place big demands on workers. In order to pass muster they needed to know only the organisational codes of their worksites and to be loyal to the unwritten rules of party leadership. They did not have to have any knowledge of the law. In fact that would only have made their lives more difficult.

2.1 Party Rule at the Highest Level – Selected Issues

Martin Hájek

In this study the author argues that communist rule at the highest level was actually a dual rule – over the party and over society. While rule over society was certainly demanding, it was also relatively simple in the sense that neither society nor its representatives were able to dismiss the party leadership. Rule over the party was, in certain regards, more demanding, because the rulers were less sure in their positions – members of the presidium could be removed from their functions if they were indicated as dissatisfactory. Furthermore, dissatisfaction with party leaders could have a dual source: poor management of the party and poor leadership of society. The most demanding task of course was the ruling both the party and society at once. On the one hand, measures and tactics of ruling party members complicated the task of ruling society, and on the other hand the nature of managing the state, the economy and the life of society complicated the maintenance of party loyalty and discipline.

In the text the author reveals some of the strategies that the highest leadership used to rule. In the case of rule over party members it was democratic centralism that enabled a very centralised rule in the guise of internal party democracy. Another characteristic feature that facilitated this rule was the structural similarity of all party bodies at various levels, which simplified the vertical coordination and ultimately the fortification of the centre, which usurped all decision-making power.

Rule over society, in addition to being grounded in the constitution, was achieved through the directly managed party organisations in the central state, economic and other institutions. Rule was moreover made easier by the forced hierarchical structure of all legal organisations.

The problems connected with dual rule were at the highest level addressed by merging party and state institutions, so it is not possible to speak of any parallelism of party leadership. Dual rule was also connected with the problem of responsibility, which was just as unclear as determining where decision-making authorities lay. The author illustrates these difficulties using specific examples drawn from the archives of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia.

2.2   Late Communist Rule at the District Level

Zdenka Vajdová

The study identifies certain phenomena in the inner workings of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the national committees, which, over the course of the 1980s, can be interpreted as the gradually receding capacity of the party to maintain control over the socio-economic space at the district tier. The author attempts to describe the process whereby meetings of district bodies of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia – the district committee and the presidium of the district committee – were opened up to other entities in the economic and social life of the district, and the process whereby the sphere of discussion at the meetings of the district bodies of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was expanded. Nobert Elias' concept of power balances is applied in the study, enabling an understanding of these phenomena as manifestations of the process of a reduction of the differences between the power of the government – the rulers – and the power of the ruled, i.e. between the organs of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia and the population.

The method of data collection employed in the research involved the study of original documents, particularly those lodged in the State District Archive in N. Some documents were scanned and saved in electronic format. The documents contain minutes and records of plenary meetings and meetings of the board of the district national committee dating from the 1980s, along with minutes and records of the meetings of the district committee of the Communist Party and the presidium of the district committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia in the 1980s.

The district tier in the hierarchy of rule represented the closest direct contact with the ruled population in the Czech Republic. The aim of this study is to help explain how it occurred that the "total omnipotence of the state of real socialism", which existed in 1971, had by 1989 ceased to exist, and without any extra-state violence.

2.3 The Organs of the Local and Municipal National Committees in the System of Communist Power

Lukáš Valeš

In the system of communist power the national committees were bodies that occupied a unique position. According to Act no. 5/1965 Coll., they were the: "broadest based organisation of workers, organs of state power, and administration in the districts". This definition provides a good illustration of the dual standing of the national committees in general. On the one hand they were a part of the system of state power, while on the other hand they were meant also to be a body of popular administration, facilitating the direct participation of the "broadest strata of citizens" in the administration of the state.

This organisational structure was the fulfilment of the Marxist-Leninist demand to unite the legislative and executive powers. One of its important aspects was that it expressed the "popular" character of socialist Czechoslovakia. Succinctly put, Czechoslovakia was a state of working class people who executed their power through the bodies of the state. The national committees (at all levels) existed in order for them to be able to participate directly. This was intended as the fulfilment of the principle of socialist democracy, which aimed to engage the participation of all components of society in the administration of the state.

A manifestation of this was the new definition of the national committees contained in the third in the series of new acts on national committees, Act no. 69/1967, where the national committees were defined not only as bodies of state power and administration but also as "state bodies of an autonomous nature". However contradictory this definition may appear from a legal-administrative perspective, it nonetheless accurately describes the unique position that the national committees occupied in the system, especially at the lowest levels, in the towns and villages. In the 1960s their autonomous character was further reinforced, as the national committees were accorded independent areas of authority within which they were able to issue binding legal regulations, and their responsibilities grew, especially within the area of economic management. Though this process subsided over the course of the 1970s, it was strengthened once again in the new act on national committees in 1983 (Act no. 31/1983 Coll.)

The national committees were also interesting for the political personnel they were made up of. Each national committee was comprised of a plenum, a council, a commission and the individual divisions of the national committee. The plenum was the representative body of the national committee, whose responsibilities were to deliberate and approve all the primary conceptual materials, issue legal regulations within the framework of the committee's areas of authority, approve the budget, and pursue other activities such as monitoring the execution of tasks, etc. Owing to the practice of selecting candidates for delegates from the ranks of organisations within the National Front the committees' work engaged the participation of people who otherwise remained outside the official political or power structures of the regime.

The commissions were another body of the local national committees (MNV and MěstNV) that facilitated the participation of primarily active and skilled citizens in the administration of the town or village. The work of the commissions focused on the development of the local community in a particular sector (health care, social affairs, transportation, etc.), and they also controlled the activities of the divisions and organisations run by the local national committee (MNV, MěstNV), etc.

The executive body of the national committees was headed by the council of the national committee, which was comprised of the chair, deputy chair, secretary of the national committee, and committee members, and which was de jure subordinate to the plenum – even with regard to the dismissal of the council's members.

In addition to the elements of formal democracy that existed in the operational structure of the local national committees they also deviated from ranks of the totalitarian system in terms of the content of their activities. National committees, primarily those at the lowest level, addressed issues of everyday politics (politics as the administration of public affairs). They thus dealt with the "non-political" political subjects, where practical rather than "political" (power) criteria were the crucial factors. This fact also had an effect on how top functionaries at the local level interacted with political components of superior rank. Given that, with only some exceptions, it was members of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia that they were dealing with, they often came into conflict with the apparatus or the functionaries of the Communist Party as a result of the fact that they were trying to tackle practical problems and they were genuinely aware of the state of affairs on the ground. These conflicts manifested themselves in full over the course of November 1989. While the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia at the statewide and local levels was incapable of any flexible response to the growing support for the opposition that was taking shape, it was the representatives of the towns and villages – even if they too were Communist Party members – who proved capable of understanding the profundity of the events that were taking place, initiated discussions with Civic Forum, and put themselves behind securing the smooth transfer of local administration into the hands of the new political elites.

2.4   Territorial Governance, Settlement Hierarchies and the Project for the Urbanisation of Slovakia

Simon Smith

The author examines territorial governance and spatial planning in communist Slovakia using the concepts of regime and coalition, acknowledging that, in comparison with democratic conditions, the scope of actors incorporated was much narrower, the structures of local regimes more rigid and the bargaining techniques mobilised by local actors were limited.

Territorial governance is defined by the framework of planning procedures and national spatial and regional policy goals, which reflect the character of the political system of a given state. The imperatives of industrialisation and urbanisation governed Slovakia's development during the communist period, most systematically in the 1970s and 1980s following the adoption of the Project for the Urbanisation of Slovakia. This policy structure not only had a significant impact on the degree of concentration of the Slovak settlement system, but also led to a further centralisation of decision-making because it operationalised a strict hierarchy of urban areas, regions, cores and agglomerations linked to the administrative classification of central places.

Local government organs generally constitute the focus of local governance regimes. In the communist system, however, they had weak powers to promote or regulate local and regional devel-

opment because of the dominance of sectoral interests and plans, and because of the operation of hierarchical relations between tiers of the state administration. The 1960 reorganisation of the state administration in Czechoslovakia and subsequent reforms purported to equalise the relationship between local government and enterprise or sectoral interests. However they failed to resolve the basic conflict between "resortism" and "local patriotism", as the enhanced planning roles of regional and local national committees codified in the 1971 Law were in reality impossible to enforce.

A typical local coalition under this system was dominated by a single enterprise (usually the major employer), whereas national committees and locally-active social organisations were subordinate partners whose consent was readily obtained given the paternalistic role played by large enterprises in local economic, social and cultural life. Bargaining arrangements within such a coalition were crude, essentially based on client-patron dependency, and spatial integration was poor given the conflict between the "public" interests represented by local authorities and the "private" interests of the enterprise. Such coalitions were instrumental, not based on a strong sense of shared local identity.

However, not all regions or settlements could benefit from such a model. Differently structured coalitions emerged in places that were marginal to the communist "growth machine" (on the borders of districts, outside the urban corridors identified in the Project for the Urbanisation of Slovakia, within historic city centres). Here there were few large enterprises and national committees had more scope to coordinate local development, although they also had fewer resources. A hypothesis which requires empirical testing is that these marginal spaces were typified by "organic" coalitions with a stronger sense of local identity, more equal partnership between actors, a greater reliance on social organisations to support development and a partial displacement of paternalism by an ethos of self-help.

However, the strategies of local regimes in marginal spaces were still strongly determined by the logic of administrative hierarchies and particularly at moments of administrative reorganisation focused on lobbying central government to improve or defend their ranking. Such strategies are still viewed as the most valid task of local government today in districts such as Stropkov and Svidník, where the emergence of a "symbolic" regime, based upon the mobilisation of different sectors of civil society around a convincing vision of change, is still a faraway prospect. This is partly because the informal know-how of local elites has a high degree of continuity.

Similarly, in more central spaces instrumental local regimes often persist, both because local authorities seek to prevent public access to the planning process (local elites are not yet ready to embrace a culture of partnership-based governance), and because of the economic weakness of most municipalities in relation to large private investors and developers. This makes private capital a necessary ally in planning and projecting in much the same way as national committees were dependent on large state enterprises.

In Slovakia the social time of urbanisation was too compressed to allow effective local control of the process, and lacked the democratising aspect of classical urbanisation. It depleted the social capital of most regions and restructured it according to the position of settlements in urban, industrial and administrative hierarchies. These spatial hierarchies have not disappeared with the end of the communist regime, the abolition of the official central place hierarchy and the enhancement of the competences of local and regional self-government. They are embedded in real spatial flows and dependencies, in the potentials of local actors, in the characteristics of local regimes and in their ability or inability to switch strategies in response to new development chances.

2.5 Communists in Central Slovakian Villages

Josef Kandert

This study is based on ethnographic research conducted in villages in central Slovakia in 1967–1968 and 1974–1984. In the study the author shows what the position of communists was like in the environment of relatively traditional village communities. The communists were perceived as representatives of the ruling "state" political opinion, but not necessarily as supporters of a certain ideology, because many of them simultaneously felt themselves to be Christians. Alongside these individuals, though, there were also the "hard communists", members of the Slovak Communist Party, who were known to be atheists as well. In the villages the hard communists were the exception; villagers could usually point to the presence of one, two or three individuals at most. There was also a third category of communist, represented by people who joined the Slovak Communist Party for their own personal gain. They were often ascribed responsibility for a variety of wrongdoings inflicted on the villagers by the machinery of the state.

The research in the villages revealed the existence of a particular phenomenon – the typical presence of two village power factions, between which a struggle for power was waged on an ongoing basis. The two competing factions also had a key say in choosing local functionaries and in their election to office. In actuality it may be noted that the village system of factions was a phenomenon that could be traced way back, existing from the time of the Habsburg monarchy (to 1918), through the period of parliamentary democracy (1920–1939) and the ensuing period of clerical democracy (1939–1945), and into the period of the proletarian dictatorship, i.e. in popular democratic and later socialist Czechoslovakia; and it exists even now in the newly built democratic system since 1989. Faction membership correlated mainly with family and friendship ties. As godparents were perceived as family relatives (in a relationship comparable to that between parents and children), godparent ties played an important role in the construction and maintenance of the political ties between faction members. In factions where affiliates of two different churches lived side-by-side it was possible to also find the criterion of religion among the recruitment principles of faction membership. Each faction had an "active" core, made up of roughly twenty to thirty members. There was always only one faction in power, and through its members it controlled all the important offices in the village, including voluntary organisations and associations, and even political parties.

Within the village individual communists were evaluated according to the same criteria as all other – non-communist – members of the factions. From the perspective of the villagers and the members of the village factions, communists – as faction members – had one distinct advantage: they were able to boast contacts at high levels in the state and party apparatus, both in regional and state circles. Overall, however, it must be said that membership in the Slovak Communist Party did not itself serve to raise the social standing or position of an individual in the village.

3.1 The Use of Personal Biographical Information under the Communist Regime in Czechoslovakia

Jiřina Šiklová

In the study the author looks at the cadre questionnaires and biographies that were filled in and written up by people under the previous regime and interprets them as a form of authoritarian rule that was generally accepted in "really existing socialism". The author argues that this was a silent form of cooperation with the regime, which almost every person of adult age and employed in qualified positions between 1948 and 1989 partook in. Anyone applying for higher education and anyone who changed their position of employment was required to fill in on repeated occasions the cadre questionnaire, the sections of which changed according to the changes that occurred in the political situation. A citizen applying for a higher position of employment was required to participate in this game, fill in the questionnaire, and write up their biography. Not doing so meant that a person was minimising their chances of being accepted for the position, and thus ensuring their own exclusion from being able to find a place in the power hierarchy, and that they were doing so of their own volition. But this form of cooperation is not much recalled in the present. Often this is owing to the fact that people prefer to drive out those memories they feel threatened by. Amnesia is a form of defensive reaction exercised by an otherwise healthy individual. Essentially the same reaction applies in the case of social memory, which, primarily through repetition, preserves what is beneficial and useful for the group in some way. All other information is diminished. Nevertheless, people continue to be fascinated with the legalised evil of the past. They are more likely to believe what was recorded by the StB about a person, or by people about themselves under direct or indirect pressure than they are to believe what they know about their fellow men and women. Entire books have been published on this topic, and they are read like bestsellers.

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