

Abstract

The dissertation is about Rudolf Slánský, an important figure in the history of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia. The first part of the text is based on a reconstruction of Slánský's political activities. It looks at his leaning towards left-wing ideas when he became interested in social democracy at the beginning of the 1920s and subsequently became a member of the Czechoslovak Communist Party where he was involved in the internal struggles of that time.

An important part of the text consists of Slánský's activities as regional secretary in Moravská Ostrava. Two basic camps clashed in the Ostrava region (although the disputes were more of a personal nature than ideological) and in Slánský's subsequent rise (he became regional secretary) the efforts of the Prague Communist Party leadership to calm the situation and to put a "compromise" candidate in charge (or one that was not personally involved in either of the camps) can partly be seen. By transferring him, the aim of the Prague leadership was to "calm down/bring into line" the young radical, but also eventually to give him the opportunity (in an important region) to show his abilities (especially his organisational abilities). Upon his return from Ostrava, Rudolf Slánský began to get involved in the power struggles within the Communist Party. He became part of Gottwald's group, which took over the leadership of the party in 1929 at the Fifth Communist Party Congress.

Another part of the dissertation is devoted to Rudolf Slánský's activities in the mid-1930s. In 1935, Jan Šverma and Slánský took de facto power of the party as Gottwald and Kopecký were forced to hide in Moscow. Slánský and Šverma, came into conflict with the Comintern because of their partly independent policies. Consequently, Slánský was forced to criticise himself and lost his powerful position in the party acquired after the Fifth Congress. He returned to a higher position with the party at the Seventh Communist Party Congress in 1936.

Another significant moment in Slánský's life was his stay in Moscow during the Second World War. The text discusses his role in the Moscow leadership of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, his duties in Soviet radio for the Central European region which he was in charge of, his involvement in the resistance movement, and finally his subsequent role in the Slovak National Uprising.

Far more significant and more important are Slánský's activities after 1945. He was General Secretary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and this position made him the second most powerful man in the party and later in the country. The part he played in building

the Communist Party is key and this part of the dissertation stems from how the party looked under Slánský's leadership, how its organisational structure was shaped, and how its membership base developed. Other important activities of Slánský regarding 1945–1948, February 1948, and finally his involvement in the post-February repressions are also discussed.

Another part of the work looks at the image building of Slánský. This part of the text discusses how Slánský was officially presented to society and how, as a result, he was perceived by society itself. The aim here is to analyse how Slánský's image was built at the time of his fiftieth birthday, in contrast to how he was portrayed to society during his own trial. In connection with this, the text focuses on analysing how Slánský was accepted by society when he was still the second most powerful man in the country, and finally, how people responded to his removal from office, his arrest, and the trial itself. At the end of the dissertation, the rehabilitation process is summarised.

Part of the text includes three short separate *Excursions*. These are about the fate of the Slánský family throughout the whole period under review. The last *Excursion* is linked to the aforementioned rehabilitation process.

Part of the dissertation is an analysis of Slánský's chosen value formulas and ways of negotiation. Here the text is inspired by the concept of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. Here the terms *habitus*, *social field* and *capital* are important.

Keywords: Rudolf Slánský, Klement Gottwald, Jan Šverma, Czechoslovak Communist Party, Comintern, United Front, February 1948, repression, political trials, Informbyro, rehabilitation, habitus, social field, capital