

The present thesis discusses the life of Rudolf Bechyně, the eminent Czech Social-Democratic politician of the first half of the twentieth century. The author studies in a practically chronological order the life's path of the politician, starting in Moravia (still during the era of the Austro-Hungarian Empire), over the period of the First Republic of Czechoslovakia, until his exile to London during the Second World War when Bechyně, as the Chairman of the Council of State, became together with the President Edvard Beneš the main leader of the Czech resistance movement abroad.

With respect to extant archival materials, the thesis focuses more systematically on the description of Bechyně's work at the Ministry of Public Supply, as well as on the last decade of his life when the politician was forced to revalue most of his attitudes and principles. Although the author tends to follow the traditional biographical pattern, through the fate of Rudolf Bechyně he furthermore depicts the fate of the Czech Social Democratic Party.

A certain excursus of the thesis is presented in an attempt at a comparison of the socialist ideas and their differentiation under the influence of the Bolshevik Revolution; and in a separate case study of the political-cultural review *Nová Svoboda* published by the left-wing Social Democrats Rudolf Bechyně and Václav Patzak in wartime London.