



Towards Breakthrough or Breakdown? The Consolidation of KSCM as a Neo-Communist Successor Party in the Czech Republic

S. Hanley

To cite this article: S. Hanley (2001) Towards Breakthrough or Breakdown? The Consolidation of KSCM as a Neo-Communist Successor Party in the Czech Republic, *The Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, 17:3, 96-116, DOI: [10.1080/714003581](https://doi.org/10.1080/714003581)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/714003581>



Published online: 08 Sep 2010.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 182



View related articles [↗](#)



Citing articles: 13 View citing articles [↗](#)

Towards Breakthrough or Breakdown? The Consolidation of KSČM as a Neo-Communist Successor Party in the Czech Republic

SEÁN HANLEY

The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia is unusual among communist successor parties in having maintained a clear communist identity after 1989. This can be explained by reference to the concept of 'subcultural party', catering for a particular segment of the population. This particular identity emerged as a result of a protracted internal struggle, in addition to the obvious need to address the electorate and win votes. Moreover, close examination of the party's programmes and its leaders' utterances indicates that it is more than simply a traditional communist party inspired by revenge for the collapse of the old system or by nostalgia for the past, but in fact contains innovative and democratic elements that have been hitherto overlooked by observers. It is well placed to take advantage of the new political circumstances, a feature that challenges its new identity as a subcultural party.

The Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM) in the Czech Republic is an isolated exception among successor parties in East and Central Europe in having maintained and renewed a communist identity after 1989. The KSČM's 'orthodox' character compared with other former ruling parties in the region, coupled with lack of empirical data on the party, have frequently led it to be viewed by analysts as a holdover, whose politics are essentially unchanged from those of its pre-1989 predecessor, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ). Standard works on the region characteristically describe it as an 'unreformed conservative-communist party',¹ a 'real "dinosaur" of Leninism which has no future ... relegated to the left ghetto of the new party system ...'.² More specialized comparative discussions of successor parties have largely confined themselves to noting KSČM's exceptionalism and the opportunity which this provided to the 'historic' Czech Social Democrats (ČSSD) to emerge as the principal party of the Czech left.³ Meanwhile, in the Czech Republic itself political scientists have tended to treat the party purely as an example of an 'anti-system' or 'extremist' party.⁴

Seán Hanley is Lecturer in Politics in the Department of Government at Brunel University, UK.

Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics, Vol.17, No.3, September 2001, pp.96-116

PUBLISHED BY FRANK CASS, LONDON

However, in 1998–89, against a background of economic stagnation and growing public disenchantment with ineffective minority governments, the KSČM confounded much conventional wisdom by undergoing a rapid increase in popularity, suggesting not only that its political death was much exaggerated, but that its ‘neo-communist’ strategy was paying unexpected political dividends. This article examines the reasons for KSČM’s endurance after 1990 and its re-emergence as a significant actor in Czech politics in the late 1990s. After reviewing the existing literature on Czech communism and KSČM, I will suggest that throughout most of the first decade after 1989 KSČM can be understood as a ‘subcultural party’, whose emergence was the product of a protracted internal struggle, rather than the simple projection of historical factors into the post-communist era. This struggle opposed a ‘neo-communist’ strategy driven by a ‘logic of constituency representation’ to a ‘social democratic’ one of office-seeking and vote maximization.⁵ I will note that the ‘neo-communist’ strategy and ideology adopted by KSČM in 1993 is more complex than the simple revanchism, conservatism or ‘Leninism’ often ascribed to the party and contains significant innovative and democratic elements. I will conclude by analysing the growth in KSČM support in the late 1990s and the dilemmas it may pose for the party. I will suggest that the possibility of significant electoral success without any corresponding increase in the party’s coalition potential may be more destabilizing than beneficial to the party.

Understanding Czech Communism, Understanding the KSČM

Political Legacies and the Czech Communist Tradition

Country-specific monographs, as well as more recent comparative work on party systems,⁶ highlight a number of powerful *structural* factors militating towards the emergence of a highly conservative, anti-reformist communism in the Czech Lands after 1989. The two factors most usually picked out are: (1) the significant, although varying, levels of mass support for communism in the Czech Lands historically; and (2) the critical weakness of reformists within the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia after the crushing of the ‘Prague Spring’ in 1968–69. First, unusually for East and Central Europe, the Czech Lands developed a mass social-democratic labour movement in the late nineteenth century which produced a large Communist Party. The Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) existed throughout the democratic inter-war Czechoslovak Republic with an electoral base of 10–15 per cent. After the war, boosted by the collapse of the pre-war democratic regime at Munich in 1938, the KSČ emerged as a mass force, taking 38 per cent of the Czechoslovak vote and 40 per cent of the Czech

vote in the 1946 elections. In February 1948 the Communists were thus able to take power in a coup which outwardly respected legal forms and enjoyed a degree of popular backing unique in Eastern Europe. Mass support and the modern administrative and social structures then combined to create a 'bureaucratic authoritarian' regime significantly more repressive and reform-averse than weaker national-communist regimes in Hungary and Poland.⁷ The successor party derived from this regime was thus disinclined to undergo post-communist social democratization after 1989 following the Polish or Hungarian models.

However, even in purely historical terms, such structural explanations tend to overlook the *dualistic* character of Czechoslovak and Czech communism, which oscillated between being a broad-based national-democratic movement and an isolated, pro-Soviet subculture.⁸ Indeed, some analysts have suggested that it was precisely the *strength* of 'social-democratic' tendencies in the Czechoslovak party that explains the strength, and ultimately the success, of Soviet-backed attempts to transform it into a reform-averse party loyal to Moscow. Rupnik, for example, notes that the relatively open 'Austro-Marxist' character of the KSČ in the 1920s necessitated a thoroughgoing process of 'Bolshevization' directed from Moscow in 1929.⁹ Similarly, having become a vehicle for one of the most radical reform communist projects seen in Eastern Europe in the 1960s, the KSČ was transformed by the Soviet-led invasion of August 1968 and the post-invasion 'normalization' regime, which systematically expelled reformers from the party and debarred them from positions of influence. This, rather than a 'bureaucratic authoritarian' legacy *per se*, established the inflexible, hardline and conservative course consistently maintained until the regime's demise in November 1989, suggesting that the KSČM's post-1989 course was based on a more limited legacy substantially deriving from the 'normalization' period.

The Role of Political Contingency

However, while offering insight into the character of the KSČ as a ruling party, all such historically based accounts of the development of the Czech successor party largely ignore actual political processes after 1989. Another set of explanations for the 'non-social-democratization' of KSČM, however, stresses the role of politically contingent events *within* the party in the early 1990s. For, as Grzymala-Busse notes,¹⁰ the broadly similar strength of the communist tradition and legacies in Slovakia saw the former ruling party there take a very different post-communist social-democratic course after 1989. It is generally agreed that, although reformist pockets did exist within the KSČ,¹¹ the party was wholly unprepared for political transition in November 1989 and the onset of competitive pluralistic politics thereafter.

Having decided against a Chinese-style 'solution' of mass repression against the popular protests of the Velvet Revolution,¹² the party leadership was politically paralysed and responsibility for transition negotiations passed by default to Ladislav Adamec, the federal prime minister. By the time the party convened an extraordinary congress on 20–21 December 1989, the key mechanisms of the country's transition had thus already been agreed with the Civic Forum and Public Against Violence movements.¹³

Although radical in terms of personnel changes and reformist in tone, the extraordinary congress was a desperate and largely incoherent attempt to come to terms with the party's sudden loss of power and to formulate a response to it. It swept away the entire pre-November leadership of the party, re-electing only four members of the 200-strong Central Committee.¹⁴ Resolutions passed included a rejection of the doctrines of the 'normalization' period, an apology for the wrongdoings committed by the Communist Party since 1948, an acceptance of the loss of its 'leading role' in society and general endorsements of the rule of law, a 'socialist market', human rights and democracy. However, despite a commitment to become a 'modern political party' and the use of previously taboo phrases borrowed from both the dissident opposition ('democracy for all') and 1960s reform communism ('Action Programme', 'renewal'), such resolutions set out no clear political direction. However, the congress belatedly enacted a key reformist demand of the Prague Spring by deciding to federalize the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia into two autonomous national parties. While the Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS) had formally existed since 1930, in the Czech Lands a 'new' party had to be created, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM), formally established on 31 March 1990.¹⁵ Other than this, the most concrete changes made were measures to democratize and decentralize party organization, including formal recognition of the role of 'platforms' (factions).

Grzymala-Busse argues that reformers within KSČM were marginalized at an early stage by the encouragement of the highly visible, but politically ineffective, 'platforms' among those few Czech Communists with ideas about how to meet the challenge of democratic politics at that time. They were thus, she argues, prevented from launching an early pre-emptive strike to transform the party into a post-communist social-democratic formation as occurred in neighbouring Slovakia with the Communist Party of Slovakia (KSS) (later the Party of the Democratic Left (SDL)). Rather than tradition and historical legacies, the key variable, she argues, was the strategy of a small number of elite actors and their failure to capitalize on the unique political opportunities offered by the post-transition period.

Such an approach rightly reinstates the importance of political contingency and internal party dynamics into the former ruling party's

adaptation to democratic politics. However, it focuses on the period before 1993 – and principally on events in 1990–91 – and addresses itself more to the *failure* of reformers in the KSČM than the success of the ‘neo-communists’ who took control of the party in 1993 and their subsequent strategy. Crucially, it does not address the issue of how and why the ‘neo-communist’ orientation proved a more politically viable strategy, sustainable in the relatively long term both electorally and within the party itself. We therefore need to refocus our analysis of political agency within KSČM on the nature of neo-communists’ *successful* political choices and strategies in the period 1990–93. Such an analysis not only implies that the historically derived constraints of the Czech communist tradition were perhaps greater than Grzymala-Brusse suggests, but also offers some insight as to why KSČM was subsequently able to stabilize itself as a ‘neo-communist’ party.

Internal Conflicts and Competing Electoral Rationalities 1990–93

The KSČM’s isolation in the 1990s as an ‘orthodox’ party must to a large extent be seen as the result of a conscious collective choice to adopt a ‘neo-communist’ strategy, rather than a simple reflection of historical legacies, or a one-off instance of elite miscalculation in the immediate post-transition period. It was the outcome of a complex and prolonged internal political struggle in the years 1990–93, which engaged both party elites and substantial sections of the party’s grassroots membership and saw the formulation of sophisticated rival projects for the former ruling KSČM’s adaption to post-communist democratic politics.

The Failure of Reform

According to observers, three broad currents were discernible in KSČM as early as January 1990: ‘democratic socialist’, ‘reformist’ anti-Stalinist, and ‘neo-Stalinist’.¹⁶ From late 1990, such alternatives increasingly found their way into the mainstream internal politics of the party. At the first KSČM congress in Olomouc in November 1990 Jiří Svoboda, a film director and non-conformist intellectual, was elected party chairman, defeating the more conservative Jan Machalík by 387 votes to 248.¹⁷ A reformer essentially in agreement with the ‘democratic-socialist’ current, Svoboda sought to transform the KSČM into the basis of a solid, well-organized Left acceptable to a broad section of Czech society, by salvaging the democratic and progressive aspects of the communist tradition and dropping the word ‘communist’ in favour of the label ‘Democratic Socialist’ or ‘Radical Left’. Svoboda and his allies initially adopted a relatively evolutionary approach, intending to change the party’s name at the Olomouc congress to a

transitional ‘Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia: Party of Democratic Socialism’.¹⁸ However, while delegates approved a ‘democratic socialist’ programme they rejected the name change.

By 1991–92, factional conflicts were openly emerging inside the party. The creation of a social-democratically-oriented Democratic Left faction by younger Communist deputies was paralleled by the growing militancy of conservative communists, including the neo-Stalinist ‘Marxist-Leninist Clubs’.¹⁹ In 1991 the Democratic Left successfully called for a referendum of members on changing the party name. However, in the referendum, held in 1992, 75.94 per cent of those voting opted to retain the existing name.²⁰ The second KSČM congress, held at Kladno in December 1992, showed the growing strength of conservatives in the party, reinterpreting the 1990 Olomouc programme as a starting-point for the KSČM, rather than a definitive statement of a post-communist orientation.²¹ However, Svoboda – who was in hospital and unable to attend the congress after a near-fatal assault by a presumed anti-communist extremist – was overwhelmingly re-elected party chairman in a highly charged atmosphere. In January 1993, a number of prominent figures in the pre-November 1989 regime, such as the former Prague party leader Miroslav Štěpán and the former interior minister Jaromír Obzina, who had been readmitted to the party, triggered an internal party crisis by forming the ‘For Socialism’ platform, which called unashamedly for the restoration of the old regime.²² Such open communist revanchism led Svoboda to intensify his campaign to reform the party. He demanded the expulsion of the ‘For Socialism’ leaders, an immediate change in the party’s name and the adoption of an unambiguously post-communist orientation. When on 10 March 1993 the KSČM Central Committee excised Svoboda’s key concept of ‘democratic socialism’ from its declaration, he announced that he was resigning as party chairman.²³ However, he withdrew his resignation after the Central Committee passed a motion stating that it did not consider the ‘For Socialism’ leaders to be members of the party and called the party’s third congress early in June 1993 to resolve the issues of party name and identity. In the succeeding weeks it quickly became apparent at pre-congress district conferences that Svoboda’s strategy would be heavily defeated, as two-thirds of KSČM district organizations supported retention of the party’s existing name.²⁴ Facing defeat, Svoboda declared that would neither seek re-election as chairman, nor remain a member of an unreformed KSČM.²⁵

The Neo-Communist Alternative

Svoboda viewed the choice facing the KSČM as one between neo-Stalinist obscurantism and post-communist ‘democratic socialism’.²⁶ However, from 1992 onwards a third, ‘neo-communist’ faction, derived from the ‘reformist

anti-Stalinist' current observed in 1990, emerged in the party, seeking a middle way which would retain the communist character of the party while jettisoning crude anti-democratic neo-Stalinism. The third KSČM congress, which was held in the town of Prostějov, produced a clear victory for the neo-communist faction and its conception of the party.²⁷ It rejected the idea of a name change and elected as party chairman the leading neo-communist candidate Miroslav Grebeníček, a former university lecturer in history who had been one of the party deputy chairmen. However, it also voted to expel the leaders of the 'For Socialism' platform – whose politics Grebeníček and other neo-communists had always firmly rejected – and abolished any formal role for platforms in the party on the grounds that they gave too much influence to minorities.²⁸

Although space precludes detailed analysis of rival internal strategies,²⁹ there were a number of tactical and organizational factors underlying Svoboda's failure and the neo-communists' victory. First, the extensive post-November 1989 democratization and decentralization of party structures gave district organizations substantial autonomy, making radical reorganization driven by the centre unfeasible. Second, Svoboda seems to have underestimated the importance of ideology and identity to KSČM members, as is suggested by his assertions that rank-and-file communists were 'decent people' who had joined the party from essentially public-spirited motivations.³⁰ Finally, Svoboda's tactics of seeking a rapid resolution of key issues by focusing on the symbolic question of the party name further weakened his position and mobilized opposition against him. However, it is puzzling that such a degree of division should have convulsed the party, given the apparent broad policy consensus on other issues. Post-communist 'democratic socialists' and neo-communists agreed on many important issues: the idea of democratization after 1989 as a free-market 'property putsch' (*majetkový puč*); the key aspects of the party's social and economic policy (egalitarian, statist interventionist, nationalistic); the nature of the party's social constituency (losers in transformation); and the need to reject neo-Stalinism.

However, the conflict over the apparently symbolic issue of the party's name concealed different assessments of the party's past and different strategies for its future resting on contradictory rationalities of electoral competition. For post-communist reformers, with the exception of the 1968 Prague Spring, communist rule was largely a period of crimes and 'inexcusable violations of human rights',³¹ which had collapsed in November 1989 because it was rightly rejected by the people.³² 'Real socialism', reformers argued, would always be an unattractive political model, indelibly associated with the communist party.³³ The name 'communist' was therefore 'a kind of burden, which drives both our

deputies and our party as a whole into a corner',³⁴ making it naive to imagine that in any social crisis voters would automatically turn nostalgically to the communists.³⁵ Moreover, having, as they saw it, adopted a non-communist 'democratic socialist' programme (at Olomouc), the KSČM had already ceased to be a communist party and, logically, should signal this to the Czech public by changing its name.³⁶ Moreover, at the tactical level, Svoboda and his supporters noted, the splitting of Czechoslovakia at the end of 1992 had removed the potential for a left-wing federal coalition with Slovak parties, leaving the KSČM and the Czech Left in a new, more right-wing-dominated Czech party system.³⁷

Conversely, however, if the policies of the Czech Right faltered, opportunities for the Left would open up. While KSČM on its own was too weak to constitute a viable Left,³⁸ it would be, they argued, well placed to act as the core of a left-wing alliance, if it could make itself acceptable to potential coalition partners and win over emerging social groups. In January 1992 the KSČM formed the Left Bloc (LB),³⁹ an electoral coalition linking it in the Czech Lands with a number of tiny left-wing groups, which in the June 1992 elections polled 14 per cent of the Czech vote and emerged as the largest Czech opposition party. The creation of the Left Bloc was intended as a step towards the creation of such a post-communist electoral alliance, organized along the lines of the Polish Democratic Left Alliance.⁴⁰ However, to make such an alliance viable, Svoboda argued, the KSČM not only had to change its identity but also 'gradually to seek the outline of a common minimum programme' capable of 'uniting the opposition (from centre to radical left)'.⁴¹ However, if the KSČM were to miss the 'historic opportunity that social development will undoubtedly offer' then other left-wing forces would ultimately take that role, leaving the communists an isolated, declining political sect with an elderly membership and declining organization.⁴²

In purely ideological terms, neo-communists viewed Svoboda's concept of 'democratic socialism' as unacceptable because it was a social-democratic programme of ameliorating capitalism, rather than a communist programme of seeking a systemic alternative. This, they argued, was not only a denial of the party's identity and *raison d'être* but not a real alternative given the apparent exhaustion of West European social democracy. However, neo-communists such as Miroslav Ransdorf, the faction's leading ideologue, offered ideas of an 'expansive transformation' of the KSČM as an alternative to Svoboda's project which rested on a quite different rationale, countering all the key arguments advanced in the reformist project. 'Neo-communists' viewed the issue of the party's name as a distracting and irrelevant one, imposed on the party from outside.⁴³ A new name, they argued, would be cosmetic and unnecessary, as *any*

successor party would always be associated by the Czech public with its communist predecessor.⁴⁴ Moreover, for neo-communists, maintaining a communist identity was 'a symbol that we have not gone down on our knees'.⁴⁵ Neo-communists also saw Svoboda's project as undemocratic and dangerous because it was attempting to impose a predetermined set of changes from above, rather than seeking an orientation that could attain majority support within the party through its newly democratized internal mechanisms. He was thus, in their view, risking a potentially disastrous split.

Neo-communists were sceptical about the strategic assumption that it would be possible to create a single broad left-wing bloc: the communist and social-democrat programmes were, they claimed, incompatible, and moreover in the Czech Republic the centre-left was already occupied by the Social Democratic Party (ČSSD). Neo-communists countered the examples of the success of post-communist parties in Poland and Lithuania cited by reformers, by noting the models of orthodox parties in Western Europe, such as the French Communist Party and the Italian 'Communist Refoundation'.⁴⁶ Rather than risk alienating the party's loyal electorate, neo-communist thinkers such as Ransdorf concluded that '[i]t would be rational to appeal to those citizens Social Democracy cannot catch'.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Ransdorf and other neo-communists consciously accepted the neo-communist strategy's costs. While considering that communist isolation was exaggerated and partly surmountable through local activism, they accepted that in the foreseeable future the party would be isolated and confined to a purely defensive and oppositional stance. Ransdorf, for example, wrote of holding a 'line of defence for the movement and the rights of working people'.⁴⁸ Communists, he argued, should think in the long term and 'not fear years in the wilderness and have the courage to swim against the tide (*jít proti proudu*)'.⁴⁹ Overall, therefore, neo-communists' analysis of both the internal dynamics of their own party and the wider context of Czech politics, led them to see their strategy as more principled but also more realistic than a project of post-communist social democratization.⁵⁰

Such competing perceptions and strategies can be viewed in more than purely local and descriptive terms. Kitschelt, for example, has distinguished two fundamental logics that parties in competitive multi-party systems may follow: 'a logic of constituency representation' where a party's 'organization, strategy and progress are derived from the ideology of their core support groups in society' and a 'logic of electoral competition' in which parties 'adapt political stances to appeal to their marginal sympathizers in order to maximize electoral support'.⁵¹ By giving priority to the demands of the KSCM's loyal mass membership and existing voters, the

neo-communist orientation can be seen to follow a 'logic of constituency representation', which gave the party's chances of gaining political influence a lower priority than its role of representing its established supporters. Svoboda's strategy of transforming the KSČM into an electorally attractive, coalition-building Party of Democratic Socialism or a broad Left Bloc, by contrast, reflected 'a logic of electoral competition'.

In this context it is tempting to see Svoboda's strategy as a 'rational' course and the 'neo-communist' outcome as an irrational or 'sub-optimal' deviation from it introduced by the distorting effect of ideology and tradition. In theoretical terms, rational choice and party competition literature has long noted that the institutional dynamics between internal party actors can lead parties as to adopt electoral strategies that are 'irrational' in terms of party competition.⁵² However, as Kitschelt observed more recently, there are typically a number of potentially rational strategies open to parties in a competitive party system, all of which will characteristically involve trade-offs.⁵³ It may therefore not be straightforwardly possible to determine which set of strategic assumptions was more realistic or more 'rational', given the need to maintain the party not only as an electorally successful force, but also as an internally stable organization.

A 'Subcultural Party'?

As with other Eastern and Central European party phenomena, in the case of the KSČM the conceptual tools of Western-based party literatures do not seem fully adequate. A 'logic of constituency representation' is usually characteristic of newly formed parties with highly mobilized, ideologically motivated support interested in wide-ranging policy change and the intrinsic rewards of participation, an example being the Green parties which emerged in Western Europe in the 1970s and 1980s. It is true that since 1993 the KSČM has made sustained efforts to reformulate its ideology in democratic, but nevertheless communist, terms. Qualitative analysis of KSČM programmatic documents thus reveals a relatively coherent, if eclectic, ideology centering on resistance to capitalist restoration and foreign influence; an étatistic vision of a market economy with a dominant public sector; rejection of Czech membership of NATO and a highly sceptical view of accession to the EU; and a limited and ambiguous critique of the period of communist one-party rule.⁵⁴

Despite its lack of political influence, the KSČM has also consistently devoted considerable efforts to researching and drafting detailed policy and legislative proposals. However, the KSČM cannot really be considered a newly formed party and its rank-and-file members do not seem to have been

strongly mobilized or policy-seeking. Internal KSČM documents repeatedly bemoan the failure of members to take an active interest in party activities, 'self-government' and policy discussion.⁵⁵ Rather than substantive policies, KSČM membership and core support seem motivated more by a sense of tradition and identity – what Panebianco terms 'identity incentives' – most usually found in the memberships of long-established historical parties in established democracies.⁵⁶

However, the notion of the 'subcultural party', developed by Enyedi using a case study of the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) in Hungary, may offer a means of resolving such paradoxes. The 'subcultural party', Enyedi argues, is defined as a type of party rarely, but not wholly exceptionally, found in Eastern and Central Europe, based on a distinct, culturally defined segment of society with similar lifestyles, 'common norms, values and convictions', 'feelings of solidarity and loyalty to each other' which is organizationally expressed by the party and affiliated organizations.⁵⁷ While echoing the 'encapsulation' strategies of historical mass parties, such a 'subcultural strategy' need not imply mass organization, but merely the creation of networks of 'social organizations that claim to represent the values and interests of a culturally and ideologically well-defined group'.⁵⁸ Such an approach thus represents a low-yield but relatively low-risk strategy in a context of rapid change, provided that the party subculture can be protected from external erosion.

The KSČM's social constituencies and organizational structure in the 1990s reveal precisely such a picture of a 'subcultural party' with a 'mass' organization that has depth rather than breadth. First, to a significantly greater extent than other successor parties in Eastern and Central Europe the KSČM has retained a mass membership and organization. The party is numerically by far the largest political organization in the Czech Republic, with its membership of 136,000 more than double that of its nearest rival, the Christian Democratic Union (KDU–ČSL).

Estimates and internal data suggest that after post-transition losses and further sharp decline in the period 1991–93, membership stabilized at a slowly declining level of 100,000–200,000 (see Table 1),⁵⁹ although the party's branch network is declining more rapidly than these figures suggest, as networks of branch chairmen and councillors and district party organizations are increasingly replacing local branches as the effective organizers of local activity.⁶⁰

Despite having succeeded in re-creating a central apparatus and a nationwide organizational network based on a territorial rather than a work-place basis, the KSČM membership has rapidly become one largely composed of retired people, with internal party sources suggesting that among those members who remained in the party after 1989, the largest cohort joined in

KSČM AS A NEO-COMMUNIST SUCCESSOR PARTY: CZECH REPUBLIC 107

TABLE 1
KSČM MEMBERSHIP 1990–99

	Total membership	% aged over 60	% of workers	No. of basic organizations
1990 (30 June)	562,529	39.8	29.9	n/a
1991	355,045	51.6*	21.0*	n/a
1992	354,500	n/a	n/a	10,669
1993	317,100	n/a	n/a	8,530
1995	195,443	n/a	n/a	7,030
1997	154,900	n/a	n/a	5,826
1998	142,500	70 (est.)	n/a	5,545
1999	136,500	n/a	n/a	5,406

Sources: *Dokumenty I. Sjezdu KSČM*, p.10; *Dokumenty II Sjezdu KSČM*, pp.16–17; *IV Sjezdu KSČM*, p.36; *Lidové noviny*; 'Draft report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM) on the Party's work in the period between the 4th and 5th Congresses'. Figures relate to 1 January where not stated.

* Projection based on 12 districts (58,000 members).

the immediate post-war period. For example, a report to the 1992 KSČM congress, based on an extensive membership survey, showed that 37.4 per cent of members had joined the party during 1945–48, compared with only 18.2 per cent who joined during the height of the 'normalization' period (1971–80).⁶¹ Moreover, since 1990 the KSČM has attracted few new members – figures from 1992 suggested, for example, that only 0.5 per cent of party members had joined after that date⁶² – and the party had particularly weak appeal for young people: the KSČM youth organization, the Communist Union of Youth (KSM) was estimated to have had only 250 members in 1998.⁶³ Internal structural relationships within the party also reflected a 'mass' conception of party organization. Despite limited investment in information technology, elite–mass links were mainly organized through a hierarchical organizational pyramid and face-to-face contacts at local level, as well as through the party's daily and weekly newspapers *Haló noviny* (circulation 30,000–40,000) and *Naše pravda*, which served both as an internal channel of communication to the rank-and-file members and as the party's main chosen means of informing the Czech public about itself.

The 'subcultural' nature of KSČM is most strongly suggested, however, by analysis of its electoral and social base. The KSČM itself has consistently seen its constituency in broad populist terms as all those 'working people' (*lidé práce*) and groups 'whom the capitalist system existentially threatens, pushes out to the margins of society and offers no real chance of change',⁶⁴ 'social groups who derive their living from the results of honest work, in either the past or the present, and from deserved social benefits. ... industrial and agricultural workers ..., farmers in transformed co-operatives, ... and other employees', small businesspeople, the self-employed and 'socially weak and threatened groups such as young people, pensioners and women'.⁶⁵ From 1992 the KSČM sought to organize this constituency directly by developing itself into a locally-based left-wing social movement, a 'civil society in miniature',⁶⁶ around the party's organizational network and by sponsoring a Programme of Active Social Self-Defence (PASS). The PASS strategy sought to establish links between the party and relevant civic initiatives and organize a range of non-political activities and services of practical interest to the KSČM target constituencies (for example, legal advice, social events, and 'popular' business ventures [*lidové podnikání*]).⁶⁷

However, the KSČM's real social base was considerably narrower than this envisaged broad popular national constituency. Polling from June 1996, for example, showed that, compared with those of other parties, supporters were disproportionately likely to be aged over 60 (47 per cent), retired (51 per cent), on a low income (54 per cent) or resident in small or medium-sized towns (40 per cent). Economically active communist supporters were more likely to be industrial and agricultural workers or members of the police and armed forces.⁶⁸ Moreover, at the level of civil society, as the party itself conceded as early as 1995, it has been consistently unable to influence many 'civic initiatives' beyond a number of small groups already closely aligned with the party such as the anti-German Club of the Czech Borderlands (KČP) or the Clubs of Left-wing Women. The Programme of Active Social Self-Defence, while 'relatively successful' in organizing social activities, was also admitted to have been in practice incoherent and lacking in political impact, as were attempts to sponsor new left-wing trade union organizations.⁶⁹

A number of further points emerge when we consider the KSČM's relationship with its social constituency in conjunction with the nature of the party's organization and political geography. The first point of note is the remarkably high ratio of KSČM members to voters, which in the two most recent legislative elections (1996, 1998) has been one of approximately 1:4.⁷⁰ In other words, to a considerable extent, the party's members and sympathisers *were* its electorate. Secondly, we should note the consistently

high percentage of core voters and the party's lack of 'marginal' support throughout the 1990s. A poll of April 1998, for example, found that 83.5 per cent of KSČM supporters had voted for the party in 1996⁷¹ and that 77 per cent felt strong or relatively strong attachment to the party, the highest such figures for any Czech party.⁷² Finally, as ecological analyses of spatial voting patterns reveal, the communist vote after 1989 has shown both remarkable geographical stability⁷³ in terms of localities and a close correlation with historical (1946) patterns of communist support.⁷⁴ KSČM support thus appeared to be based on a distinct historically and generationally defined group. As Czech sociologists have noted, it is precisely this communist-oriented generational group, for whom the war and immediate post-war years were a formative political experience, who were most favoured by 'real socialism' in terms of social mobility and, later, by structures of remuneration and social benefits.⁷⁵

KSČM in a Changing Party System: Dynamics of Breakthrough or Dynamics of Breakdown?

From 1993 until 1999, the KSČM was internally stable and its leadership secure and solidly supported by its members and voters.⁷⁶ In this period the communists maintained their relatively strong position in local politics in two sets of communal elections (1994 and 1998) and against expectations also managed to gain a small number of representatives in the Czech Senate which was elected in 1996 and 1998 on a first-past-the-post basis, by successfully mobilizing its support in the context of a generally low turnout. The party was also relatively successful in the first set of elections held for regional assemblies in late 2000, where both its local organizational presence and low voter turnout combined to the party's advantage. However, the growing left-wing drift in Czech public opinion, detectable from the mid-1990s,⁷⁷ failed significantly to benefit the party in electoral terms at national level. In the (list-based) parliamentary elections the party's vote dropped in 1996 from 14 per cent to 10 per cent, losing 13 of the 35 seats won by Left Bloc in 1992, the greatest loss for any party. In June 1998 the KSČM made a modest recovery, polling just over 11 per cent of the poll, rising from 22 to 24 seats in parliament, and gaining 30,000 extra votes despite a reduced overall turnout.

In its broader political strategy the party made still less headway. Throughout the 1990s the KSČM consistently aimed at participation in a coalition government, either of the centre-left or in a Grand Coalition of all significant parties, similar to the transitional 'Government of National Understanding' in 1989–90 or the post-war National Front coalition of 1945–48. The 1995 KSČM Congress, for example, spoke of the formation

of 'a broad left-wing, patriotic, anti-right-wing grouping'⁷⁸ and a coalition government of the left. More recently, in the late 1990s, KSČM leaders such as Vojtěch Filip, chairman of its parliamentary group, have advocated the notion of a 'Government of National Accord' based on the 'widest possible consensus' – and if possible uniting all parliamentary parties – with a 'minimum common programme'.⁷⁹ However, at both local and national levels other parties and important political actors such as President Havel continued to regard KSČM as an extremist pariah party, which could not be considered as an acceptable potential coalition partner. Crucially the Czech Social Democrats (ČSSD), who emerged as the dominant party of the left in the 1996 elections, repeatedly ruled out any co-operation with the KSČM, preferring pragmatic co-operation with the right after inconclusive election results in 1996 and 1998. Thus, from June 1996, until its disintegration due to financial scandal in December 1997, the Klaus-led centre-right coalition government continued as a minority government 'tolerated' by the Social Democrats. Similarly, in June 1998 following early elections, in a reversal of roles the Social Democrats themselves formed a minority administration based on institutionalized co-operation with Klaus's opposition Civic Democrats formalized via a written 'Opposition Agreement'.⁸⁰

However, in late 1999 as the tenth anniversary of the Czechoslovakia's 'Velvet Revolution' approached, to almost universal surprise the KSČM found itself poised on the threshold of an apparent political breakthrough in terms of its political support. In 1998–99, against a background of economic stagnation and growing public disenchantment with both the minority Social Democratic government and the right-wing parties of the former coalition, the communists experienced a sudden and rapid increase in popularity, overtaking both the incumbent Social Democrats and Václav Klaus's centre-right Civic Democratic Party (ODS) to become the most popular Czech party. According to the IVVM polling institute, KSČM support rose from the 10 per cent it received in the June 1998 election to a peak of 23 per cent of potential voters in October 1999 before falling back to 15–20 per cent in 2000.

These shifts in public opinion, which took place at a time when the KSČM itself had not undertaken any significant political initiatives, can be seen as reflecting a number of underlying factors. Principal among these seem to have been the disappearance of the far-right Association for the Republic–Republican Party of Czechoslovakia (SPR–RSČ) as a political force in 1998, some of whose voters gravitated towards the KSČM as a vehicle for protest voting, and the disappointment of many left-wing voters with the performance of the minority Social Democrat government and the 'Opposition Agreement' it had concluded with Klaus's ODS.⁸¹ In more general terms, however, there was a sense of wider malaise, which brought

mainstream political discourse closer to the communist rhetoric of 'crisis' and, despite deep public divisions over the issue, a growing tendency among Czech voters to view the KSČM as 'normal' party, which should not be boycotted (according to 47 per cent of respondents in one survey) or prevented from entering government.⁸²

However, what is of greater interest is the sidelight that the unexpected surge in support for KSČM cast on internal developments and dilemmas within the KSČM. The rapidity and scale of the party's rise in the opinion polls seems to have taken communist leaders by surprise and their reactions to it were deliberately muted. Despite hints that the KSČM's fifth congress in December 1999 might see a significant public rethinking of party strategy, the substantive resolutions adopted took almost no account of the party's increased popularity.⁸³ Indeed, they painted a relatively pessimistic picture of an isolated but 'consolidated' party, which was in some respects significantly less optimistic than that given four years previously.⁸⁴

The congress also seems to have abandoned the grander vista of the Programme of Active Social Self-Defence: resolutions recognized, for example, that attempts to create a communist-led trade union grouping, the Association of Trade Unions of Bohemia and Moravia (founded in 1995), had conclusively failed, and urged members simply to maintain links with existing communist-oriented groupings and local non-political associations. In ideological terms, despite incorporating the notion of globalization and global opposition to capitalism and slightly softening its language towards prospective Czech accession to the EU, the resolutions adopted contained few detectable shifts compared with those of 1995. The party's leadership also remained largely unchanged, with Grebeníček re-elected party leader by a wide margin over his nearest challenger, the more conservative Václav Exner, a KSČM deputy chairman, who received 23 per cent of delegates' votes.

Indeed, paradoxically, the rise in support appears to have temporarily halted leadership plans for some degree of public realignment by the party, first suggested in a speech by Grebeníček to a programme conference of the party in early 1999. In this speech he argued that the KSČM was strategically placed to move from a defensive phase during which it had consolidated itself as a reinvented but nevertheless recognizably communist party to a new phase, in which it could win and exercise a share of political power and in which a degree of adaptation and rethinking might be necessary. In Grebeníček's view, the party could thus realistically aim to be part of a governing coalition at national level within the next ten years.⁸⁵ Such moves were linked with public attacks by the leadership on the party's small but vocal neo-Stalinist wing, the first such criticisms since 1993.

Despite the establishment in 1995 of a separate neo-Stalinist splinter party, the Party of Czechoslovak Communists (SČK),⁸⁶ small neo-Stalinist

groupings such as the magazine *Dialogy–otázky–odpovídi* and its ‘readers’ circles’ had continued to function within the KSČM. Moreover, the party’s tiny youth organization, the Communist Union of Youth (KSM), also appears to be strongly revanchist in outlook.⁸⁷ In January 1999 Grebeníček therefore spoke out against left-wing ‘infantile disorder’ on the part, he claimed, of some older members whose had failed to understand the party’s critique of the ‘first historical form of socialism’ or to assess realistically the changed political situation after 1989. While few in number, he argued, ‘they often make a lot of noise, [and] may end up devaluing the self-sacrificing work of KSČM members of all ages’ by depicting the whole party as neo-Stalinist.⁸⁸

Early 2000 also saw a campaign by the leadership to deregister a number of local party branches in Prague, which, according to the leadership, were thoroughly neo-Stalinist and characterized by an atmosphere of ‘cadre revenge’ and whose members were said to be ‘unable to communicate and bring in [political] elements which communists had dealt with ten years ago’.⁸⁹ However, KSČM leaders’ newly-found desire to challenge and rid the party of hardline neo-Stalinists and revanchist elements in order to increase the party’s acceptability and electoral appeal, with its strong echoes of Svoboda’s abortive campaign of 1992–93, provoked opposition from the more conservative communists within the party leadership, most notably Václav Exner, who challenged Grebeníček for the leadership at the 1999 congress. The prospect of electoral growth and, perhaps more distantly, that of holding governmental office raised by the growing unpredictability of the Czech party system in the mid- to late 1990s, seems once again to have brought to the fore the destabilizing conflict between a ‘logic of constituency representation’ linked to the maintenance of a distinct communist identity and a strategy of mass organization and a ‘logic of electoral competition’ centring on vote maximization and office-seeking.

Conclusions

KSČM’s ‘non-social-democratization’ and its adoption of a distinct neo-communist strategy after 1989 reflected both structural–historical factors, which had shaped a specific communist tradition in the Czech Lands, and contingent political choices in the period 1990–93. Key among such choices were the tactics adopted by both the weak reformist forces within the party and their neo-communist opponents. However, a critical factor in the emergence and stabilization of KSČM as a neo-communist party was the ability of the neo-communist faction to articulate a strategy and ideology, which were relatively coherent; capable of winning majority support within the party; and representing an adjustment to the reality of post-communist

democratic politics. In this respect, the KSČM's decision in 1993 to adopt a neo-communist rather than a post-communist strategy represented a relatively rational adjustment to competing internal, electoral and conjunctural pressures, which preserved the KSČM organizationally and politically for much of the 1990s. The party's success in maintaining itself allowed it to benefit from subsequent instabilities in the Czech party system in the late 1990s. However, the party's continued lack of coalition potential, reflecting a broader lack of acceptability and legitimacy in Czech society, remains a fundamental problem for it. Indeed, it seems that without inter-party realignment, the possibility of growth in its electoral support may in fact be a potential danger to the KSČM. For, in increasing the attractiveness and viability of a 'logic of electoral competition', the surge in support in 1999–2000 seems to have undermined many of the assumptions underlying the party's strategy of slowly building on its stability as a 'subcultural party'. The dilemma of choosing between – or rather combining – logics of 'constituency representation' and 'electoral competition' (a dilemma faced by many contemporary left-of-centre parties in both Western and Eastern Europe⁹⁰) therefore seems likely to reassert itself even in an atypical and outlying case such as the neo-communist 'subcultural' KSČM.

NOTES

1. Atilla Ágh, *The Politics of Central Europe* (London: Sage, 1998), p. 155.
2. John Nagle and Alison Mahr, *Democracy and Democratization: Post-Communist Europe in Comparative Perspective* (London: Sage, 1999), pp.179 and 180 respectively.
3. Michael Waller, 'Adaptation of the Former Communist Parties of East-Central Europe: A Case of Social-democratization?', *Party Politics*, Vol.1, No.4 (1995), pp. 473–90; John T. Ishiyama, 'The Sickie or the Rose?', *Comparative Politics*, Vol.30, No.3 (1997), pp.299–330; Isaac Bigio, 'The Successor Parties in Eastern Europe: From Social Democracy to National Communism', *Labour Focus on Eastern Europe*, No. 68 (1998), pp.31–62; D. F. Ziblatt, 'The Adaptation of Ex-Communist Parties to Post-Communist East Central Europe: A Comparative Study of the East German and Hungarian Ex-Communist Parties', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 2 (1998), pp.119–37; M. Orenstein, 'A Genealogy of Communist Successor Parties in East Central Europe and the Determinants of Their Success', *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol.12, No.3 (1998), pp.472–99.
4. See, for example, P. Fiala and M. Mareš, 'Česká veřejnost a extremismus politických stran' and 'Programová analýza SPR–RSC a KSČM z hlediska politického extremismu', in P. Fiala (ed.), *Politický extremismus a radikalismus v České republice* (Brno: Masaryk University, 1995), pp.80–94 and 95–110.
5. Herbert Kitschelt, *The Logics of Party Formation* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); Zsolt Enyedi, 'Organizing A Subcultural Party in Eastern Europe: The Case of the Hungarian Christian Democrats', *Party Politics*, Vol.2, No.3 (1996), pp.379–96.
6. See Herbert Kitschelt, *Party Systems in East Central Europe: Consolidation or Fluidity?* (Glasgow: Centre for the Study of Public Policy, University of Strathclyde, 1995), and Herbert Kitschelt, Zdenka Mansfeldová, Radoslaw Markowski and Gábor Tóka, *Post-Communist Party Systems: Competition, Representation and Inter-Party Cooperation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
7. Kitschelt, *The Logics*; Kitschelt *et al.*, op. cit.
8. See David W. Paul, *The Cultural Limits of Revolutionary Politics: Change and Continuity in*

114 JOURNAL OF COMMUNIST STUDIES AND TRANSITION POLITICS

- Socialist Czechoslovakia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979); and Jacques Rupnik, 'The Roots of Czech Stalinism', in Raphael Samuel and Gareth Stedman Jones (eds.), *Culture, Ideology and Politics* (London: Routledge, 1982).
9. See Rupnik, *op.cit.* See also his *Histoire du parti communiste tchécoslovaque* (Paris: Presses de la Fondation nationale des sciences politiques, 1981).
 10. Anna Grzymala-Busse, 'Reform Efforts in the Czech and Slovak Communist Parties and Their Successors 1988–1993', *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol.12, No.3 (1998), pp.442–71; citations on pp.469 and 443 respectively.
 11. *Ibid.*
 12. A full transcript of the relevant Central Committee discussions on 24–26 November 1989 has been published in Czech: Marianna Krtilová (ed.), *Poslední hurá* (Prague: Edice Propadliště dějin/Cesty, 1992).
 13. Hastily devised stratagems such as attempts by communist deputies to have the president directly elected or instructions that communists infiltrate local Civic Forum branches were wholly ineffective.
 14. Jan Obrman, 'Communist Party Changes its Structure', *Report on Eastern Europe*, 2 Feb. 1990, pp.1–2.
 15. The 'federated' Communist Party of Czechoslovakia continued until December 1991, when national and political differences, including links between the KSČM and conservative Communist breakaway groupings in Slovakia, led the Slovak party – renamed Party of the Democratic Left (SDL) in February 1991 – to cut formal ties with the Czech communists.
 16. Petr Vilhelm, 'Zůstat, vystoupit, přestoupit?', *Tvorba*, 1990, No.3 (17 Jan.), p.23.
 17. Jiří Pehe, 'Changes in the Communist Party', *Report on Eastern Europe*, 30 Nov. 1990, pp.1–5.
 18. 'Co chystají komunisté', *Svobodné slovo*, 25 June 1990, p.3.
 19. J. Svoboda, 'Dopis delegátům', *Haló noviny*, 26 June 1993, p.2.
 20. Out of 291,783 votes (representing an 82.3 per cent turnout), 221,575 opposed changing the party name, and 69,007 were in favour. The Democratic Left itself, frustrated at the slow pace of reform, had already broken away from the KSČM in December 1991 to form the short-lived Democratic of Labour (DSP): 'Sebevědomě vsťíc voličům', *Naše pravda*, 1992, No.10, pp.1 and 8.
 21. See *Dokumenty II. Sjezdu KSČM* (Prague: ÚV KSČM [KSČM Central Committee], 1992).
 22. Published in full in 'Za socialismus', *Haló noviny*, 27 March 1993, p.5.
 23. 'J. Svoboda oznámil svou rezignaci', *Haló noviny*, 11 March 1993, p.1.
 24. See *Dokumenty III. Sjezdu KSČM* (Prague: ÚV KSČM [KSČM Central Committee], 1993).
 25. Svoboda, 'Dopis delegátům', p.2
 26. J. Svoboda, 'Strana na rozcestí', *Naše pravda*, 1993, No.9 (5 March), p.2.
 27. The label 'neo-communist' was used by the party in its 1993 congress documents, but was dropped in 1995 after proving a focus of criticism because of its implications of a break with the communist tradition.
 28. 'J. Svoboda oznámil svou rezignaci', p.1. Delegates from the post-communist minority led by Central Committee member Josef Mečl then left the congress to found a post-communist breakaway party, the Party of the Democratic Left (SDL).
 29. For a fuller discussion see Grzymala-Busse, *op.cit.*
 30. See interview with Svoboda, 'Mýlil jste se někdy?', *Haló noviny*, 23 June 1993, p.1, and Svoboda, 'Dopis delegátům'.
 31. J. Svoboda, 'S kým jít a s kým se rozejít', *Haló noviny*, 27 Jan. 1993, p.3.
 32. *Ibid.*
 33. J. Svoboda, 'O straně, která je na rozcestí', *Haló noviny*, 24 Feb. 1993, p.5..
 34. J. Svoboda, 'Všechny důvody k ofensivní činnosti', *Haló noviny*, 8 March 1993, pp.4–5.
 35. Zdeněk Masopust and Josef Mečl, 'Česká politika: prostor a výzva', *Haló noviny*, 5 March 1993, p.7.
 36. Svoboda, 'O jedno proším', *Haló noviny*, 23 Feb. 1993, and 'O straně, která je na rozcestí'.
 37. Masopust and Mečl, 'Česká politika: prostor a výzva'.
 38. Zdeněk Masopust and Josef Mečl, 'Proč KSČM transformovat?' *Haló noviny*, 19 June 1993, p.3.
 39. The largest was the Democratic Left of Czechoslovakia led by Lotar Indruch, itself an early breakaway from the communist party. At federal level the Left Bloc was a coalition of the

KSČM AS A NEO-COMMUNIST SUCCESSOR PARTY: CZECH REPUBLIC 115

- KSČM and the Slovak communists, now renamed Party of the Democratic Left.
40. In Svoboda's view the Left Bloc was 'in embryonic form the co-operation necessary to achieve social change ... [and] the overcoming of the traditional contradictions between the communist, social-democratic and Christian-social left': J. Svoboda, 'Obhajujeme a rozvíjíme občanskou společnost', *Naše pravda*, 1993, No.4 (29 Jan.), pp.2–3.
 41. To this end, in April 1993 Svoboda offered Left Bloc's participation in the 'Realist Bloc' of left-wing parties proposed by newly elected Social Democrat leader Miloš Zeman. However, the Social Democrats and all other potential participants rebuffed the offer.
 42. Svoboda, 'O straně, která je na rozcestí'.
 43. M. Grebeníček, 'Přání je otcem myšlenky', *Haló noviny*, 12 March 1993, p.1.
 44. Vratislav Novák, 'O nebezpečích ohrožujících stranu', *Haló noviny*, 28 April 1993, p.1.
 45. M. Ransdorf, 'Nesvoboda pod Svobodou', *Naše pravda*, 1993, No. 12.
 46. M. Grebeníček, 'Jsem přesvědčen, že lidé potřebují stranu našeho typu', *Naše pravda*, 1993, No.21, p.3.
 47. Ransdorf, 'Nesvoboda pod Svobodou'.
 48. Ibid.
 49. Ibid.
 50. Grebeníček, 'Přání je otcem myšlenky'.
 51. Kitschelt, *The Logics of Party Formation*, p.48.
 52. See, for example, George Tsebilis, *Nested Games: Rational Choice in Comparative Politics* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990); Patrick Dunleavy, *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice* (New York: Harvester/Wheatsheaf, 1991); Herbert Kitschelt, *The Transformation of European Social Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
 53. A key argument made in Kitschelt, *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*.
 54. For a fuller analysis of KSČM ideology see Seán Hanley, 'From Subcultural Party to Neo-Communist Force?' in A. Bozóni and J. Ishiyama (eds.), *A Decade of Transformation: Communist Successor Parties in Central and Eastern Europe* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe: forthcoming).
 55. A 1995 KSČM Congress report, for example, complains of members' ignorance of party policy and a parochial absorption in local affairs, 'passive reactions, [and] a tendency to wait for the views of the leadership and approve them without discussion': *IV. Sjezdu KSČM* (Prague: ÚV KSČM [KSČM Central Committee], 1995), pp.38–44 (p.44).
 56. Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organisation and Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
 57. Enyedi, op. cit., p.379.
 58. Ibid., p.378.
 59. Figures broadly confirmed by the party's electoral activity at local level and its reported income from membership dues: see, respectively, Tomáš Kostecký and Aleš Kroupa, 'Party Organization and Structure at National and Local Level in the Czech Republic Since 1989', in Paul G. Lewis (ed.), *Party Structure and Organization in East-Central Europe* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1996), pp.89–115, and Markéta Matoušková, 'Rozpory mezi členy a přispěvků', *Lidové noviny*, 30 Nov. 1995.
 60. 'Draft report of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM) on the Party's work in the period between the 4th and 5th Congresses', p.11 (published on-line in December 1999 at <<http://www.kscm.cz/dokument/zpr4-5sje.htm>>).
 61. *Dokumenty II. Sjezdu KSČM*, p.36.
 62. Ibid.
 63. 'Gottwalda baví práce s lidmi', *Lidové noviny*, 2 April 1998, p.3.
 64. *Za občanskou a sociální spravedlnost* (Prague: Ústřední volební štáb KSČM [KSČM Election Headquarters], 1996), p.1.
 65. *IV. Sjezdu KSČM*, p.44.
 66. M. Grebeníček, 'Předseda M Grebeníček se obrací na členy a příznivce: KSČM a Levého bloku', *Haló noviny*, 29 June 1993, p.2.
 67. Vratislav Votava, 'Aktivní sociální sebeobrana', *Naše pravda*, 20 Jan. 1993, p.3.
 68. P. Machonin et al., *Strategie sociální transformace české společnosti* (Brno: Doplněk, 1996), pp.122–5; 'Předčasné volby v číslech', *Svobodné slovo*, 22 June 1998, and 'Nejvíce hlasů nepomohlo Zemanovi k vítězství', *Svobodné slovo*, 22 June 1998.

116 JOURNAL OF COMMUNIST STUDIES AND TRANSITION POLITICS

69. Adam Novak, 'The Last Communist Party in Europe', *East European Reporter*, May–June 1992, pp.28–9.
70. 626,136 votes in 1996 compared with an estimated 160,000 members; 658,550 votes in 1998 compared with the party's own figure of 136,500 members in 1999.
71. 'Čtvrtina někdejších voličů ODS by nyní podpořila US', *Právo*, 29 April 1998, p.3.
72. 'US a DŽJ mají nejmenší voličské jádro', *Lidové noviny*, 29 April 1998, p.4.
73. Tomáš Kostecký, 'Changing Party Allegiances in a Changing Party System: The 1990 and 1992 Parliamentary Elections in the Czech Republic', in Gordon Wightman (ed.), *Party Formation in East-Central Europe* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1995), pp.79–106.
74. Tomáš Kostecký, Petr Jehlička and Ludek Sýkora, 'The Czechoslovak Parliamentary Elections of 1990: Old Patterns, New Trends and Lots of Surprises', in John O'Loughlin and Herman van der Wursten (eds.), *The New Political Geography of Eastern Europe* (London: Belhaven, 1993), pp.235–54, and Tomáš Kostecký, 'Economic, Social and Historical Determinants of Voting Patterns in the 1990 and 1992 Parliamentary Elections in the Czech Republic', *Czech Sociological Review*, Vol. 2 No. 2 (1994).
75. See Jiří Večerník, *Markets and People: The Czech Reform Experience in a Comparative Perspective* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1996), p.255.
76. Polling in early 1998 showed that only 13 per cent of KSČM supporters were dissatisfied with the leadership of Grebeníček: 'Co si lidé myslí o stranách...', *Týden*, 1998, No. 9, p.11.
77. See Petr Matějů and Blanka Řeháková, *Turning Left or Class Realignment? The Changing Relationship between Class and Party in the Czech Republic 1992–96* (Prague: Institute of Sociology, 'Social Trends' Working paper No.1, 1996), and Petr Matějů and Klara Vlachová, 'Values and Electoral Decisions in the Czech Republic', *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (1998), pp.249–69.
78. *IV. Sjezdu KSČM*, pp.38–44 (p.44).
79. 'Vojtěch Filip: i kdybychom ve volbách vyhráli...', *Lidové noviny*, 2 April 1998, p.3.
80. This agreement was later extended and further formalized in the 'Patent of Toleration' signed by the two parties in early 2000.
81. A STEM poll of July 1999 suggested that 30 per cent of communist supporters were former Social Democrat voters and the Social Democrats had lost 20 per cent of their 1998 electorate to the communists: 'Voliči ČSSD přecházejí ke komunistům', *Lidové noviny*, 21 July 1999, p.2. For fuller details see the STEM on-line archive of party preferences, at <<http://www.stem.cz/scripts/vismo/preference/index.asp>>.
82. 'Většina lidí proti izolaci KSCM', *Právo*, 11 Jan. 2000.
83. Proposals from some district organizations for new initiatives to capitalize on the surge in support, such as the proposed appointment of a deputy chairman for youth, were rejected by the congress.
84. The congress largely conceded that little could be done to stop the slow erosion of the party's mass membership and organization, and also noted that it had failed to connect with its chosen constituencies, including key target groups such as blue-collar workers and residents of rural areas.
85. 'Vystoupení předsedy ÚV KSČM Miroslava Grebeníčka na programové konferenci KSČM v Praze dne 30. 1. 1999', <<http://www.kscm.cz/dokument/gre30199.htm#navestí1>> (p.3).
86. In May 1995 Miroslav Štěpán and other expelled leaders of 'For Socialism' founded the neo-Stalinist Party of Czechoslovak Communists (SČK); however, SČK's main rationale was to influence and re-integrate with KSČM, and it has now renamed itself the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ).
87. 'Stalinisté viní Ransdorfa, že je příliš vstřícný ke kapitalismu', 2 April 1998, p.3; see also 'Grebeníček: KSČ selhala, proto přišel kapitalismus', *Mladá fronta dnes*, 6 Dec. 1999.
88. 'Vystoupení předsedy ÚV KSČM Miroslava Grebeníčka ...', *op.cit.*
89. Jiří Dolejš, head of KSČM's Prague regional organization, cited in Jitka Götzová, 'Komunisté podporují rozchod s lidmi, kteří volají po minulosti', *Právo*, 13 March 2000, p.3; see also Jitka Götzová, 'Grebeníček: Vedení KSČM chce zrušit organizace dogmatikům', *Právo*, 9 March 2000.
90. See Kitschelt, *The Transformation of European Social Democracy*.