

## ON THE POLITICAL DIFFERENTIATION OF CZECH SOCIETY AT THE TURN OF THE 19TH AND 20TH CENTURIES. ESTABLISHMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CZECHOSLAVONIC TRADER'S PARTY IN MORAVIA

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*The 1990s represent one of the historical turning points in the character of Czech political partisanship. It brought an end to the existence of honorary political parties as a loose grouping of a narrow class of elites and triggered the beginning of well-organized communities with a solid, mass membership-based internal structure and expansion of their electoral potential by establishing interest affiliate organizations offering benefits to supporting voters. At the same time, the change in the parties' character was accompanied by processes of political differentiation in Czech society as an expression of its modernization and desire to complete national emancipation and the creation of its statehood. The result was the creation of several new political parties and, at the same time, the creation of political camps, which became the foundation of the emergence of the Czech society pillar political structure. With a certain time lag, the processes of political differentiation in Czech society in the first decade of the 20th century were completed by efforts to form Czech professional political parties, comprised of the so-called old urban middle classes, i.e. tradesmen, craftsmen, and merchants. In the initial phase, their founders believed that they could promote their economic interests on the political scene through established civic and socialist political parties. However, quite quickly, the elites of small entrepreneurs abandoned this vision and began to seek to establish a professional trader's political party. In Bohemia, three professional political parties were established in the short period between 1903 and 1909: the Trader's Progressive and Independent Party in Bohemia, the Trader's Party in Bohemia in the Czech Kingdom, and the Czechoslavonic Trader's Party. These were honorary-type organizations or pre-party units that just started searching for their party identity. The failures of the traders' parties in the elections to the Reich Council and the Landtag revealed a weakness in the cooperation tactics. They contributed to the transformation or the disappearance of said parties. The situation in the trader's movement in Moravia was different. The Trader's Party was formed here compared to Bohemia with a slight time lag, but its founders immediately began to form it as a mass political party. The Czechoslavonic Trader's Party in Moravia, founded in 1908 in Prostějov, even though in the short period before the outbreak of World War I, it went through a building phase, is the first successful attempt to create a standard, classical political party in the Bohemian territory. This study reflects its efforts for internal consolidation and integration into the Bohemian party-political system of pre-war Moravia.*

**Keywords:** political party, professional middle classes, tradesmen, political differentiation of Czech society, Moravia, 20th century.

**Formulation of the issue.** A simplified view of the historical development of political partisanship in the Czech lands reveals the variability of this phenomenon over time. From the beginnings related to the revolutionary events of 1848/9 and the restoration of constitutionality in the Habsburg monarchy in 1861 to the present, political parties have gone through three stages of development, which have their own distinctive features. The phase of honorary-type political parties was replaced by the stage of existence of mass political parties. In the third stage, these modernized types of political organizations are complemented by the emergence of political movements, whose program emphasizes more interest than ideological postulates.

The subject of our interest are the processes of transformation of honorary political partisanship into mass partisanship, which took place at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries and are associated with the political differentiation of Czech society [Malíř, 2005a, pp. 21–44]. It was a relatively complicated phenomenon. The Czech lands were not politically independent. They formed an

integral part of the Habsburg monarchy and were governed by a governorship, as the highest administrative body. In addition, their territory was not ethnically homogeneous, but nationally mixed. Up to a third of the population was of German ethnicity. Moreover, it was not a national minority, but a politically privileged and advanced group of the population occupying important positions in both economic and political life [Křen]. The German population of the Czech lands was also going through a process of political differentiation, so that parallelly working and essentially autonomous party-political systems on a national basis were emerging in individual countries. Public and political life in the Czech lands was characterized by national tensions and conflicts.

With regard to our topic, we will pay attention only to the process of political differentiation in the majority Czech environment, in Bohemia and Moravia; the situation in Silesia was complicated by clashes between the Czech, German and Polish ethnic groups, and economic and political development in the country was delayed. We cannot explain the reasons for the differentiation

movement in the political spectrum of Czech society only by people's dissatisfaction with the results of efforts to promote national interests achieved by the first Czech civic political parties called the National Party (the so-called Old-Bohemian, founded in 1861) [Cibulka] and National Liberal Party (the so-called Young Czech Party, founded in 1874) [Malíř, 2005b]. It was a manifestation of the final phase of the modern Czech nation forming process in the conditions of the emergence of a modern industrial society, whose goal in the political field was to achieve its own statehood [Kořalka, 1996]. The process of politicisation of society was fundamentally influenced by electoral reforms (in 1882, 1896 and 1907), which resulted in the exchange of the curatorial electoral system for elections under universal suffrage [Krejčí, pp. 45–90].

Until the early 1990s, the political interests of Czech society were represented by five political parties<sup>1</sup>. In addition to the civic political parties mentioned above, there were also political organisations of the nobility, the Conservative Estate Party [Georgiev] and the Constitutional Estate Party [Velek]. Although it was an honorary group, small in number and already anachronistic in a democratising modern society, it was still politically influential and survived until the outbreak of the First World War. The fifth political party was the Czechoslovak Social Democratic Workers' Party (founded in 1878) [Kořalka, 2005]. Due to the party's socialistic program, until the early 1990s, the state, elites and a large part of the society had quite some difficulties in coping with its existence.

The processes of political differentiation hit Czech society hard in the 1890s. The processes took place relatively quickly and resulted in the formation of four political camps and the so-called pillar structure of society. Over the course of ten years, a relatively wide network of professional and ideologically oriented political parties emerged in both countries. They developed their activities either only on a provincial scale, or the Moravian associations joined the Czech ones as institutional or ideological factions. The Catholic political camp consisted of two types of a party [Marek, 2005]. The National Catholic Party in Bohemia (founded in 1897) and the Catholic National Party in Moravia (founded in 1896) were groups of conservatively oriented Catholics from the middle and upper social classes, while the Christian-Social Party in Bohemia (founded in 1894) and the Moravian-Silesian Christian-Social Party (founded in 1899) was inspired by the encyclical of Pope Leo XIII. *Rerum novarum* and their base of members consisted of Catholic-oriented workers and the lower middle classes. The socialist camp included the Social Democrats, who in 1911 still constituted a breakaway Social Democratic Czechoslavonic Workers' Party in Austria (the so-called Centralists). Their opponents, the National Socialists, joined the National Czechoslavonic Workers' Party (founded in 1897) [Harna]. The Moravian Brothers quickly merged their National Workers' Party in Moravia (founded in 1898) with the organization in Bohemia (1898). From the future point of view, the establishment of the Czech Agrarian Party (founded in 1899) in Bohemia was

fundamental, which immediately merged (in 1905) with the Czech Agrarian Party for Moravia and Silesia (founded in 1904). Under the motto "The countryside – one family", they gained control over the rural area and the Czechoslavonic Agrarian Party gradually developed into the position of the strongest Czech political group [Rokoský]. Masaryk's political stream of the so-called realists in 1900 constituted a small, but in terms of influence, especially on the more educated sections of the population, Czech People's Party, which in 1905 transformed into the Czech Progressive Party [Kučera, 2005a]. The political current of the so-called progressives also underwent organizational changes. After an episode with the Party of Progressive Socialists (1896 – 1897), they founded the Czech Radically Progressive Party (founded in 1897) and the Czech Constitutionalist Party (founded in 1899). Finally, after the merger of the parties, both wings met in the Czech Constitutionalist Progressive Party (founded in 1908) [Kučera, 2005b]. The followers and progressives of the Young Czech Party in Moravia followed different political paths. Their political parties worked on a provincial principle. Followers of the Young Czech Party founded the People's Party in Moravia (founded in 1891), from which the People's Party in Moravia (the so-called Bulín's Party) got separated in 1913 [Malíř, 2005c]. The progressive movement in Moravia after the episode with the so-called Young Moravia (1896 – 1897) resulted in the constitution of the Progressive Party in Moravia (founded in 1907), which quickly converged with the People's Party and the development resulted in 1908 in founding the People's Progressive Party in Moravia [Malíř, 2005d].

**Study objectives.** The above outlined process of the political differentiation of Czech society, which, in terms of time, falls into the period of the so-called extended 19th century, is not complete. Although it resulted in the emergence of a relatively wide range of new political parties, complementing older party entities, there were still certain social groups or classes that were not satisfied with the results of the political differentiation process. Even in this wide spectrum, they could not find speakers and advocates for their interests. Frustration with the impossibility of finding a political entity willing to promote a specific program of these population sections was reflected in the call for the establishment of other political parties. There was a strong voice, especially from the members of the so-called old city middle class, i.e. tradesmen, craftsmen and merchants. Since the beginning of the 20th century, we can note attempts to constitute a professional political party associating members of this productive and social category.

Historical research on the issue of the middle classes, their composition, life and role in society in the Czech environment lags behind in the long run [Hlavačka, p. 254], however, their importance is not to be overlooked [Machačová-Matějček, pp. 213–268]. Although we cannot base this claim on more accurate statistical data, the partial findings are eloquent. The middle classes made up 15–20% of the Czech lands' population before World War I

<sup>1</sup> In the notes concerning individual political parties, we intentionally refer to the synthesising work of Malíř, J. - Marek, P., *Political Parties* (2005), as the authors of the articles reflect the basic historical features

of the development of these parties and, at the same time, provide a comprehensive list of archival and printed sources and literature, which allow researchers to further study the issue.

[Hlavačka, p. 253]. From this number, the number of tradesmen, craftsmen and merchants can be estimated at up to 1 million [Podstata středního stavu a středostavovské politiky, zvláště živnostenské, 1910]. The economic base of the Czech nation consisted of handicraft production, retail and services; the other half of agriculture [Hlavačka, p. 398]. It is therefore understandable that, thanks to electoral reforms, the entry of a certain part of this population mass into political life aroused political party elites' interest in its organizational support. The traditional political base of tradesmen and merchants was represented by the National Liberal Party in Bohemia and the People's Party in Moravia. However, the introduction of universal suffrage also activated most of the newly established political parties in the struggle for acquiring small and artisanal entrepreneurs, which established special satellite, affiliated organisations for this class [Marek, 1996, pp. 30–45]. The result of these efforts was the organisational-political fragmentation of the class of tradesmen and merchants, which was complemented by efforts to constitute a new professional trader's party without any ties to existing political parties.

Our contribution evokes attempts to establish a professional trader's party, which we reflect on in the years before World War I in the Czech lands. We pay main attention to the political party of the Czechoslovakian Trader's in Moravia, which we perceive as the first successful attempt to build a classic mass political party of the urban middle class, i.e. a social group classified as the so-called old middle class. Given the overall organisational fragmentation of tradesmen and merchants, which included a relatively strong tendency to resign from politics and the creation of non-political organisations based on trade regulations and federal law, and the short time to the outbreak of World War I, which, de facto, interrupted political life in the Czech lands, the party remained undeveloped, in the founding phase of its development. Nevertheless, we perceive its establishment as an important stage in the process of pre-war political differentiation of Czech society and, at the same time, we see it as one of the basic building stones of the future post-war Czechoslovak Trader's Party, which formed an integral part of the party-political system of the first Czechoslovak Republic (1918 – 1938). Although it was not one of the key political parties for which we consider the "Five Parties", at the same time, it also has its place and importance in the system of Czechoslovak interwar democracy [Marek, 1995; Kárník, pp. 311–320; Harna, pp. 121–124].

**Analysis of sources and literature.** The legal order of the Habsburg monarchy considered political parties to be subjects of private law. Therefore, it did not impose on them the obligation to document their activities and archive documents. The consequence of this fact in the Czech environment is the absence of archival funds of political parties. If evidence of their activities has been preserved, it is a torsion of party archives. They are usually stored in the personal funds of party officials, deputies or other important members. For the trader's political movement, i.e. its professional political party, none of the mentioned types of archive funds has been preserved. That is why we are forced to base our research on printed sources, primarily on the party press. A key source for us is the weekly *Zpravodaj* (eng. *Newsletter*, later renamed the

*Živnostenský zpravodaj*, (eng. *Trader's Newsletter*) as the central press body of the Czechoslovakian Trader's Party in Moravia, which was published throughout the party's existence and allows us to monitor both its genesis and activities until World War I. Given that the party leaders were also involved in the professional political parties in Bohemia, *Zpravodaj* (Newsletter) makes it possible to reflect on the situation throughout the Czech lands. The periodicals of the Czechoslovakian Trader's Party, the *Československý deník* (Czechoslovak Daily) and later the *Moravský deník* (Moravian Daily) published in the interwar period are also a rich source of information. With regard to the fact that it was the successor party's press body, the newspaper editors were turning to the history of their predecessor and to the issue of politicisation of the Czech professional trader's movement quite regularly and published a number of historical excursions and memories of the party and activities of the party's founders from the years before the war. We work critically with the party press as a historical source. The historiography of the politicisation of the Czech trader's movement is relatively poor. The topic can be described as more or less overlooked. The reasons can be found in the mentioned problems with the source base for research and in the fact that the role of tradesmen political parties in the Czech party-political systems was marginal. In the reality of the pre-war environment, they were actually only looking for their identity. On the other hand, it cannot be overlooked that the parties completed the form of these systems and the reflection of the political thinking of small entrepreneurs as a social class is indispensable for understanding the role of the middle classes in society [Machačová-Matějček]. The historiographical reflection of Czech political partisanship, including analyses of the society political differentiation processes in the period before World War I, has moved forward qualitatively and quantitatively since the early 1990s and is of interest to both historians and political scientists. In this case, we refer to monographs, anthologies and journal studies cited in a collective monograph prepared by J. Malíř and P. Marek [Malíř – Marek, 2005].

**Research results.** The establishment of the political parties of the Czech traders was preceded by several years of discussion about the politicisation of the trader's movement. It basically divided small entrepreneurs into three opinion groups (supporters, opponents, indifferent) and gained in intensity always in connection with the results of the provincial and imperial elections, in Moravia especially in 1905 – 1907 [Anděl; Pastyřík; Mlčoch, 1924]. The vast majority of tradesmen and merchants rejected the establishment of a professional political party. They feared that political involvement would negatively affect their clients and harm them economically. They preferred to join organisations established on the basis of the Trade Act (trade associations and merchant bodies), or interest groups (associations). They relied on the fact that the provincial unions of trade associations and merchant bodies were able to enforce their demands at the provincial and national levels thanks to ties to existing civic political parties. Supporters of the establishment of the professional political party did not reject the creation of non-political organisations, however, the results of the elections pointed to the fact that there was a minimum of tradesmen among the elected deputies, i.e.

that they were exclusively members or candidates of established political parties, arguing in favour of politicising the trader's movement. They claimed that the elected deputies primarily defended the interests of their parties, and not primarily the tradesmen and merchants. They wanted to establish a professional political party that would eliminate this fact. They believed that the formation of a professional political party would free tradesmen and merchants from the dependence on civic and socialist parties, help eliminate their organizational fragmentation, and ensure the size of this social class (in connection with elections) would ensure its competitiveness on the political scene. The emergence of political professional parties can be described as the victory of the minority current trader's movement.

We consider the establishment of the Czech Progressive and Independent Trader's Party to be the first attempt to form a professional tradesmen's political party. It appeared in the party-political system of Bohemia only for a short period, in 1903 – 1907. It was an honorary-type political party (or a pre-party organisation), whose members came mainly from the territory of southern Bohemia, although its ambitions extended to expanding its scope throughout the country. The party presented the economic program of the Czech traders [Živnostenský program, pp. 7–17]. The main goal of its activity was to gain the representation of tradesmen at the Czech Landtag and the Reich Council in Vienna through deputies professionally associated with the small producers, but their political profile (i.e. belonging to a political party) was not yet a decisive criterion for their nomination. A certain partial shift in the direction of constituting a classical political party was the existence of the Bohemian Trader's Party in the Czech Kingdom in 1905 – 1907, which managed to gather the tradesmen in Central Bohemia. Also in this case, it was an honorary-type party, which had already resigned from the headquarters of the local federal-based organisation and its basic components were free associations, but from a programme and tactical point of view, it did not exceed the scope of an organisation focused on enforcing economic requirements of small entrepreneurs through cooperation with existing civic political parties (Kuchynka; K naší organizaci, 1905]. From a formal point of view, the Czechoslavonic Trader's Party in Bohemia came closest to the typology of the modern mass political party in 1909 – 1914, which, however, permanently solved basic existential problems and did not develop major political activities.

Regardless of all the limits associated with the duration and functioning of the Czechoslavonic Trader's Party in Moravia (1908 – 1914), we consider this organisation to be the first classical political party to operate in the Czech area. Its establishment in Prostějov appears to be the result of the organisational work of the local Association of Tradesmen and especially the agitation of the magazine Zpravodaj (Newsletter), the press body of the District Union of Trader's Associations, in the years 1905 – 1908. The newspaper office was then led by the accountant of the local Credit Union, 25-year-old trained basket maker Rudolf Mlčoch (1880 – 1948) [Rudolf Mlčoch]. On the pages of the periodical, he promoted the idea of establishing a professional trade union political party as a spokesman for the interests of small craftsmen, tradesmen and merchants. He pointed to

the fact that existing political parties, posing as their advocates, allegedly did not fulfil this role.

The fact that the party was formed outside the natural centres of Moravian political happenings [Malíř, 1982; Malíř, 1985, pp. 115–116] in Prostějov, was not a coincidence. After the transition of self-government into the hands of Czech representatives (1892), the city went through a period of all-round development [Marek, 1999] and became one of the economic, social and cultural Moravian centres of richly developed small-scale production [Marek, 1989]. The political and social activities of middle class members also reflected this fact. A group of capable and ambitious organizers (e.g. Václav Beck Jr., Ignác Streck, Jaroslav Babička, Ferdinand Foltin, etc.) gathered on the premises of the Industrial Union [Novák] and the District Union of Traders' Associations, later grouped in the Trader's Association, purposefully and determinedly following the idea of constituting a professional political party. The agitation on the Zpravodaj (Newsletter) pages was complemented by organising numerous meetings of tradesmen and people's camps, especially in the Prostějov region. Their aim was to convince the participants of the need to obtain the representation of tradesmen at the Landtag and the Imperial Council. The only path leading to it was to create their own professional political party. The later, First Republic partisan tradition complemented this motivation and extended it with the words of the deputy and later President, T.G. Masaryk, at the Imperial Council in Vienna on April 9, 1908, when he declared that tradesmen must establish their own political party in the same way as agrarians and workers [Mlčoch, 1923]. This was supposed to be not only the current, but also the last call for the organisers. The subjective factor that anchored the party in Prostějov was the personality of the mentioned R. Mlčoch. He was not only an ambitious, but also an organizationally capable, hard-working and purposeful man who was determined to establish the party and was able to involve his co-workers.

The Czechoslavonic Trader's Party was established in two time phases. The district trader's conference on April 20, 1908 in Prostějov with the participation of about a hundred confidants from the political districts of Prostějov and Olomouc can be considered as a preparatory congress. The participants discussed the drafts of basic party documents and elected an interim provincial executive committee of the party led by V. Beck Jr. and the provincial confidant of the party, R. Mlčoch [Mlčoch, 1928]. They founded the political party de facto. However, they realized that they were participants in a local, provincially limited event, while their ambitions extended to the scope of the organisation within the whole Moravia. Therefore, the elected bodies were instructed to prepare a new, constitutive congress of the party in a short time, this time with the participation of delegates representing all major Moravian trade centres. After an eight-month relatively very intensive agitation campaign and using, inter alia, the tradesmen's desires to guarantee old-age and disability insurance of professional middle classes of the population of expanding the party as the idea for the party's expansion, the congress was held again in Prostějov on January 3–6, 1909. The traders' press cheered on the transformation of the organisation offering membership to

tradesmen and merchants from all over Moravia, however, the publicly published statistical data on the party's membership base are relentless: confidants represented about 2,000 members grouped in 40 local associations from the Central Moravia region and a few other localities (Vsetín, Královo Pole). Therefore, the old-new leadership was also given the task not only to strengthen the party internally, but especially to expand the field for its action. The presence of guests such as Josef Václav Najman (1882 – 1937) [Marek, 1997; Jakubec, 2007; Beneš, 1932] and Antonín Karel Mrha (1875 – 1947), representing the Trader's party in Bohemia at the congress, offered one of the possibilities. However, despite the absence of reliable data on the party's number of members, we can say that until the war, its base did not exceed 3,000 members. It also penetrated into other Moravian regions, but the core of the organisations was located in Central Moravia. In the party tradition, the party's foundation date was firmly connected with April 20, 1908 [Marek, 1983].

We have identified the Czechoslavonic Trader's Party as the first modern party unit in the history of the trader's movement. From the organisational point of view, it had the classical structure of a mass political party (basic, district, regional, provincial organizational articles) [Organizační řád, 1908]. It differed from other parties of this type only in the absence of a satellite system of affiliated organisations. This was related to the initial phase of forming the party, when a small circle of officials at headquarters put all their efforts into founding local organisations in individual Moravian regions and did not have the time and strength to create other components, but also to the current programme rejection of the self-help cooperative movement. The party considered them as competitive businesses weakening the position of independent small entrepreneurs.

However, we consider the party's programme a major breakthrough in the current development of the politicisation of the traders' movement. In comparison with all other programme documents created on the basis of political and non-political professional organisations, the party for the first time crossed the line of close interest in economic issues related to tradesmen and merchant entrepreneurship and also took a position on national, political, social and cultural development of the nation and the whole Czech society. With this step, the party reached a level comparable to other political parties, which offered their membership base the defence of all interests and needs, not just economic ones. It opened up space for the potential possibility of having those tradesmen and merchants, who were not satisfied with the poor programme and thus joining civic and socialist political parties, to join the party. Although articles of this nature take the form of brief propositions in the programme and the document, as a whole, lags far behind to comparable materials at the same level (enumeration of requirements, absence of philosophy, postulates without explanation), it is undoubtedly a step towards fulfilling the standard of a political party [Osнова programu, 1908].

The change in the nature of the party's programme rules was markedly reflected in the content of the central party periodical, which was the weekly Zpravodaj (Newsletter). Compared to other politically and non-politically oriented newspapers of the traders' movement,

it began to change rapidly. It was founded in 1905 from a purely class-oriented periodical, dealing only with economic issues affecting the entrepreneurship of tradesmen and merchants (this topic remained) and changed into a classic political paper which, to a limited extent, was following and critically commenting on Czech politics, events in society and later, before the war, also events in the world, i.e. in the Habsburg Monarchy and its neighbourhoods.

The results of the study of the party's internal life in the context of its provincial Moravian party-political system involvement before World War I, show that its activities significantly affected the reaction of political parties and the traders' movement to its establishment. In both cases, it was not favourable. None of the political parties (Social Democratic, National-Social, Agrarian, People's/People's Progressive, Catholic-National, Christian-Social) evaluated its creation as a positive step towards satisfying the population's political and economic interests and all responded by creating their own traders' satellite organisations. With this measure, they faced the danger of small entrepreneurs leaving their parties and weakening their own membership base. Subsequently, they argued that the professional political party did not actually have its own *raison d'être* within the trader's movement. With the exception of agrarians, all political parties rejected the professional principle of the trader's party organisation [Marek, 1984a].

This negative attitude found concrete expression in the preparations for and during the elections to the Imperial Council and the Moravian Landtag in 1911 and 1913 [Marek, 1984b]. For the first time in the history of the Czech trader's political movement, the the Czechoslavonic Trader's Party in both cases drew up its own candidate list, exclusively including only its members. However, attempts to find a partner willing to form a coalition were not successful. When the party found a partner in the provincial elections, the People's Progressive Party, it turned out that the offer of cooperation was not sincere, but it was part of a strategy aimed at liquidating or weakening of the trader's party. The number of votes that voters cast for its candidates is dismal. In the imperial elections of 1911, they received a total of 3,005 votes (for comparison, Catholics 128,072, Social Democrats 91,881, Agrarians 64,637, People's Progressive 21,529). None of the mandate candidates was shortlisted. In the second elections round, the party supported some Agrarians or members of the People's Progressive Party [Výsledky říšských voleb, 1911]. In the provincial elections, the party introduced three candidates for the mandate [Kandidátní listina, 1913]. One of them eventually withdrew his candidacy and the other reconsidered it and participated in the elections as a non-party supporter. In the end, only R. Mlčoch ran for the party, who succeeded in the first election with 577 votes and lost to the popular progressive František Šery by four votes in the second ballot with 735 votes [Politika msty, 1913].

In the case of the reaction of the professional trader's movement to the party's establishment, the criticism of its formation is not as clear as it was for political parties, as there were supporters of the establishment of a professional trader's political party, but also from formal, very reluctant consent expressions of

some central professional institutions (more pronounced in Bohemia than in Moravia), it is clear that it was accepted as a reality, but without any enthusiasm.

The organisation's leadership, in which R. Mlčoch maintained an active and self-sacrificing leadership position, in response to the adversity encountered by the party's establishment, wanted to prove, in spite of everything, that its existence not only makes sense but can also become an influential and competitive force, both within the trader's movement itself and between established political parties. Therefore, it paid priority attention to the party's apologia and agitatedly defended it within both professional and political organisations. However, the party considered building its own strong and functional organisational structures to be the most effective weapon. The party entered political events in Moravia only to a limited extent, rather at the local than the provincial level, trying to get positions in trade organisations (unions, business bodies, associations, cooperatives), administrative bodies (district road committees) and in self-government (municipal committees, city councils). The party had certain difficulties to assert itself in communal politics, yet it was represented in several municipal committees (e.g. Holešov, Litovel, Rosice, Fryšták, Dolany, Doloplazy, Brodek u Prostějova, etc.).

The penetration into the mentioned structures was accompanied by organising meetings, conventions and people's camps, which, in addition to agitation and propaganda on the pages of their own press, seem to be the most significant feature of the party's entry into public affairs. The party management used them as an activity to recruit new members, strengthen existing organisations and gain voters, and connected them with the presentation of their programme postulates. Most of the resolutions adopted at these assemblies went to the party's membership base. However, some of them were sent by the organisers to the central trader's institutions, selected imperial and provincial deputies of other political parties who had a reputation as advocates of traders' interests, or

directly to the Moravian Landtag or the Provincial Trader's Council. In June 1912, on the initiative of the party's leadership, a Working Body for Trade and Merchant Affairs was created on its premises, the task of which was to evaluate the actions of council committees in areas related to trade and merchant issues, monitor government policy and the performance of Czech deputies. The conclusions of this committee in the mentioned areas of interest can be called critical [Marek, 1983].

**Research conclusions.** The analysis of the political differentiation issues in Czech society at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries showed us that the time limit of this process, traditionally associated with the period of the 1890s, should be extended to the outbreak of World War I. At the beginning of the 1910s, after several years of the trader's movement leaders discussing about the optimal model of organisation and tactics in defending professional interests and demands led to the first attempts to establish political parties with a membership base consisting exclusively of members of the so-called old middle class, i.e. tradesmen, craftsmen and merchants. The party elites of these organisations saw the meaning of the existence of these components in the design of a quality professional economic programme, which would be promoted at the Vienna Imperial Council and Landtags by deputies professionally linked with small-scale production, but by members of civic and socialistic political parties who show interest in the traders' economic programme and in its advocacy. The organisations themselves did not want to enter political life. Only practical experience convinced them of the unreality and unproductiveness of such a tactical approach and hence they re-evaluated the organisational forms, the programmes were modified in terms of their enrichment with the definition of ideological, political and cultural direction and the adoption of a new strategy of political behaviour. These changes were the sign of completing the process of the search for the professional trader's political party identity and its transformation into a standard mass political party.

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## SUMMARY

### ПРО ПОЛІТИЧНУ ДИФЕРЕНЦІАЦІЮ ЧЕСЬКОГО СУСПІЛЬСТВА НА МЕЖІ XIX ТА XX СТОЛІТЬ. СТВОРЕННЯ ТА РОЗВИТОК ПОЛІТИЧНОЇ ПАРТІЇ ЧЕСЬКО-СЛОВ'ЯНСЬКИХ ПІДПРИЄМЦІВ У МОРАВІЇ

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Дев'яності роки XIX століття в історії чеської системи політичних партій – один з ключових періодів, протягом якого змінювався їх характер. Закінчився період існування партій нотаблів як вільного угруповання вузького класу еліт. Почали виникати добре організовані об'єднання з жорсткою внутрішньою структурою, які спиралися на масову членську базу та розширяли свій виборчий потенціал шляхом створення асоційованих

організацій за інтересами, що пропонували вигоди й прихильним виборцям. Цю зміну характеру партій супроводжували процеси політичної диференціації чеського суспільства як вираження його модернізації та прагнення до повної національної емансипації та створення власної державності. В результаті з'явилася низка нових політичних партій і водночас утворилися політичні табори, які стали основою пілларізації чеського суспільства. З певною затримкою процеси політичної диференціації чеського суспільства в першому десятилітті ХХ століття завершилися зусиллями щодо формування станових політичних партій чеських т. зв. старих міських середніх прошарків – дрібних підприємців, ремісників, торговців. Спочатку їх засновники вважали, що свої економічні інтереси на політичній сцені вони просуватимуть через традиційні громадянські та соціалістичні політичні партії. Проте досить швидко еліти дрібних підприємців відмовились від цього бачення та почали докладати зусиль для створення станової політичної партії. За короткий період часу (1903 – 1909 рр.) в Богемії було створено три станові політичні партії: Партія прогресивних і незалежних чеських підприємців, Чеська партія підприємців у Королівстві Богемія та Партія чесько-слов'янських підприємців і торговців. Це були організації елітного типу або протопартійні утворення, які свою партійну ідентичність тільки шукали. Невдачі партій підприємців на виборах до Імперської Ради та земського парламенту виявили слабкість тактики співпраці та сприяли трансформації або припиненню існування згаданих партій. Ситуація в русі підприємців у Моравії була іншою. Станова політична партія підприємців тут сформувалася хоч і з невеликою затримкою порівняно з Богемією, проте засновники відразу ж почали створювати її як масову політичну партію. Політична партія чесько-слов'янських підприємців у Моравії, заснована в 1908 році в Простейові, незважаючи на те, що протягом короткого періоду перед початком світової війни перебувала у фазі будівництва, є першою успішною спробою створення стандартної, класичної політичної партії в чеському просторі. Дослідження відображає її зусилля щодо внутрішньої консолідації та інтеграції до чеської партійно-політичної системи довоєнної Моравії.

**Ключові слова:** політична партія, середні суспільні стани, підприємці, політична диференціація чеського суспільства, Моравія, ХХ століття.