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# Communists as the Heirs of Capitalism? The Dynamic Politicization of Zlín/Gottwaldov Post 1945

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Zlín, Gottwaldov, Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, capitalism, state socialism, national enterprise Baťa/Svit

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## Abstract

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This study deals with the factory town of Zlín in the former Czechoslovakia after 1945, when communists replace Baťa management in the governing bodies of both the company and the municipality. Based on an analysis of regional and central provenance archival materials and contemporary press, and through discursive-historical analyses and considering the perspective of the actors involved, the present study identifies: 1) four informal regional groups of communist elites and 2) two dominant narrative strategies (re)produced by these factions. This paper traces the dynamics of the relationships between these groups and arrives at the conclusion that the main proponents of the post-Baťa narrative were postwar communists from the Baťa factory, while supporters of the anti-Baťa narrative were Hodonín apparatchiks. The first above-named faction dominated city life until 1949. Herein, a more complicated picture of postwar Central and Eastern Europe is presented, where Stalin's master plan of unidirectional Sovietization was not implemented all at once, and where the possibilities for a range of versions of socialism under Soviet supervision were being realized.

While the bulk of interest in the city of Zlín (after 1949, Gottwaldov) and the Baťa concern (after 1949, Svit) has been of yet focused on the interwar period, during which the Baťa family built a globally successful shoe company and made Zlín into a modern company city,<sup>1</sup> in recent years, more works dealing with both the period of the Nazi occupation<sup>2</sup> and the era of state socialism have been published. Most recently, the state of Zlín after 1945 received attention in connection with the beginning of Miloš Jakeš's political career, in a new, synthetic history of the city.<sup>3</sup> An increasing number of publications have examined the (dis)continuity of the interwar, wartime

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- 1 Cf., for example, ŠEVEČEK, Ondřej. *Zrození Baťovy průmyslové metropole. Továrna, městský prostor a společnost ve Zlíně v letech 1900–1938*. České Budějovice; Ostrava: VEDUTA; Ostravská univerzita v Ostravě, 2009; DOLESCHAL, Zachary Austin. *In The Kingdom of Shoes: Bata, Zlín, Globalization, 1894–1945*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2021.
- 2 MAREK, Martin. *Středoevropské aktivity Baťova koncernu za druhé světové války*. Brno: Matices Moravská, 2017.
- 3 BÍLÝ, Matěj. "Jak roste nový člověk." Miloš Jakeš jako regionální komunistický funkcionář. In *Soudobé dějiny/CJCH*, 2023, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 15–67, DOI [10.51134/sod.2023.010](https://doi.org/10.51134/sod.2023.010); KAŠKA, Václav. Od Zlína ke Gottwaldovu. In VALUŠEK, David – ŠEVEČEK, Ondřej – SOMMER, Vítězslav (eds.) *Dějiny města Zlína 2. Moderní město*. Zlín: Statutární město Zlín, 2023, pp. 180–238.

and postwar eras, focusing on the spheres in which Zlín is often considered exceptional among the European context; in its realization of the principles of organized/accelerated modernity.<sup>4</sup> In the past fifteen years or so there has also been an erosion of such tendentious interpretations of the Baťa era as either a purely positive or purely negative stage.<sup>5</sup>

Inspired by these approaches, the present study seeks to continue the trend of critical and source-based writing on the city of Zlín. The field of research will be expanded by way of a reconstruction of the dynamics of the public sphere politicization<sup>6</sup> during the transition period from capitalist Zlín to socialist Gottwaldov. Employing a discursive-historical analysis and taking in to account the actor's perspective, two specific areas will be evaluated: 1) at the level of actors, focusing on regional communist elites as the new key political actors,<sup>7</sup> who will be divided into four informal groups, and 2) at the discursive level, outlining two distinct narrative strategies regarding the capitalist past and the socialist future of the factory and the city that local communist actors (re)produced in order to reckon with the legacy of the successful capitalist concern amongst the new conditions.

In light of such an approach, developments before 1945 are accounted for, although the core of the source base consists of documents from the postwar period. The research mainly draws from sources of regional provenance, particularly contemporary press and minutes from the meetings of district and regional committees of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (Okresní výbor Komunistické strany Československa—OV KSČ, Krajský výbor Komunistické strany Československa—KV KSČ). Minutes from Local, District, Unified and Regional branches of the National Committee (Místní národní výbor—MNV, Okresní národní výbor—ONV, Jednotný národní výbor—JNV, Krajský národní výbor—KNV) meetings as well as employee company cards are also examined. At the national level, materials from the Czechoslovak Communist Party's Central Committee (Ústřední výbor Komunistické strany Československa—ÚV KSČ), the Chamber of Deputies and the security forces are studied as well. In reading, analyzing and interpreting these sources, inspiration was also taken from the methodological approaches used in the cited scholarly literature.

4 Cf., for example, GUZIK, Hubert. Kolektivní domy a sociální politika českých průmyslových podniků v letech 1939–1953. In *Umění (Art)*, 2013, vol. 61, no. 1, pp. 33–56; ZARECOROVÁ, Elman Kimberley. *Utváření socialistické modernity. Bydlení v Československu v letech 1945–1960*. Prague : Academia, 2015; SPURNÝ, Matěj. Vědět a stavět. Kontinuity urbánní expertízy na příkladu Bratislavy v “krátkém” dvacátém století. In *Soudobé dějiny/CJCH*, 2021, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 315–352, DOI 10.51134/sod.2021.009.

5 Cf., for example, HOLUBEC, Stanislav. Silní milují život. Utopie, ideologie a biopolitika baťovského Zlína. In *Kuděj*, 2009, vol. 11, no. 2, pp. 30–55; MAREK, Martin – STROBACH, Vít. Batismus, urychlená modernita a průkopníci práce. Personální politika Baťova concernu a řízení přesuny zaměstnanců v letech 1938–1941. In *Moderní dějiny*, 2010, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 103–153.

6 The noun “politicization” is understood as the action or process of making political or of establishing upon a political basis; the fact of being politically aware or active. In other words, as a derivate of the verb politicize; to make something or someone political, or more involved in or conscious of political matters. See: Oxford English Dictionary, politicization, [https://www.oed.com/dictionary/politicization\\_n?tl=true&tab=meaning\\_and\\_use-paywall](https://www.oed.com/dictionary/politicization_n?tl=true&tab=meaning_and_use-paywall) (last viewed on 17 September 2024); Cambridge Dictionary, politicize, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/politicize> (last viewed on 17 September 2024).

7 Cf. BÍLÝ, Matěj – LÓŽI, Marián – ŠLOUF, Jakub. *Nervová vlákna diktatury. Regionální elity a komunikace uvnitř KSČ v letech 1945–1956*. Prague : Nakladatelství Karolinum, 2019, pp. 8–10.

## The dynamics of relations between regional communist elites

In postwar Czechoslovakia, the process of expanding the sphere of state competence continued, accompanied by the politicization of the public sphere. For example, only 15% of directors and deputy directors of nationalized companies were non-Party members, and 35–40% of these political-economic elites had KSČ credentials.<sup>8</sup> The specifics of the “Third Republic” (1945–1948) were manifested markedly in Zlín. From the time the founder of the company, Tomáš Baťa, became mayor of Zlín in 1923 and had been directing the city’s development, the interwar paternalism of the Baťa family also tended to suppress local political rivalries. The public sphere was to be reserved primarily for activities organized by the concern, while the activities of communists in particular were suppressed. However, the second-largest concern in interwar Czechoslovakia was, like other strategic industries, placed under national administration in May 1945 and in October 1945, it was nationalized by a transfer to state ownership,<sup>9</sup> opening the path to a very dynamic politicization of public events in Zlín. Jan Antonín Baťa had remained abroad from the summer of 1939 and his top management, including Zlín mayor Dominik Čipera, were quickly replaced by communists who ran the city, district and the factories as well.<sup>10</sup>

The communists’ rise to power was consolidated with a victory in the 1946 elections. Although in Zlín, they received a slightly below-average 38.1% of the votes, while the National Socialist Party built upon its good interwar results by taking an above-average 34.2%,<sup>11</sup> the communists claimed success because they reportedly received 80 times more votes than they had during the 1930s.<sup>12</sup> Such optimism stemmed from the fact that at the time, the KSČ only had a few dozen members in the city and it had only taken 5% of the votes in the 1935 election.<sup>13</sup> However, the KSČ’s numbers and influence had grown steadily since 1945 and according to Party statistics, by the first quarter of 1948, approximately ten thousand—one out of five—residents of Zlín and nine and a half thousand employees of the Baťa factories—nearly one third—had joined the KSČ.<sup>14</sup> After the next wave of recruitment, 54% of Svit workers held KSČ membership cards, which placed the company in the category of large factories in Czechoslovakia with an above-average number of communists.<sup>15</sup> Thanks to this representation, the entire Party region boasted the largest proportion of worker-members from all other Czech regions.<sup>16</sup>

8 PAVKA, Marek. *Kádry rozhodují vše! Kádrová politika KSČ z hlediska teorie elit*. Brno : Nakladatelství Prius, 2003, pp. 30–31.

9 KOLUMBER, David. *Spory o Baťův odkaz*. Ostrava : Key Publishing, 2016, p. 19 and pp. 65–66.

10 KUSLOVÁ, Hana. Soumrak batismu ve Zlíně aneb Z osudů českých vedoucích představitelů firmy. In *Acta musealia*, 2005, vol. 5, no. 1–2, pp. 72–78.

11 *Zprávy státního úřadu statistického Republiky československé*, 27. Prague : Státní úřad statistický, 1947, pp. 180–184.

12 Moravský zemský archiv – Státní okresní archiv Zlín (SOkA Zlín), fond (f.) KSČ-OV Gottwaldov (OV KSČ G), inv. no. 20, Minutes of the plenum of the OV KSČ, 9 June 1946.

13 BARTOŠ, Josef – SCHULZ, Jindřich – TRAPL, Miloš. *Historický místopis Moravy a Slezska v letech 1848–1960*, 7. Ostrava : Profil, 1980, p. 204.

14 Moravský zemský archiv (MZA), f. G 561 – KSČ-KV Gottwaldov (G 561), box (b.) 2, inv. no. 3, Brochure for the IV. Regional Conference of the KSČ, March 1948, p. 29.

15 MAŇÁK, Jiří. *Proměny strany moci I. Studie a dokumenty k vývoji Komunistické strany Československa v období 1948–1968*. Prague : Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 1995, Příloha I/2, Zastoupení komunistů mezi zaměstnanci průmyslových podniků v roce 1949, pp. 89–91.

16 MAŇÁK, Jiří. *Komunisté na pochodu k moci. Vývoj početnosti a struktury KSČ v období 1945–1948*.

Given the current state of knowledge, however, it is not surprising that even in Zlín, the regional communist elites did not form an unchanging monolith,<sup>17</sup> notwithstanding their outward party discipline, Marxist-Leninist ideology and aim of monopolizing power. They were also united by basic socio-demographic indicators. Most individuals were distinguished by their original occupation as workers, all of them (with the exception of Miloš Jakeš) were born before the First World War, between 1892 and 1912 and there were no women.<sup>18</sup> However, if we take a closer look at Zlín's postwar communist leaders, we'll find that they came from the lower and middle classes, had received primary, secondary and in one case, higher education, and were mainly distinguished by a) the length of their membership in the KSČ, b) their activities during the Nazi occupation, c) their degree of embeddedness in Zlín and d) employment in the Baťa concern. The first two criteria are more general, and were also tracked by central Party evidence, while the latter two are linked with the city of Zlín. Though all of these character metrics were articulated by period actors as significant, and together they formed these people's lived world and the world of thinking. By combining the four criteria, four informal and unstable groups of regional communist elites can be identified, which are not contemporary nomenclature, but they have been newly created.

If 1945 became a moment of rapid rise to power for the communist elites, their political careers then developed not only through chance, personal interests, or positions in patronage networks, but also according to their flexibility in (re)producing the narratives elaborated below, as well as their affiliation with one of the four groups defined here. These political factions cannot be perceived as closed and unchanging intra-party cliques; rather, they were part of the network of official and unofficial relationships. They are not defined as ideal types in the Weberian sense, but as living groups with which the political actors maintained dynamic and varying strong affinity. In this sense, Josef Kijonka<sup>19</sup> can be seen as an actor who straddled the boundaries of the four groups. On the one hand, he had already been involved with the Communist Party between the wars, and so from May 1945 onwards he projected a strong anti-Baťa rhetoric; but on the other, he had been working in the Baťa concern since 1939, where he associated with the postwar communists from the Baťa factory with whom

Prague : Ústav pro soudobé dějiny AV ČR, 1995, Příloha no. 7, Přehled rozložení členů v místních a závodních organizacích, věkového a sociálního rozvrstvení (podle krajů) k 31. 12. 1947.

17 Cf. BÍLÝ – LÓŽI – ŠLOUF 2019, pp. 280–288.

18 MAŇÁK 1995, *Proměny strany moci I*, Příloha III/1, Složení OV KSČ v českých krajích v roce 1950, pp. 235–236; BÍLÝ 2023, p. 30.

19 Josef Kijonka (1906–?) worked for most of the interwar period as an unskilled laborer in the pipe works in Nový Bohumín, starting in 1939 as a pipe fitter and grinder in Baťa's machine works. From 1945, he held the positions of chairman of the enterprise's work council and chairman of the regional trade union council, and he was also a member of the high echelon of the KSČ leadership for the region. Beginning in autumn of 1948, he was also the concern's director for social and personnel affairs. In 1949, he was appointed Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Welfare. During the party purges, his previous activities were investigated, mainly because of his ties to Ivan Holý. SOKA Zlín, f. Baťa, a. s. Zlín, Signature (sign.) II (Baťa), b. 1094, inv. no. 55, p. no. 1, Recording card of Josef Kijonka; Lidová manifestace ve Zlíně. In *Zlínská pravda*, 15 May 1945, p. 2; KIJONKA, Josef. Spolupracovníci! In *Nový Zlín*, 15 November 1945, p. 1; KIJONKA, Josef. Pracující lid je na stráž! In *Tep nového Zlína*, 20 February 1948, p. 1; ROUŠAR, Přemysl. *Dějiny národního podniku Svit*. Prague : Práce, 1967, pp. 199–203.



his postwar career was closely linked. Kijonka and director Ivan Holý formed a tight duo at the national enterprise, in which union boss Kijonka represented the working class and the “people’s tribune.”

The first group detailed here shall be named the “old Zlín comrades,” because these communists entered the party in Zlín during the interwar period and identified with the narrative of a disciplined, revolutionary handful of Bolsheviks who were persecuted by the “Baťa terror” and who had faced the peak stage of exploitation by big capital with its refined tactic of “bribing workers” with higher-than-average wages. The anti-Baťa self-presentation of one of these “stalwart communists”<sup>20</sup> helped politicize the public sphere and legitimize the communists’ ascension to power during the revolutionary weeks and months after the war. Gradually, however, the old Zlín comrades became the main actors in the party’s politics of memory, which took on a representative form in the anthology *Komunisté vyprávějí... (Communists Retell...)* (1961). In this volume, the central theme of the memoirs is the exceptionally difficult position communists had in Baťa’s Zlín, their struggle against “Batism” and later, also against Nazism.<sup>21</sup> With the exception of Vincenc Červinka,<sup>22</sup> who warned his interwar comrades in 1946, “We cannot follow the old path [...], the party’s tactics are changing [you must eliminate] tendencies to sectarianism, because of the often-illegal work you did in the interwar period,”<sup>23</sup> the old guard did not serve in important positions for a long time because they broke with the postwar party line. They had interpreted the new constellation of power after liberation as a possibility for establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat. First, in liberated Zlín, they began to prematurely unite the KSČ with the Social Democratic Party<sup>24</sup> and as late as autumn 1945, they were still promulgating the idea that “this year we will be integrated into the Soviet Union.”<sup>25</sup>

Functionaries from the second recognizable group, “the Hodonín apparatchiks,” had also entered the KSČ during the interwar period, though they can be distinguished from the first group mainly by the fact that they had not worked in Zlín between the wars. These associates held offices in the regional KSČ leadership, which had its headquarters in Hodonín, or in the district or local party and youth organizations in the Hodonín and Břeclav areas. All were born in the Moravian Slovakia (Slovácko) region and maintained work

20 SOkA Zlín, f. OV KSČ G, inv. no. 20, Minutes of the plenum of the OV KSČ 29 October 1946.

21 *Komunisté vyprávějí... Sborník vzpomínek na 40 let práce Komunistické strany Československa na Gottwaldovsku*. Brno : Krajské nakladatelství, 1961.

22 Vincenc Červinka (1901–1984) was a native of Zlín from a working-class family who had returned from a concentration camp and had lived in the USSR between the two wars. The combination of his desirable past with his flexibility contributed to Červinka repeatedly holding important district and regional party and public functions from the end of the war until the end of the 1960s. He headed the district party organization, twice served as the head of Gottwaldov as the chairman of the National Committee, and was also a member of the National Assembly. MZA, f. B 125 – KNV Gottwaldov (B 125), b. 12, Meeting of the Council of the KNV, 27 December 1949; SOkA Zlín, f. Městský národní výbor Gottwaldov (MěNV G), inv. no. 21, Meeting of the Council of the MěNV, 23 June 1960; Společná česko-slovenská digitální parlamentní knihovna (SČSDPK), Deputies and bodies, Deputies, National Assembly of the Czechoslovakia, <https://www.psp.cz/sqw/detail.sqw?id=910&org=284> (last viewed on 5 March 2024).

23 SOkA Zlín, f. OV KSČ G, inv. no. 20, Meeting of the OV KSČ 29 October 1946.

24 ŠVERMOVÁ, Marie. *Vzpomínky*. Prague : Futura, 2008, pp. 195–196.

25 MZA, f. G 561, b. 23, inv. no. 27, Meeting of the KV KSČ 26 September 1945.

and family bases there, and as such, identified as natives of Hodonín or Břeclav (colloquially known as Hodoňáci, Břeclaváci). After the postwar transfer of the party's regional headquarters to Zlín, they worked as experienced interwar functionaries in the higher echelons of the KSČ's regional leadership, as well as in the people's administration, but some also gradually moved into party and state functions at the central level as members of the ÚV KSČ and the National Assembly (Jaroslav Lédl,<sup>26</sup> František Mráz<sup>27</sup>) or employees of the Ministry of the Interior (Josef Kočiš<sup>28</sup>). Miroslav Pastyřík<sup>29</sup>, an employee of the apparatus of the KSČ Central Committee from 1950, rose higher in the party hierarchy than anyone else from the Zlín communist elite.

While the functionaries of the two abovementioned groups may have also operated underground during the Second World War, for the members of the third group, "the Zlín resistance fighters," anti-Nazi resistance and close ties to the region's strong partisan movement formed a key characteristic of their identities, activities and thinking. These natives of Zlín gradually broke with the KSČ's postwar leadership, demanding a genuine grassroots democracy along with privileges for former partisans, following the Yugoslav model.

- 26 Jaroslav Lédl (1892–1974) was born into a peasant family. As a member of the KSČ between the wars, Lédl had already attempted joint communist management along the model of the Soviet kolkhozes, and had represented both farmers and the KSČ between 1945 and 1960 in the National Assembly. In the 1950s, he worked in the regional party apparatus and starting in 1952, also in the ÚV KSČ. *KSČ bojující. Výběr dokumentů okresních archivů 1920–1945*. Brno : Okresní archiv Brno-venkov, 1981, document no. 32; FRANĚK, Otakar – DRYBČÁKOVÁ, Taťána. *Šli před námi. Životopisné medailonky zasloužilých předválečných členů KSČ v Jihomoravské kraji*. Brno : Blok, 1981, pp. 126–127; ŠTVERÁK 2018, p. 525; SČSDPK, Poslanci, <https://public.psp.cz/en/sqw/detail.sqw?id=2502&org=284> (last viewed on 5 March 2024).
- 27 František Mráz (1906–?) worked between the wars as an editor of the party press, a trade unionist and regional organizational secretary for the KV KSČ. He led an illegal Hodonín party cell in the Buchenwald concentration camp. In the summer of 1945, Mráz was selected by the party's central authorities for the key function of political secretary of the KV KSČ. In February 1948, he was replaced by Miroslav Pastyřík and rose to the position of chairman of the same organization. From 1945 to 1960 he was a member of the National Assembly and from 1945 to 1949, a member of the ÚV KSČ. In the 1950s, as a trained bricklayer, he became the director of Průmstav Vsetín (Industrial Constructions Vsetín). MZA, f. Zemský úřad Brno (ZÚ), b. 423, inv. no. 33374; FRANĚK, Otakar. *Josef Juran. Poslanec a senátor KSČ*. Brno : Blok, 1979, p. 87, 134; MRÁZ, František. *Vzpomínky na ilegální činnost KSČ v koncentračním táboře Buchenwald*. In *Jižní Morava*, 1981, vol. 18, pp. 56–73; SČSDPK, Deputies, <https://www.psp.cz/sqw/detail.sqw?id=2886&org=285> (last viewed on 5 March 2024).
- 28 Josef Kočiš (1892–1967) had been born into a working-class family and entered the Bolshevik party during the Russian Civil War. Between the wars, he managed the regional party press. For many years, he held the function of deputy mayor of Hodonín, where he worked in both party and public functions even after war, until he became the first chairman of the KNV Gottwaldov from 1949–1951. Finally, Kočiš became an employee of the Ministry of the Interior. MZA, f. ZÚ, b. 434, inv. no. 1655; MZA, f. B 125, b. 12, First Meeting of the Council of the KNV 3 January 1949; FRANĚK – DRYBČÁKOVÁ 1981, pp. 152–153.
- 29 Miroslav Pastyřík (1912–1995), who came from a working-class family, worked in the regional party apparatus after the war. Pastyřík had proved himself during February 1948, after which he became the head secretary of the KV KSČ. In 1950 he was promoted from Gottwaldov to the central secretariat, and his further career was linked with the rise of Antonín Novotný. In the autumn of 1951, during a period of intense searching for enemies within the party, Pastyřík's past activities were investigated and under murky circumstances, he managed to clear his name (possibly with help from J. Lédl) and continued serving in leading party and labor-union functions until April 1968. MZA, f. ZÚ, b. 431, inv. no. 34512; HEMZA, Tomáš. *Dějiny ÚV KSČ v éře Antonína Novotného*. Disertační práce. Prague : Filozofická fakulta UK, 2019, pp. 79–80, 174; PRAŽÁK, Martin. Miroslav Pastyřík. In ANEV, Petr – BÍLÝ, Matěj (eds.) *Biografický slovník vedoucích funkcionářů KSČ (1921–1989)*, 2, L–Z. Prague : Academia; Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2018, pp. 145–146; ŠTVERÁK, František. *Schematismus k dějinám Komunistické strany Československa (1921–1992)*. Prague : Národní archiv, 2018, p. 539; SČSDPK, Deputies, <https://www.psp.cz/sqw/detail.sqw?org=282&id=3123&l=cz#> (last viewed on 5 March 2024).

Like the old Zlín comrades, they stood out in their radicalism but their decline in power was slower due to their postwar popularity and social capital. The two most important political actors of this group, Josef Vávra-Stařík<sup>30</sup> and Rudolf Rédr,<sup>31</sup> fell victim to Stalinist purges.

The functionaries from the fourth group of actors, which will be called “the postwar communists from the Baťa factory,” had been employees of Baťa concern, joining the KSČ with the influx of new members after May 1945. They moved to Zlín in the late 1930s from different parts of the Republic to take jobs in the Baťa concern, which had offered them a chance to work their way up during the years of economic, state and international crisis. After passing through a rigorous screening process, they were able to build successful careers in the corporation. This group became the Baťa system’s loyal men, and May 1945 became a turning point in their lives, when they made a splash in Zlín’s politics. Besides their KSČ membership, the postwar communists were also aided by the knowledge and social capital they had accumulated. The center of gravity for their activities lay not in the party’s regional or central assemblies, but in company and municipal administration. Ivan Holý<sup>32</sup> became director

30 The son of a peasant and former teacher Josef Vávra-Stařík (1902–1953) became an officer in the 1<sup>st</sup> Czechoslovak Partisan Brigade of Jan Žižka during the Second World War. A revolutionary ferment, membership in the KSČ and the support of Red Army commanders briefly brought him to the function of first chairman of the MNV Zlín. After an intervention by Klement Gottwald, who had warned against “leftist radicalism,” during his visit to Zlín in June 1945 and due to his prominent position in the fascist-leaning group *Národopisná Morava* at the end of the 1930s, Vávra-Stařík resigned from his position in mid-June 1945. He then devoted himself to getting former partisans involved in public life, for which purpose he founded and led the *Partokol* cooperative in Zlín. He sharply disagreed with the ousting of partisans from public offices, and was also dissatisfied with the direction postwar Czechoslovakia was taking. Paradoxically, the developments after 1948, when the partisan movement was supposed to be entirely subordinated to KSČ leadership, brought him even worse prospects. Fearing arrest in March 1948, he decided to emigrate and attempted to organize an anti-communist resistance group called *Světлана*. He was kidnapped and brought back to Czechoslovakia, where he was “exploited” as a witness in the political trials and finally executed in 1953. ROUŠAR 1967, p. 75; ŠIMÁNKOVÁ, Alena – VOREL, Jaroslav a kol. *Československá justice v letech 1948–1953 v dokumentech, 1*. Prague : Úřad dokumentace a vyšetřování zločinů komunismu PČR, 2003, pp. 184–185; MARKHAM, Mira. *Světлана: Partisans and Power in Post-War Czechoslovakia*. In *Contemporary European History*, 2021, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 16–31.

31 Rudolf Rédr (1901–1967) was the son of a bricklayer and worked between the wars as a laborer in the Baťa factory and as a small businessman. He joined the regional communist elites on account of his engagement in the anti-Nazi resistance, which culminated in his function as regional head of the illegal KSČ in Moravia, as summarized in his book *Aby národ žil* (So the Nation May Live) (1948). Immediately after the liberation of Zlín, he held functions in district and then regional party leadership. He was coopted into the ÚV KSČ and until February 1948, he was the chairman of the KV KSČ, also heading the regional partisan organization. Although he chaired the MNV in 1949–1950, his position was weakened by the search for enemies within the Party. Rédr’s adversaries pointed to ambiguities in his party personnel questionnaires, in which he allegedly lied about membership in the interwar KSČ. Under pressure, he left for a post as chief of the firefighting service in Prague, but in February 1952 he was arrested and imprisoned for over two years. Besides embezzlement, he was accused of collaboration and contacts with the “traitors” Vávra-Stařík and Rudolf Slánský – both of whom he was linked to through activities in the postwar partisan organizations. Národní archiv (NA), f. KSČ-ÚV, Ústřední kulturně propagační komise a kulturně propagační oddělení ÚV KSČ (1261/2/20), aj. 172, Opinions of the students of the Central Party School in Slapy, fol. 104; SOkA Zlín, f. OV KSČ G, inv. no. 352, Rudolf Rédr; RUDOLF, Rédr. *Aby národ žil. Komunisté na Moravě v odboji*. Brno : Rovnost, 1948; ŠTVERÁK 2018, p. 548; PRAŽÁK, Martin. Rudolf Rédr. In ANEV, Petr – BÍLÝ, Matěj (eds.) *Biografický slovník vedoucích funkcionářů KSČ (1921–1989), 2, L–Z*. Prague : Academia; Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2018, pp. 234–237.

32 Ivan Holý (1913–1987) a graduate of the Faculty of Law in Brno whose father had been a professor at a high school in Brno and an interwar senator, (1939–1945) managed to work his way up

of the nationalized concern and soon was one of the captains of nationalized industry, with a network of contacts in the enterprise, the region and the center including Klement Gottwald. Vilém Morýs,<sup>33</sup> and later Miloš Jakeš,<sup>34</sup> headed the town of Zlín/Gottwaldov.

As far as the dynamics of the relations between the groups themselves went, there was a perceptible pushback against the Zlín resistance fighters when both Josef Vávra-Stařík and Rudolf Rédr reached the post of “mayor” of the city, which indicates the great deal of credit associated with their past in the resistance; however, they were soon replaced with communists from the Baťa factory, which in turn shows the lingering connection between the factory and the town hall. Rudolf Rédr maintained long-smoldering conflicts with the group of old Zlín comrades, who had doubts primarily about his interwar KSČ membership and his moral profile, as well as with the Hodonín apparatchiks, who accused him of dictatorial practices, eventually replacing him as chairman of the KV KSČ in March 1948 with František Mráz, for whom Rédr had the greatest animosity.<sup>35</sup> Both of them had achieved prominent positions of power; Rudolf

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to the post of export department clerk within six years at the concern. During ten days in May 1945, he was able to become the company's national administrator. In the following months, he convinced the decision makers of his qualities and became the director of the nationalized concern (October 1945). From 1946, he was a member of the National Assembly and in the summer of 1949, he took the position of deputy minister of light industry. He was arrested in June 1951 and sentenced to 18 years with a group of national economists “Josef Goldman et al.,” finally released early in September 1956. Archiv bezpečnostních složek (ABS), f. Ministerstvo národní bezpečnosti (MNB), arch. no. 28, Personal file of the State Security against Dr. Ivan Holý; SOkA Zlín, f. Baťa, b. 1038, inv. no. 20, p. no. 4, Recording card of Ivan Holý; OPAVSKÝ, Jindra. Na každého lotra dojde. In *Naše pravda*, 2 December 1952, p. 2; Zpráva o výsledcích revize politických procesů z let 1949–1954. In *Rudé právo*, 22 August 1963, p. 2; KOLUMBER, David. Ivan Holý (1913–1987). In SHELLE, Karel – TAUCHEN, Jaromír – HORÁK, Ondřej – KOLUMBER, David (eds.) *Encyklopedie českých právních dějin, 23, Biografie právníků A–J*. Plzeň : Key Publishing, 2022, p. 698.

- 33 Vilém Morýs (1904–1948), the son of a foundryman and Social Democrat from Frýdlant nad Ostravicí, began working for the Baťa concern in spring 1939 as an electrician for most of the occupation period. Because his wife was Jewish, Vilém Morýs was briefly imprisoned during the occupation, but he was released after an intervention by the Baťa company, which claimed he was indispensable. In June 1945, he became chairman of the MNV, eventually dying as the result of a car accident on 3 December 1948. SOkA Zlín, f. Baťa, b. 1038, inv. no. 20, p. no. 8, Recording card of Vilém Morýs; SOkA Zlín, f. Baťa, b. 1084, inv. no. 42, p. no. 6, Recording card of Zora Morýsová; SOkA Zlín, f. Archiv města Zlína (AMZ), inv. no. 213, Meeting of the Council of the MNV, 10 December 1948; *Zpráva o činnosti MNV ve Zlíně v jubilejním roce 1947*. Zlín : MNV Zlín, 1947, p. 14; ADAMEC Ondřej. Vilém Morýs. In *Acta musealia. Muzea jihovýchodní Moravy ve Zlíně*, 2006, vol. 6, no. 1–2, pp. 97–98.
- 34 Miloš Jakeš (1920–2022), the son of a small farmer from the village of České Chalupy in the Český Krumlov region and a graduate of the selective Baťa School of Work, worked in the electro-technical division of Baťa. After entering the KSČ in June 1945, he began steadily building a political career, the focus of which (also because of his age) lay in working with youth. For example, he had a personal share in the responsibility of their votes significantly contributing to the KSČ's narrow victory in the 1946 elections in Zlín. In September 1950, he replaced Rudolf Rédr as chairman of the JNV, and later he became a member of the presidium of the KV KSČ. In the summer of 1952, he assumed the function of secretary of the Central Committee's Czechoslovak Youth Union in Prague. SOkA Zlín, f. Baťa, b. 275, Recording Card of Milouš Jakeš; SOkA Zlín, f. JNV G, inv. no. 2, Meeting of the plenum of the JNV 20 September 1950; KŘEŠŤAN, Jiří. Miloš Jakeš. In ANEV, Petr – BÍLÝ, Matěj (eds.) *Biografický slovník vedoucích funkcionářů KSČ (1921–1989)*, 2, L–Z. Prague : Academia; Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2018, pp. 524–525; BÍLÝ 2023, pp. 16–26.
- 35 SOkA Zlín, f. OV KSČ G, inv. no. 20, Minutes of the plenums of the OV KSČ 6 May 1946 and 9 June 1946; SOkA Zlín, f. OV KSČ G, inv. no. 352, Rudolf Rédr; MZA, f. G 561, b. 23, inv. no. 28, Minutes of the presidium KV KSČ 20 August and 29 October 1946; MZA, f. G 561, b. 2, inv. no. 3, Minutes of the IV. Regional conference, March 1948.



Rédr as leader of the regional resistance organization in Moravia and František Mráz as the leader of the interwar regional party organization and as a party organizer in Buchenwald.

At the end of the war, the Hodonín apparatchiks imagined that they would return to their functions in Hodonín. However, according to František Mráz's memoirs, the "comrades from Zlín and the surrounding area demanded" relocation to Zlín. Klement Gottwald settled the dispute at a joint meeting of the Hodonín apparatchiks and communists from the Baťa factory in Brno, during which he supported relocation of the district apparatus to Zlín, the city with the highest number of workers in the region and a bastion of "Batism," where experienced cadres were greatly needed.<sup>36</sup> At the same time, Ivan Holý and Vilém Morýs supported each other for the positions of national administrator of the Baťa works and chairman of the MNV,<sup>37</sup> but the rise of previously-loyal employees of the private company aroused suspicion. The communists from the Baťa factory had been criticized in closed board meetings, as had the old Zlín communists and the Hodonín apparatchiks for their many shortcomings. Among the most emphasized issues were in cooperation with Baťa's experts and a preference for Baťa's method of work organization, instead of the party managing the enterprise in cooperation with the KSC's factory and regional committees. One of Holý's strategies to weaken the criticism was to distance himself from the former directors of Baťa by pointing to their alleged collaborator past, thus at the same time deflecting similar suspicions away from his own person.<sup>38</sup>

When the appointment for the post of director of the Baťa concern was being decided in September and October 1945, Rudolf Rédr supported the serving national administrator Ivan Holý, while the Hodonín faction and Vincenc Červinka questioned Holý's ability to lead such a big enterprise as well as his party engagement and general discipline. Their acrimonious debates ended in a consensus motivated by both the intention of prohibiting non-communists from the enterprise's leadership—and the fear of a possible return of the original stockholders—as well as by an effort to act in unison in front of party leadership.<sup>39</sup> Contradictions would have undermined the communists' main goal, which was to demonstrate that they were able to lead a company better than the capitalist Baťa had. This would also legitimize the KSC government at the national level because the socialist modernity of Zlín, which was allegedly admired even by western journalists, was supposed to be the future for all of Czechoslovakia.<sup>40</sup> Therefore, during the escalation of conflicts within the National Front in 1947, Holý's leadership had support both in the party press—which denied the National Socialists' attacks on the "Red terror" in the factory<sup>41</sup>—and in the

36 MRÁZ 1981, pp. 69–70.

37 NA, f. Politický sekretariát ÚV KSČ 1951–1954, 1261/0/22 (1261/0/22), sv. 2, aj. 33, b. 4, Final report on the activities of comrades Ivan Holý and Josef Kijonka, 26 April 1951.

38 WOLHMUT MARKUPOVÁ, Jana. *Soukromá válka Huga Vavrečky: Mikrohistorie z rozhraní soudobých dějin (1945–1952)*. Prague: Nakladatelství Karolinum, 2022, p. 211.

39 MZA, f. G 561, b. 23, inv. no. 27, Minutes of the Presidium of the KV KSČ 22 September 1945; MZA, f. G 561, b. 23, inv. no. 28, Minutes of the Presidium of the KV KSČ 20 August 1946; Zlín vítá s nadšením znárodnění průmyslu. In *Nový Zlín*, 26 October 1945, pp. 1–2.

40 SIMONE, André. "Made in Czechoslovakia". In *Rudé právo*, 9 December 1947, p. 2.

41 Stříbrnáctví a zlínská skutečnost. In *Rudé právo*, 22 August 1947, p. 2.

factory's party organization. Specifically, regardless of prior criticism, the press assessed Holý as a "type of a people's director with all the prerequisites for political growth."<sup>42</sup> Closing ranks by the communists was a result of the National Socialists' strong protests against Holý's alleged political terror in the concern, which had already reached the floor of the National Assembly for a second time in 1947. Deputy Holý was interpellated for letting non-communists in and for his dictatorial methods, but also indirectly for his Protectorate-era collaboration with the Nazis.<sup>43</sup>

The communists from the Baťa factory claimed one success after another until the end of 1948. In mid-June 1945, Vilém Morýs moved up from his position as vice-chairman of the MNV to replace Josef Vávra-Stařík as chairman. He soon proved himself as a more suitable organizer of the postwar consolidation and of investments in modernization projects, which were coordinated with company director Ivan Holý. They became the main architects of the "new Zlín," the showcase of the Czechoslovak version of state socialism, which attracted both domestic and foreign attention and led to good relations with the leadership of the state and the party, but also the jealousy of the Hodonín apparatchiks. The workforce of the Baťa plants collected the highest average daily wages in the Republic,<sup>44</sup> while working in newly air-conditioned halls. The premises became the site of epochal changes, "palaces of work,"<sup>45</sup> which had been transformed from sites of exploitation into places for free building of socialism.<sup>46</sup> The pinnacle of which was the renaming of Zlín to Gottwaldov and the national enterprise Baťa to Svit on 1 January 1949.<sup>47</sup> The semiotic gesture of rebranding served as a reckoning with the past, a purification of the public sphere and even ultimately forgetting that the first stage of "de-Batification" had arrived quickly in 1945.<sup>48</sup> In addition to the thick line drawn to separate the capitalist Zlín of the Baťa family from the socialist present, it also represented the dawning of the socialist era, marked by the name Svit (shine, gleam), and also the ambition of occupying a symbolically leading position in the hierarchy of socialist cities, marked by the name Gottwaldov. In a promotional short film shot for the occasion of the concern's renaming, in which neither the word "Zlín" nor "Baťa" was uttered, Ivan Holý spoke of the purge of the "last sign of capitalism."<sup>49</sup> He had already compared Gottwaldov with Stalingrad in

42 SOkA Zlín, f. OV KSČ G, b. 138. inv. no. 94, District Conference OV KSČ Svit n. p., 1947, fol. 2.

43 SČSDPK, Interpellations of the deputies Bartoš and Slíva to the Government, 10 June 1947, [https://www.psp.cz/eknih/1946uns/tisky/t0654\\_00.htm](https://www.psp.cz/eknih/1946uns/tisky/t0654_00.htm) (last viewed on 11 March 2024); SČSDPK, 67. Plenum of National Assembly, 11 July 1947, <https://www.psp.cz/eknih/1946uns/sten-prot/067schuz/s067001.htm> (last viewed on 11 March 2024); to the collaboration of Holý Cf. DVOŘÁKOVÁ, Jiřina. Bedřich Pokorný – vzestup a pád. In Internetová verze Sborníku AMV, 2004, no. 2, p. 246 [https://www.abscr.cz/data/pdf/sbornik/sbornik2-2004/bedrich\\_pokorny.pdf](https://www.abscr.cz/data/pdf/sbornik/sbornik2-2004/bedrich_pokorny.pdf) (last viewed on 13 March 2024).

44 KAPLAN, Karel. *Znárodnění a socialismus*. Prague : Práce, 1968, pp. 74–75.

45 Ve Zlíně zahájili výrobu v novém pětipatrovém pracovním paláci. In *Rudé právo*, 13 August 1947, p. 1.

46 MELICHAR, Bohumil – PÝCHA, Čeněk. Didaktické mapování socialistické paměti. In *Historie – otázky – problémy*, 2021, vol. 13, no. 2, p. 42.

47 Národní podnik Baťa mění jméno. In *Rudé právo*, 9 November 1948, p. 1.

48 Nové pojmenování hlavních ulic ve Zlíně. In *Zlínská pravda*, 28 June 1945, p. 3.

49 SOkA Zlín, Seznam filmů uložených v podnikovém archivu Svit a. s. Zlín, inv. no. 21, *1 týden Gottwaldova* (a short film).

the press, which had been renamed from Volgograd,<sup>50</sup> with Rudolf Rédr declaring in the summer of 1949, “Just as the USSR has its historic Moscow and it is rebuilding its famous Stalingrad, so we too have our ancient Prague and we’re building Gottwaldov, the city of a glorious and great socialist future.”<sup>51</sup> The new name of the city that had become the center of the new region, which included the incorporation of towns all the way to Otrokovice into an agglomeration that was designed for as many as 120 000 residents,<sup>52</sup> was intended to motivate the people of Zlín to become similar to Czechoslovak leaders such as KSČ chairman and president Klement Gottwald, whose cult was at its peak. The renaming ended with the greatly publicized Gottwaldov City Week, which began on Monday 3 January 1949 with the ceremonial entrance of Svit employees for their first shift of the first five-year-plan, continuing over the following days with entertainment, events, fireworks, an exhibition of pictures lent by the Prague Castle and the laying of the foundation stone for a monument to Klement Gottwald.<sup>53</sup> In typical fashion, the government delegation was accompanied mainly by communists from the Baťa factory.<sup>54</sup>

On the other hand, the Hodonín apparatchiks, whose prewar KSČ membership brought them closer to the old Zlín comrades, were assigned responsibility for the KSČ’s weaker position in the region’s rural areas. While the communists from the Baťa factory were preparing the grandiose renaming of Zlín to Gottwaldov in November 1948, General Secretary Rudolf Slánský and his deputy Josef Frank issued a warning to the Zlín regional leadership that they could no longer underestimate the situation during the time of “sharpening the class struggle.” They lost the 1946 regional elections to the People’s Party and in May 1948, a larger-than-average number of “white ballots” expressing disagreement with the KSČ’s policies were turned in and many illegal anti-communist “groups” were said to be active in the area. Additionally, the region came in last in the fulfillment of its agricultural deliveries because, according to Slánský, its leadership, which had taken the operation of the Baťa works as a model, “had succumbed to pressure by peasants from below.”<sup>55</sup>

After 1948, however, the position of the Hodonín apparatchiks gradually grew stronger, while that of the communists from the Baťa factory grew weaker, for a wide range of reasons. Besides a breakdown of the core of the communists from the Baťa factory, including the death of Vilém Morýs in December 1948 and Ivan Holý’s promotion to Prague in 1949, the Hodonín faction proved themselves during the “textile scandal” at the very beginning of 1948—a Zlín variation of the prelude to the February crisis.<sup>56</sup> Another factor was the continuation of the centralization of economic power within the framework of the structural changes created in the first five-year plan. Because of directive

50 HOLÝ, Ivan. Zrodil se Gottwaldov. In *Tep svobodné práce*, 26 November 1948, pp. 1, 8.

51 SOkA Zlín, f. JNV G, inv. no. 6, I. working conference of the Council of the JNV with representatives of the Svit, 12 August 1949.

52 Československý lid blahopřál svému prezidentu. In *Rudé právo*, 24 November 1948, p. 1.

53 Historické dny pracujícího lidu v Gottwaldově. In *Rudé právo*, 4 January 1949, p. 1.

54 MZA, f. G 561, b. 23, inv. no. 30, Minutes of the Council of the KV KSČ, 28 December 1948.

55 MZA, f. G 561, b. 23, inv. no. 30, Minutes of the Council of the KV KSČ, 13 November 1948.

56 SOkA Zlín, f. OÚ-ONV, inv. no. 10, Minutes of the Plenums of the ONV, 13 January, 19. January, and 3. February 1948.

planning that prioritized heavy industry—the number of people employed in the leather working and shoemaking industries fell by 76% in comparison with 1948<sup>57</sup>—the significant limitation of enterprises' independence, workplace collectives and the division of the unique Baťa manufacturing complex into smaller national enterprises, the national enterprise Svit declined in quality and lost its position.<sup>58</sup>

The Hodonín apparatchiks' position was also strengthened by implementation of the regional system, allowing them to take up key functions in the KNV, as well by the increasing centralization of political power. In February 1949, the post-Morýs city council attempted to reject a plan calling for consolidating the district and local people's administrations in the district's cities into the JNV. The Gottwaldov councilors used the post-Baťa narrative (see below) in an attempt to convince higher authorities that Gottwaldov—exceptionally—could benefit by not proceeding with this kind of centralization:

The city of Gottwaldov is a city *sui generis*—without any parallels among the other cities in the ČSR. It is characterized by unusually fast growth, out of the ordinary in our conditions. Although this growth seems incomprehensible to many citizens of our republic, it is a matter of course for all those who know Gottwaldov and who are participating in building it. Creative initiative, entrepreneurship, hard work, an organizational sensibility, discipline and awareness—these are the main characteristics of today's Gottwaldov. Why are we emphasizing these qualities? Because we want to build the first exemplary socialist housing estate.<sup>59</sup>

This was among the issues that KNV chairman Josef Kočiš opposed as he maintained that centralization would speed Gottwaldov on its way to becoming the best socialist city in the Republic.<sup>60</sup>

Last but not least, as in other regions, there were internal party purges and the associated rise of Antonín Novotný, who had been regional secretary in Hodonín in 1937–1938 and was thus close to the Hodonín apparatchiks.<sup>61</sup> As such, the abovementioned criticisms of the communists from the Baťa factory, which had been voiced publicly by the National Socialists prior to 1948 and in private among the Hodonín apparatchiks, could be reframed as deliberate conspiracies, sabotage and treason instead of mistakes or shortcomings after the arrest of Brno's chief secretary Otto Šling at the beginning of October 1950. “Baťovština” became the Zlín version of “Šlingovština” (e.g. dictatorial practices), which occurred when the regional secretariat blamed failures primarily on Ivan Holý, who, according to the historian Marián Lóži, had previously overshadowed the power of chief secretary Miroslav Pastyřík but now lost his position and was facing imminent, politically-motivated arrest. At the end of December 1950, Holý and Kijonka were criticized at a regional committee meeting for reckless

57 BEINHAUEROVÁ, Anna. K problematice pracovních sil a jejich zdrojů ve vybraných odvětvích lehkého průmyslu českých zemí v letech 1949–1960. In MATEJČEK, Jiří (ed.) *K hospodářským a sociálním dějinám 19. a 20. století*. 2. Opava : Slezský ústav, 1991, pp. 144–145.

58 BEINHAUEROVÁ 1991, pp. 157–158; POKLUDA, Zdeněk. *Baťovi muži*. Zlín : Kovárna Viva, 2012, p. 137.

59 SOkA Zlín, f. AMZ, inv. no. 214, Minutes of the Council of the MNV, 4 February 1949.

60 SOkA Zlín, f. JNV G, inv. no. 1, Minutes of the Plenum of the JNV, 26 June 1949.

61 BÍLÝ, Matěj. Antonín Novotný. In ANEV, Petr – BÍLÝ, Matěj (eds.) *Biografický slovník vedoucích funkcionářů KSČ (1921–1989)*, 2, L–Z. Prague : Academia – Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2018, p. 125.



investments without appropriate approvals, for authoritarian practices and for preferring Baťa experts over working-class human resources, so the committee proposed their removal.<sup>62</sup> Following, an investigative commission from the ÚV KSČ, which—besides representatives of the party's center Josef Frank, Brno Köhler and Jarmila Taussigová—also included Jaroslav Lédl from the Hodonín apparatchiks group (he later also served in the commission that investigated Miroslav Pastyřík), and Karel Kodovský, who was close to the old Zlín comrades.<sup>63</sup>

The commission submitted the results of its investigation to the ÚV KSČ at the end of April 1951, recommending expanding the investigation to include Miroslav Pastyřík, dismissing Holý and Kijonka from their positions and expelling them from the KSČ on account of the accusations of serious misconduct, including “Batism.”<sup>64</sup> The collective documentation was then transferred to StB (Státní bezpečnost, State Security), which fabricated an image of Holý as a spy for the Baťa family and a saboteur of the first five-year plan.<sup>65</sup> In 1951, the youngest representative of the communists from the Baťa factory who was still active in the city, Miloš Jakeš, got himself into a very complicated situation. On one hand, he defended the chairman of the OV KSČ, Alois Svoboda, against accusations of dictatorship, in which their shared past as Baťa employees played a role; on the other, he distanced himself from Holý and established good relations with the Hodonín apparatchiks, particularly Jaroslav Lédl. According to historian Matěj Bílý, without Lédl's patronage, Jakeš's career would likely have ended prematurely.<sup>66</sup>

Hodonín apparatchiks came through the period of purges the best. Alois Indra (1921–1990), less than a generation younger, was connected to the group through his wartime and postwar work in the Hodonín area. He had proved himself during the intra-party purges and crises in 1953 and 1956, and in 1957, assumed the position of chief secretary in the KSČ's Regional Committee.<sup>67</sup> Together with chairman of the KNV—and later of the ONV—Karel Kodovský, chairman of the JNV—and later the MNV—Vincenc Červinka and the directors of the national enterprises Svit and ZPS, Karel Černoch and Josef Švrček, he represented the stabilization of politics in Gottwaldov in the post-Stalinist era, which, from the perspective of the present study, was primarily facilitated by the rising dominance of the Hodonín apparatchiks. After the abolition of censorship in 1968, Ivan Holý took the opportunity in an expansive interview to blame his downfall primarily on the Hodonín apparatchiks. Even the first installment of the three-part interview provoked critical reactions from Karel

62 MZA, f. G 561, b. 3, inv. no. 5, Telegram of the KV KSČ Gottwaldov and the contribution by J. Lédl, fol. 366; SOkA Zlín, f. OV KSČ G, b. 139, inv. no. 97, Minutes of the Plenum of the OV KSČ Svit, 4 March 1951; LÓŽI, Marián. *Žít stalinismus. Komunistická strana Československa v době teroru a budování světlych zítřků*. Disertační práce. Prague : Filozofická fakulta UK, 2022, pp. 79–82.

63 SOkA Zlín, f. Baťa, b. 1085, inv. no. 43, p. no. 8, Registration card of Karel Kodovský; SOkA Zlín, f. OÚ-ONV Zlín, inv. no. 10, Minutes of the Council of the ONV 23 March 1948; MZA, f. B 125, b. 11, Final meeting of the KNV in Gottwaldov on 31 May 1960.

64 NA, f. 1261/0/22, sv. 2, aj. 33, b. 4, Final report on the activities of comrades Ivan Holý and Josef Kijonka, 26 April 1951.

65 NA, f. 1261/0/22, sv. 3, aj. 42, b. 3, Questions of security, 29 June 1951.

66 BÍLÝ 2023, pp. 41–42, 50.

67 HEMZA 2019, p. 130.

Kodovský.<sup>68</sup> The postwar intra-party conflicts had never been forgotten and in the form of open polemics, they re-politicized the public sphere in the period of media ferment over the “Prague Spring.”

### The dynamics of the regional communist elites’ narrative strategies

Members of the Baťa family acted like pioneers of modern civilization who took inspiration from the West as well as unabashedly evincing sympathy for certain measures used in the Soviet Union, such as the efficiency of the Stakhanite movement. They claimed that their business management did not maintain a “classic capitalist character,” and that they fostered the cults of work and of youth, combining discipline and hierarchy with elements of self-governance.<sup>69</sup> New impulses for the collectivist and paternalistic dimensions in business were imported by Baťa management during the Second World War, when concerns were forced to define their social functions in the Nazi-occupied state. Social cohesion, order and the integrity of the employee collective, in which women “freed” from domestic labor were supposed to be much more strongly represented, had become priorities. After the war, successfully implemented collective housing and company recreation projects took root in the Baťa system, whose tendency towards apoliticism and more than merely economic goals was amplified during the Protectorate period.<sup>70</sup> At the same time, as mentioned above, the year 1945 brought a strong wave of politicization and uncertainty of how to reckon with Baťa’s past with the goal of building the socialist future, and the regional communist elites (re)produced a range of ideas about how it could be done. Although Marxism-Leninism remained the mandatory interpretive framework, it is possible to identify two dominant narrative strategies applied to the past and future of Zlín, termed here “the post-Baťa narrative” and “the anti-Baťa narrative.” As in the case of the four groups of political actors identified above, these are not period designations, but an analytical framework created for the purpose of this study. The prefix “post” expresses not only the simple temporal succession—after “Batism,” but also a certain continuity with the previous period; in other words, a certain transitional plurality stretched between the Baťa narrative and the new discursive order.

It should be emphasized in advance that the two narratives cannot be easily separated. Some of the regional actors and the party elites alternated between using one or the other, according to circumstance and need. Svatopluk Turek (1900–1972), an interwar employee of the concern and representative of socialist engaged art was not a member of the regional communist elites, but he excelled with the strategy and significantly influenced public discourse with his writing. He portrayed his negative experiences working for the concern in the anti-Baťa novel *Botostroj* (The Shoe Machine) (1933, banned by a court order in 1938, 1946), and was involved in several months of conflicts over the staging

68 HYBLEROVÁ, Ludmila. Vstupte doktore Holý. In *Naše pravda*, 17, 24 and 31 May 1968, p. 4; KOLUMBER, David. Jana Wolmuth Markupová: Soukromá válka Huga Vavrečky: Mikrohistorie z rozhraní soudobých dějin (1945–1952). In *Dějiny – teorie – kritika*, 2023, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 203–204.

69 HOLUBEC 2009, pp. 41–51.

70 GUZIK 2013, pp. 33–38.

of *Botostroj* in Zlín. The communists eventually pushed its premiere through at the Workers' Theater on 28 October 1947, exacerbating the fractious relations between the communists and National Socialists. Until the search for intra-party enemies was underway, he supported director Ivan Holý and wrote tirelessly about the uniqueness of the “new Zlín.”<sup>71</sup>

In April 1946 in Zlín, Antonín Zápotocký proclaimed that:

The old Zlín was to some extent a miracle of modern technology and rationalization, but also an example of the most modern capitalist exploitation. [...] We do not want to dismantle the technical conveniences and advantages of rationalizing the work process. Zlín manufacturing, which has become famous, must maintain its primacy in production and its good name. Its aim has to be service to the nation and service to all its co-workers.<sup>72</sup>

As Zápotocký's speech illustrates well, the bearers of the post-Baťa narrative did not renounce selected motifs of the Baťa legacy, including the inclusive term “co-workers” (*spolupracovníci*); however, at the same time, they had to tell a story suited for the new discursive and political order. The breakthrough connection “America and socialism” made a strong impression;<sup>73</sup> factory personnel were to continue enjoying an above-average standard of living, but without the exhausting tempo of manufacturing, fear of losing their jobs or soulless consumerism.<sup>74</sup> This narrative combined elements of Baťa capitalism, corporativism, and state socialism, and it worked with ideas about a happier life thanks to the relaxation of work discipline and social supervision as well as more intense participation in running the business by the workforce. Within the framework of emancipation from the former patriarchal hierarchy, they pushed for political engagement in the workplace and in public, calling upon not only youths but also women, who had been “locked up” into the privatism of the Baťa's houses.<sup>75</sup> Let us add that however much the proportion of employed women in Baťa/Svit factory increased (31% in 1949),<sup>76</sup> they were neither adequately financially remunerated nor relieved of the burden of the “second shift,” despite experiments with collective services.<sup>77</sup> Labor in the workshops was supposed to be humanized, and at the same time, ascribed a higher meaning in building a socialist society, which was to lead to an even greater increase in productivity than in the era of the capitalist Baťa. In the beginning of 1947, Ladislav Mňačko wrote that the Baťa factories were “already putting shoes on the whole world again,”<sup>78</sup> and at the end of

71 Cf., for example, SVATOPLUK T. Tep nového Zlína. In *Rudé právo*, 6 February 1946, p. 3; HEMELÍKOVÁ, Blanka. T. Svatopluk. In *Slovník české literatury po roce 1945*, <https://slovník-ceskeliteratury.cz/showContent.jsp?docId=869> (last viewed on 8 March 2024).

72 DOLEJŠÍ, Vojtěch. Osvobozený Zlín. In *Rudé právo*, 6 April 1946, p. 4.

73 SVATOPLUK, T. Osvobozený Zlín. In *Svět v obrazech*, 30 August 1947, p. 20.

74 Cf., for example, Příspěvek Ivana Holého na VIII. sjezdu KSČ. Druhý den jednání sjezdu. In *Rudé právo*, 30 March 1946, p. 2.

75 Ve Zlíně ve všem první. In *Rudé právo*, 25 January 1948, p. 5; FLORYK, Jaromír. *Mládež, její organizace a výchova v n. p. Svit*. Gottwaldov : s. n., 1965, pp. 36–39.

76 JEMELKA, Martin – ŠEVEČEK, Ondřej. *Tovární města Baťova koncernu. Evropské kapitoly globální expanse*. Prague : Academia, 2016, pp. 104–106.

77 BEINHAEROVÁ, Anna. Výzkum ženské pracovní síly (retrospektiva a perspektiva). In MATĚJČEK, Jiří (ed.) *K hospodářským a sociálním dějinám 19. a 20. století*. 2. Opava : Slezský ústav, 1991, pp. 282–283.

78 MŇAČKO, Ladislav. Zlín, boty, dvouletka. In *Rudé právo*, 8 January 1947, p. 3.

that same year, it was ceremonially announced that the prewar production volume had been attained.<sup>79</sup>

According to Boris Groys, one dimension of Marxist-Leninist thinking constitutes a determination to domesticate capitalism as the best engine for economic acceleration.<sup>80</sup> If in practice the Bolsheviks feared they would lose power in an experiment like this, postwar Zlín appeared to be an excellent “laboratory of our nationalization”<sup>81</sup> because here were to be the best conditions for educating a new type of worker who would combine high efficiency with conscious socialist discipline.<sup>82</sup> Also, the “new Zlín” was to remain “first in everything,”<sup>83</sup> “a piece of modern civilization set in the surroundings of the forested Wallachian peaks,”<sup>84</sup> thus becoming the showcase of Czechoslovak state socialism.<sup>85</sup> The narrative appropriated older representations of Zlín as the fastest-developing city in Czechoslovakia,<sup>86</sup> where the “familiar Zlín spirit” of entrepreneurship and the will to overcome difficulties reigned supreme. Even after 1945, the “whole world came to the city to learn” despite the Cold War. Both the American and Soviet ambassadors visited and in 1946–1947 alone, 1740 foreign visitors from 42 countries (including 350 French, 174 English and 102 Soviet guests) stayed at the company hotel.<sup>87</sup> Among the most accentuated firsts were the newly-built, air-conditioned production halls, which took employee comfort into account, the first completed residential houses from the two-year plan and the construction of a collective home with a high living standard, the first company nursery, the first trade union holiday abroad (in Yugoslavia), and the first workers’ theater and film festival.<sup>88</sup>

The central tenet of the anti-Baťa narrative was the struggle against “Batism,” which allegedly “...manifested itself even in the same way as other fascist sadists and cutthroats, in that as a consequence of this depraved morality inconvenient persons were removed by all means. [...] Let us be attentive, vigilant, and, above all, consistent against all the elements of fascism, which is so deeply rooted, especially in the leading cadres of the Baťa factories!”<sup>89</sup> Although Nazism had been defeated in Europe in May 1945, according to Josef Kijonka, the author

79 Zlín dosáhl předválečné výroby. In *Rudé právo*, 20 December 1947, p. 5;

80 GROYS, Boris. *Gesamtkunstwerk Stalin. Rozpolcená kultura v Sovětském svazu. Komunistické postskriptum*. Prague : Akademie výtvarných umění v Praze, 2010, p. 173.

81 SVATOPLUK, T. Zlín – ten šťastnější. In *Rudé právo*, 20 November 1947, p. 4.

82 SLÁNSKÝ, Rudolf. Zlín musí být vzorem ostatním. In *Zlínská pravda*, 23 June 1945, pp. 1–2; Ministr soudr. Kopecký na Moravě. In *Rudé právo*, 18 December 1945, p. 2.

83 Ve Zlíně ve všem první. In *Rudé právo*, 25 January 1948, p. 5.

84 *Nový Zlín*. Zlín : Baťa, 1948, p. 5.

85 Cf., for example, SLÁNSKÝ, Rudolf. Zlín musí být vzorem ostatním. In *Zlínská pravda*, 23 June 1945, pp. 1–2.

86 HOLÝ, Ivan. *Projevy a články z let 1945–46*. Zlín : Ivan Holý, 1947, p. 13, Ivan Holý’s speech on the factory radio on 26th October 1945.

87 *Zpráva o činnosti MNV ve Zlíně v jubilejním roce 1947*. Zlín : MNV Zlín, 1947, pp. 1, 8, 17.

88 SVATOPLUK, T. Zlín ještě krásnější. In *Rudé právo*, 12 April 1947, p. 3; HÁJEK, Jiří. Boty a kultura. In *Rudé právo*, 27 July 1947, p. 4; Ve Zlíně zahájili výrobu v novém pětipatrovém pracovním paláci. In *Rudé právo*, 13 August 1947, p. 1; První závodní jesle v republice. In *Rudé právo*, 25 August 1947, p. 5; KAPLAN, Karel. *Znárodnění a socialismus*. Prague : Práce, 1968, pp. 74–75; KRAUS, L. *Od verpánku k světovosti*, 2. Gottwaldov : Svit, 1984, p. 17; ZARECOVÁ, Kimberly Elman. *Utváření socialistické modernity. Bydlení v Československu v letech 1945–1960*. Prague : Academia, 2015, pp. 316–327.

89 KIJONKA, Josef. Boj proti batismu. In *Zlínská pravda*, 15 May 1945, p. 2.



of this mobilizing demonstration, the struggle against fascism in Zlín was only getting started after the war. Liberation from “Batism,” which was described as Zlín’s version of fascism and capitalism, was directed primarily against the recent Baťa elites and toward the nationalization of the concern in the first phase.<sup>90</sup> Baťa managers cunningly concealed their ruthless manner of exploiting workers and “worshipping the swastika” behind their “humanitarian mask.”<sup>91</sup>

Jan A. Baťa, who represented both the domestic grand bourgeoisie and foreign imperialist grand bourgeoisie, became the central villain of the anti-Baťa narrative due to the way in which he began leading the concern from abroad in 1939. The anti-Baťa interpretation draws no distinction between fascism, “Batism” and imperialism. Imperialism could also be internal (the dominion of the grand bourgeoisie over the domestic population) or European (the threat of German revanchism) as KSCĚ ideologue Arnošt Kolman had claimed, among other statements made in December 1945 in the Masaryk school auditorium in Zlín in connection with Stalin’s explanations of the national and colonial question.<sup>92</sup> Although Czechoslovakia was not actively participating in colonial expansion, colonial and anti-imperialist imagination found a permanent home in the anti-Baťa narrative. The purge of “Batism” was a version of the liberation of “colonial slaves” overseas.<sup>93</sup> In this conception, “Batism” was a) an unnatural, non-native import, “Americanism, which was consciously grafted by the Zlín capitalist grafters onto our domestic Czech body;”<sup>94</sup> b) planned, in cooperation with Nazis, to enslave the Czechs and force their relocation to the wastelands of Patagonia, where Jan A. Baťa wanted to become, as a shoemaker, the “crowned king of Patagonia;”<sup>95</sup> c) was actively participating in interwar colonialism when following the application of sanctions, they delivered shoes to the Italian army in Abyssinia;<sup>96</sup> d) was imperialistic, because the concern’s shops and factories encircled the entire world;<sup>97</sup> e) created a “Zlín fascist statelet,” where the same laws did not apply as in the rest of Czechoslovakia, but the Baťa family despotically ruled over the backwards rustics;<sup>98</sup> f) was inhuman, half-mad and practiced a colonial model of exploiting human resources as the management treated workers like slaves or draft animals.<sup>99</sup>

Both narratives changed over time. For example, the anti-Baťa narrative gradually escalated its criticism of a Zlín-specific path to socialism. Sometimes they supported one another—to the greatest degree in the years between 1946 and 1948 because of the need to unite against non-communists—but at other

90 Cf., for example, INFANT, Albert. Osvobození otroci. Původní zpráva ze Zlína. In *Rudé právo*, 4 July 1945, p. 4; SVATOPLUK, T. Starý a nový Zlín. In *Rudé právo*, 21 October 1945, p. 3; KIJONKA, Josef. Den velkého vítězství. In *Rudé právo*, 25 October 1945, p. 3.

91 Cf., for example, Zrada rodiny Baťovy a jejich ředitelů. In *Rudé právo*, 24 November 1945, p. 1.

92 KOLMAN, Arnošt. Lidská společnost a věda. In *Naše pravda*, 22 and 23 December 1945, p. 5; STALIN, J. V. *Marxismus a národnostní a koloniální otázka*. Prague: Svoboda, 1949, pp. 192–193.

93 St. K. Neumann se dožívá 70 let. In *Zlínská pravda*, 6 June 1945, p. 5.

94 SVATOPLUK, T. Batismus. In *Naše pravda*, 12 September 1952, p. 3.

95 Brazilský Čechoslovák. Jan Baťa žádá o brazilskou příslušnost. In *Naše pravda*, 4 September 1946, p. 2.

96 Takový byl batismus—nejrůznovější způsob vykořisťování pracujících. In *Naše pravda*, 24 May 1952, p. 2.

97 Výstava “Batismus—zrcadlo světového imperialismu.” In *Naše pravda*, 1 September 1953, p. 1.

98 SVATOPLUK, T. Batismus. In *Naše pravda*, 15 August 1952, p. 3.

99 SVATOPLUK, T. Batismus. In *Naše pravda*, 22 August and 28 August 1952, p. 4.

times, the narratives clashed, during the search for intra-party enemies after 1948, for example. Differing strengths and implementation in the public sphere can also be identified. The anti-Baťa narrative was heard loudly and clearly when the controversial issues of nationalization and retribution were discussed, while the post-Baťa position emphasized production and other successes. However, at internal Communist Party meetings, there were parallel clashes between the two interpretations and the proponents of the post-Baťa narrative had to defend themselves against accusations of abusing their power, unprofessionalism and an insufficient de-Batification of the company's management. An open confrontation between the two narratives was only able to occur after February 1948, when the non-communist concept disappeared from the public space, and after the Soviet-Yugoslav split and the announcement of the doctrine of the intensification of the class struggle in summer-autumn of 1948.

One of the first manifestations of the re-empowerment of the anti-Baťa narrative can be identified in the second half of January 1949; i.e., shortly after the triumph of the proponents of the post-Baťa narrative during Gottwaldov City Week. What was called the “Third Battle of Botostroj”—the struggle to make a film adaptation of the novel—which had already been preceded by the aforementioned challenges of its publication (in 1933 and 1946) and dramatization (1947). This fight, however, was to be the toughest because it had shifted to Prague and into the Communist Party. The script had received a negative review by director Elmar Klos,<sup>100</sup> who was head of the famous company film group in Zlín in 1934–1945, and who had entered the KSČ after the war and been involved in purging collaborators from the film industry and nationalizing the film business.<sup>101</sup> Klos, at that time a prominent filmmaker and the leader of one of the creative teams at Barrandov, and who several months later shot a documentary film about the IX. Congress of the KSČ, criticized the schematism of the novel and the screenplay. In his view, the Baťas had created a qualitatively new type of capitalism, which was effectively managed and at the same time also self-managed from below, which is why it was more resilient in crises and maintained favor and motivated initiative in most workers, whom they had made into co-entrepreneurs. Klos's personal evaluation, which corresponded with the post-Baťa narrative and was published in *Naše pravda*, a mouthpiece for the KV KSČ, was rejected on the grounds that Elmar Klos was falsifying “Zlín's recent capitalist past.”<sup>102</sup>

When the search for enemies in the regional structures of the KSČ intensified after the arrest of the regional head secretary Otto Šling in October 1950, the post-Baťa narrative took on a treasonous dimension, with all possible consequences on the table for its supporters (removal from functions, imprisonment). The post-Baťa narrative was condemned as inimical “Baťovština” during the Stalinist purges. These purges, which did not spare the national economic

100 MACH, Josef. Začíná třetí bitva o Botostroj. Kdo má zájem na falšování nedávné zlínské minulosti. In *Naše pravda*, 22 January 1949, p. 5.

101 Elmar Klos. In *Filmový přehled*, <https://www.filmovyprehled.cz/cs/person/4742/elmar-klos> (last viewed on 26 March 2024).

102 MACH, Josef. Začíná třetí bitva o Botostroj. In *Naše pravda*, 22 January 1949, p. 5.

sector during a period of deepening economic problems, ended Ivan Holý's exemplarily successful career as a socialist manager, a tenure that had planned such sweeping modernization projects in Zlín as the construction of the first television transmitter in Europe (October 1948).<sup>103</sup> He was arrested as deputy minister of light industry in June 1951, and only appeared in public as a witness during the trial of "Rudolf Slánský a spol." in November 1952. He made a public confession that he had damaged the economy with ill-conceived investment projects, that he was a Nazi informer and that through his support for "Baťa entrepreneurship," he wanted to rehabilitate capitalism and return the company to its original owners.<sup>104</sup> The "inevitable evolution" from "Batism" to "Baťovština" was vividly portrayed in Svatopluk Turek's self-purifying thirteen-part article series published by *Naše pravda*, which was timed so that the last two installments were released in November 1952 during the final trial hearings for Rudolf Slánský's case. In Turek's articles, Ivan Holý's image followed the trajectory from the "first worker of Zlín" and the "tireless corrector of all events in Zlín" to a "traitor of the nation."<sup>105</sup> Similarly, at the time of his promotion to Prague, Miloš Jakeš also ritually distanced himself from Holý, denouncing his grandiosity, populism and contempt for Soviet experiences.<sup>106</sup>

The anti-Baťa narrative dominated the entire 1950s, especially at the beginning of the decade when "Batism" had already been completely dehumanized like at an exhibition titled *Batism—a mirror of world imperialism* held at the Moskva hotel (previously called Společenský dům),<sup>107</sup> and at the end of the decade, when a campaign against "revisionism" was waged at the national level. The sharpening of the ideological struggle at that time also took the form of dusting off the struggle against "Batism," which was decried by Alois Indra in June 1958 at the XI. Congress of the KSC with the speech "memories of a nice boss, high wages and houses." Although he identified groups of engineers, clerks and the "labor aristocracy"<sup>108</sup> as the bearers of nostalgia for the old Zlín, communist regional elites had long feared Baťa popularity among ordinary workers, which was reflected in their policies of memory and history. Consequently, three anti-Baťa books, including *Pravá tvář batismu* (The True Face of Batism) by Svatopluk Turek, were published over the next two years.<sup>109</sup>

Two more pronounced waves of reinforcement of the post-Baťa narrative can then be traced in the years of experiments in reforming the centrally-planned economy. The need to speak the language of efficiency, entrepreneurship and a sufficiency of consumer goods resonated more at that time than the language of class conflict and tons of steel. In 1968–1969, the national press

103 Zlín bude mít první televizní vysílač v Evropě. In *Rudé právo*, 9 October 1948, p. 1.

104 Proces Slánský, <https://www.nacr.cz/verejnost/badatelna/digitalni-badatelna/politicke-procesy/slansky> (last viewed on 6 March 2024); LÓŽI 2022, pp. 79–82.

105 SVATOPLUK, T. Osvobozený Zlín. In *Svět v obrazech*, 30 August 1947, p. 20; SVATOPLUK, T. Batismus. In *Naše pravda*, 21 November and 28 November 1952, p. 4.

106 SVATOPLUK, T. Batismus. In *Naše pravda*, 31 October 1952, p. 4.

107 Výstava, kterou by měl zhlédnout každý. In *Naše pravda*, 18 September 1953, pp. 5–6.

108 INDRA, A. Diskuse ke zprávě Ústředního výboru XI. sjezdu KSC. In *Rudé právo*, 20 June 1958, p. 6.

109 KUČERA, Bohumil. *Batismus – ideologie sociálfašismu*. Gottwaldov : Krajské nakladatelství, 1959; SVATOPLUK, T. *Pravá tvář batismu*. Prague : Státní nakladatelství politické literatury 1959; DVORÁKOVÁ, Eva. *Batismus a baťovci*. Gottwaldov : Krajské nakladatelství, 1960.

highlighted the First Republic successes of the Baťa concern, which had made such a good name for Czechoslovakia abroad that socialist exports were also able to benefit, and which had been managed more rationally than the contemporary socialist enterprises.<sup>110</sup> Tomáš Baťa was still “our most predatory industrialist,”<sup>111</sup> but now he had no longer exploited workers; on the contrary, he supported their entrepreneurship based on the American experience.<sup>112</sup> Another partial “rehabilitation” of Baťa’s entrepreneurship, architecture and urbanism came in 1988–1989,<sup>113</sup> even though it was more cautious this time than the one twenty years earlier as a former director of the concern, Hugo Vavrečka, was the grandfather of Václav Havel.<sup>114</sup>

## Conclusion

The present study has addressed the communist regional elites in postwar Zlín at the actor-analysis and discursive levels, which were not conceived of separately. With a certain degree of simplification, it is possible to say that the main proponents of the post-Baťa narrative were postwar communists from the Baťa factory and that those who supported the anti-Baťa narrative were Hodonín apparatchiks. The climactic moment of the dominance of the communists from the Baťa factory was the renaming of Zlín to Gottwaldov and the Baťa concern to Svit in January 1949. However, immediately afterwards and primarily as a result of the structural changes of the first five-year plan and intensive campaigns of seeking intra-party enemies, the Hodonín apparatchiks, who best navigated the turbulent period of the early 1950s and became the bearers of post-Stalinist stabilization, gained power.

The thinking and the exercise of power of political actors did not take place outside of everyday interactions with generally-shared and lived norms and emotions;<sup>115</sup> specifically, deeply-rooted feelings about the exceptionality of Baťa capitalism. With the dynamic postwar politicization of the public sphere, political actors had to relate in some way to this legacy. The allusion to Zdeněk Nejedlý’s thesis about communists as the heirs of national traditions in the title of this study can therefore be twofold; the communists either partly built upon the capitalist past (the post-Baťa narrative), or they rejected it (the anti-Baťa narrative). Proponents of the post-Baťa narrative understood themselves as the best heirs of capitalism, because they brought together “America and socialism.” In this conception, the two quantities had grown together into a new quality, so even this less class-sharpened narrative stayed within the bounds of

110 bh. Jižní Amerika, krajané a my. In *Rudé právo*, 7 June 1969, p. 5; Jak si polepšit bez koruny investic? In *Lidová demokracie*, 21 May 1968, p. 1.

111 ČECHOVÁ, Alena. Aby práce neničila tělo. In *Reportér*, 4 January 1968, pp. 23–24.

112 VEČER, Jan. Jak jsme na tom s cenami potravin. In *Vlasta*, 31 July 1968, p. 15.

113 STAŠA, Eduard. O projekty, které se neuskutečnily. In *Naše pravda*, 18 August and 25 August 1989, p. 6; Panely by měly vydržet. In *Lidová demokracie*, 7 October 1988, p. 3; Malá a velká ekonomika. In *Vlasta*, 6 February and 10 February 1989, p. 8.

114 Kdo je Václav Havel. In *Rudé právo*, 23 February 1989, p. 4.

115 KOLÁŘ, Pavel – KOPEČEK, Michal. Foreword. In DONERT, Celia – KLADNIK, Ana – SABROW, Martin (eds.) *Making Sense of Dictatorship. Domination and Everyday Life in East Central Europe after 1945*. Budapest; Vienna; New York : Central University European Press, 2021, p. IX.



Marxism-Leninism.<sup>116</sup> In other words, they ushered in a qualitatively higher phase of collectivism than the Baťa version; Baťa had run his business under the model of “work collectively, live individually,” but the post-Baťa narrative said “work collectively, live collectively,” which was even done through politicizing the public sphere, at folklore festivals for example.<sup>117</sup>

Zlín’s journey from capitalism to socialism was framed by the exceptionality of the company town, whose political and economic actors were united by the intention of (re)producing the organized, accelerated modernity as effectively as possible, and to be first either among competitors (capitalism) or among equals (socialism). However, Zlín/Gottwaldov did not become a showpiece for socialism for two main reasons. Firstly, the tight link between the factory and the town weakened after the war and the city was no longer primarily managed from the executive office of the concern. The interests of several political collectives of actors (namely, the leadership of the nationalized Baťa enterprise, the National Committees at every level, and also the secretariats of political parties, which themselves were internally heterogeneous), had begun to clash. A previously hegemonic Baťa narrative splintered into several competing conceptions, which weakened the exceptionality, efficiency and position of the Zlín manufacturing complex. Second, in the era of heavy industry prioritization, political and power centralization and the search for an internal enemy after 1948, the post-Baťa narrative was condemned by proponents of the anti-Baťa narrative as traitorous “Baťovština” that sought to plunge socialist Gottwaldov back into the times of big capitalist Baťa.

At the same time, however, both narratives deconstructed the Baťa—or more generally, the First Republic—mythos, served to legitimize nationalization of the Baťa concern and were thus inscribed in the governing discourse and the new political order of postwar Czechoslovakia. Given the circumscription of the study’s topic, the non-communist narrative which portrayed the communists as demagogic usurpers of Bata’s modernizing legacy, was not given a deeper look.<sup>118</sup> However, it should be emphasized that although this position disappeared from the public sphere after February 1948, some of its motifs, particularly accusations of dictatorial practices among the leadership of the Baťa concern, still resonated for a long time in the anti-Baťa narrative, thus blurring the seemingly clear boundary between communists and non-communists.

In this study, a more complicated picture of postwar Central and Eastern Europe is offered, where Stalin’s master plan of unidirectional Sovietization was not implemented all at once, and where the possibilities of different versions of socialism under Soviet supervision were becoming realized.<sup>119</sup> The dynamics

116 KOLMAN, Vojtěch. Jak přeměnit kvantitu v kvalitu? K Hegelovu pojmu míry. In *Filozofický časopis*, 2018, vol. 66, no. 3, p. 325.

117 Cf., for example, Velké národopisné slavnosti ve Zlíně. In *Zlínská pravda*, 1 July 1945, p. 2; *III. Krajská konference Komunistické strany Československa ve Zlíně, 12. – 13. dubna 1947*. Zlín : Společný výkonný výbor Čs. strany národně socialistické ve Zlíně, 1947, p. 8.

118 Cf., for example, *50 let strany národně socialistické ve Zlíně 1897–1947*. Zlín : Společný výkonný výbor Čs. strany národně socialistické ve Zlíně, 1947; Odhalená teroristická skupina ve Zlíně. In *Nové slovo*, 20 April 1947, p. 1; VAŇHARA, Josef. Rozhlas se ptá, zda se ve Zlíně střílí. In *Svobodný zítřek*, 11 September 1947, p. 4; O poměrech ve Zlíně. In *Nové slovo*, 3 October 1947, p. 2.

119 NAIMARK, Norman M. *Stalin and the Fate of Europe: The Postwar Struggle for Sovereignty*. Cambridge : Harvard University Press, 2019.

of the relationships between the actors and their (re)produced narratives show the internal contradictory faces of Stalinism, which arose out of permanent tension between its national and international, and individual and collective dimensions. Applying this insight to the clashes between the two Zlín communist narratives, the international Soviet model was meant to supplant the Zlín (national) path to socialism, while at the same time, global “Batism” was intended to be eliminated by a return to the people’s national roots.