

THE HISTORICAL PATH OF THE LAST 50 YEARS

The year 1971 is associated with important historical data and events in the life of the peoples of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic. Fifty years ago, the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia constituted itself from the left and international wing of the Social Democratic Party at the first Congress of the Communist Party held in Prague from May 14 to May 16, 1921. In September of the same year, the revolutionary classes of all nations of Czechoslovakia joined into a single political force. The 14th Congress of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia was held during May of this year to confirm the correctness of the development of the Party based on the principles of Marxism-Leninism, and to outline the principles of political, economic, cultural and scientific life of Czechoslovakia in the years to follow.

The history of the Communist Party is deeply associated with the history of the Czechs and Slovaks in the last 50 years, during which the communists of Czechoslovakia participated in all important events.

The history of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is connected with the most progressive cultural trends of the Czechs and Slovaks. It is associated with the development of science and technology within the last 25 years, during which the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia as the leading political force has been guiding the peoples of Czechoslovakia to accomplish the desired aim — the construction of a socialist society. The contemplation on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Czechoslovak Communist Party would be incomplete without emphasizing the help of the party to the development of Czechoslovak science.

In pre-war Czechoslovakia, the number of scientists working at universities and in some important research centres was 700; nowadays, this number is twenty times higher.

The most important event in the development of Czechoslovak science and, hence, also in that of parasitology, is the foundation of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences. It was stated in the report motivating the foundation of this institution, which had to be developed on the principles of the Soviet Academy of Sciences: "Science is the basis of socialism; socialism having been created by science, continues to develop on a scientific basis to transform nature and society to the advantage of man".

In 1952, when the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia instigated the foundation of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences as an institution of fundamental scientific research, this principle became the prompting motif. It is difficult not to mention the words of Klement Gottwald, President of the Czechoslovak Republic and, for many years, Communist Party leader, referring to the foundation of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences: "The Academy will be a creative working institution and not a representative body. This is an extremely serious and honorable role. Its place will be at the very centre of the life of our people and not at its periphery. This is its responsibility towards our people, towards our country: to become a true focus of scientific research in our country, a focus of economic, technical and cultural progress". (K. Gottwald, 1951–1953, p. 200).

Also Professor Zdeněk Nejedlý, first President of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, laid down the principles of this institution in his programmatic proclamation "We are building the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences" published in February 1952.

Science in our country continued in the tradition of the Czech and Slovak scientific societies and that mainly in the tradition of the Royal Czech Society of Science (Královská česká společnost nauk) which had come into being in the second half of the 18th century. The conception of the newly established Academy of Sciences contrasted, however, from that of these former scientific societies in that it was to become mainly a scientific "workshop". Its organisation and activities are based on the pattern of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

The foundation of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and that of the Slovak Academy of Sciences marks the culminating point in the rebuilding of Czechoslovak science; this was followed by a rapid development of science and scientific research in Czechoslovakia. With the support of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, most favourable conditions were created for the progress of fundamental scientific research in socialist Czechoslovakia.

This progress is illustrated by the following facts. When commencing its activities, the Academy of Sciences had 1,619 employees by January 1, 1953. In 1970, i.e. 18 years later, the number of employees of both academies (the Slovak Academy including) was 14,000. Of these, 6,000 are university graduates, of whom several are holding the degree of candidate and doctor of science. There are 130 scientific institutes and other institutions belonging to the Academy. For the first time in history, the people of both nations (Czechs and Slovaks) were given the opportunity of developing fundamental research in social sciences covering the entire field of this scientific branch.

At the same time, utmost support was given to scientific activities at universities and to applied research affiliated with the individual ministries and large industrial enterprises. In Slovakia, an extensive scientific base was built practically from the root.

These progressive trends in fundamental research are illustrated also by the progress of Czechoslovak parasitology. This is closely linked to the foundation of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences (Institute of Parasitology) and the Slovak Academy of Sciences (Helminthological Institute), and to the development of zoological departments at the various universities (particularly at the faculties of natural sciences) and at veterinary colleges. Parasitology advanced also very notably at the research institutions of the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Agriculture.

Within the last 25 years, the progress of Czechoslovak parasitology as a science has been considerable and numerous of its results have been acclaimed internationally (for details see *Folia parasit. (Praha)*, 17 : 97—101, 1970). Confirmation has been given of the importance of parasitology in the research of natural foci of infection under conditions of the moderate zone of the Earth.

Special attention has been paid to the research of natural foci of infection based on the theory of E. N. Pavlovsky. The original theory on the circulation of some diseases in intact nature has been applied to conditions of densely populated areas by means of parasitological and biocenological analyses of natural foci in central and south-eastern Europe.

Under these aspects it has been possible to solve successfully, e.g., the problem of the epidemic outbreak of meningoencephalitis near Rožňava in eastern Slovakia in 1951, which attracted the interest of the Czechoslovak public. Retrospectively it has been confirmed by comprehensive research that the epidemic had been caused by the virus of tick-borne encephalitis spread by the use of unboiled goat- and cow-milk.

Later, other problems of tick-borne encephalitis as well as problems of several diseases characterized by a natural focus (e.g. tularemia, leptospiroses, toxoplasmosis etc.) have

been solved. Investigations in this field improved greatly by coordinated work of the parasitologists with virologists, microbiologists, mycologists, epidemiologists, zoologists, botanists etc.

Also these investigations have fully been supported by the central and local Party authorities and by the Public Health Services.

In recent years, a number of parasitological periodicals and volumes of collected papers have been introduced to publish the results achieved in parasitology. Academia, the Publishing House of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, has been publishing since 1962 the periodical *Folia parasitologica* issued by the Institute of Parasitology of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, Prague as a continuation of the former annual *Československá parasitologie*. *Helminthologia* and *Acta Helminthologica* are annuals of the Helminthological Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Košice.

The foundation of the Czechoslovak Parasitological Society in 1959 marks another important step in the development of Czechoslovak parasitology. Nowadays, this Society has 180 members whose specialization covers a variety of parasitological fields. Among other activities, this Society participates also in the organisation of parasitological seminars, symposia and conferences of either local or international character.

The development of fundamental research is one of the examples illustrating the solicitude extended to scientific research by the socialist government headed by the Communist Party.

The strength of the Communist Party guiding our people for more than a quarter of century, is based on the close contact with the working people, the fundamental driving force of historical progress. The historical path of the Communist Party from its commencement until the revolutionary socialist transformations marks the culmination of the most glorious revolutionary and national traditions of the Czechoslovak people. No other movement in our history has achieved such fundamental successes in accomplishing the desire of all working people.

The history of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia is a significant confirmation of the fact that the only reliable guide through the complicated storms of the present days is Marxism-Leninism and that socialism only is capable to offer all the means for a happy and content life of all Czechs and Slovaks and peace for the creative mind of their scientists.

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