

POLISH SEAPORTS AND CZECHOSLOVAK FOREIGN TRADE

Polské námořní přístavy a československý zahraniční obchod. — Československo je jako vnitrozemský stát nuceno používat v nákladním přepravním styku se zámořím cizích evropských námořních přístavů. Předností geografické polohy Československa však je, že může používat k překladi svého tranzitního zboží většího počtu evropských přístavů, ležících na pobřeží více moří. Po druhé světové válce staly se pro čs. zahraniční obchod nejvýznamnějšími přístavy polské, zvláště Štětín. V příspěvku je stručně rozebrána struktura čs. tranzitu polskými přístavy v posledních letech a význam těchto přístavů pro čs. námořní plavbu. Zvláštní pozornost je věnována otázkám přepravy zboží mezi Československem a polskými přístavy. V závěru vyslovuje autor názor, že polské přístavy, zejména pak Štětín, zůstanou i v budoucnu pro čs. zahraniční obchod nejvýznamnějšími evropskými námořními přístavy.

Czechoslovakia as an inland state is obliged to make use of foreign seaports for carrying trade with overseas countries. The total volume of the Czechoslovak seaborne trade is considerable: in 1961 it amounted to 6,229,000 metric tons.

The advantage of Czechoslovak geographical position in the heart of Europe is, however, that she is able to use for the shipping of goods in transit a larger number of European ports, lying in various countries on the shores of different seas, while at the same time the distance of none of these ports from Czechoslovakia differs much from that of any other.

Among such ports there are also the Polish ports. All three main seaports of present-day Poland: Gdańsk, Gdynia and Szczecin, were already used to a considerable extent for the shipping of Czechoslovak goods in transit before the World War II. Thus in 1937 the tonnage of Czechoslovak transit goods amounted in Gdańsk to 1,036,000 metric tons, in Gdynia to 223,000 metric tons. The leading position in the shipping of Czechoslovak transit goods in the pre-war period was of course taken by Hamburg, with which, along with the above-mentioned three ports, the Adriatic seaports, especially Trieste, competed for Czechoslovak transit goods.

After the second world war, the setting up of a People's Democratic regime both in Czechoslovakia and in Poland created favourable conditions for the close cooperation of both countries. Czechoslovakia had now the possibility of using the Polish seaports for the shipping of its goods to a much greater

extent than ever before. Czechoslovakia began to make intensive use of this possibility as early as 1947 and 1948. In 1950 the amount of Czechoslovak goods in transit handled in Polish seaports reached 1,440,000 metric tons. In the period 1951—1953 the amount of Czechoslovak goods passing through Polish ports decreased, this being caused among other factors by the decrease of Czechoslovak trade with capitalist countries. Since 1954 the extent of Czechoslovak transit goods passing through Polish ports again rapidly increased. At the same time, however, Czechoslovak transit goods passing through Hamburg also increased, the amount in 1954 attaining a figure higher than that of 1938. The peak figure was reached in 1956, when the port of Hamburg dealt with over 1,448,000 tons of Czechoslovak transit goods. A cause of this development was, among others, the existence of the Elbe water route, which enabled Czechoslovakia to transport goods to and from Hamburg in her own vessels, and further, the sufficiency of suitable liner connections from Hamburg to those countries and ports with which the Polish seaports at that time had not yet direct or not sufficiently ample shipping connections. The improved equipment of the Polish ports and the extension of liner services on the overseas routes enabled Czechoslovakia to transfer gradually, after 1957, part of her trade from Hamburg to the Polish seaports.

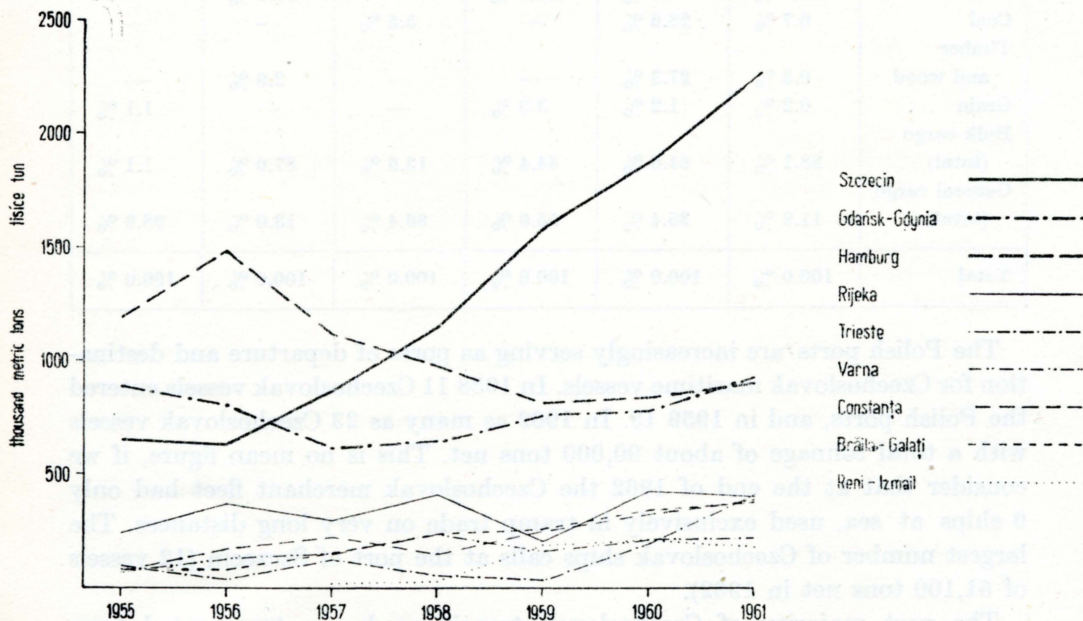
The extension and modernisation of the seaports of socialist countries on the Black Sea and the lower Danube, along with the improvement in the number of overseas routes covered, brought about, in the second half of the fifties, favourable conditions for the considerable growth of Czechoslovak transit via these ports, i.e. Constanta, Braila and Galati, Varna, Reni and Izmail. For transport of goods between these ports and Czechoslovakia the Danube route may be used. Further, the use of these ports instead of the Polish ports for transport of goods between Czechoslovakia and the countries of the Near East, Southern Asia and the Far East means the shortening of the sea-journey by as much as 2000 nautical miles.

During the same period the amount of Czechoslovak goods shipped via Rijeka also increased considerably. The extent of Czechoslovak transit via Trieste varied very much during the whole post-war period.

In spite of these facts the shipping of Czechoslovak transit goods via the Polish ports constantly increased from 1957 onwards and in 1961 amounted to 3,303,000 metric tons. In other words, in 1961 about 52 % of the entire Czechoslovak seaborne trade went through the Polish ports, while about 37 % of this entire seaborne trade passed through Szczecin.

Czechoslovak imports in general and especially seaborne imports consist for the most part of heavy bulk cargoes such as ores and other raw materials, while Czechoslovak exports are mostly made up of general cargo. For this reason the tonnage of Czechoslovak transit goods imported via the Polish ports greatly surpasses the export tonnage. This can be seen strikingly in

the case of Szczecin and Gdańsk, to a lesser degree in Gdynia, which plays a larger part than the other Polish seaports in handling general cargoes. This is illustrated by the following figures of Czechoslovak transit goods handled by the Polish seaports in the years 1959—1961:*)



1. Czechoslovak transit goods traffic through various European ports and port groups in 1955 to 1961 (according to J. Beránek 1962 and O. Šlampa 1962)

Československý tranzit různými evropskými námořními přístavy a jejich skupinami v letech 1955—1961 (podle J. Beránka 1962 a O.Šlampa 1962)

	1959		1960		1961	
	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports
	(thousand metric tons)					
Szczecin	1,350.3	251.5	1,510.4	403.1	1,895.1	463.4
Gdynia	239.6	163.1	326.6	180.2	288.6	148.4
Gdańsk	287.2	60.7	257.7	56.6	458.6	48.6

A more detailed picture of the structure of Czechoslovak transit via the Polish seaports in 1960 is given by the following table (compiled from Morski rocznik statystyczny 1961/I, table 30):

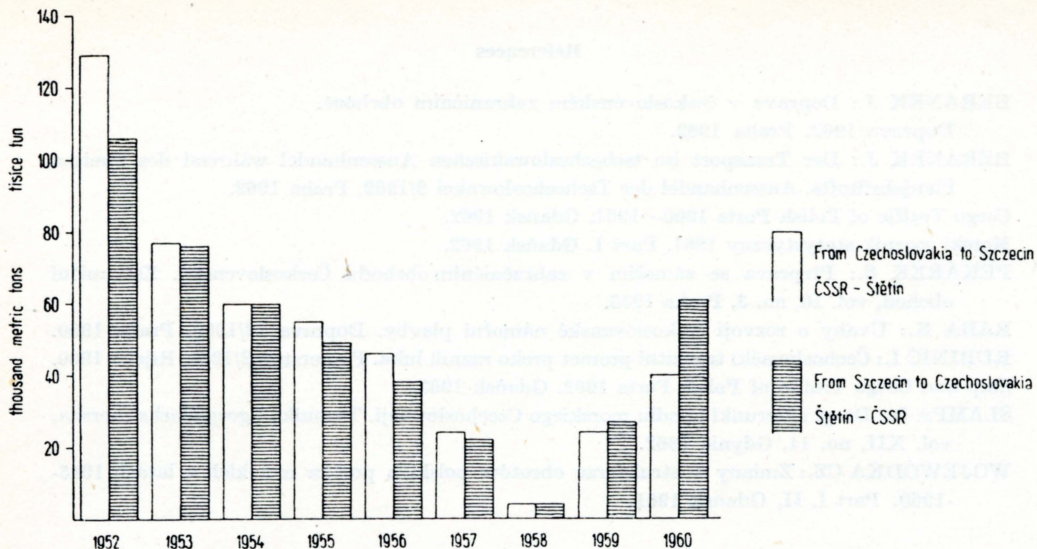
*) Official figures of Czechoslovak transit published by the Administration of Polish and the most other European ports slightly differ from the figures given by J. Beránek (1962).

	Szczecin		Gdynia		Gdańsk	
	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports	Imports	Exports
Ores	70.0 %	0.2 %	40.4 %	—	79.4 %	—
Coal	0.7 %	28.6 %	—	5.5 %	—	—
Timber						
and wood	0.3 %	27.3 %	—	—	2.9 %	—
Grain	0.2 %	1.2 %	3.9 %	—	—	1.1 %
Bulk cargo						
(total)	88.1 %	64.6 %	44.4 %	13.6 %	87.0 %	1.1 %
General cargo						
(total)	11.9 %	35.4 %	55.6 %	86.4 %	13.0 %	98.9 %
Total	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %	100.0 %

The Polish ports are increasingly serving as ports of departure and destination for Czechoslovak maritime vessels. In 1958 11 Czechoslovak vessels entered the Polish ports, and in 1959 13. In 1962 as many as 23 Czechoslovak vessels with a total tonnage of about 90,000 tons net. This is no mean figure, if we consider that at the end of 1962 the Czechoslovak merchant fleet had only 9 ships at sea, used exclusively in tramp trade on very long distances. The largest number of Czechoslovak ships calls at the port of Szczecin (12 vessels of 51,100 tons net in 1962).

The vast majority of Czechoslovak transit goods are transported from Czechoslovakia to the Polish seaports and vice versa by rail. Transport of goods between Czechoslovakia and Szczecin and vice versa, is also carried on along inland waterways, on the one hand down the Elbe from the Czechoslovak Elbe—Vltava ports, along the German canals and lower Oder, and on the other hand from the Polish port of Koźle to Szczecin. The latter passage from Koźle to Szczecin, which up to 1958 was also taken part in by Czechoslovak barges, is now entirely carried out by the Polish Oder fleet. The extent of goods transported from Czechoslovakia to Szczecin and vice versa in Czechoslovak barges in the period 1952—1960 is shown in diagram 2. The diagram clearly shows the continual decline in the extent of this transport up to 1958 and its rise from 1959 in connection with the extension of the Elbe — Szczecin route, on which Czechoslovak water transport has of recent years been concentrated. By this route mostly timber and sugar are carried from Czechoslovakia to Szczecin, while mainly ores, apatites and recently also phosphates for the fertilizers factory at Lovosice are transported from Szczecin to Czechoslovakia.

The Polish transport of Czechoslovak transit goods via the Oder shows also a marked tendency to rise. While Polish barges in 1956 carried only 16,600 metric tons of Czechoslovak transit goods, in 1960 they transported 111,900 and in 1961 as much as 147,600 metric tons.



2. Transport of goods between Czechoslovakia and Szczecin along inland waterways by Czechoslovak barges). Morski rocznik statystyczny 1961.

Préprava zboží mezi Československem a Štétiném po vnitrozemských vodních cestách československými plavidly). Morski rocznik statystyczny 1961

The total tonnage of goods shipped by water between Czechoslovakia and Szczecin while it is greater than pre-war and has strikingly increased during recent years, is not yet sufficiently high. In 1960 only 11.2 % of the total tonnage of Czechoslovak goods shipped via Szczecin was carried to or from Szczecin via the Oder. Favourable conditions for increasing this proportion undoubtedly exist. Any considerable change can, however, in the author's opinion, be brought about only by means of improved shipping conditions on the Oder, especially on its middle course, by an increase in the available barges on the Oder, and further, by a lengthening of the navigable reaches of the Oder at least, for the present, as far as the Ostrava region, as well as by some other improvements.

In conclusion, we may say that in spite of the considerable increase in shipping of Czechoslovak transit goods via the Black Sea and Adriatic ports during the last few years, we may expect that the Polish seaports and, among them, above all Szczecin, will retain in the future the position of being the most important seaports for the Czechoslovak foreign trade, especially in connection with the further extension of trade relations between Czechoslovakia and the countries of Latin America and West Africa.

References

- BERÁNEK J.: Doprava v československém zahraničním obchooě.
Doprava/1962. Praha 1962.
- BERÁNEK J.: Der Transport im tschechoslowakischen Aussenhandel während des zweiten Planjahrfünfts. Aussenhandel der Tschechoslowakei 2/1962, Praha 1962.
- Cargo Traffic of Polish Ports 1960—1961. Gdańsk 1962.
- Morski rocznik statystyczny 1961. Part I. Gdańsk 1962.
- PEKÁREK S.: Přeprava se zámořím v zahraěničním obchodu Československa. Zahraniění obchod, vol. 10, no. 3, Praha 1955.
- RABA K.: Úvahy o rozvoji československé námořní plavby. Doprava 12/1960, Praha 1960.
- RUBINIĆ I.: Českoslovaěki tranzitni promet preko raznih luka. Pomorstvo 2/1960, Rijeka 1960.
- Ship and Cargo Traffic of Polish Ports 1962. Gdańsk 1963.
- ŠLAMPA O.: Drogi i kierunki handlu morskiego Czechosłowacji. Technika i gospodarka morska, vol. XII, no. 11, Gdynia 1962.
- WOJEWÓDKA CZ.: Zmiany w strukturze obrotów polskich portów morskich w latach 1945-1960. Part I, II, Gdańsk 1961.