

A stylized world map composed of a grid of dots in various shades of gray, with several dots highlighted in red. The map is centered behind the title.

Right-Wing Extremism in the Czech Republic

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- The Workers' Party of Social Justice (DSSS) is the strongest right-wing extremist party in the Czech Republic with about two percent of votes in the last parliamentary election. It profiles itself as the »defender of ordinary people« against »the corrupt political elite«, especially the parties in power, and tries to make use of government corruption scandals to discredit the democratic political spectrum as a whole.
- The main strategy to raise support for the extreme right is to highlight criminal cases comprising members of the Roma population: »Anti-gypsyism«, where a number of local citizens who are not among the party's main support take part in various protest events focused on Roma criminality, is becoming the main area of contact of DSSS with mainstream forces.
- Despite its poor showing in elections, the extreme right in Czech Republic attained a certain degree of influence due to media coverage of its activities. Mainstream political parties respond to it and often borrow its anti-gypsy rhetoric, while neither the state nor the non-governmental sector has proven to be very effective in solving the so-called Roma issue.



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1. Introduction: Dynamics of Right-Wing Extremist Movements and Their Electoral Successes in the Czech Republic

The present-day spectrum of right-wing extremism in the Czech Republic began to form after the fall of communism in 1989; however, it also builds on older traditions in this part of the political spectrum in the Czech lands and perhaps even on nationalistic and right-wing traditions which, in the historical context, have come to be perceived as extremist (Czech nationalism in the nineteenth century, agrarian republicanism in the first half of the twentieth century etc.). The right-wing extremist spectrum in the Czech Republic can, when viewed from the outside, be divided into the groups shown in Table 1.

We should bear in mind that these divisions have been undertaken for analytical purposes, whereas in reality the lines between the various categories are often blurred. Furthermore, neo-Nazism is an external designation, as neo-Nazis often call themselves nationalists or national socialists. The designation national socialist in the Czech context is also ambiguous, as traditional Czech national socialism, which originated at the end of the nineteenth century, is usually understood in the Czech environment as the centre-left of the political spectrum (although there is some overlap with the nationalistic neo-Hussitism) (Mareš 2008). We should also note that successful political entities in the political party environment generally represent an amalgamation of various ideological trends undertaken by their leaders for pragmatic reasons and often encompassing ideologically antagonistic far-right movements (Mareš 2003: 221).

In the 1990s, the party *Sdružení pro Republiku – Republikánská strana Československa* (Association for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia – SPR-RSČ)

made inroads into the party system under the leadership of Miroslav Sládek. The core of the party began to form in December 1989 and was registered in February 1990. Its views are a good example of the above-mentioned ideological mix, encompassing various Czech nationalist and new far-right trends, whereby neo-Nazism did not have a significant role to play and existed primarily in the youth organisation *Republikánská Mládež* (Republican Youth), which was disbanded by the Ministry of the Interior in 2002 (Mareš 2003: 215–218).

The SPR-RSČ was sharply critical of the new post-communist elite (Sládek's proclamation that it was necessary »to throw the government into the Vltava« became well known), engaged in racist invective against the Roma population, opposed the Czech Republic's membership of NATO and accession to the EU and opposed the demands of the Sudeten Germans (cancellation of the Benes decrees, recognition of their right to a homeland and the return of property or compensation); anti-German rhetoric became strong only after 1991, when cooperation with the German Republicans came to an end following the meeting between Franz Schönhuber and Miroslav Sládek. The SPR-RSČ also demanded the reunification of Carpathian Ruthenia, which was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1945 (Mareš 2003: 209).

The SPR-RSČ was unsuccessful in the first free elections following the fall of communism in 1990, but did win seats in parliament in 1992 and 1996. In the early elections in 1998, however, it did not manage to cross the 5 percent threshold and since then right-wing extremism has not been represented in the Czech Parliament. In 2000 the SPR-RSČ declared bankruptcy and a large part of the party (including Sládek) transferred to a new party bearing the name of its chairman: *Republikáni Miroslava*

Table 1: Basic ideological division of the right-wing extremist spectrum in the Czech Republic

Nationalists			Neo-Nazis		»New« Far Right	
Neo-Hussitism (builds on the »fighting« ethos of the Hussite revolutionary movement)	Ultra-conservative movement (builds on the reactionary tradition in Czech history)	Integral Catholic movement (partially tied to Clerical Fascism)	Espousing traditional Nazi ideology; subservience to Nazi-era Germany; ties to the tradition of Sudeten German Nazism	White Power (modern neo-Nazism, espousing a superior position for the Czech nation)	Pragmatic mix of various ideological trends, or extreme version of »mainstream« Czech traditions	Ideologically undefined focus on white supremacy; identity based on xenophobia
Manifestations in various Czech fascist trends						

Source: Mareš 2008

Sládka (Miroslav Sládek's Republicans – RMS). In 2008, the original SPR-RSČ was reactivated, but by then it had become marginal and was suspended in 2011 after failing to submit its legally mandatory annual financial report. In 2010, the small *Republikánská strana Čech, Moravy a Slezska* (Republican Party of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia – RSČMS) broke off from the SPR-RSČ, but it is entirely without influence (Bast, Mareš, Smolík, Vejvodová 2010: 240).

In the elections to the Czech National Council (until 1992) and the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic (as of 1996), the SPR-RSČ and RMS scored the following results:

1990* – VDS/SPR-RSČ	1.0 % (72,048)
1992 – SPR-RSČ	5.98 % (387,026)
1996 – SPR-RSČ	8.01 % (485,072)
1998 – SPR-RSČ	3.90 % (232,965)
2002 – RMS	0.97 % (46,325)
2006* – Národní síly	0.17 % (9,341)
2010 – SPR-RSČ	0.03 % (1,993)

* in 1990 the SPR-RSČ formed a coalition with the *Všelidová demokratická strana* (All People's Democratic Party – VDS) and in 2006 was part of *Národní síly* (National Powers), and thus legally ran on the ticket of *Národní strana* (National Party).

Source: Czech Statistical Office 2012

The various parties and movements that split off from the SPR-RSČ and the parties that were established from various ideological movements in the skinhead subculture and from the membership of small, post-communist, far-right associations gradually tried to usurp the position of the SPR-RSČ. These included the *Národně sociální blok* (National-Social Bloc – NSB – bringing together dissident republicans and neo-Nazi skinheads), which did not succeed in the 2001 elections; neither did the Neo-Hussite *Národní strana* (National Party – NS) nor the ultraconservative *Národní sjednocení* (National Unification – NSj) party (Mareš 2011).

Dělnická strana (Workers' Party – DS), established in 2002 by members of the SPR-RSČ and RMS who were dissatisfied with Sládek's leadership, was somewhat more successful. Having initially cooperated with various parties (including the far left) under a not very well defined ideological profile, it later entered into a new era of marked cooperation with the neo-Nazi structures

of *Národní/svobodný odpor* (National/Free Resistance – NO/SO) and *Autonomní nacionalisti* (Autonomous Nationalists) in 2006. In 2008, the party even founded the paramilitary *Ochranné sbory Dělnické strany* (Workers' Party Protection Corps), and the youth association *Dělnická mládež* (Workers' Youth) was established in support of it. DS was strongly involved in the anti-Roma demonstrations in Litvínov-Janov in 2008, and won 1.07 percent of the vote in the elections to the European Parliament in 2009, qualifying it to receive public funding (Bastl, Mareš, Smolík, Vejvodová 2011: 164).

In 2010, DS was dissolved by court order. Its members and leadership transferred to *Dělnické strany sociální spravedlnosti* (Workers' Party of Social Justice – DSSS). This party had been established under a different name and orientation as early as 2004, but the wing supporting DS assumed power and assumed the above name and structures in case DS was prohibited (Mareš 2012). DSSS is also supported by *Dělnická mládež* (Workers' Youth). In the 2010 parliamentary elections, DSSS received 1.14 percent of the vote (Ministry of the Interior 2011: 8).

2. Agents of Right-Wing Extremism

2.1 The Current State of Right-Wing Extremist Movements and Organisations

The DSSS is the strongest right-wing extremist party in the Czech Republic in terms of both voters and members (it has approximately 600 members). It brings together various nationalistically focussed structures and the new right (including former members and followers of the SPR-RSČ) as well as part of the neo-Nazi spectrum. Other right-wing extremist parties are marginal [e. g., the ultra-conservative *Národní sjednocení* (National Unification) party].

There are also a number of right-wing extremist civic associations active in the Czech Republic whose focus is mainly on educational activities. The oldest of these is *Vlastenecká fronta* (Patriotic Front – VF), which was established in 1993 and endorses traditional Czech interwar fascism.

Various racist media associations are also currently active on the Internet, such as White Media (which also manages the Anti-Multi-Kulti Watch project, where information about immigrants and »xenophiles«, i. e., people who help them, especially from the NGO sphere, is published).

On the neo-Nazi scene, a number of organisations modelled on German free nationalism are active: the NO/SO; *Svobodná mládež* (Free Youth –SM), which has partial ties to the NO/SO; various regional groups of the *Autonomní nacionalisti* (Autonomous Nationalists), a branch of the Blood & Honour Division Bohemia; and other small regional groups (Ministry of the Interior 2012: 13–16).

A host of perpetrators of violent attacks aimed especially against the Roma population but also against immigrants and leftist activists hail from the militant neo-Nazi spectrum. Recently, however, local ethnic unrest in locations where there are co-existence problems between the Czech ethnic majority and the Roma minority has become a regular occurrence. Even »ordinary citizens« have taken active part in such unrest alongside militant extremists. Cases of shootings or other violent attacks perpetrated by people from the »regular population« against members of the Roma population who are suspected of stealing or mugging have also stirred controversy.

2.2 DSSS

2.2.1 Focus, Objectives and Main Message

When assessing the politics of the DSSS, one should bear in mind that the formulations in the party's platform documents are more moderate than some of the statements made by party leaders and sympathisers at meetings. After the dissolution of DS and the prosecution of some of its leaders for making inflammatory speeches, it has naturally become cautious in its statements.

While the DSSS endorses National Socialism its basic platform rejects the ideologies of both Nazism and Communism (DSSS 2010a).

Some members and sympathisers of DSSS are Czech isolationists and xenophobic nationalists who have a deeper ideological background, while others endorse Hussite Czech nationalism. Others still have ties to neo-Nazism (Ministry of the Interior 2012: 15), and certain symbols inspired by German right-wing extremism (Strasserism, Thule-Seminar and the like) are used at DSSS rallies or those of its youth organisation – Workers' Youth (DM), (Mareš et al 2011: 13–14) as are symbols of the dissolved DS (where ties to neo-Nazi groups were one of the reasons for state repression).

The party is not religiously defined and is not tied to any significant degree to religious groups (not even to integral Catholicism, which DS briefly flirted with in 2006–2007) (Bastl, Mareš, Smolík, Vejvodová 2011: 159). In terms of history, it endorses various Czech historical traditions that it momentarily deems advantageous—reference to late nineteenth-century national labour movements being a staple. The party verbally supports the traditional family and rejects same-sex registered partnerships (DSSS 2011a).

The party is currently using the »Roma issue« to profile itself, casting itself as a »truth« teller about »gypsy criminality«. In relation to criminality in general, it advocates a strict »law and order« approach and even believes the population should engage in self-defence. Officially at least, the party does not contest democratic parliamentary mechanisms and strongly supports elements of direct democracy. Its platform is focused on »welfare-chauvinism« (DSSS 2011a). It believes in an egalitarian society and income redistribution, but only for members of its own ethnic nation, not for groups perceived as »foreign« or »nonconformist« (DSSS 2012).

2.2.2 Images of Enemies

The party profiles itself as the defender of ordinary people against the corrupt political elite, especially the parties in power. It tries to make use of government corruption scandals to discredit the democratic political spectrum as a whole. It tends to perceive even the mainstream media or specific reporters as enemies, especially if they report negatively about party members or communicate facts and opinions not in line with DSSS policies.

The party's defining characteristic is its opposition to nonconformists and people abusing social benefits. The party also likes to highlight criminal cases where the actual or suspected perpetrators are members of the Roma population. It is active in organising events in locations where, following criminal Roma activity, co-existence problems arise between the inhabitants of so-called Roma ghettos and the majority (Ministry of the Interior 2012: 14).

Judaism is not a major focus of the DSSS (even if individual members engage in anti-Semitism), although it does criticise the pro-Israeli policies of the Czech government. The DSSS opposes the construction of new mosques in the Czech Republic, but Islamophobia does not have any

significant role to play in its policies. Its opposition to migrant workers from various countries, especially those from outside Europe, is more important, especially with respect to the large number of Vietnamese in the Czech Republic and criminality in which they are involved (Mareš et al. 2011: 34).

The DSSS strongly criticises the present form of the European Union and NATO (DSSS 2011b). Its rhetoric is anti-capitalist and that of DM even more so. It rejects the capitalist globalisation of the economy and capital speculation (Lamprecht 2012). Recently, the DSSS profited itself on its opposition to ACTA, which it sees as an instrument of control over privacy (Vrba 2012).

Its political enemies are members of the left-wing, especially direct adversaries from autonomous anarchist groups [especially *Antifašistické akce* (Antifascist Action)], and the communists. The DSSS calls attention to the fact that it and the far-right are subject to stronger state repression than left-wing extremists and it verbally attacks anti-racists from the NGO sector. Party members have also been involved in campaigns against court-appointed experts whose opinions contributed to some of the party's members or sympathisers receiving prison sentences (Chaloupská, Křivka 2012).

2.2.3 Strategy

The DSSS focuses on acquiring power through parliament, but to date it has not managed to win seats at the regional, national or European level, although it has won a few seats on local councils. Currently the DSSS is represented only in the Northern Bohemian city of Krupka following a repeat election, in which its representative, Anna Holešinská, initiated and helped push through a new public order ordinance and thus helped to enhance the party's image (Holešinská 2012).

In terms of the media, the party presents its opinions mainly on the Internet and in the occasional television discussion; owing to its poor electoral showings, however, it is not invited to appear on television very often. Another important channel for communicating with the public are the frequent appearances of party chairman Tomáš Vandas all over the country, including in small towns. Its annual May Day demonstrations, organised alternately in Prague and Brno, also receive media coverage.

Clearly, ethnic unrest in problematic regions has been the most influential promotional tool of the DSSS. In early 2011, tensions flared in Nový Bydžov when a man of Roma ethnicity raped an ethnic Czech woman. On 12 March 2011, DSSS called a demonstration in the town, which was also attended by many locals. Antifascists demonstrated against it but were blocked by the police. Following the event, some demonstrators attacked members of the Roma population. (Ministry of the Interior 2012: 48). In summer 2011, ethnic unrest broke out in Šluknov and Novoborsko following a series of crimes perpetrated by the local Roma population, which were covered by the media. The DSSS called demonstrations in these locations, and local demonstrators were involved in clashes with the police. (Ministry of the Interior 2012: 12–13).

In April 2012, ethnic tensions arose after a fifteen-year-old boy from Břeclav reported being attacked by a group of Roma men (one of his kidneys had to be removed). The DM called a demonstration, at which the party's leader, Tomáš Vandas, made a speech. After the demonstration, certain participants tried to attack houses occupied by Roma families, but the police intervened. After a number of weeks, the fifteen-year-old confessed to the police that he had made up the story and that he had in fact injured himself after falling off a railing while showing off in front of his friends (Romea 2012).

DM also organised the *Školní dvůr* (School Courtyard) project, inspired by a project of the same name (*Schulhof*) in Germany. DM members handed out promotional materials, including CDs with nationalistic recordings, in front of primary and secondary schools in an attempt to gain support for their political movement. DM also publishes comics as a way of trying to gain support among young people (Weikert 2012).

2.2.4 Organisational Structure, Hierarchy, Key Personalities, and Leadership

Formally the statutes of the DSSS are worded to comply with the laws of the Czech Republic, which is a necessary condition for its legal existence. The supreme decision-making body of the party is the DSSS National Congress, which elects the party chairman. The supreme decision-making body during the period between the assemblies is the Assembly of the Republic. The executive body of the Assembly of the Republic is the Execu-

tive Committee (DSSS 2010). Vertically, the party's structure has three levels: local offices, regional offices and central bodies (DSSS 2010).

The party is headquartered in Prague and has regional offices in all fourteen regions of the Czech Republic. The party's local offices are, however, distributed very randomly and unevenly across the country (Ministry of the Interior 2012: 10). The DSSS has its strongest support base in the Ústí nad Labem Region. The party also has DSSS Civilian Patrols at its disposal (these are not mentioned in the statutes) and uses them to monitor locations where crimes occur (as a rule involving the Roma population) (Mareš 2010: 48). The DSSS works closely with its youth organisation *Dělnická mládež* (DM).

The party's chairman, Tomáš Vandas, was a functionary in the SPR-RSČ and RMS for many years from the mid-1990s onwards and worked closely with Miroslav Sládek. In 2003, he became the chairman of the DS and following its dissolution was elected to the same position in the DSSS. He depends on the support of his loyal deputy, Jiří Štěpánek, who is also a former republican. The younger generation of activists is represented at the central level by Jiří Petřivalský, who was formerly a member of various nationalistic groups. Representatives from regions where the party has most support, namely Petr Kotáb and Lucie Šlégrová from the Ústí nad Labem Region, have a strong standing in the party. Relations with the youth sub-cultural scene are maintained by Erik Lamprecht, the chairman of DM.

2.2.5 International Ties

The main partner of DSSS is the National Democratic Party of Germany (NPD). This cooperation builds on ties to the Czech and German militant neo-nationalistic scene and on cooperation between the DS and the NPD. The DSSS officially rejected the revision of the Benes decrees, but the Czech neo-Nazi supporters of the party show some sympathy for Sudeten-German revisionism (supported a. o. by the NPD). This is an important background for cooperation between the NPD and the DSSS (Mareš, Vejvodová 2011). The climax of their cooperation to date was the Riesa Manifesto on the Violation of Human Rights, which was signed by the chairmen of the DSSS and the NPD (Udo Voigt at the time) on 2 April 2011.

The manifesto states, *inter alia*, the following: »Both parties, in their efforts to resolve the challenges facing Europe today, have agreed on cooperation in these areas:

- a) Promotion of anti-immigration measures
- b) Opposition to all attempts to control freedom of speech
- c) Criticism of the non-democratic system of the EU institutions
- d) Support for campaigns against the illegal and armed conflicts of the USA and NATO around the world
- e) Cross-border cooperation aimed at the communal level

Both parties are also very concerned about the ongoing political, social and economic crisis in their respective countries. The crisis in Europe is a crisis of values. European government leaders have lost their credibility.

We perceive an increase in tension between the public and government representatives. Instead of dealing with real public issues, government politicians are trying to demonise national political opposition (so-called »extremists«) with the aim of justifying their own mistakes and burying the past.« (DSSS, NPD 2011).

A delegation led by NPD Chairman Udo Voigt subsequently visited Prague on 28 and 29 May 2011 and held further meetings with the DSSS leadership (Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic 2012: 22). On 1 May 2011, an event coordinated between the DSSS and German neo-Nazis was organised. This included demonstrations held in parallel in Brno and Heilbronn to mark the opening of the German labour market to people from the new EU member states. In Germany, the campaign slogan was »Stop the Invasion of Foreign Workers!« (*»Fremdarbeiterinvasion stoppen!«*); in the Czech Republic it was »Protest against the Invasion of Foreign Workers and the Exodus of our People« (*»Protest proti invazi cizích pracovníků a exodu našich lidí«*). At the Heilbronn event, DSSS member Jiří Petřivalský made a speech, while NPD representative Robin Sieber spoke in Brno. In Heilbronn, the event was organised by the event committee created for this demonstration, which was supported by various *Freie Kameradschaften* and certain local offices of the NPD and JN (*Nationales und soziales Aktionsbündnis 1. Mai 2011*).

DSSS representatives take part in NPD election campaigns in the new federal states (former GDR) as interns. Representatives of JN as well as of the women's organisation *Ring Nationaler Frauen* speak at DSSS events. In Germany, some DSSS activists have ties to members of *Freies Netz in Bavaria*. In June 2012, DSSS Deputy Chairman Petr Kotáb took part in Friendship Day organised by *Kruh česko-německého přátelství* (Czech-German Circle of Friends) formed by neo-Nazis from the Czech Republic and Germany in 2010 (*Deutsch-Böhmischer Freundenzreis 2012*). In 2011, a number of German neo-Nazis took part in anti-Roma demonstrations in the Šluknovský výběžek area in late summer 2011.

Another important DSSS partner is the Slovak party *Ľudová strana – Naše Slovensko* (Slovak People's Party – Our Slovakia – ĽSNS), which is tied through its personnel to the civic association *Slovenská Pospolitosť* (Slovak Solidarity – SP). This association, in turn, has long-running ties with various far-right entities in the Czech Republic. The activities and strategies of DSSS serve as inspiration for ĽSNS and SP events. The representatives of the Austrian National People's Party (NVP) also took part in the aforementioned May Day promotional events in Brno in 2011 (Ministry of the Interior 2012: 19). Representatives of the Autonomous Nationalists from Poland should also have attended this event, but failed to do so owing to disputes with the German participants (Autonom.pl 2011).

2.2.6 Social Background

The social background of DSSS is difficult to ascertain, as the hitherto weak position of the party means it is difficult to conduct a thorough sociological survey of party members and supporters. A survey conducted at the end of 2010 and focussing on the general potential of right-wing extremism in the Czech Republic did yield some findings, however. During the survey of right-wing extremist sympathisers, the survey also studied participants in right-wing extremist events. The following conclusions do not apply directly to the DSSS, but owing to its dominant position in right-wing extremism in the Czech Republic, probably provide a fairly accurate picture: »The rise of right-wing extremism is related to economic uncertainty. The risk group (event participants) often comprises the unemployed and those dissatisfied with their income, assets and standard of living. Social

inequality also plays a role – often the people in question have a basic education or vocational training, are dissatisfied with their income, and consider society to be unjust« (STEM 2011: 21). The STEM survey also ascertained that a significant number had been involved in crimes where the perpetrator was a member of a minority or problem group (STEM 2011). In the elections to the Chamber of Deputies in 2010, the DSSS gained the most ground in Northern Bohemia, where there is high unemployment and a high concentration of members of the Roma minority, who settled in this territory mainly after the Sudeten Germans left Czechoslovakia after the Second World War.

2.2.7 Areas of Contact With the Rest of Society

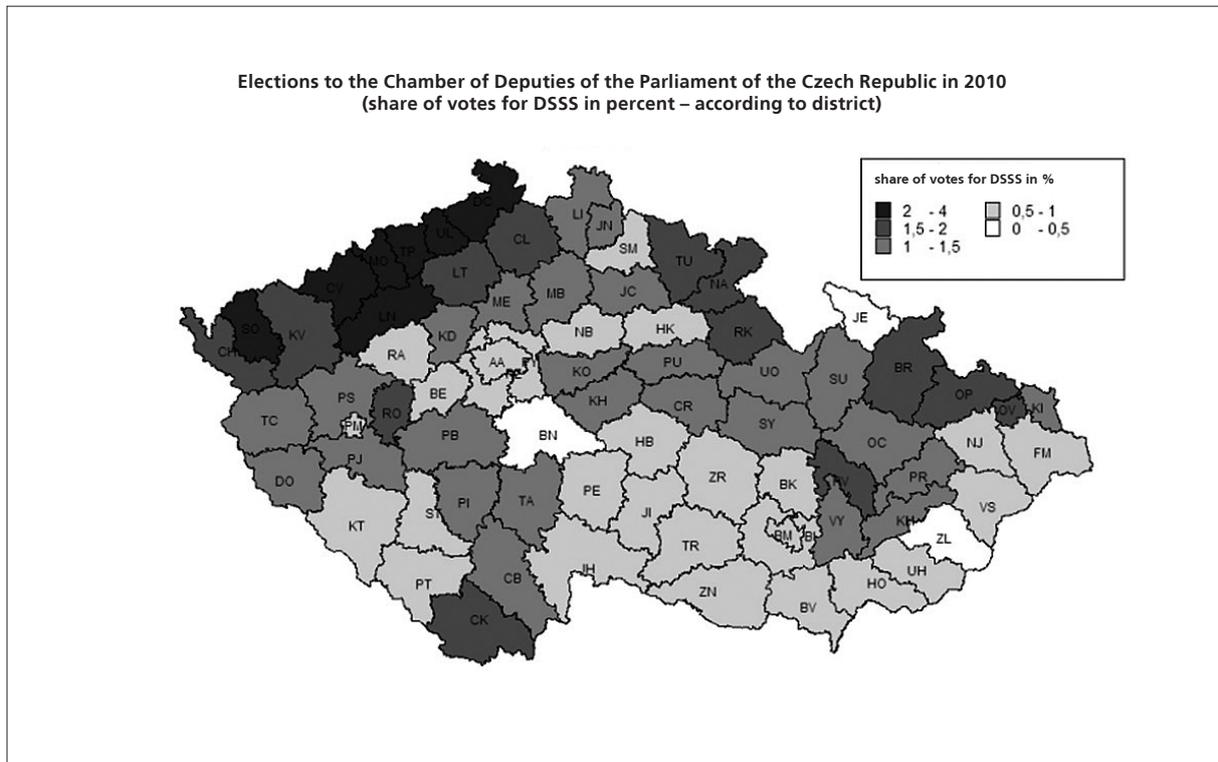
Members of the far-right youth subculture scene participate regularly in DSSS events. Currently this scene is divided into a number of different sub-cultures (skinheads, autonomous nationalists and the Casapound movement, members tied to them and some football hooligans). It is not possible to state unequivocally that any one of these subcultures would offer whole-hearted support for the DSSS, but in a number of locations, they certainly include sympathisers or even members of the DSSS (Mareš et al. 2011: 13).

In March 2010, shortly after the dissolution of the DS, a document entitled »Official Disassociation of the Autonomous Nationalists from the Workers' Party (of Social Justice)« (*»Oficiální distancování Autonomní Nacionalistů od Dělnické Strany [sociální spravedlnosti]«*) appeared on the then primary server of *Autonomní nacionalisté* (Autonomous Nationalists), with *Svobodná mládež* (Free Youth), *Svobodný prostor* (Free Space) and free resistance activists as signatories. In the document, DSSS activists were accused of intolerance of other ideological trends in the national socialist movement and of a lack of willingness to help prosecuted activists (Autonomní nacionalisté 2010).

It later became apparent that this document did not represent all members of the above groups. Invitations to DSSS events or those of its youth organisation continue to be posted on the website of NO/SO and on the new main server representing *Autonomní nacionalisté – Revolta.info*. The party does not, however, promote the sub-cultural image openly.



Figure 1: Elections to the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic in 2010



Source: Ministry of the Interior 2011: 9

The DSSS is relatively isolated in the political party spectrum. »Anti-gypsyism«, where a number of local citizens who are not among the party's main support take part in various protest events focused on Roma criminality, is becoming the main area of contact with mainstream forces. In areas where the DSSS is gaining popularity on the Roma issue, even established political parties are expressing interest in cooperating with it, e. g., the mayor of Krupka representing the conservative *Občanská demokratická stranu* (Civic Democratic Party – ODS) in 2010 (Parliamentary Journal 2010).

A specific group with ties to DSSS is K 213, an organisation defending the rights of fathers. (K 213 denotes the section in the former Civil Code covering failure to pay mandatory alimony, on the basis of which fathers are allegedly deprived of their right to raise their children after a divorce). K 213 Chairman Jiří Fiala spoke at a DSSS meeting. Certain self-proclaimed anti-communist activists, such as Jan Šinágl, have given speeches at DSSS events (DSSS 2011b). In 2012, the party tried to make use of the broader dissatisfaction of citizens supporting *Holešovská výzva* (Holešovská Appeal),

originally an initiative of people from outside the DSSS, by having party supporters register an association under the same name, which led to *Holešovská výzva* losing its original significance and its initiators disassociating themselves from the DSSS (Holešovská výzva 2012). The Moravian section of the DSSS cooperates with the radical stream of the Moravian autonomist movement.

Specific – thematically limited – support is enjoyed by members and sympathisers of the DSSS accused of committing a crime related to promoting and expressing sympathy for the movement, leading to the infringement of the rights and freedoms of citizens, e. g., prosecution for use of the symbols of the dissolved DS or of NO/SO or glorification of national socialism. This support is provided by activists espousing complete freedom of speech based on the American model. These activists (such as Tomáš Pecina) do not agree with the ideas of the DSSS or of its supporters, but help individually prosecuted members because they believe it is wrong for people to be prosecuted for their opinions (Pecina 2012).

3. The Influence of Right-Wing Extremism

Right-wing extremists in the Czech Republic – specifically the DSSS – has, despite its poor showing in elections, attained a certain degree of influence due to media coverage of its activities. Mainstream political parties respond to it and often borrow its anti-gypsy rhetoric (in some cases engaging in more extreme rhetoric than DSSS activists). As mentioned above, even ordinary citizens take part in some local events and then express sympathy for the DSSS (sometimes after hearing the speeches of DSSS representatives in person and finding out that they do not contain open elements of neo-Nazism, which contradicts the image of the DSSS in the mainstream media).

Regarding topics other than the so-called Roma issue, the DSSS and right-wing extremism is of minimal relevance in social discourse. While the party may protest against the policies of established parties, high-level political corruption and LGBT community marches and may promote a tough »law and order« approach, it tends to be eclipsed on these issues by other parts of the political spectrum.

The party has only been successful in communal elections in the Northern Bohemian town of Krupka, where there are major co-existence problems with the Roma minority. It has the greatest chances of winning seats in the regional government in the Ustí nad Labem Region, but is unlikely to do so in any of the other 13 regions in the Czech Republic. At the national level, there appears to be little chance of it attaining the 5 percent threshold necessary to enter the Chamber of Deputies. It also appears unlikely to win a senate seat in an electoral district (provided no inter-ethnic disturbances occur prior to elections).

If the economic crisis continues, the parties in the Czech Republic that may potentially profit are in particular *Komunistická strana Čech a Moravy* (Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia – KSČM) or new left-wing populist entities. An acute deterioration of relations between the Czech majority and the minority Roma populations in the event of further media coverage of brutal crimes committed by the Roma community (as the incident in Břeclav has shown, such crimes need not even be real) could contribute to an increase in the popularity of the DSSS. However, in order for this to translate into electoral support for the DSSS, such unrest would have to break out concurrently in a number of locations in the pre-election period and the mainstream forces would have to fail to resolve it.

The DSSS is at a disadvantage because it does not have a stable membership base and is not popular amongst older people, who form the strongest voting blocks. Any chance it may have in the future is likely to derive from a growth in its popularity among young people, as demonstrated by a survey conducted by Millward Brown for the *Člověk v tísní* (People in Need) foundation in 2010–2012. This survey focused on the political views of secondary school students (i. e., people under 18, the legal voting age in the Czech Republic). Of these young people, 12 percent said they would vote for the DSSS in 2012, whereas in 2010, the figure was only 6 percent (Millward Brown, *Člověk v tísní* 2012: 41). Even so, this figure was much higher than the results gained by the party in the 2010 parliamentary election. It is probable, however, that the radical stance of young people will diminish as they grow older and that their current sympathies for the DSSS will not translate into votes.

4. Counterstrategy

From the point of view of state politics, the DSSS is perceived as an extremist party and is labelled as such in regular reports on extremism issued by the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic and also in annual reports issued by *Bezpečnostní informační služby* (Security Information Service), which, as the internal intelligence service of the Czech Republic, is responsible for monitoring the party. As already mentioned above, the predecessor of the DSSS – the DS – was dissolved by court order and most of its members transferred to the new entity (Mareš 2012). Activists and speakers at DSSS meetings have been prosecuted for hate speech offences in a number of cases. This state repression has led the DSSS to tone down its rhetoric. The impact of this on support for the party is difficult to ascertain, as it is in any case at a very low level. One may speculate that the party is losing potential supporters due to its »extremist image«, but the percentage of such voters was apparently not very high in the first place.

NGOs and anti-racist Roma and Jewish organisations have all made efforts to counter DSSS activities. Ties between the DSSS and neo-Nazis are monitored predominantly by the anarchist *Antifašistická akce* (Anti-Fascist Action). These efforts (especially if covered by the media) could help to discredit the DSSS. On the other

hand, the non-governmental sector has not proven very effective in solving the so-called Roma issue, which is the main topic on which right-wing extremists profile themselves in the Czech Republic.

5. Conclusion

The primary representative of current right-wing extremism in the Czech Republic is *Dělnická strana sociální spravedlnosti* (Workers' Party of Social Justice), the successor to the dissolved *Dělnická strana* (Workers' Party).

Neither DS nor DSSS has been able to repeat the successes of the SPR-RSČ from the 1990s (even though a number of important DSSS activists, including chairman Vandas, began their political career in the SPR-RSČ). The DSSS is supported by a part of the neo-Nazi spectrum in the Czech Republic and its most important ties abroad are to the German NPD. The primary topic on which the DSSS profiles itself is the so-called Roma issue. Inter-ethnic unrest in the Czech Republic may result in an increase in support for this party, but in the short-term, at least, this is likely to be on the regional rather than the national level.

Table 2: Czech Right-Wing Parties

Czech name	English name	Abbreviation	Leaders	Characteristics
Sdružení pro Republiku – Republikánská strana Československa	Association for the Republic – Republican Party of Czechoslovakia	SPR-RSČ	Miroslav Sládek	Registered Feb. 1990; declared bankruptcy 2000; reactivated 2008; suspended 2011
Republikánská Mládež	Republican Youth			Disbanded by Interior Ministry 2002
Republikáni Miroslava Sládka	Miroslav Sládek's Republicans	RMS	Miroslav Sládek	Founded 2000, successor to SPR-RSČ
Republikánská strana Čech, Moravy a Slezska	Republican party of Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia	RSČMS		Broke away from SPR-RSČ in 2010; without influence
Národně sociální blok	National-Social Block	NSB		dissident republicans and neo-Nazi skinheads
Národní strana	National Party	NS		Neo-Hussite
Národní sjednocení	National Unification party	NSj		ultraconservative; marginal
Dělnická strana		DS		Workers' Party established in 2002 by members of SPR-RSČ and RMS who were dissatisfied with Sládek's leadership. Founded the paramilitary <i>Ochranné sbory Dělnické strany</i> (Workers' Party Protection Corps) in 2008, including youth association <i>Dělnická mládež</i> (Workers' Youth). Dissolved by court order in 2010.
Národní/svobodný odpor	National/Free Resistance	NO/SO		neo-Nazi
Dělnické strany sociální spravedlnosti	Workers' Party of Social Justice	DSSS	Tomáš Vandas	established under a different name in 2004; absorbed DS
Vlastenecká fronta	Patriotic Front	VF		civic association; established 1993; endorses traditional Czech interwar fascism
Svobodná mládež	Free Youth	SM		
Autonomní nacionalisti	Autonomous Nationalists			a branch of Blood & Honour Bohemia



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