



JÁN MICHALÍK

1899 – date of death unknown

Ján Michalík, born on 12th April 1899 at Malý Čepčín, is another in the series of almost forgotten personalities in central banking in Slovakia. After completing elementary school, he studied at the Hungarian gymnasium in Kremnica from 1911 to 1916. He continued his studies at the gymnasium in Levoča, but in 1917 he had to join the Austro-Hungarian army, in which he served on the Italian front until the end of the First World War. He was able to complete his secondary school study only in 1919. In 1919-1920, he completed a one year vocational course at the State Commercial School in Banská Bystrica. From 1920 to 1921, he worked at the Tax Office in Martin. At the end of 1921, he entered the service of the Tatra Banka in Martin, where he worked until 21st May 1924.

On 22nd May 1924, he was accepted as an employee of the Banking Office of the Ministry of Finance in Prague. He continued to work in the area of central banking until his forced retirement in 1948. Up to the end of May 1925, he gained his first experience in central banking as an intern at the Headquarters of the Banking Office in Prague. From June 1925 to October 1929, he worked as a „definitively appointed“ official in the Kolín branch. In July 1929, he was transferred to the Košice branch, where he held the position of auditor of the National Bank of Czechoslovakia (NBCS). Although his working results and abilities were highly appreciated, from 1932 he unsuccessfully applied for vacant positions as deputy director of branches in Slovakia. Therefore, for family reasons he applied for at least a transfer to the branch at Kolín, which he finally achieved in 1936. After the origin of the Slovak Republic in March 1939, he was transferred to the former branch of the NBCS in Bratislava, together with other officials working in the Czech Lands. At this time it was fulfilling the role of the central bank in Slovakia. After the origin of the Slovak National Bank (SNB) in April 1939, he was assigned to its headquarters in Bratislava with the function of controller. He directed the foreign currency accounting department. In June 1940, he was elected a member of the committee of the Pension Fund of the employees of the SNB for a period of three years.

However, at the beginning of March 1941, he was unexpectedly dismissed – „discharged from service with immediate effect“. The management of the SNB had to adopt such a radical solution in connection with the so-called mark affair, which was investigated by Central State Security. Various officials of the SNB including Ján Michalík were accused of illegal buying and selling of Reich marks.

In 1944, Ján Michalík actively participated in preparati-



on for the Slovak National Uprising, and from 1st September he was a member of the Presidium of the Finance Commission, together with other important representatives of Slovak banking. After the suppression of the uprising, he was imprisoned for some time.

After the coming of the Czechoslovak government to Košice at the beginning of 1945, from 17th April he was entrusted with organizing offices of the Czechoslovak Currency Office. He also had to supervise the printing of 2000 Ks vouchers at Neografia in Martin. In May 1945, he returned to the service of the SNB and was assigned to the third class of chief controllers. As a „resistance worker“ and perhaps also thanks to family connections with deputy prime minister Ján Ursíny, he very soon gained a position in the top management of the SNB. In June 1945, he was appointed a member of the Temporary Board of the SNB. At a session of the Temporary Board of the revived NBCS on 17th August 1945, Michalík and Ján Oliva were entrusted with the positions of directors of the SNB first class.

After the merging of the SNB and NBCS in November 1945, when the SNB changed into the Regional Institute of the NBCS for Slovakia in Bratislava, representatives of the two strongest political parties in Slovakia were given its leading positions. Karol Markovič represented the Communist Party of Slovakia, while Ján Michalík became the nominee of the Democratic Party. Their positions were officially confirmed by a decision of the Temporary Board of the NBCS on 18th December 1946, when they were retrospectively from 1st January 1946 appointed directors of the NBCS third class with the same legal powers. Markovič and Michalík jointly directed the Regional Institute of the NBCS in Bratislava until February 1948, when the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia seized power. This was soon reflected in the composition of the management of the NBCS. K. Markovič was already entrusted with management of the Regional Institute of the NBCS on 25th February. As in all the important state institutions, a so-called action committee began to operate in the NBCS. Its role was to purge the bank of „hostile and unreliable elements“. Michalík became the first victim of these political purges, when a resolution of the Temporary Board of the NBCS of 10th March „deprived him of the title and character of a director of the NBCS“ with immediate effect, because he was „a representative of the Democratic Party and professionally unsuitable to hold a leading position“. He also lost his membership of the Commercial Administration of the NBCS and retired on a pension from 1st April 1948. Thus, he was dismissed



from the service of the central bank for the second time in seven years. However, his retirement was far from the end of his persecution by the Communist regime. At the peak of the political trials in 1950 he was imprisoned. Like other functionaries of the NBS, he was probably accused of offences allegedly committed in connection with the currency reform of 1945, and the subsequent freeing of frozen accounts. In May 1953, he was released from prison and returned to his family at Kolín. Although we did

not succeed in obtaining further information about his later life, it is probable that, like other Slovak bankers with similar careers, he survived the rest of his life on the lowest possible pension, under the constant surveillance of the State Security and without any possibility to work in the area of banking.

Mgr. František Chudják, Archive of the NBS