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The division of Czechoslovakia and why there was no referendum in
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Declaration of Originality

I declare that this Thesis is only my own work and has not been published in part or in whole anywhere. All used literature and other sources are attributed and properly cited in references.

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Abstract

The main goal of this thesis is to explain the situation during the break up of Czechoslovakia and why there was no referendum during the dissolution. Czechoslovakia was divided in 1993. During this dissolution Vladimír Mečiar and Václav Klaus, the leaders of Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic negotiated and they divided the country. However, the main problem was that Klaus and Mečiar decided about the end of Czechoslovakia instead of citizens. The main reasons for the break up were the dysfunctional constitution and the lack of political experience and different cultural and political identity. At the beginning, political leaders promised citizens that if Czechoslovakia would divide there would be a referendum, but the reality was different. A referendum was not the way how to divide the country and hence they decided instead of people. Also, opinion polls which were made during that time, showed that the majority of the people wanted a common state. After the break up citizens of each state accepted the new democratic country.

Príčiny neuskutočnenia referenda pri rozpade Československa v roku 1992

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Abstrakt

Hlavnou úlohou tejto bakalárskej práce je vysvetliť situáciu pri rozpade Československa a vysvetliť prečo sa neuskutočnilo referendum počas rozpadu Československa, ktoré sa rozdelilo v roku 1993. Počas roku 1992 prebiehalo niekoľko stretnutí medzi politickými lídrami z Česka a Slovenska. Klaus a Mečiar rozdelili krajinu bez referenda. Referendum by malo byť súčasťou priamej demokracie a ľudia by sa mali rozhodnúť sami, čo v krajine chcú a v tomto prípade či chcú krajinu rozdeliť na dva samostatné štáty. Avšak pri rozpade Československa to neboli ľudia, ktorí rozhodli, ale najsilnejšie politické strany. Hlavným dôvodom prečo sa niečo také stalo bola nefunkčná ústava a nedostatok politických skúseností. Pred voľbami v 1992 politickí lídri sľubovali občanom referendum pokiaľ dôjde k rozpadu krajiny. Nakoniec sa však rozhodli sami bez hlasu od občanov. Na druhej strane vedeli, že podľa prieskumov verejnej mienky, ktoré boli urobené počas roku 1992 väčšina ľudí chcela ponechať spoločný štát. Aj napriek tomu sa HZDS s ODS rozhodlo krajinu rozdeliť.

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Introduction

On August 26, 1992 in Villa Tugendhat in the Czech Republic Klaus and Mečiar decided that Czechoslovakia had to divide into two states. ODS the Czech political party and HZDS the Slovak political party negotiated for a long time but ultimately, Mečiar and Klaus decided for dissolution. As a result of the negotiations between Slovak and Czech political parties the Slovak parliament adopted the constitution of the Slovak Republic on September 1, 1992. Czechoslovakia disappeared from the world map at the beginning of the new year in 1993. Czechs and Slovaks lived together in one state, but when Czechoslovakia became a democratic country after the fall of communism this common state disappeared. What happened? Why was Czechoslovakia divided?

There were a lot of factors which helped bring about the division of Czechoslovakia. One of the issues was that Czechoslovakia was a new democratic state after the fall of communism with new political leaders who did not have experience of how to lead a state. They did not know how to react and how to solve the problem, and they were dealing with a large number of urgent political and economic problems at the same time. Another issue was the dysfunctional constitution and the different political priorities of the two parts of federation. Political parties were different in each country and their goals were also different. Czech and Slovak politicians could not find a common solution and each of them had different opinions and ideas. They could not solve problems with the economy and also with trade and industry.

According to some political parties the break-up of Czechoslovakia was necessary. For example, the main political party in Slovakia which wanted a break up was the Slovak Nationalist Party. The nationalists were in opposition and they claimed that Slovakia should become an independent country. However, there were some political parties which wanted a common state. Although Czechs and Slovaks wanted a common state, they could not agree how this state should work. The Czech and Slovak political parties had to negotiate how to structure a common state. Mečiar and Klaus negotiated and they decided that it is better to divide republic. Nevertheless, Mečiar and Klaus did not ask the people of their countries if they wanted two separate

states. Klaus and Mečiar decided about the future of the state, but without the people. How is it possible in a democratic state that politicians did not ask the citizens about dissolution and just divided the country? Why did Czechoslovakia not have a referendum about the break up?

Firstly, it is important to explain what holding a referendum means. A referendum is a method of direct democracy where people vote directly and decide about new laws or rules or something else that is connected with the state. In the Czechoslovak case a referendum should have helped to decide whether Czechoslovakia would be one state or split up, and would have shown that citizens agreed with the decision made by the government. However, in Czechoslovakia it did not happen, political leaders decided to do it without the people. The break up of Czechoslovakia was illegitimate due to the absence of referendum, but it was legal and tolerated in both parts of the republic.

I. Chapter: Why are referendums important

In this chapter, we would like to explain the role of referendums in democratic states. Why are the referendums necessary in a democratic state and what are their advantages and disadvantages? There are three types of referendums mandatory, optional and abrogative and we look at how you can use them in practice. In the second part, we try to explain how the federative republic works, and examine the constitutional law on referendums which was adopted in 1991. It was the first constitutional law about referendums since 1920. Then we try to explain who could work use this constitutional law and what the president have to do. However, this constitutional law was never applied in Czechoslovakia. It is important to say that referendum did not happened during the break up of Czechoslovakia and political leaders decided instead of the citizens of the republic.

1.1. Theory of referendums and why they are important

Democracy is a system of government where people directly or indirectly decide about the country. Citizens vote for particular representatives who represents them and govern in parliament. The role of politicians is to represent citizens and decide about the country but the role of the people is to vote for representatives. However, if country wants to make a major constitutional change such as to change the political system or to join to some organization or if country wants to split up into the two states, then citizens should decide want they want. Therefore, democracy has a special vote which called the referendum. The referendum is a method of direct democracy where people decide on an issue directly, and not through their representatives. Usually citizens vote for a range of different questions. Referendums may be held in relation to particular circumstances when citizens should decide about new laws or rules or to amend the country's constitution or something else connected with the state. According to Mads Qvorstrup "referendums are an additional to indirect democracy but it is a very rare case in the state. A referendum is like a cure which would suggest political interest and improve the quality of the government. "Referendums are inevitably a centre piece of a political system". (Qvorstrup, 2005, pp.13) Qvorstrup also said that referendums are necessary and that referendum would enhance the citizens interest in politics.

1.2. Types of referendums

The first type of referendum is the mandatory referendum. Usually the referendum is a constitutional requirement. Mandatory referendum means that citizens vote for some proposal and the consequences of the vote are binding. Therefore, if a proposal passes, the government should implement it. This type of referendum is usually about a change of constitution or the adoption of an international treaty, or a change the political system.

The second type of referendum is the optional or facultative referendum. “These are votes of the electorate which are called by a formal demand, which may emanate from the executive, from a number of members of the legislature, from a number of citizens or from some other defined agent.” (ace project) In this case the consequences are not binding as in a mandatory referendum.

The last type of referendum is an abrogative referendum. It is a referendum where citizens vote for some change in a law or if the government wants to cancel some law.

1.3. Advantage of referendum

The advantage of referendums is that referendums could solve problems in the state, people vote for the particular issue and they decide what they want. The referendum is a tool where citizens vote and through the referendum they can solve political problems. As example in the Czechoslovakia case was the issue of division, through a referendum they could divide country or stay as a common state. However, political leaders decided without the people, without a referendum and they split up. This is not the way how to solve the problem because the referendum is part of democracy and citizens in democratic countries should decide about the state.

1.4. Disadvantage of referendum

There are also some disadvantages of referendums. One of the main arguments is that referendum weakens representative democracy by restricting the role and importance of elected representatives. Moreover, “referendums are sometimes seen as a means available to elected representatives to avoid having to take a unipolar position on a controversial issues.” (ace project) It is important to say that voters do not always have the right information and they do not know about the situation or they have only

partial information. Hence, they cannot make right decisions about the issues in the state. This situation usually happens in the case of referendums on complex issues such as economic reforms or international treaties with which voters are not be unfamiliar and they do not have a lot information. Further, opponents of referendums argue that “if the executive has the power to determine when referendums are held, they can be used as a political tool to suit the needs of the governing party rather than the interests of democracy.” (ace project) In many countries election attendance for referendums is lower than at national elections.

Although the referendum is part of direct democracy in each state it works differently. The role of the referendum is contained in the constitution and each country has their own constitution and own system and also the roles of referendums are different. In this work we are dealing with the Czechoslovak case.

1.5. Czech and Slovak Federative Republic

Czechoslovakia from 1990 was a Federative Republic until the breakup at the end of the 1992. The name of the state was Czech and Slovak Federative Republic (ČSFR). A federation is a political entity composed from more political units in one union or in regions under the central government. The Czech and Slovak people were united in one common state with a common central government, army and president. Czechs and Slovaks had their own autonomy but worked as one federative state. The languages were different: in the Czech part it was the Czech language in the Slovak part the Slovak language. The capital city was Prague and the currency was Czechoslovak crown. Czechs and Slovaks had a common constitution.

In the Czechoslovak constitution there was one remarkable constitutional law which should be mentioned in the position of referendums. Especially “constitutional law No.327 adopted by CSFR Federal Assembly on 18 July 1991 under the simple name “On referendum.” (Auer & Butzer, 2001, pp.170) It was the first legal basis for a nationwide referendum since 1920. The constitutional law about referendums was part of the constitution from July 18, 1991. There was a statement in the constitution which said that Czech and Slovak citizens can decide if a referendum will be called and through the referendum they can decide about questions of the formation of the Czech

and Slovak Federative Republic. Suffrage in the Czech Republic should be citizens and electors of the Czech National Council and in Slovakia they should be citizens and electors of the Slovak National Council. The purpose of this was that both nations should vote. "The President was required to call a referendum upon the proposal of the Federal Assembly or the Czech or Slovak National Council, such proposal was to be accepted when more than 50% of the total votes were positive in both Republics. "(Auer & Butzer, 2001, pp. 171)

In practice it means "President of the CSFR could within the fixed 15 day term, reject the proposal to call a referendum if the question were not worded in such good form." (Auer & Butzer, 2001, pp.170) Nevertheless, if the legislative assembly insisted on the same question, then the President of the Republic should call a referendum within 15 days with the repetitive adoption of the proposal. However, this law was never applied despite the fact that the question of the dissolution of CSFR was to be solved only through referendum. People should have decided what they want, not political leaders. In addition, some of the citizens provided a petition and they tried to press the Federal Assembly to accept the proposal which should lead to referendum about the dissolution of the republic. According to Auer and Butzer, who claimed that "the federal constitutional law on referendums was in the former Czechoslovakia roughly put aside in this crucial matter that might affect a considerable part of electorate, as well as having other consequences for the future". (Auer & Butzer, 2001, pp.172) However, the referendum was not applied and politicians decided about the future of Czechoslovakia.

II. Chapter: Historical background of break up of Czechoslovakia

2.1. The revolution in 1989 and federation as the product of normalization

Year 1989 was special and significant in some Communist countries like in Poland, Hungary and also in Czechoslovakia. These countries brought down the communist regime and tried to build new democratic countries. At that time there was a strong communist system in Czechoslovakia and also in other countries which were part of the Soviet bloc. Citizens of the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic were discontented with regime and government. Therefore, they decided to do something about this situation in the country. Some of the activists were Christians and they held some demonstrations such as the Candlelight Demonstration in 1988. There were very active people like František Mikloško, Fedor Gál or Ján Budaj and others who were later were politicians and leaders in politics. Citizens of Czechoslovakia, particularly students, started to be very active and they tried to do something with the situation. As the consequence of this discontented was the Velvet Revolution on 17 November 1989 in Prague and also in Bratislava. Students demonstrated and they started to strike. Afterwards the citizens of Czechoslovakia joined and whole country striked against the regime. Citizens wanted more freedom, democratic elections and mainly a new government and new regime. Thus, active anti-communist people and students created an opposition. In the Czech part it was Civic Forum (OF) and in the Slovak part Public Against Violence (VPN).

Civic Forum (OF) established during the Velvet Revolution in 1989 as the opposing party to the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ). This political movement connected non-communistic artists, actors, students and dissidents in the Czech part of Czechoslovakia. (Rýchlik, 2012) The leader was Václav Havel who later became a president of Czechoslovakia. Other members were Václav Klaus who was the main political leader in Czechoslovakia during the break up or Petr Pithart.

In the Slovak part the counterpart Public Against Violent (VPN) emerged. It was political movement established in the same week and with the same concept such as Civic Forum but in Bratislava. The leaders were Fedor Gál and Ján Budaj and

members were Milan Kňažko, Vladimír Mečiar, Alexander Dubček, Peter Zajac and others. (TASR, November 16, 2012) Civic Forum and Public Against Violence called for the end of the leading role of the Communist Party. Leaders of these movement negotiated with the communist government, Václav Havel, Ján Čarnogurský and a delegation visited the presidency of the government on 28 of November 1989. They put forward their demands to Ladislav Adamec who was the prime minister at that time. Their demands were to canceled Article 4 of the constitution, which was about the leading role of the KSČ, the repeal of censorship, the withdrawal of President Husák and others politicians from their functions. (Stein, 2000) The government did not know what to do and hence they voluntarily handed over power. On 29 of November 1989 they government canceled Article 4. Until that point KSČ was the main political party in Czechoslovakia. Only KSČ could decide about the country and KSČ had a strong connections with Moscow.

Civic Forum and Public Against Violence closely cooperated and proclaimed that each of the movements will represent their part of Czechoslovakia. It means OF in the Czech part and VPN in Slovak part, and their “main goal was build the democratic Czecho-Slovak Federation in which Czechs and Slovaks and other minorities live.” (Rýchlik, 2012, pp. 88) VPN could put together the new Slovak government and OF did the same in the Czech part. They divided the functions among themselves. However, from the beginning in some issues OF and VPN had different ideas and opinions. The first problem was who will be the new president after Husák. On December 1989 Gustav Husák resigned from the presidential office and VPN and OF negotiated about who will be a new president of Czechoslovakia. (Štefanovič, 1999)

Civic Forum was afraid that Alexander Dubček will be the Slovak candidate for president. Alexander Dubček was a member of VPN and for Slovaks he was significant person and symbol of the Czechoslovak Spring. (Aktuality, November 7, 2010) However, VPN did not want Dubček as president of Czechoslovakia and instead of him they supported Václav Havel. The candidate for Civic Forum was Václav Havel as their member and the right person for this function. OF and VPN were not sure if Slovak citizens will vote for Václav Havel as a Czech citizen in elections because of a proposal which the Communist made. The Communists

suggested that there should be a direct election of the president. This suggestion was not good for the national situation. OF and VPN thought that if the candidates will be Dubček and Havel Slovaks will vote for Dubček and Czechs for Havel. The Czech population is bigger than the Slovak one and Havel would win. This could be a problem nationally and to cause a crisis. Anyhow this law did not pass and Václav Havel became president. Civic Forum and Public Against Violence did not know what to do with Dubček and hence he became Chair of the Federal Assembly until 1992.

2.2. The hyphen war and election in 1990

The first issue was the question of defining the federation and electoral system for upcoming elections. Each movement, OF and VPN, tried to put their own proposals how the new federations could look and also proposals for the electoral system and composition of parliament. However, OF and VPN could not find a way how to solve the issue and this was their first strong problem. Finally, they found a solution and “Federal Assembly comprised the House of the People (150 members, 99 from the Czech Republic and 51 from Slovakia) and House of the Nations (75 members from Slovakia and 75 from Czech lands), both elected by proportional representation. Constitutional changes required a three-fifths majority in each of the three chambers. “(R. Young, 1994, pp.4) That is, in the House of the Nation and the Czech and the Slovak parts of the House of the Nations.

Another issue was political parties and their programs, activities. Czech political parties were more active than Slovaks and they tried to build a new country and make some reforms, but the problem was that most of the time Slovaks did not support programs of the Czech political parties. Also, in the Czech Republic politicians were more focused on the situation in country and their political programs includes, economic reforms and the relationship with communist party, political progress and relationship. However, Slovak political parties wanted to solve the problem with the position of Slovakia and leadership like before year 1968. Czech political parties were for new development and changes for the whole Federative Republic and the Slovaks not, they saw their own problems not common problems.

During that time the significant political parties in Slovakia were mainly VPN and Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) led by Ján Čarnogurský. Also in March 1990 a new political party emerged which called Slovak National Party (SNS). Slovak National Party was a nationalist party and they were against minorities such as Hungarians and in some respects also against the Czechs. In the Czech part Communist Party of Czechia and Morava emerged and in Slovakia Political Party of the Democratic Left.

The first huge conflict between Czech and Slovaks occurred in January 1990. It was 2 months after the Velvet Revolution. Among the Czech and Slovak politicians the conflict emerged about the new name of the state. On 23 January 1990 the Federal Assembly had its 22nd session where they discussed the new name of the state. Havel opened discussions with the proposal to the Federal Assembly that Czechoslovak Socialist Republic was not a good name for the state after the Velvet Revolution. (Šutovec, 1999) New political movements and leaders made some changes in the economy and made social and political changes after November 1989, hence it was necessary to change the name of the state. At the same time Havel submitted a proposal for the new state symbol. Havel suggested the state name as Czechoslovak Republic but Slovaks disagreed with the proposal. Hence on 14 February the Slovak government suggested that new name of the state should include the hyphen or dash. The hyphen or dash was because Slovaks wanted to be equal with Czechs in the name of the state and hence decided that if there would be hyphen between the Czech-Slovakia each of the republics would be equal. Although Slovaks suggested another name for the state Czechs disagreed and thus this conflict called Hyphen war. The republics could not find a possible name for the new state. After long negotiations they decided that in the Czech Republic it would be Czechoslovak Federative Republic and in Slovakia Czecho-Slovak Federative Republic. (Šutovec, 1999) However, this name was very confusing for other states and after long negotiations the Federal Parliament changed the long name to Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. From 20 April 1990 until the break up the name of the new democratic state was Czech and Slovak Federative Republic. Moreover, this conflict showed huge political and national disagreements among the Czechs and Slovak politicians. (Štefanovič, 1999)

After the hyphen war followed the first free democratic elections after the fall of communism. On the same days 8 and 9 June 1990 citizens of Czech and Slovak Federative Republic voted for the Slovak National Council, Czech National Council and also the Federal Assembly. Each Republic had their candidates. Civic Forum in the Czech Republic and the Christian Democrats in Slovakia had the highest probability of winning. The Christian Democrats had more votes in a political survey than Public Against Violence. The first candidate was KDH and the second VPN.

Public Against Violence and their electoral program was focused on a strong federation and strong cooperation among the two nations. Also, they proclaimed that federation should be beneficial to both nations and their main “aim was strong republics and strong competent republican governments and parliaments.” (F. Gál, 1991, pp.86) Christian Democrats in their electoral program claimed that, they would try to ensure the sovereignty of the Slovak Republic and entrance to the European house. KDH supported the European Union from beginning; they wanted to be a part of the EU because they saw advantages of the EU. Slovak Nationalist Party wanted Slovak sovereignty and a free federation for each nation. Democratic Party demand a federation of two equal Republics. Hungarian Christian Democratic Party talked about minorities in the Federation and rights for them.

Despite what survey polls showed, the winning political party in Slovakia was Public Against Violence. Public Against Violence gained in “House of People 32.54% in House of Nation 37.12% and in Slovak National Council 29.34%. Christian Democrats were second House of People 18.98%, House of Nation 16.66%, Slovak National Council 19.20%” (Rýchlik, 2012, pp.149) Next was Communist Party, Slovak National Party, Hungarian party – MKDH.

In Czech Republic Civic Forum won “House of People 53.15%, House of Nation 49.96%, Czech National Council 49.50%, second was Communist - House of People 13.48%, House of Nation 13.80% and Czech National Council 13.24%” (Rýchlik, 2012, pp.149) Other parties were Christian democrats, Society for Moravia and Silesia.

The results of the elections have caused complications in setting up of a new government in Slovakia. Public Against Violence was not able to create a government alone. Although Christian Democrats had votes they did not want to be a part of the Federal Government. Therefore, a new Federal Government was a coalition between Civic Forum and VPN but also supported by some Slovaks and Czechs centralistic rights political parties. On the other hand, there was the Slovak communist party (KSS), Slovak national party, Hungarian party in opposition. Marian Čalfa was head of the Federal government, the president was again Václav Havel.

2.3. Political development during the 1990 and 1991

Between the years 1990 and 1992 a lot of changes and relationship between Czechs and Slovaks was tense. Moreover, there was weak legitimacy of political movements which emerged in 1989 and 1990, and they changed to political parties. Also, there were problems with characteristic of left and right political parties because politicians did not know what is right, center or left. President Václav Havel claimed that “I am not right or left but definitely I am not in the middle” (E. Stein, 2000, pp. 81) Furthermore politicians and political parties too, did not know if they were more on the right side or on the left side. Society was confused about what right, left or center meant and all newspapers wrote about it. Agencies made a survey poll and asked people and it showed that 25% respondents did not know the meaning of the words “right” and “left” and 10% of the respondents connected the right wings with capitalists. This situation emerged because of a lack of political experience and because politicians also did not know what they were as, during the communism almost everybody was left wings. As an example, Civic Forum won the elections and their slogan was “political parties are for members of the political party, Civic forum is for everybody.” (E. Stein, 2000, pp.81) Although, they said something different, in autumn OF divided into fractions in the Federal Assembly and in the Czech parliament into three sides.

On the one side was Civic Democratic Party with Václav Klaus, who was at the time Minister of Finance. Their main goal was the free market and creating a “functional federation”. In the center, there was the Civic Movement connected with the Liberal club which was formed by dissidents and Minister of Foreign Affairs (Jiří Dienstbier)

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and Czech Prime Minister (Petr Pithart) were member of this movement. The third side was Civic Democratic Alliance, who wanted an economic reforms a free market, like Civic Democratic Forum but Civic Democratic Alliance was more liberal and nationalist.

On the other hand in the Slovak Republic it was a different situation than in the Czech Republic. Public Against Violence would like to stay a political movement. They did not want to be a political party, but Fedor Gál said that it may be not forever, and maybe VPN would also become political party. VPN had a congress in February 1991 and Gál claimed that VPN was a more liberal movement. Their program was more economically focused on economic and market changes. During the congress in February Mečiar was member of VPN and Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic and he claimed that it was more in the center. Mečiar accused VPN of changing economic priorities and also that VPN tried to censor his speech on television. Mečiar tried to be very active and the leader of VPN.

Tension between Gál and Mečiar grew up and on the side of Mečiar was only Milan Kňažko another member of VPN. Mečiar and Kňažko, broke ties with VPN and on 27 April 1991 Mečiar established his own political movement- Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS). Mečiar arose and he started to be very popular in the Slovak Republic and very active in politics. President Havel described the situation in Slovakia as dramatic and worrying. Gál as a strong opponent of Mečiar moved to London and left from politics. Mečiar started to be more popular and people accepted and believed him. Other politicians were not satisfied with Mečiar's politics and hence they tried to remove him. Mečiar did not get enough votes to stay as the Prime Minister and he was dismissed because the majority of the ministers and deputies were against him.

Ministers claimed that the government was not functional thanks to political conflicts between Mečiar and other politicians and hence they wanted to remove him. His removal caused massive protest in Slovakia more than 50 000 people demonstrate in Bratislava. (Stein, 2000, pp 80) On the other hand the Czech Republic asked for a new Slovak Prime Minister. For Czechs the better person for reforming country was Ján Čarnogurský leader of Cristian Democrats Movement (KDH). President Havel called

the changed as a constitutional triumph and triumph of parliamentary democracy. (Rýchlik, 2012) Havel wanted Ján Čarnogurský to become a Prime Minister, as he thought Čarnogurský was a better and more representative person for this function. After that the Christian Democrats became the leading political party in the Slovak parliament and for a few months replaced VPN. However, a lot of the politicians changed their ideas and joined HZDS, which was Mečiar's movement. Mečiar took his removal personally and his behavior and speaking changed. (Pithart, 1998)

2.4. Crises among Czechs and Slovaks and new elections in 1992

After 1989 Slovaks and Czechs politicians had not been able to find a common ideas, opinions and solutions and crises arose. Among Czechs and Slovaks there were too many conflicts and such different opinions on the type of laws, the constitution, the name of the state, reforms and also the direction of the CSFR. The main problem was differences between politicians and lack of political experiences but also differences among citizens. Another issue was changes in Slovaks and Czechs politicians such as Mečiar's HZDS and Klaus's ODS. After the first elections, Slovak Nationalist Party step out openly and requested the independence of Slovakia. Nationalists took it over Matica Slovenská in 1990. Matica Slovenská is nationalist organization for Slovaks since 1861. This organization tried to protect Slovaks traditions, heritage and also to venerate Slovaks personalities who did something for the country such as Štúr, Hodža, Štefánik and others. (Matica Slovanská) In each Republic student organizations and artist organizations emerged. So, in that respect Slovaks and Czechs were in separate states. The next issue was that Czechs and Slovaks did not have common personalities such as Masaryk or Štefánik and others. After 1989 each Republic had their own personalities and politics. (Kováč, 2007)

As a consequence of the issues and circumstances in 1992 second democratic elections took place. The political relationship between political parties changed and new democratic elections were important from the view of the future of Czechoslovakia and the relationship between Czechs and Slovaks. In the Czech Republic, Civic Forum fall apart into two parties, Civic Democratic Party and Civic Movement. Civic Democratic Party (ODS) was a right-wing political party, and the leader was Václav Klaus, and the Civic Movement (OH) was more liberal. In the

Slovak Republic Mečiar, who was a member of VPN, created his own political movement which was called Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) and HZDS was a strong opponent of VPN. (Leško, 1996) The political situation changed in both Republics and also the relationship between them.

“The Federal Assembly approved novella of the election law in January 29, 1992 and on March 3 declared the second free elections” (Rýchlik, 2012, pp.293) On 5 and 6 June 1992 the second elections in Czechoslovakia since 1990 took place. On the same day Slovak National Council and Czech National Council had elections too. Campaigns in both Republics were very active and the main leaders of the main political parties Václav Klaus and Vladimír Mečiar tried to convince people because each of them wanted to become the new Prime Minister. In the Czech Republic the main topic was coming to terms with the past and economic reforms. On the other hand in the Slovak Republic the main topic was the arrangement of the state, economic reforms and coming to terms with the past. In the Czech Republic Klaus’s ODS was the most popular political party, and Klaus joined with the Christian Democratic Party (KDS), which was on the same side such as ODS and wanted the same reforms. In Slovakia the most popular political party was HZDS, Mečiar was active and popular in Slovakia and people liked him. He had different opinions about the state and the arrangement of the state. (Leško, 1996) His idea was clear and simple: 1. To declare the sovereignty of Slovakia, 2. new constitution, 3. international recognition of Slovakia, 4. referendum about the independence of Slovakia and edit the relationship with Czech Republic, 5. to conclude a state agreement with Czech Republic. Mečiar’s HZDS demanded a lot of the changes and set conditions but some of them were not realistic. (Rýchlik, 2012) Mečiar also promised his voters that people would decide through a referendum if Czechoslovakia would divide or not. However, during the break up everything was different.

If Klaus’s ODS and Mečiar’s HZDS won it would be the end of the Czechoslovak Federal Republic, said most opposition politicians. They saw that Mečiar and Klaus are different and not able to cooperate in one state. The next step and negotiations among politicians and results of the elections showed that it was true and Czechoslovakia divided in January 1993.

III. Chapter: Results of parliamentary elections and question of referendum

3.1. Results of the parliamentary elections and negotiations between ODS and HZDS (1992)

For Czechoslovakia the elections results were important. In the Czech Republic ODS with KDS won (House of People 33.90%, House of Nation 33.43% Czech National Council 29,73%) The opposition of ODS did not get seats in the Federal Parliament but ODA did get seats in ČNR. Left parties also won and were part of Federal Assembly. In the Slovak Republic VPN divided before the election into Civic Democratic Union (ODU) and some of the politicians moved to Mečiar's movement HZDS. In the elections citizens believed and gave their voters to HZDS and KDH and hence ODU was not part of Federal Assembly. They voted for SNR as well. HZDS got in House of People 33.53%, House of Nations 33.85% and in SNR 37,26%. Others successful parties were KDH, Party of Democratic Left (SDL), SNS and also some Hungarian political parties. In Slovakia and also in the Czech Republic parties won which rather wanted break up or for new formatting of the state Czechoslovakia.

A few days after the elections President Havel asked Klaus to created anew Federal Government and a new government program. Therefore, Klaus met with Mečiar, who won in Slovakia and they negotiated many times about the new orientation of the Czechoslovakia. However, Mečiar had all the time been putting conditions and he wanted to negotiate about the new composition of the federal government. One of the conditions was that Klaus's economic reform will not be valid for Slovakia or that Havel is not good president and hence somebody else would be better than Havel. Only a few conditions were fulfilled by ODS. According to Karol Vodička, ODS wanted Havel as a president and since HZDS demanded someone else for president, they were not able to agree on this condition. In the beginning ODS and Klaus tried to fulfill a lot of Mečiar's conditions but when Mečiar continued with others Klaus stopped and he did not want to continue with Mečiar and HZDS. They were not able to find a common solution and a common way how can CSFR could develop.

After four negotiations which happened in Bratislava in 1992, ODS and HZDS could not find a common solution. These negotiations were very long and the political parties negotiated almost twelve hours. According to Marian Leško who was a journalist at the time these negotiations between HZDS and ODS happened during the afternoons and continued until midnight. The main problem was that they were not able to find a common solution and hence they created the 9-point treaty between HZDS and ODS. Klaus and Mečiar presented this treaty and claimed that no solution existed how Czechoslovakia could survive and the only one solution and it is break up. Each of the political leaders had different opinions and different views about the common state. Politicians such as Mikloško, Zajac, and Čarnogurský knew that Czechoslovakia at an end and will break up when Klaus and Mečiar won in elections 1992. Mikloško was a member of KDĽ and until 1992 he was Chair of SNR. Peter Zajac was his advisor and a member of VPN, later OĽU, and Ján Čarnogurský was a Prime Minister after the removal of Mečiar in 1991 until to election in 1992 and member of KDĽ.

The opposition saw that these two political leaders (Klaus and Mečiar) would like separate states and each of them wants to be the leader. Also, Milan Štefanovič in his book claimed “elections could decide about the destiny of nations, and make it possible to coalitions to deal with questions such break up or cohabitation in Czechoslovakia” (Štefanovič, 1999, pp.120) As I mentioned before each of them had different opinions, Klaus wanted more economic reforms and cooperation between Republics, but Mečiar did not accept Klaus’s economic reforms and his view of CSFR was different, also he preferred confederation instead of a federation.

Mečiar during his campaign before the parliamentary elections in 1992 promised people a referendum on whether ČSFR would divide. However, reality was different and there was no referendum. When Klaus and Mečiar informed citizens about the break up most of them were not satisfied. During the period of negotiations some agencies made survey polls and asked people if they wanted a common state or two separate states. The Majority of respondents wanted a common state and hence a problem emerged for politicians because citizens did not want separate states. According to Karel Vodička who claimed “The division of Czechoslovakia was not

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primarily the result of the emancipatory efforts and patriotism of the Slovak and not at all Czech nation.” (Vodička)

3.2. Discussion about referendum and reason why referendum was not held

Before the elections political parties and leaders promised that there will be referendum if Czechoslovakia divided. Moreover, Mečiar proclaimed in his speech that people decide if they want a common state or separate states. However, Mečiar quickly forgot what he said before. “Repeated promises of a referendum on the country’s fate were never fulfilled” (Kraus & Stanger, 2000, pp.10) In addition, politics called for referendum.

Politicians demanded the referendum and some of the politicians thoughts that a referendum could change the situation and Czechoslovakia could stay as one state. However, some of the politicians claimed that if there had been a referendum people would create chaos and mess in the state. Klaus and Mečiar knew that the majority of the people would like to stay together as a one state. Only strong nationalists in both countries demanded two separate states. Therefore, Klaus knew that a referendum would just worsen the situation in the state and then it would be not easy to divide the country. Also, he did not continue cooperation with Mečiar and HZDS. Czech Prime Minister Václav Klaus and his political party ODS stood against the referendum, because they knew that the majority of people are against the break up. Moreover, it could cause a chaos in the CSFR and Klaus did not want to cause chaos and uneasiness in the country, because they could see what was going on in Yugoslavia. Klaus and Mečiar knew that if they write a proposal about a referendum and give to the Federal Assembly it would not change and that proposal would pass. Half of the Federal Assembly were strong right for quick changes and other part was more populist. According to Mikloško, nothing could pass in Federal Assembly hence the division of CSFR without referendum was necessary.

Furthemore, there was a little problem with the referendum law. When it was accepted into the new constitution in 1991 a blocking paragraph on the referendum was created. It was created for the situation when politicians would like to tried divide the Federative Republic. In practice this blocking paragraph had to be removed and the

government had to make a new constitution. After that a referendum could be held. According to Peter Zajac who claimed, that thanks to this blocking paragraph a referendum could not be held automatically and a referendum could not only be held if the government accepted a new Federal Constitution. This blocking paragraph has been made knowingly so a referendum could not easily be held. Mečiar and Klaus knew that there is no chance for a new constitution and also knew that majority of the politics is against the referendum. Thus, it was not possible to hold a referendum and they tried to skip it. The other reason was political, such as cooperation with Mečiar.

In a democratic state citizens of particular state should decide about the country. They want to live in a common state or in two separate states. In Czechoslovakia Klaus and Mečiar decided about the country and the future of the country. Citizens gave them a mandate for governing but not for dividing the country. As Iveta Radičová has pointed out in Slovakia only one political party had in its political program that they wanted the dissolution of the Federative Republic and it was SNS. Others political parties did not have a mandate from citizens but they negotiated and divide the country. (ČT 24 21.7. 2017)

According to Milan Štefanovič as well “political parties in their programs did not have something about the dissolution of the republic or the end of federation, but nobody say no against this idea, that if Slovaks wants to divide and be a sovereign state then Czechoslovakia divides.” (Štefanovič, 1999, pp.122)

It was not fair to citizens but only a few people demonstrated. Other citizens accepted the results of HZDS and ODS. On January 1, 1993 in the Czech Republic as a one state and the Slovak Republic as another state were established. In 1993 an agency in Slovakia made a survey poll, and asked people about referendum. This survey poll was made in 1993 after the breakup of CSFR.

Research question: How people would have voted in referendum?

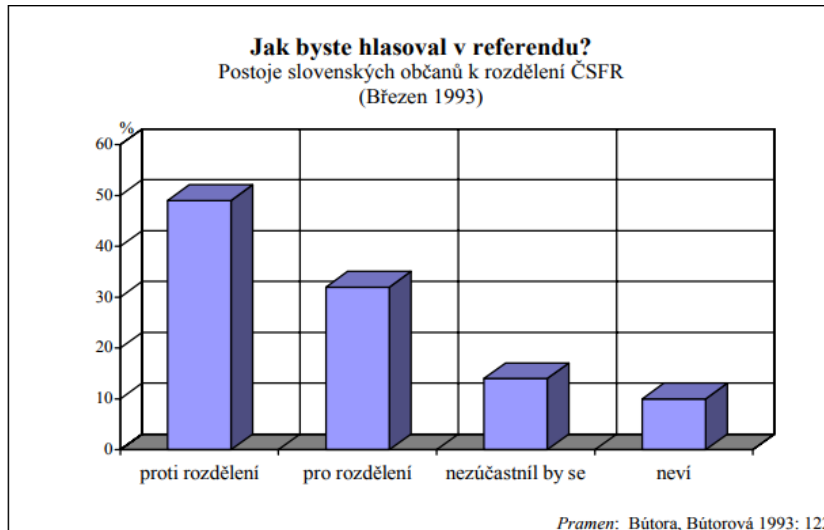
Position of Slovak citizens about the dissolution of Czechoslovakia (1993)

Almost 50% people was against the dissolution. Over the 30% people was for dissolution. Over 10% people would not go to vote and less than 10% don't know. (see Table 1.)

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This opinion poll was carried out in 1993 after the break-up of Czechoslovakia. It shows us that the majority of the people were against the break-up of Czechoslovakia and just over the 30% of the citizens wanted a common state.

Table 1.



(Vodička)

IV. Chapter: How political leaders and journalist saw the situation in CSFR and problem with referendum

For this bachelor thesis interviews were made with two political leaders and one journalist who was active in that time. One of the political leader was František Mikloško a member of VPN and later KDH and he also was a chair of SNR 1990-1992. Another was Peter Zajac a member of VPN and later DS and OKS. The last was journalist Marián Leško who at the time was editor of the weekly newspaper Nové Slovo. Original interviews you can find in appendix A-C. Respondents answered these questions:

What position did you have in 1992, during which time there were several meetings about a break up of Czechoslovakia?

Have you been a part of the negotiations about the division of Czechoslovakia?

How did you perceive the decision of HZDS and ODS?

Why was the division of the country not voted on in the referendum?

Was it right according to you that Czechoslovakia was divided without a referendum?

Was it fair to citizens that Czechoslovakia was divided and nobody asked them?

If the referendum was held how you voted?

Was the division of Czechoslovakia a good thing or not?

From retrospective point of view are you satisfied with the division of Czechoslovakia?

What position did you have in 1992, during which time there were several meetings about a break up of Czechoslovakia?

During the negotiations about the new position of Czechoslovakia Peter Zajac was a member of VPN. In October 1991 Civic Democratic Union was established and he was member of this union. Moreover, he was an advisor of František Mikloško so he had a double function.

František Mikloško at the time was a member of Christian Democrat political party (KDH) and also chair of SNR until the election in 1992.

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On the other hand, Marian Leško was editor of a weekly newspaper *Nové Slovo* without *Rešpekt* and from 1.1.1993 he was editor of *Pravda* which are until day popular newspapers. All of these men knew what going on. Some of them were part of the negotiations and Leško was a journalist who wrote a lot about the situation in Czechoslovakia.

Have you been a part of the negotiations about the division of Czechoslovakia?

As the chair of SNR until the election in 1992 Mikloško was part of the negotiations. However, after the elections the situation changed and HZDS won and then Mikloško was not part of the negotiations any more.

Peter Zajac was similar to Mikloško. Zajac was speaker of VPN, later ODU, and also as an advisor of František Mikloško.

Marian Leško was not part of the negotiations but as a journalist he waited for the news and stood in front of the building with others journalists and waited for information. Leško claimed that meetings were not in normal time and HZDS with ODS negotiated for a long time and finished during the night.

How did you perceive the decision of HZDS and ODS?

Leško claimed that if there had been referendum at the time the majority of the people in Czech Republic but also in Slovakia would say common state. When Mečiar and Klaus declared the end of the federation we know that these guys tried to make the situation easier and decide without the people. Moreover, the law about referendums was in the constitution, when the constitution was established, because politicians predicted situation like this. However, Klaus and Mečiar succeeded in the 1992 election and they proceeded as if they have a mandate for dissolution. According to Leško it was a paradox because he remembers when Mečiar told him that nobody gave us mandate for the dissolution of Czechoslovakia and it was his speech. However, after that his step was clear. Leško understands that it was a complicated situation because the majority if citizens wanted common state but these people gave their a vote in elections to ODS and HZDS. So according to Leško it was complicated on the one side people were not satisfied with the solution of HZDS and ODS but they

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gave them a mandate. The personal feeling of Marian Leško is that Klaus and Mečiar took responsibility and more competence than they really had because people, not two politicians, should vote about the breakup of the country.

On the other hand, Mikloško claimed that nobody would say out loud the word break up but everybody knew that it would happen if HZDS and ODS won in the 1992 elections. Mikloško knew when Klaus and ODS won in the elections and President Havel asked Klaus if he can create a federal government but Klaus said no and became a Prime Minister of ČNR. Then Mikloško realized that is the end of republic. According to Zajac, it was not a surprise that CSFR divided because he saw the behavior of HZDS and especially Mečiar. Zajac thought that if HZDS won the election in 1992 Czechoslovakia would divide and he was right.

Why was the division of the country not voted on in the referendum?

Mikloško thinks that the reason why there was not a referendum was mainly political. "If I was in their place and had their competence I do not know what I do." They decided to divide the republic, and mainly the Czechs because they knew that in Federal Government they could not accept any law. House of Nations was divided into the two parts and they were not able to accept any laws. Also, Klaus did not have time and he knew that if they wanted to change the law it would take time. They did not have a time and a referendum could create a chaos in the country. So, this break up without a referendum was necessary. In addition, there could not be a referendum because the majority of the population were against division.

According to Leško, the serious reason was because Václav Klaus was aware that even if the referendum would take place he would not be able to reach another agreement with Mečiar. Klaus's slogan was "5 minutes after the referendum we would be in the same situation as before" because nothing would change. Mečiar would say that the Czech people wanted a common state but Slovaks wanted separate states and this was not solution. Although Mečiar and Klaus the won in elections they did not have a mandate for dividing the country.

Zajac in this question was very specific and explained the situation very well. Firstly, a law about referendums was accepted and this law had a blocking paragraph. It means that it was not easy to call a referendum automatically. The law about

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referendums is valid only when the Federal Assembly accepts a new Federal Constitution. Zajac thinks that there was never a majority of politicians who wanted separate states. HZDS, who wanted a referendum all the time pretended that they did not break up the state but the reality was different. HZDS all the time put conditions and ODS tried to fulfill them. Zajac as an example mention Mečiar's condition of a Competence law. The competence law was adopted in December 1990. Mečiar was the main actor of this law but he ran away and I and Fedor Gál tried to negotiate with OF and thanks to that, the competence law pass. According to Zajac throughout the negotiations between HZDS and ODS Mečiar claimed that all of these negotiations are about new ways and a new arrangement in of Czechoslovakia but they never spoke about the break up of the state. Zajac is persuaded that Mečiar was the person who wanted to break up not ODS and Klaus. Zajac claimed that none of these negotiations were about dissolution of CSFR but they were about the maintenance of the common state and a better order in Czechoslovakia but finally they failed and the next step was the break up of the country.

Was it right according to you that Czechoslovakia was divided without a referendum?

Leško think certainly it was not fair to citizens because Slovakia had established the constitution of the Slovak Republic which was adopted in September 1992. In this constitution it was written that a referendum was important if Slovakia would like to enter or exit from the common state. According to Leško, Mečiar acted against political legitimacy but also against constitutional legitimacy because Slovakia had a new Constitution and the people should decide about this kind of important decision. On the other hand, we have to say citizens did not care what was going on and politicians used the situation. Leško did not remember any demonstration against the break up. People did not care what happened they just accepted it. Politicians knew that people do not care and they used it. Leško liked this sentence – The republics emerged neither from the will of society nor against its will, they arose alongside the will of the republic.

Mikloško thinks that absence of a referendum will be the objective of each political discussion about the end of Czechoslovakia. Klaus and Mečiar did not answer this

question because yes, it should be the will of the people. Mikloško thinks that it will be a problem forever that Czechoslovakia divided without a referendum. Mikloško likes what one Slovak historian, Dušan Kováč, think about this situation: thanks to the absence of a referendum Slovaks do not bear the responsibility that they have decided for the state and now it is my state and I have to take care of it and make him it better. Zajac answered to this question that if there had been political will, politicians could have unlocked the blocking paragraph and he think that probably Czechoslovakia would have survived. This was the main reason why politicians did not unlock the blocking paragraph. Nowadays everybody lied about the situation regarding a referendum but the reality was that nobody wanted the referendum because they knew that people are against the break up.

Was it fair to citizens that Czechoslovakia was divided and nobody asked them?

According to Zajac, people gave the vote to HZDS and ODS and they decided instead of them. People can vote in elections or in referendums and in elections they gave a mandate to HZDS and they used their competences. It is true that HZDS did not speak about the break up of Czechoslovakia so in that point of view it was not fair to citizens.

Leško claimed the Federal Assembly was the main organ responsible for the break up of Czechoslovakia. Also, the Federal Assembly accepted that Czechoslovakia would divided into two separate states, the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic. However, to citizens it was not fair but on the other hand they did not stand up against the HZDS and ODS.

Mikloško: Honestly I think that people did not care. When I was Chair of the Slovak parliament one Slovak writer asked me why I am not on the HZDS side for the division of the country. My answer was that people did not want it so why should I be against the people. Slovaks have attributed that they need to be roll and they will go and they accept it. From the beginning there were two types of people: one who was afraid of Mečiar and the others who had a strong connection with Czechoslovakia and they also had been afraid. However, nowadays Slovaks did not have a problem with their own state.

If the referendum had been held, how would you have voted?

Mikloško is not sure “because I have mixed feelings. On the one side we were fighting against the communism together with the Czechs. On the other side when I saw Klaus’s politics I realize in that moment that I can vote for separate states. Although, the relationship with Czechs and mainly with dissidents was strong.

Leško was also not sure, like Mikloško he thinks that, in that time it difficult question. For him Czechoslovakia was somewhere where he has born, lives, where he has friends and he did not see a reason why. Maybe the problem could be in a border area if some conflict happened. Despite the fact he did not vote for what he was but finally Klaus and Mečiar decided instead of him.

Zajac was Czechoslovakist and Federalist and preferred a common state. Zajac for sure knows that in a referendum he would have voted for Czechoslovakia. He believed that the break up of Czechoslovakia was for geopolitical reason. He did not understand such a big state as Czechoslovakia could be divided into two small states. However, nowadays Czechs and Slovaks have a good relationship which is fine for us but before were better.

Was the division of Czechoslovakia a good thing or not?

Leško nowadays does not see that what happened as bad. Czech Republic and Slovak Republic are members of one integration unit and also security unit and both are in the European Union. Politicians claimed that the relationship between Czechs and Slovaks is great. According to Leško, this relationship will stay like that while the EU functions. He is not sure what would happen after, if the EU had problems. For today there is nothing tragic with what happened but we will see what happens in the future.

Mikloško thinks that for Slovaks it is good that we are alone and responsible for ourselves. At the beginning Czechs who thought that Czechoslovakia is their own state lost because these people were not satisfied with the situation. Czechoslovakia was Masaryk’s message it was his republic. Czechoslovakia was a strong and big country and according to Mikloško stronger than Austria, Poland or Hungary. However, nowadays we fight who is strong. After all Slovakia is a separate state and can develop alone and is responsible for itself. Slovakia bears the responsibility for itself and cannot tergiversate anymore, because before we tergiversate tod

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Hungarians, Czechs, Habsburg or Communist. For almost 30 years we are independent and responsible for ourselves.

Zajac said that he did not feel a nostalgia for Czechoslovakia. At the beginning he thought that it would be a disadvantage but today it is better for Slovakia and it is better that Slovakia is independent.

From a retrospective point of view are you satisfied with the division of Czechoslovakia?

Leško thought that the beginning would be very bad thanks to Mečiar's politics and HZDS but in 1998 Slovakia did not support Mečiar anymore and Mečiar lost the elections. Leško claimed that November 1989 happened more in Prague and it was more Czechs than Slovaks but in 1998 we did ourselves. The worst thing is that Slovaks are not active in elections and in constitutional changes they think that it is fine when others decide instead of them. Even worse it is that politicians think that if they have a mandate they can do what they want.

Zajac he did not feel nostalgia for Czechoslovakia. He just thinks that the negatives of break up are more geopolitical but nowadays it is different and Slovakia is integrated well.

Mikloško is satisfied with the solution. He is a cultured person and Slovakia is a cultured country and it should stay cultured. However, he claimed that Slovakia had one trauma: the Slovak state which was very bad for people and this period destroyed Slovakia. Hence we have to care about Slovakia and fight.

Each of these people is satisfied today that Slovakia is one state and the Czech Republic another. Slovakia can develop more and now is responsible for itself. The Slovak Republic and also the Czech Republic are members of integrated units and also the European Union and they stand as friends and good neighbor country. Although the division of Czechoslovakia was not right and there was no referendum people did not care and stood back from politics even though that they did not want the division of the republic. People gave a vote in the 1992 election to HZDS and ODS and these particular political parties used their mandate and divided Czechoslovakia.

Conclusion

This bachelor thesis was focused on the break up of Czechoslovakia and why there was no referendum. We tried to explain the main factors which influenced the break up and problems which meant there could be a referendum.

In the first part, we tried to explain why referendums are so important. In democratic countries referendums are used as a tool where people vote directly and decide about new laws, reforms, rules or something else that is connected with the state. We could find three types of referendum. One is mandatory referendum, where people vote for everything that should change in the country. Second is optional or facultative referendum. The last type is abrogative referendum where people vote in the referendum for some changes in laws. Referendums have some advantages but also some disadvantages. The main disadvantage is that referendums weaken representative democracy by restricting the role of elected representatives. Sometimes it also happened that referendums did not help because the majority of the people are against and others are for the proposal.

In the second half of the first chapter we tried to explain what is the role of the Federative Republic and how it works and to connect to the constitutional law "On referendum" in Czechoslovakia. This constitutional law about referendums was part of the Federal constitution. If some politicians decide to break up the country they should do it only through a referendum. The main point in this law was that both nations should vote in a referendum and the president was required to call a referendum.

In the second part of the thesis we tried to simply explain the relationship between Czechs and Slovaks and also the political situation from 1989 to 1992. At the beginning we should explain the Velvet Revolution which happened in 1989. The communists lost power and dissidents, VPN, and OF, took power. However, there were political, ethnic, and ideological problems between Czechs and Slovaks meaning that they cannot live in the one state. It started with the competence law continued to the Hyphen war and the first democratic elections in 1990. In addition the situation became even worse and the original political parties divided: Public Against Violence

to HZDS and ODU, Civic Forum to OH and ODA. After the election in 1992 the political situation radically changed. Mečiar and his HZDS won in the Slovak part of the country, Klaus and his ODS won in the Czech part. After the election in 1992 Mečiar and Klaus tried to negotiate and find a common solution but they failed and decided to divide the country. On 1.1. 1993 the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic emerged as two separate states.

In the third part of this thesis we tried to argue that it was necessary for Czechoslovakia to break up and it was easier to do it without a referendum. Although, before the election Mečiar promised a referendum if Czechoslovakia would divide but he very quickly forgot what he said. When Klaus and Mečiar decided that is the end of the republic on August 26, 1992 they knew that the majority of the population is against break up. If they held referendum it would have failed and hence decided to do it without the people and their votes. Another issue was the blocking paragraph which was made in 1991. This paragraph allowed the holding of a referendum only if the Federal Assembly accepted the new Federal Constitution. However, Klaus and Mečiar realized that this would never happen and there is no chance for the new Federal Constitution to be accepted. Klaus wanted to divide the country on new year's day in 1993 because he could not apply his economic reforms to Slovakia. Hence Klaus and Mečiar decided very quickly and on 1st September 1992 the Slovak Republic adopted its own constitution. People accepted the decision of Klaus and Mečiar and Czechoslovakia disappeared from the world map in 1993.

In the practical part of this thesis we made interviews with two elite politicians (Mikloško and Zajac) and one journalist who was interested in the situation in 1990-1993 in Czechoslovakia Marián Leško. The questions were focused mainly on the referendum and the reason for the absence of a referendum. Leško, Mikloško and Zajac claimed the same: that people gave a vote in the election to HZDS and ODS and these political parties negotiated about the order of Czechoslovakia, but cooperation with Mečiar was very bad and Klaus was not able to fulfill all Mečiar's conditions. Hence Czechoslovakia broke up and if we speak about referendums, there were some political reasons why there was no referendum but the main one was that people did

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not want a break up. In addition, they accepted the break up without demonstrations because people did not care.

The situation in Czechoslovakia was unique at the time and still is. We can see what is going on in Spain or the UK. There the situation is similar and people demand a referendum, and demonstrate against the government. Although, these countries are different, Czechoslovakia is a case in the history where a democratic state divided without a referendum and people accepted it. In the 25 years the Slovak and Czech Republics have lived alone, and each of them has developed and is satisfied with the situation. Last year (2017) was made survey polls in Slovakia which show that people are satisfied with the republic and it is better that we are alone and we could develop ourselves. Nowadays Slovakia is a sovereign developed country and is a member of the European Union and NATO.

Resumé

V tejto bakalárskej práci sme chceli poukázať na problém neuskutočneného referenda pri rozpade Československa v roku 1992. Taktiež sme sa snažili poukázať na príčiny rozpadu Československa. Československo definitívne zmizlo z mapy sveta 1. Januára 1993 kedy vznikla Slovenská a Česká republika.

V prvej kapitole tejto bakalárskej práce sme sa snažili vysvetliť dôležitosť referenda a načo slúži referendum. Je dôležité povedať, že hoci voliči v štáte dajú svoj hlas zástupcovi to neznamena, že zástupca má moc o všetkom rozhodovať za voliča ako napríklad o rozdelení štátu. Je samozrejme, že referendá majú svoje výhody aj nevýhody. Tak napríklad takou nevýhodou referenda je to, že pokiaľ sa uskutoční referendum a voliči neprídu hlasovať tak to referendum bolo zbytočné a pokiaľ chcú zástupcovia niečo zmeniť potrebujú nadpolovičnú väčšinu. V takomto prípade sa referendum môže uskutočniť niekoľkokrát. V druhej polovici prvej kapitoly sme sa snažili vysvetliť ako funguje Federácia a konkrétne ako fungovala Česko-Slovenská federatívna republika. Taktiež sme sa snažili poukázať na novú ústavu, ktorá bola prijatá v roku 1991. V tejto ústave bol bod o referende pokiaľ by sa nejaké konalo v Československu, kde prezident mohol vypísať referendum na návrh Federatívneho zhromaždenia v oboch republikách. Pomocou referenda mohli byť riešené štátno-právne usporiadanie Československa.

V druhej kapitole sme sa snažili objasniť historické udalosti od roku 1989 až do roku 1992. V roku 1989 komunisti odovzdali moc disidentom a politickým stranám ako Občianske fórum a Verejnosť proti násiliu. Tieto politické strany prevzali moc v krajine a vyvolali prvé slobodne voľby v roku 1990. Už v prvej polovici roku 1991 nastal problém s názvom krajiny. Politické strany sa nevedeli dohodnúť na rovnakom názve a tak vznikla Pomlčková vojna, kde Slováci presadzovali pomlčku alebo spojovník medzi názvom Česká-Slovenská republika. Nakoniec sa názov krajiny zmenil na Česká a Slovenská Federatívna Republika a po Pomlčkovej vojne nastali ďalšie nezrovnalosti medzi Slovákmi a Čechmi ako napríklad odvolanie Slovenského premiéra Vladimíra Mečiara, ktorý si následne na to založil svoje vlastné politické hnutie HZDS a opustil VPN. Mnoho iných politikov z VPN ho nasledovalo do HZDS

a spoločne s ním sa pripravovali na nasledujúce voľby, ktoré sa mali konať v leto roku 1992. Tesne pred voľbami v roku 1992 sa VPN rozdelilo na viac strán a taký istý osud malo Občianske fórum. Hlavným kandidátom vo voľbách v Českej republike bolo ODS na čele s Václavom Klausom a na Slovensku zas HZDS s Vladimírom Mečiarom.

V nasledujúcej kapitole sme sa snažili zhodnotiť situáciu po voľbách, kde sa k moci dostalo ODS a HZDS a ako spolu viedli niekoľko rokovaní o novom usporiadaní štátu. Klaus sa snažil urobiť zmeny v ekonomickom smere a urobiť niekoľko ekonomických reforiem s čím však Mečiar nesúhlasil a došlo k prvému konfliktu medzi HZDS a ODS. Konflikt sa však stupňoval a napätie rástlo a toto všetko viedlo k rozpadu Československa nakoľko Mečiar sa nedokázal dohodnúť s Klausom na spoločných veciach o usporiadaní a ďalšom vývoji krajiny. Malo to však jeden háčik ako rozdeliť krajinu, pretože dobre vedeli, že občania sú za zotrvanie krajiny a len maličká skupina ľudí je za rozdelenie. Tak sa Mečiar s Klausom rozhodli, že referendum nie je možné vyvolať už hneď z dvoch dôvodov. Prvým bol blokačný paragraf, ktorý hovoril o tom, že pokiaľ bude referendum, musí byť priata nová federálna ústava. Toto však nebolo prijateľné a to Klaus dobre vedel, nakoľko si uvedomoval, že federálne zhromaždenie nie je schopné prijať novú ústavu tak rýchlo. Druhou príčinou bolo, že verejnosť bola proti, ale na druhej strane vedeli, že sa nevzbúri a nepostaví proti neuskutočneniu referenda. Vtedy padlo posledné slovo a definitívne sa Klaus s Mečiarom rozhodli, že sa krajina rozdelí aj proti vôli ľudu, ktorý to tak či tak prijme.

V poslednej kapitole uvádzame zhrnutia rozhovorov, ktoré sme robili s dvomi politikmi a to Petrom Zajacom a Františkom Mikloškom a jedným novinárom Mariánom Leškom. Vybraným osobám sme položili zopár otázok ohľadne neuskutočneného referenda a rozpade krajiny. Všetci traja respondenti sa zhodli na tom, že chýbala občianska vôľa, ktorá by sa bola postavila za zotrvanie republiky a požadovala referendum. Slováci to však prijali a tak sa krajina rozdelila bez referenda.

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Appendix A: Interview with Marián Leško

What position did you have in 1992, during which time there were several meetings about a break up of Czechoslovakia?

I have been editor of a weekly newspaper *Nové Slovo without Rešpekt* and from 1.1.1993 I have been editor of *Pravda*.

Have you been a part of the negotiations about the division of Czechoslovakia?

I was not part of the negotiations but as a journalist we waited for the news and stood in front of the building with other journalists and waited for information. These meetings were not in normal time and HZDS with ODS negotiated for a long time and finished during the night. Sometimes we waited eight, nine and ten hours and after that we informed citizens.

How did you perceive the decision of HZDS and ODS?

We knew that if had been referendum at the time the majority of the people in Czech Republic but also in Slovakia would say common state. When Mečiar and Klaus declared the end of the federation we know that these guys tried to make the situation easier and decide without the people. Moreover, the law about referendums was in the constitution, when the constitution was established, because politicians predicted situation like this. However, Klaus and Mečiar succeeded in the 1992 election and they proceeded as if they have a mandate for dissolution. It was a paradox because he remembers when Mečiar told him that nobody gave us mandate for the dissolution of Czechoslovakia and it was his speech. However, after that his step was clear. I understand that it was a complicated situation because the majority of citizens wanted common state but these people gave their a vote in elections to ODS and HZDS. It was complicated on the one side people were not satisfied with the solution of HZDS and ODS but they gave them a mandate. My personal feeling is that Klaus and Mečiar took responsibility and more competence than they really had because people, not two politicians, should vote about the breakup of the country.

Why was the division of the country not voted on in the referendum?

I think that the reasons were serious and also because Václav Klaus was aware that even if the referendum would take place he would not be able to reach another agreement with Mečiar. Klaus's slogan was "5 minutes after the referendum we would be in the same situation as before" because nothing would change. Mečiar would say that the Czech people wanted a common state but Slovaks wanted separate states and this was not solution. Although Mečiar and Klaus the won in elections they did not have a mandate for dividing the country.

Was it right according to you that Czechoslovakia was divided without a referendum?

I think certainly it was not fair to citizens because Slovakia had established the constitution of the Slovak Republic which was adopted in September 1992. In this constitution it was written that a referendum was important if Slovakia would like to enter or exit from the common state. Mečiar acted against political legitimacy but also against constitutional legitimacy because Slovakia had a new Constitution and the people should decide about this kind of important decision. On the other hand, we have to say citizens did not care what was going on and politicians used the situation. I did not remember any demonstration against the break up. People did not care what happened they just accepted it. Politicians knew that people do not care and they used it. I liked this sentence – The republics emerged neither from the will of society nor against its will, they arose alongside the will of the republic.

Was it fair to citizens that Czechoslovakia was divided and nobody asked them?

Well, the Federal Assembly was the main organ responsible for the break up of Czechoslovakia. Also, the Federal Assembly accepted that Czechoslovakia would divided into two separate states, the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic. However, to citizens it was not fair but on the other hand they did not stand up against the HZDS and ODS.

If the referendum was held how you voted?

I was not sure, I think that, in that time it was difficult question. For me Czechoslovakia was somewhere where he has born, lives, where he has friends and he

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did not see a reason why. Maybe the problem could be in a border area if some conflict happened. Despite the fact I did not vote for what because finally Klaus and Mečiar decided instead of me.

Was the division of Czechoslovakia a good thing or not?

Nowadays does not see that what happened as bad. Czech Republic and Slovak Republic are members of one integration unit and also security unit and both are in the European Union. Politicians claimed that the relationship between Czechs and Slovaks is great. According to Leško, this relationship will stay like that while the EU functions. He is not sure what would happen after, if the EU had problems. For today there is nothing tragic with what happened but we will see what happens in the future.

From retrospective point of view are you satisfied with the division of Czechoslovakia?

I think that the beginning would be very bad thanks to Mečiar's politics and HZDS but in 1998 Slovakia did not support Mečiar anymore and Mečiar lost the elections. November 1989 happened more in Prague and it was more Czechs than Slovaks but in 1998 we did ourselves. The worst thing is that Slovaks are not active in elections and in constitutional changes they think that it is fine when others decide instead of them. Even worse it is that politicians think that if they have a mandate they can do what they want.

Appendix B: Interview with František Mikloško

What position did you have in 1992, during which time there were several meetings about a break up of Czechoslovakia?

At the time I was in head of Slovak delegation and also chair of SNR until the election in 1992. The negotiation was led by prime ministers of SNR and ČNR.

Have you been a part of the negotiations about the division of Czechoslovakia?

Yes, I have been a participant on each negotiations until to the election in 1992.

How did you perceive the decision of HZDS and ODS?

In that time inside of me mixed two feeling. I saw that politicians would like to divide the country but nobody would say out loud the word break up but everybody knew that it would happen if HZDS and ODS won in the 1992 elections. I knew when Klaus and ODS won in the elections in and President Havel asked Klaus if he can create a federal government but Klaus said no and became a Prime Minister of ČNR. Then I realized that is the end of republic and the Slovak Republic emerge.

Why was the division of the country not voted on in the referendum?

I think that the reason why there was not a referendum was mainly political. If I was in their place and had their competence I do not know what I do. They decided to divide the republic, and mainly the Czechs because they knew that in Federal Government they could not accept any law. House of Nations was divided into the two parts and they were not able to accept any laws. Also, Klaus did not have time and he knew that if they wanted to change the law it would take time. They did not have a time and a referendum could create a chaos in the country. So, this break up without a referendum was necessary. In addition, there could not be a referendum because the majority of the population were against division.

Was it right according to you that Czechoslovakia was divided without a referendum?

I think that absence of a referendum will be the objective of each political discussion about the end of Czechoslovakia. Klaus and Mečiar did not answer this question because yes, it should be the will of the people. I think that it will be a problem forever that Czechoslovakia divided without a referendum. I like what one Slovak historian, Dušan Kováč, think about this situation: thanks to the absence of a referendum Slovaks do not bear the responsibility that they have decided for the state and now it is my state and I have to take care of it and make him it better.

Was it fair to citizens that Czechoslovakia was divided and nobody asked them?

Honestly, I think that people did not care. When I was Chair of the Slovak parliament one Slovak writer asked me why I am not on the HZDS side for the division of the country. My answer was that people did not want it so why should I be against the people. Slovaks have attributed that they need to be roll and they will go and they accept it. From the beginning there were two types of people: one who was afraid of Mečiar and the others who had a strong connection with Czechoslovakia and they also had been afraid. However, nowadays Slovaks did not have a problem with their own state.

If the referendum was held how you voted?

I am not sure “because I have mixed feelings. On the one side we were fighting against the communism together with the Czechs. On the other side when I saw Klaus’s politics I realize in that moment that I can vote for separate states. Although, the relationship with Czechs and mainly with dissidents was strong.

Was the division of Czechoslovakia a good thing or not?

I think that for Slovaks it is good that we are alone and responsible for ourselves. At the beginning Czechs who thought that Czechoslovakia is their own state lost because these people were not satisfied with the situation. Czechoslovakia was Masaryk’s message it was his republic. Czechoslovakia was a strong and big country and I think stronger than Austria, Poland or Hungary. However, nowadays we fight who is strong.

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After all Slovakia is a separate state and can develop alone and is responsible for itself. Slovakia bears the responsibility for itself and cannot tergiversate anymore, because before we tergiversate told Hungarians, Czechs, Habsburg or Communist. For almost 30 years we are independent and responsible for ourselves.

From retrospective point of view are you satisfied with the division of Czechoslovakia?

I am satisfied with the solution. I am a cultured person and Slovakia is cultured country and it should stay cultured. However, I think that Slovakia had one trauma: the Slovaks state which was very bad for people and this period destroyed Slovakia. Hence, we have to care about Slovakia and fight.

Appendix C: Interview with Peter Zajac

What position did you have in 1992, during which time there were several meetings about a break up of Czechoslovakia?

During the negotiations about the new position of Czechoslovakia I was a member of VPN. In October 1991 Civic Democratic Union was established and I was a member of this union. Moreover, I had been an advisor of František Mikloško so I had a double function.

Have you been a part of the negotiations about the division of Czechoslovakia?

I was not a participant of that negotiations.

How did you perceive the decision of HZDS and ODS?

For me it was not a surprise that CSFR divided because I saw the behavior of HZDS and especially Mečiar. I think that if HZDS win the election in 1992 Czechoslovakia would divide and I was right.

Why was the division of the country not voted on in the referendum?

Firstly, a law about referendums was accepted and this law had a blocking paragraph. It means that it was not easy to call a referendum automatically. The law about referendums is valid only when the Federal Assembly accepts a new Federal Constitution. I think that there was never a majority of politicians who wanted separate states. HZDS, who wanted a referendum all the time pretended that they did not break up the state but the reality was different. HZDS all the time put conditions and ODS tried to fulfill them. As an example Mečiar's condition of a Competence law. The competence law was adopted in December 1990. Mečiar was the main actor of this law but he ran away and I and Fedor Gál tried to negotiate with OF and thanks to that, the competence law passed. According to me throughout the negotiations between HZDS and ODS Mečiar claimed that all of these negotiations are about new ways and a new arrangement in of Czechoslovakia but they never spoke about the break up of the state. I am persuaded that Mečiar was the person who wanted to break up not ODS and Klaus. And none of these negotiations were about dissolution of CSFR but they were about the maintenance of the common state and a better order in

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Czechoslovakia but finally they failed and the next step was the break up of the country.

Was it right according to you that Czechoslovakia was divided without a referendum?

If there had been political will, politicians could have unlocked the blocking paragraph and he think that probably Czechoslovakia would have survived. This was the main reason why politicians did not unlock the blocking paragraph. Nowadays everybody lied about the situation regarding a referendum but the reality was that nobody wanted the referendum because they knew that people are against the break up.

Was it fair to citizens that Czechoslovakia was divided and nobody asked them?

Well, people gave the vote to HZDS and ODS and they decided instead of them. People can vote in elections or in referendums and in elections they gave a mandate to HZDS and they used their competences. It is true that HZDS did not speak about the break up of Czechoslovakia so in that point of view it was not fair to citizens.

If the referendum was held how you voted?

I was Czechoslovakist and Federalist and preferred a common state. For sure I know that in a referendum I would have voted for Czechoslovakia. I believed that the break up of Czechoslovakia was for geopolitical reason. I did not understand such a big state as Czechoslovakia could be divided into two small states. However, nowadays Czechs and Slovaks have a good relationship which is fine for us but before were better.

Was the division of Czechoslovakia a good thing or not?

I did not feel a nostalgia for Czechoslovakia. At the beginning I though that it would be a disadvantage but today it is better for Slovakia and it is better that Slovakia is independent.

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From retrospective point of view are you satisfied with the division of Czechoslovakia?

Like I said before it is good for Czechoslovakia. I did not feel nostalgia for Czechoslovakia. I just think that the negatives of break up are more geopolitical but nowadays it is different and Slovakia is integrated well.