

Slovakia in the Period of "Normalization" and Expectation of Changes (1969 - 1989)

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Slovakia in the Period of "Normalization" and Expectation of Changes (1969 - 1989). The paper gives a more systematic perspective on the political and social development of Slovakia in the period 1969 - 1989. The paper consists of the two parts. The first part *The politics of normalisation and the society in Slovakia* shows the interconnection of the Communist party politics with the development of society. It demonstrates the consequences of the normalisation as emigration and political purges and compares the situation in Slovakia to the one in the Czech Republic. Special attention is given to the indications of the partial awakening of society in 80s (the impact of the Helsinki Conference, the struggle for religious freedoms and for the position of Churches, critical dimension of art, especially theatre etc.) that, however, did not change stagnant character of Slovakian society. On the contrary, the dogmatic communist party wing succeeded to acquire the power in this period and to continue the political persecutions.

The second part discusses *the constitutional law position and the economic position of Slovakia in the Czechoslovakian federation*. It is evident that the normalisation politics manifested itself in a full extension in the sphere of constitutional law and economy. Both the deformation of the federal arrangement and the centralisation of economy had seriously affected the situation in Slovakia. The attention is given to the position of Slovakia in the Federation and to the issues of Slovaks social and economic equalising with the Czech lands. The economic data comparison doubts the taken-for-granted statement that the Czech lands "paid for" Slovakia. I also introduce the data about the situation in the power elite in both the countries, the data about military industry and description of the problems of the proposal of new constitution.

The paper describes divergent traits of the processes that underwent in Slovakia of that time. In spite of the overall stagnation Slovakia paradoxically showed the economic growth. Shifts apparent in next domains are documented and evaluated briefly. The offered description helps to understand the historical background of the democratisation processes in the Slovak society, the split of the common state of Czechs and Slovaks, the economic problems, problems in culture and in social sphere that have become visible after the November 1989.

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In August 1968 representatives of Czechoslovakia signed an agreement called The Moscow Treaty. The Kremlin's dictate began an era of "normalization" of Slovak and Czech societies and renewed the rules of neostalinism. The renewal of neostalinism, called "normalization" by its pursuers, meant re-installation of central directive planning in economic domain, secured the leading role of the Communist party in all domains of social life, suppressed any possibilities for autonomy and self-governance and strictly demanded monopoly of Marx-Leninist ideology in cultural life. Top political leaders pursued this line of normalization until the middle 80's but also after that, the political relations and political system were, in nature, the same. (Renner, H. - Samson, I., 1993) Moscow allowed the federalization of a common Czechoslovak state but it strictly refused the federalization of the political system. For this reason, a conflict between political centralism and federalism, formed by two national republics, appeared. The policy of "normalization" suppressed decentralization, uncomfortable for Moscow, it was to have a discrepancy in order to regain its power over state.

Policy of "normalization" in Slovakia's society

Drastic withdrawal from the reform process of the year 1968 occurred mostly after the installment of Gustáv Husák in the top political function. The policy of normalization gained its monstrous size, powered by the influential pressure of Moscow pursued not only by military measures, at all distinct levels. The democratic process was stopped and again started the uniform and definite line of

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centralization of the state power - the monopoly of power by the Communist party of Czechoslovakia. Virtually all decisions were made at the Central Committee of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party through which, the political and state institutions "rebuilt the order" in Slovak and Czech society. This process was very typical for the "real socialism of Breznev's era". (Šimečka, M., 1990) Times of "changing coats" began. Many reformed communists turned to be conform "normalizers". For the loss of their moral values they were looking for a position under a "new sun". The twenty years long period of mental schizophrenia began when the people had to pretend to behave differently than ordinary citizens.

Normalizers realized, that the only way to eliminate the reforming movements in society was to eliminate the influence of the reform intelligentsia in the state and gain control over mass-media. In order to achieve this goal Breznev's administration put a systematic pressure on many organizations. The Association of Slovak Journalists, led by Svetozár Štúr, was one of them. In May 1969, more than one hundred Czech and Slovak journalists (Bohuš Chňoupek, Bohuš Trávníček, Miloš Marko, Miloš Krno and many others) published a declaration *"Into Our Ranks"*. They came with a self-destroying critique of the press from January 1968. In a short time the chair of "The Association of Slovak Journalists" proclaimed support of the normalization policy. Production of many newspapers (Kultúrny život, Nové slovo) stopped and the remaining newspapers adopted the new policy. Employees of television, radio and other media were tested through the process called "cadre proving". (Šimko, O., 1995). To understand why the characteristics of this process were self-destructive, one must look at the protocol of consequences. In its effect, the decisive criterion of the quality of journalist work was subordinate to political requirements and readiness to fulfill the role of an ideological blazoner.

Political screening was accomplished within all groups of intelligentsia: in education (normalized by Matej Lúčan), in science, among engineers, doctors and others. In June 1969, there took place in Bratislava a congress establishing "The Association of Slovak Writers" as an independent organization. In a short time this organization was exposed to a strong pressure and already its second congress was in the spirit of normalization and "socialistic realism", as normalizers called the conform literature. One of the Slovak Communist Party ideological leaders, Ľudovít Pezlár, emphasized the application of the marx-leninism principles in literature, as a main feature of socialistic realism. Freedom of speech virtually disappeared.

The Secretary of the Communist Party Central Committee of Czechoslovakia, Vasil Biľak, represented a hand of Moscow operating in Slovakia. He, together with other dogmatic normalizers, was responsible for "cadre" policy, ideology and mass-media policy. They were more tough and cruel in pursuing the normalization policy than G. Husák, though Husák refused reform policy at the meeting of the Communist Party Central Committee in September 1969 in Prague. Civil resistance against normalization policy, though more in the Czech part of the country, appeared for the last time in August 1969. After suppression of the last protests: resignation, helplessness and disappointment spread among the people who were trying to find other opportunities of social survival.

Serious problems in the economy, educational system, medical services and science appeared. These, were mainly caused by the vast emigration after the August 1969 of the Slovak intelligence - doctors, teachers (only 100 teachers from Comenius University emigrated), engineers and scientists as well as administrators and blue collar workers. The decrease in number of people was also significant. In the years 1969-1970, about 11 thousand of people did not return from abroad to Slovakia and more than 10 thousand of people emigrated from the country. The majority of them were looking for a new and better life when they lost their hopes in further reforms and political developments in their motherland. Furthermore, emigration did not stop and continued in the 70's and 80's (for instance Peter Šťastný, top NHL ice-hockey player). Estimates are, that as much as 240,000 people left Czechoslovakia. (Michal, T., 1990, Žatkuliak, J., 1992) Political power filled empty management positions with "reliable and pre-tested cadres". Their professional and managerial experience and knowledge were often insufficient.

This strong wave of emigration was, to some extent, caused by the "self-normalization" of the Communist Party. In January 1970, its leaders decided to perform "internal provings". These became the main tool of the "healthy core" to eliminate reform communists. In Slovakia, about 53,000 members were dismissed from the Communist Party. This "purge" was also followed by layoffs of the non-communists who held management-control positions from state institutions, army, industry and

cultural institutions. It had impact on all levels and all areas of Slovakian society and negatively affected future development. Anyway, it was still not as radical as it was in the Czech region. The purge was followed by other repressive regime actions: lost of working positions, suppression of public activity, restrictions for university admission and confiscation of emigrant apartments. Families were watched by the State Security (ŠtB). ŠtB restrained people from traveling abroad; From Slovakia in 1969, about 200,000 people traveled abroad. In 1970, it totaled 42,000. (Štefánský, M., 1992)

Political relations forced many famous people of Slovak culture to emigrate or to continue living abroad. Cultural affairs were directed by the politically contradictive, although respected, Slovak poet Miroslav Válek. Abroad, those achieving high regard were for example: opera singer Lucia Poppová, painter Koloman Sokol, mime Milan Sládek, film director Elo Havetta, folk singer Janka Guzová-Becková, dramatic adviser Ján Kalina, writer Ladislav Mňačko and economist Eugen Löbl.

In February 1970, Jozef Lenárt became the First Secretary of the Communist Party. He belonged to the conservative wing of the Communist Party. Together with Vasil Biľak and other politicians requested "help" from Moscow against "counter-revolutionary activity". The position of normalizers was strengthened by signing the "Agreement of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Help between Czecho-Slovakia and Soviet Union" in May 1969, in Prague. The normalization policy triumphed at the Communist Party Central Committee meeting, in December 1970. The ultra left wing forced the signing of "Lessons From Crisis in the Party and Society after the XIII Congress of the Communist Party". This demagogic document rejected the reform process as a counter-revolution, establishing the reason for "international help" from five countries of the Warsaw Treaty. In reality, this "international help" resulted in a severe and violent occupation of Czecho-Slovakia. "Understanding..." was approved by the XIV. Congress of the Communist Party in May 1971. This document became a political "norm", holding Slovak and Czech societies paralyzed for nearly 20 years. By 1972, the Labor Union, youth organizations and other parts of the National Front were normalized.

In January 1971, the Chairmanship of the Communist Party Central Committee (ÚV KSČ) approved a document establishing evidence of "representatives of right-wing opportunism and organizers of anti-socialistic and anti-Soviet campaigns". The goal of this repressive action was to exclude these people from political, state and other public structures. In 1973, more than six thousand people were on the list. They were closely "guided" and watched by political apparatus. Many of were the elite of Czech and Slovak society. Persecutions and political trials ensued which impacted numerous families. (Zpráva o černé listině, 1992)

The normalization process was not without contradictions. The social regulations used in the first half of the 70's, had to balance and absorb political tensions. Net income increased by 29 percent but some differences between the Czech and Slovak societies deepened. From 1970 to 1991, Slovakia strengthened its work force by 522,000; increased housing units by 580,000; and increased its birth-rate 10 percent a 453,000 live births (by 1980). Nevertheless, the Czech region enjoyed higher wages, retirement incomes and household incomes. Despite these figures both regions were strongly influenced by the leveling and equalization policies under the communist regime. (Kaplan, K., 1993)

Gustáv Husák, the first Slovak elected President of Czechoslovakia on May 29, 1975, merged state and political function into one. He was president until the end of 1989 and was not able to fulfill the expectations of many people around him that he would secure mitigation of neostalinism and loosen the political situation. Among those who knew him personally, he was considered as somebody with a "sense for timing". It meant, he was able to enforce necessary changes in the right time. But, he was still devoted to Party discipline, though he had attributes of a capable politician. He had his share in federalizing the Czechoslovak state. He represented "normalization of a lesser evil". However, normalization will be tied to his name forever. Despite a common unified normalization strategy, a stricter and wider normalization was believed to be implemented against the Czechs versus a "lighter" normalization against the Slovak². There exist one basic explanation regarding the stricter character of normalization in the Czech region: the top functionaries in the Communist Party (Husák, Biľak), were Slovak. Insufficient historical evidence cannot support this view, but it remains a source of tension in Czech - Slovak relations.

² Viliam Plevza (Plevza V., 1991, 95-197) writes, that G. Husák was a "forced" witness of political cleaning and dismissals of many people. He represented a "gradual re-evaluation of the dogmatic normalization".

Under the influence of the Helsinki Conference in January 1977, "Charter 77" was founded. Inclusive initiatives were against normalization and focused on protection of civil and political rights regarding international treaties that were ratified by Czechoslovak state institutions. In Slovakia it had no significant support and was signed only by a limited number of dissidents. However, it provided a room for discussions and initiative for political and civic opposition. In 1976, Alexander Dubček's letters were published in Europe, stating the impact of normalization in Czecho-Slovakia. Civic opposition or dissent represented writer Dominik Tatarka, publicists Milan Šimečka and Miklós Duray, writer Hana Ponická, historian Jozef Jablonický and others. Including other groups like ecologists, Ján Budaj and Mikuláš Huba who were later involved.

The core of Slovakia's dissent was a Christian movement. They secretly published and distributed over 20 "samizdate" journals, some of which had a short life. A secret church was built up. Representatives of this stream were Bishop Ján Chryzostom Korec and attorney Ján Čarnogurský. (Škvarna, D. et. all., 1997) The power of dissent in the Christian movement resulted primarily from a fact that Slovak society was predominantly religious (Catholic + Protestant)³. The Communist regime suppressed religious life and activities through state institutions more in Slovakia than in Czech countries. It restricted: importing religious literature; religious education and the Bishop office. Overall, it overtly worked against the Roman Catholic Church. (Hlinka, A., 1990) In Brno June 1975, Brno, a national congress of Catholic priests organized in a pro-regime association "Pacem In Terris" took place. In the early 50s, the Vatican forbade priests to be a member in this association but the state policy continued attracting new members. There were virtually no conditions for religious life. The Greek Catholic church was suppressed completely. Monasteries and orders were abolished from 1950 and confiscated church properties diverted to state hands.

Considerable administrative change in the Roman Catholic church occurred when Pope Paul VI., on 30 December 1977, in Rome, demarkated new dioceses in Slovakia with regard to Ostrihom, Ráb and Jáger archdioceses in Hungary. This remedy was needed for a long time. From the origin of Czechoslovakia these borders were inconsistent with the official border of Slovakia. The Trnava Apostolic Administration was promoted to the level of diocese and Metropolitan See. These dioceses were subordinated to it: Nitra, Banská Bystrica, Spiš, Košice and Rožňava. (Chovanec, J. - Mozolík, P., 1994)

The Marian Year enunciated from June 1987 by Pope John Paul II., vitalized Catholic parishioners. This announcement was preceded by the celebration of the thousand and hundred anniversary of death of Saint Method in July 1985 at Velehrad in Moravia. Pilgrimages with nearly one hundred thousand people took place in Levoča, Šaštín, Staré Hory, Marianky and in other places. In 1988, a petition requiring withdrawal of religious oppression, occupation of empty bishop offices (5 of the total of 7 were empty) and free publishing of religious literature was signed by more than 300,000 Church members from Slovakia. Afterwards, Monsignor Ján Sokol (later archbishop and Metropolitan of Church province) and Monsignor František Tondra were consecrated to bishops.

From the beginning of the 80's, it was clear, that Czecho-Slovakia, under pressure from political, state and economic normalization, was in a deep crisis. Political power was unable to solve the situation. Its actions were inefficient (i.e. position of local authorities in public administration who obtained a certain level of self-government since 1982). They had no real effect, despite at the Communist Party congress in 1986 were reported as "successes". In order "to look better" and indicate economic growth, the statistics compared the present situation to the situation 15 years before. In spite of the overall situation in Czechoslovakia, in the 70's and the 80's, Slovakia had higher social and economic growth rate than Czech and Moravia. It was virtually the only country of the Soviet block that "gained"⁴ under socialism. Anyway, it had two faces; society was divided.

Society stagnated. Social stratification did not change much in the 70's and the 80's. Slovakia had a relatively high employment rate (75 percent from productive population in 1985). It was considered as the problem that many areas (health care, education, social services, communications, banking and other services) employed too many females. Together with growth in industry, the number of

³ According to the 1970 survey findings (Hlinka, 1990), 70 percent of population reported themselves as believers, 14 percent were atheistic and the remaining were indifferent. In the 1991 Census, 3.179 million people claimed to be Roman Catholic, 326.000 to be Protestant, 179.000 to be Greek Catholic (after restoration), 511.000 without religion and 921.000 were not classified.

⁴ It is a question of criteria and values. For instance from 1970 to 1988 GNP increased in Czech countries by 100 percent, in Slovakia by 174 percent. See (Patoprstý, J., 1996, pp. 141-143; Průcha, V., 1996, pp. 72-75).

employed people increased. On the contrary, the number of people employed in agriculture decreased. Many villages and towns significantly changed its face under the influence of urbanization. The housing standard increased⁵. But, it was still much lower than, for example, in Austria.

The level of education increased (from 1970 - 1991 the number of graduated from high-schools and universities doubled). The qualification of the most working force groups was higher than in Czech regions. Education was not a sufficient precondition of career advance - the necessary one was political involvement. Many people in higher managerial positions did not meet qualification requirements. University educated professionals were truly unsatisfied with their working classification. The only positive was, that new positions were occupied by younger generation not so influenced by normalization. Many people strictly divided private and public spheres of behaviour and applied different values in each of them. In the 80's dissatisfaction with political situation strengthened. On the surface there were not such strong economic reasons for social changes as it were in Poland or Hungary. But, in fact, there were some. Prices of many goods were increasing steadily from the end of the 70's that, with an unchanged income, had an impact on lowering the living standard. The number of households with children under the social minimum line increased and in all segments of population. This proportion was higher in Slovakia than in Czech. As a result, the rate of new-born children decreased; for the years 1980 - 1991 new-born were 5.6 percent of population. Anyway, the majority of people had acceptable but modest living standard.

Potential economic and social tensions between nations and ethnic minorities had no strength⁶. It was successfully quelled by the regime. The national framework was settled by the Constitution Law About Nationalities No. 144 from 1968 Code, which emphasized the use of original languages, nationally diversified education and culture. Realization of this law was constrained by the lack of executive regulations and national institutions. Hidden Slovak - Hungarian and Hungarian - Slovak contrasts had only historical reasons⁷.

So, did still "too little" reasons exist to evoke significant changes in society? The 80s were still the "age of immobility" (to paraphrase M. Šimečka), though compared to the 70s, situation was less tight, of course, not in politics. But, people in Slovakia did not have a feeling of an acute crisis. In the beginning of the 80s, it was clear, that society in Slovakia was much different from the Czech society. Together with other features, Slovakia differed by its conservative and less extreme politics, though we could hardly speak about democratic conditions which were nipped in the bud. Was it possible to explain the differences of perception of stagnation in Slovakia and in Czech? Or, was the reason, that the impact of the normalization was less devastating to Slovakia, including normalization within the Communist Party of Slovakia? To some extent, these preconditions limited reform movement. Did the smaller social differences and economic growth in Slovak society cause an external sense of stability?

In reality, some movements in society began only when Michail Gorbačov became the General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in March 1985. Society in Slovakia expected democratic changes that would follow the "Soviet example" and implement "perestroika", "glasnost" and a legal state. These expectations were not fulfilled neither after Gorbačov's appointment nor after his visit to Bratislava in April 1987. Though Gorbačov indirectly expressed support of reforms in 1968, under Dubček's leadership, Moscow was unwilling to re-evaluate its drastic interference in 1968. Normalizers in Czecho-Slovakia were protected this way. Furthermore, in December 1987, the most dogmatic group of normalizers overtook the power.

General Secretary G. Husák was replaced by Miloš Jakeš (M. Gorbačov in Bratislava personally greeted him). Second man in political hierarchy was Vasil Biľak, though after one year he resigned with Ignác Janák replacing. (Lipták, E., 1996) As compared to the "middle stream" of G. Husák and Federal Prime Minister Ľubomír Štrougal, dogmatics applied more pressure on the Slovak and Czech public. They were unsatisfied with the powerful and influential political team of Husák - Štrougal, which held more clout than positions of Alois Indra, the Chair of Czecho-Slovak Federal Parliament,

⁵ By the census and household surveys for years 1970-1991, an increased portion of apartments equipped with central heating system from 28 percent to 76 percent, with bathrooms from 48 percent to 88 percent, with automatic washing machine from non-registered to 34 percent, with colour TV to 49 percent and with car from 12 to 38 percent.

⁶ By the census in 1970, those with Slovak nationality numbered 3.878 million citizens, in 1991, it was 4.511 million. The ratio of Slovak nationality to all Slovak citizens remained unchanged about 85 percent. Hungarian nationality increased only from 552.000 to 566.000 (10,8%). Other nationalities like Ukrainian, Ruthenian, Czech and others comprised an insignificant ethnic proportion. But, in 1980, about 200.000 Gypsies lived in Slovakia. More in (Minoritné... 1994).

⁷ See (Slovensko-maďarské vzťahy...,1992; Slovaks and Magyars, 1995).

the chairmen of the Czech and the Slovak Parliament, or tanking Party member V. Biľak. In particular, these people were connected with the occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968, so they were dedicated to the declaration "Understanding from Crisis..."⁸. They opposed criticism of the situation in Czechoslovakia, or any changes in the political system, and formally proclaimed a "deepening of socialistic democracy". Ideologists felt a potential danger from some political and state representatives who advocated for a transformation of society. This was the reason personal changes initiated in the years 1987 - 1988 in the Communist Party, the national and federal governments⁹. Many people perceived these as pseudo-changes as an end to the "age of immobility", but other events were more promising. Alexander Dubček (Dubček, A., 1993) appeared on Hungarian television for his honorary doctorate presented by the University of Bologna. He criticized policy of normalization and advocated the reform process of 1968. As a result, public opinion thawed.

Many people nourished a change in belief by listening to "illegal" broadcasts of "Radio Free Europe" and the "Voice of America", by reading Soviet "perestroika" literature, samizdates (ecological "Bratislava Nahlas" - Bratislava Aloud) and some critical articles in domestic journals and newspapers. Political criticism became the most visible in culture. Art, science, film and theater began to express the alternative political attitudes. Despite internal political pressure, the pressure from the government, actors maintained a strong influence on public opinion. Some of the more prominent actors were: Ladislav Chudík, Jozef Króner, Štefan Kvietik, František Dibarbora, Ctibor Filčík, Ivan Mistrik, Milan Kňažko, Michal Dočolomanský, Magda a Milka Vašáryová, Božidara Turzonovová and others. Slovak theater was very well respected. Film director Juraj Jakubisko and his "Tisícročná včela" (Thousandyear Bee) won first prize at the European film festival in Venice. Similarly, film director Dušan Hanák was recognized at the festivals in San Remo and in West Berlin. Opera singer Peter Dvorský became well respected world singer. UNESCO added to the World Cultural Heritage list Vlkolínec, Bardejov and Banská Štiavnica. In science (Štefan Schwarz, Jozef Čabelka, Daniel Rapant, Jozef Ružička...), medicine (Viliam Thurzo, Konštantín Čárský, Dionýz Blaškovič...), painting, graphics and art (Ludovít Fulla, Ján Želibský, Vincent Hložník, Albín Brunovský, Dušan Kállay..., Bienále ilustrácií Bratislava exhibitions), music (Alexander Moyes, Eugen Suchoň, Ján Cikker, Bratislava Music Festivals, Slovak Philharmonic Orchestra), architecture (Vladimír Karfík) and sport (ice-hockey players, mountain climbers, athletes, motorcyclists, tennis-player Miloš Mečíř, walker Jozef Pribilinec) maintained contact with world competition.

Despite a "revival" in society, which may have been the reason, the political power continued defaming prominent people. They chose Christianity, a sensitive attribute to Slovak society. Together with the police, on 25 March 1988, in Bratislava, the peaceful Candle Demonstration of ten thousand believers was brutally suppressed. Official Catholic activist František Mikloško initiated the request to demonstrate, but his proposal was rejected. Demonstrators were brutally hatted at these demonstrations: 20th anniversary of occupation, the 70th anniversary of the Czechoslovak state, and other expressions of public resistance against the regime. In Autumn 1989, Jakeš and other Communist Party heads refused apologies from the Polish and Hungarian governments for the Polish and Hungarian military troops' participation in 1968 occupation. In August 1989, a representative of the Catholic dissent Ján Čarnogurský was put in jail. Resistance against the communist regime culminated also among students. It was exactly the students who, on streets of Bratislava and Prague on 16 and 17 November to overturning the political system in Czecho-Slovakia.

Institutional-legal and economic position of Slovakia within the federation

On the 1 January 1969, the constitutional law No. 143 from 1968 Code of Laws about Czecho-Slovak Federation, founded two national republics: Slovak Socialistic Republic and the Czech Socialist Republic that were joint in Federation. Regional legislative power rested in the National Councils. Regional executive power rested with the national governments and ministries. The acclamatory elections established two equal chambers of federal parliament - the House of the People

⁸ This held also about G. Husák, who supported M. Jakeš. He supported the document "Lessons from Crisis.." in his speech at the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the founding of a joint Slovak and Czech state. In: *Práca*, October 28, 1988, p. 3.

⁹ Interesting was that the board of the Communist Party Central Committee decided to abrogate of G. Husák with a vote ratio 8:2 (K. Hoffman, L. Adamec, V. Biľak, A. Indra, M. Jakeš, J. Kempný, J. Lenárt, P. Colotka voted for: E. Štrougal and A. Kapek voted against). G. Husák was disillusioned and proclaimed that his function was already available. More in (Tüma, O, 1996, pp. 350-380).

(a renamed National Assembly) and the House of Nations (consisting of 50, later on 75 members of the republics' national councils).

Federal Parliament was the reigning legislative institution in Czecho-Slovakia. The federal government constituted the executive institution of the federation. Veto-power was applied in the Federal Parliament. In the House of Nations the representatives elected in Slovak and Czech republic voted separately. The Federal government was led by Oldřich Černík, with four vice-prime ministers, two of them were Slovaks - Peter Colotka and Samuel Falt'an. The Chair of the Slovak National Council was Ondrej Klokoč and the Slovakia's Prime Minister was Štefan Sádovský.

There were conflicts over the position of the Federal Parliament Chair, where the Slovak side wanted to have proportional representation in the top political and state functions. President was Ludvík Svoboda, Federal Prime Minister was Oldřich Černík (both Czechs) and the First Secretary of the Communist Party Central Committee was Alexander Dubček, Parliament Chair Peter Colotka and the Vice-Chair Josef Smrkovský (who was also House of the People Chair) supported by the Czech side. A strict condition from Moscow, proclaiming J. Smrkovský as a "persona non grata" was behind these battles for power. G. Husák and L. Svoboda submissively fulfilled this order. The chair of the House of Nations became Dalibor Hanes and from April 1969, Dubček became the Federal Parliament Chairman. (Bárta, M., 1993)

A document from the Communist Party Central Committee dated from May 1969, titled "Implementing Regulation" set the primary aims of the normalization process for a renewal of neostalinist conditions - central planning, unequivocal dominance of state ownership and elimination of any market economy elements, the leading role of Communist Party in all domains of life, suppression of autonomy and self-governing social units and the monopoly of Marx-Leninist ideology in cultural life. This document caused significant change in the economic policy of Czechoslovakia. The new centralized decision-making, totally dependent on political power, was implemented. Simultaneously, Czechoslovak economy was subordinated to the requirements of Moscow by signing a trade agreement in 1970 lasting five years. The next line of subordination was pursued through the Council for Mutual Economic Affiliation (CMEA). For the Slovakian economy it meant stronger subordination and dependency upon natural resources from Russia for Slovakia's heavy industry.

In October 1969, the constitutional law No. 117 prolonged the election period of all representative institutions of that time (by cancelling the general elections that had to be held in November 1968) to begin "cleansing" of state institutions. A. Dubček was withdrawn as Federal Parliament Chair. The Slovak National Council retracted its declaration regarding the occupation as illegal. A line of normalization measures started. The nascent processes in Slovakia were re-evaluated as "counter-revolutionary" and 35 representatives were dismissed from the Parliament including: František Barbírek, Alexander Dubček, Samuel Falt'an, Vojtech Hatala, Hvezdoň Kočtúch, Jozef Rosa, Viktor Pavlenda, vice-chair Jozef Križ, among others. These people were important to the applicable measures under constitutional law for the Czechoslovak Federation. Some of the people representing Slovakia's particular needs were laid-off; Prime Minister Štefan Sádovský, Vice-Prime Minister Jozef Zrak, and one notable minister, Štefan Šebesta. Chief economists were politically excluded from decision-making circles and often replaced by non-professionals¹⁰. After the National Committees Conference in November 1969, eight thousand out of seventy thousand local authorities were forced to leave their offices. This resulted in the emigration of many political and economic representatives.

Emigré groups were active abroad. They advocated the 1968 reforms and criticized the political situation in their motherland. In June 1970, the Slovak World Congress led by Štefan B. Roman was founded in Toronto. The Congress assembled Slovak leagues and organizations from around the world. It requested the Slovak right for self-determination. A certain part of journalists (close to the journal *Horizont*) and the Congress representatives understood the need of political connection between Slovakia and Czech lands and they were even close to the intellectual streams directed to European integration. (Braxátor, F., 1992; 100-134) One other organization the Council of Free Czechoslovakia was led by Martin Kvetko. (Špetko, J., 1994) It is argued that Slovak emigration did

¹⁰ Conclusions from the Slovak National Council (SNR) Committee for evaluation of SNR activities and the institutions from 1968 to 1970. SNR, No. 310,1990, Bratislava, February 1990: Author's material.

not have any significant influence on the country's situation. Conversely, its activities were usually rhetorically reinterpreted by the Communist leaders.

Political "pacification" of the state institutions opened-up positions for normalizers who gained power. In November 1971 an election took place. For the election of 1971, political pluralism was ousted, and nominations reflected only new communist candidates. Voting was obligatory and candidates were also elected by almost 100 percent in the elections of 1976, 1981, 1986. Results of elections could be seen as an exhibition of formality, apathy, fear and helplessness. Citizen claimed they "would change nothing, anyway while endangering my family". This was how people rationalized their conformity to the ruling power.¹¹

Insufficient democratic conditions devastated the organisation of the state. Political power centralised the economy, rejected Czech and Slovak national constitutions and prevented the establishment of the Supreme Court. The basic provision of the federation was to balance power between Czech and Slovak Republics. By the Constitutional Law No. 125, attached regulations emasculating the Republics from December 1970. The law: "re-established Prague centralism, by liquidating the legal and institutional autonomy of the republics". (Hrnko, A. - Siváková, D., 1997; Polakovič, Š., 1994; Ferko, M. - Marsina, R., et.al. 1994)

In December 1970, normalizers dismantled the last "building block" of the reform. Federal institutions usurped regional political power. The totalitarian regime re-organised the state. A 20-year period of "centralised guidance" of the monopolistic Communist Party began. This federation had little support from the Czechs and Slovaks. (Žatkuliak, J., 1992) This revamped federation included restructuring the public administration functions throughout Czechoslovakia.

The constitutional law No. 125, the law about competencies No. 133 from 1970, and the next legal regulations changed the relationship of the federal and national republics. The role of the federal executive organisations were strengthened orienting on unified economy through central planning and budgeting. Laws completing central management of the Czechoslovak economy were not advantageous to national republics (Pavlenda, V., 1987). Furthermore, the so called, economic-production units usurped financial management responsibilities away from national governments¹¹.

Slovak institutions lost their position of "administrator" for Slovakia. Their duties consisted often of only fulfilling orders and approving federal regulations. It was, however, more than in the 50's and the 60's. National ministries were created and, Slovakia was treated as an administrative and political unit. There existed a limited space for independent policy-making, for Slovakia's specific economic and social needs. (Marsina, R., et. all., 1992) The ability to control by the Slovak National Council was prohibited. The ascension of a hard-liner Viliam Šalgovič to chairman; he replaced dead chair Ondrej Klokoč in July 1975, dead chair Ondrej Klokoč, explains, at least partly, that phenomenon. Šalgovič was devoted follower of V. Biľak and by the end of the 80's he lost support in the Party and became an alienated figure. Similarly transpired the fate of M. Jakeš.

In the 70's, at the end of the industrialisation process, the Slovak economy still showed an increase in GNP. But, the effectiveness of such investments was low due to the resource-intensive costs. In September 1977, an international treaty concerning the construction of the water dam system in Gabčíkovo and Nagymaros along the Danube was signed in Budapest. Slovakia's first nuclear power plant near Trnava in Jaslovské Bohunice became operational. In November 1980 a new highway connecting Prague and Bratislava opened. Companies from Slovakia also participated in the construction of a subway in Prague.

Economic normalization was characterised by chaos in goods + services production. A partial exception was agriculture and collective farms that had many problems, in spite of the fact that they essentially fulfilled the self-sufficiency programme of basic foodstuffs independent from imports. (Pešek, J., 1995) Nonetheless, it was common in the 70's and 80's, to have problems with food supply and consumer goods. Having suppressed markets caused problems in production due to a lack of necessary components to complete the particular product.

From the beginning of the 80's it was evident that Czechoslovakia's economy stagnated. The five-year central planning period during 1981 to 1986, collapsed. A divestiture of the service industry for industrial production continued. Federal Prime Minister Lubomír Štrougal reported that since 1970,

¹¹ Planning, financing and price manipulation within the Council for Mutual Economic Affiliation (CMEA) during the 70's and 80's, had a similar outcome. A negative trade account balance with socialist countries appeared. It was evident that the country was losing touch with the outside world. The whole CMEA was unable to react to the changing business environment in the world markets.

each 5-year period inflicted a decrease in net national income by one third. Heavy industry, built for military reasons, was an economic and ecological burden. The ecological conditions worsened after the Černobyl accident. The areas of Horná Nitra, Jelšava, Ružomberok, Bratislava, Žiar nad Hronom were plagued by the mining of natural resources and the emissions of heavy industry using obsolete machinery and outdated technology. By some experts' estimation, the ecological devastation in the Czech region was even worse.

Large munitions factories in Martin, Považská Bystrica and Dubnica nad Váhom, employed some 15 thousand employees to produce tanks, rifles and transporters, were the back bone of the Slovak economy. This limited other economic opportunities. From 1976 to 1988 a military equipment costing 144 billion crowns was produced and exported for 83 billion. In 1988, the two-thirds of Czechoslovak military production was located in Slovakia. The Soviet army troops and nuclear weapons were deployed here as well. The transformation of military production began prior to November 1989, due to the intervention of M. Gorbačov's Malta negotiations with USA President George Bush. This resulted in a loss of 70 billion crowns mostly from Slovakia. In addition, Slovakia became more dependent on importing natural resources Czech. Percentage of Soviet Union trade with CS increased from 32 percent in 1968 to 43 percent in 1985.

Being the framework of complex administration, economic and political problems, the federation was seen by considerable part of society to be a part of normalization. Relatively strong anti-federalist pressure emerged in the economic sphere by attempting to reduce the control of both the republics' administrative bodies. The next period implementing the centralist concept began in the second half of the 80's.

Neither group of G. Husák was able nor willing to secure the federation from this pressure. Ambitious Ladislav Adamec, who became a Federal Prime Minister in Autumn 1988, pursued an even stricter anti-federalist course. He supported the idea that The Czechs suffered economically because - presumably The Slovaks benefited from transfers of monetary resources from the federal budget. In 1988, he proposed, that responsibilities for the national institutions had to be constrained and, even the chemical industry (e. g. Slovnaft), heavy industry, universities and justice had to be under the federal government auspices. His proposed constitutional law, was not passed from the government to parliament. The situation worsened when Štrougal, due to conflicts with Jakeš, abdicated his prime ministership, and Karol Laco and Peter Colotka (replaced by Ivan Knotek) resigned their vice-prime minister positions. These people tried, to some extent, balance the federation. L. Štrougal admitted some social and economic changes that was unacceptable for normalizers. The replacements relied only on formal "re-structuralization" for the problems in the economic mechanism.

The bureaucratic federation and its complicated redistribution mechanism within Slovakia's, Czech's and federal budgets provoked tensions. Discrepancies in economic, state and social relations between the Czech and Slovak nations deepened. The unclear and intricate economic and financial relations between the respective economies created mutual discontent. The economic tools for measuring inputs of enterprises producing semi-products (more in Slovakia), for instance the value added tax (VAT), were not used in Czechoslovakia at this time. An uniform state in a centrally planned economy caused investments, taxes and transfers to be circulated in a closed circle. National work force and resources were not used effectively. The federal institutions operated all key branches of industry. Output was calculated as Czech because 80 to 90 percent of the companies' and economic production units' headquarters, final production facilities, and international trade companies resided there. The profit was reported there as well. Taxes from these profits were transferred to the Czech budget first and then, through the federal budget, to the Slovak one. Within this framework, it is difficult to measure or compare economic effectiveness of the Slovakia's and Czech economies.

After 1985, we may say that the living standard of both republics equalled. Gross national product per capita in Slovakia was 87 percent of GNP per capita in Czech¹². The equalisation of both republics can be expressed by the fact that in 1989, the share of Slovakia in Czechoslovakia's GNP was 30 - 34 percent and the population of Slovakia totalled 34 percent of Czechoslovakia population. (Žatkuliak, J., 1997)

¹² Later comparisons were more accurate. In: 1987 investments per capita were, in Slovakia 11,350 crowns and in Czech 11,415 crowns. The ratio in personal consumption was 18,185 crowns to 19,805 crowns. National Income per capita was in Slovakia 35,381 crowns, in Czech 40,583 crowns. In Slovak Government Papers No. 716-22/1989 from discussions of SNR presidency, Bratislava, March 15, 1989. Author's material.

The tensions between Czechs and Slovaks were evident during the preparation for a new federal constitution. A request for the new constitution was proposed at the XVII. congress of the Communist Party in 1986. The reason was, that many laws changed and there is a need to integrate them into "one document". The section 142 of the Czechoslovak Federation constitutional law required to prepare also national constitutions. Despite requests from the Slovak side, preparation was rejected. It was argued, also by K. Laco, that there is no need to repeat the same articles in three constitutions. Behind this argument prompted political attempts to get out of federalisation principles in political and economic area. From this reason, in 1987, work began on the so called, "trilateral" constitution. It contained a section about the leading role of the Communist Party. This was also pursued in the Autumn of 1989 within the Slovak National Council by the Federal Legislative Minister Marián Čalfa and Slovak National Council Chair Viliam Šalgovič. They suggested cancelling section 142 regarding national constitutions. Representative Vladimír Mináč of the Slovak National Council and others protested against it¹³. Controversy about the new constitution was suspended due the political changes in November 1989. Since the early 1990, the efforts embarked on to base the state, legislative and economic relations between Czechs and Slovaks on the original 1968 federation idea.

The year 1989 witnessed Soviet satellites countries breaking orbit (Pryce-Jones, D., 1995; 1996). The era of Communist hegemony over society, economics and culture in Czecho-Slovakia came to a halt. However, the idea for a revival in the original mission and principle of a federation was not met with unified understanding. On the contrary, a divergent process began in spite of the newly established democratic conditions, or possibly because of them. This has ultimately resulted in the split of the Czech and Slovak nations.

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¹³ SNR, Stenographic record from the meeting of the Slovak National Council on October 31, 1989, pp. 4-43. Author's material.

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