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Views Reflected in the Spanish Press**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	7
<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>2. BASIC FACTS ABOUT SPANISH NEWSPAPERS.....</b>	<b>11</b>
2. 1. <i>El País</i> .....	12
2. 2. <i>El Mundo</i> .....	13
2. 3. <i>ABC</i> .....	14
2. 4. <i>El Periódico de Catalunya</i> .....	15
2. 5. <i>El Diáro Vasco</i> .....	16
2. 6. <i>Deia</i> .....	16
2. 7. <i>La Vanguardia</i> .....	17
<b>3. THE SITUATION BEFORE AND AFTER THE DISSOLUTION IN SPANISH NEWSPAPERS.....</b>	<b>19</b>
3. 1. Czechoslovakia After June 1992 Elections.....	31
3. 2. Czechoslovakia After 1993 Dissolution.....	49
3. 3. After Separation New Problems.....	53
<b>4. PRESENTATION OF THE MAIN ACTORS OF DISSOLUTION IN SPANISH NEWSPAPERS.....</b>	<b>58</b>
4.1. Václav Havel.....	58
4. 2. Václav Klaus.....	64
4. 3. Vladimír Mečiar.....	70
<b>5. LANGUAGE IN SPANISH NEWSPAPERS.....</b>	<b>77</b>

5. 1. <i>El País</i> .....	77
5. 2. <i>El Mundo</i> .....	80
5. 3. <i>ABC</i> .....	81
5. 4. <i>El Periódico</i> .....	83
5. 5. <i>El Diario Vasco</i> .....	84
5. 6. <i>Deia</i> .....	85
5. 7. <i>La Vanguardia</i> .....	85
<b>6. CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	<b>88</b>
<b>7. PRIMARY SOURCES AND LITERATURE</b> .....	<b>93</b>
7. 1. Primary Sources.....	93
7. 2. Literature.....	93
7. 3. Internet Sources.....	98
<b>8. ANNEX I</b> .....	<b>99</b>
8. 1. Chronology of the Czech-Slovak Conflict, 1991 – 1992.....	99
8. 2. Chronology of Slovak History in 1993.....	133
8. 3. Unclassifiable Articles.....	140
<b>9. ANNEX II</b> .....	<b>145</b>
9.1 Evelina Mäsiarová’s Interview with Sr. Ricardo Estarriol.....	145
9. 1. 1. Curriculum vitae of Ricardo Estarriol.....	157
9.2. Evelina Mäsiarová’s Interview with Sr. Ramiro Villapadierna....	160
9. 2. 1. Curriculum vitae of Ramiro Villapadierna.....	166
<b>10. ZUSAMMENFASSUNG</b> .....	<b>168</b>





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## 1. Introduction

The idea of this thesis was originally suggested by Professor Edelmayr during my studies in Alcalá de Henares, Spain. I was interested in researching the various aspects of Spanish journalistic coverage of the process of Czechoslovak separation for various reasons. One, important, was to see how the Spanish printed media responded to the dissolution of a country, with which Spain had relatively little in common. Both countries never had particularly close economic or cultural ties, a fact that has not changed substantially during the existence of independent Slovak Republic.

This thesis seeks to analyze the coverage of the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in the Spanish press. One of the key points of research was to see how the separation process of former Czech and Slovak Federal Republic was covered in major Spanish newspapers. These included *El País*, *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*; these newspapers and their reporting is analyzed in detail, whereas I have not presented a detailed survey of articles published by *EL MUNDO*, due to its relative insignificance and more “trivial” nature; additionally, it lacked, unlike other Spanish periodicals, much of the independent or autonomous lines of journalistic coverage. Additionally, some basic facts are provided concerning Spanish minorities periodicals such as *El Periódico de Catalunya*, *El Diario Vasco*, and *DEIA*. Instances of their coverage of the topics are given in the annexed Chronology of Events on pages 93 – 140.

In addition to the risks/advantages of the separation for the Czech Republic and for Slovakia and from a general European perspective, another aspect discussed here is the way the Spanish press relates to the separation process in the light of Spain’s own political separatism, notably of Basque and Catalan. In this respect, it will be argued the process of Czechoslovak separation produced a kind of interest in Spanish press that went beyond general coverage of international news and topics, addressing particular issues and producing particular reactions as the Spanish press saw certain parallels with its domestic affairs.

When analyzing and commenting the newspapers' coverage, I have made extensive use of available Czech and Slovak literature on the subject, which, perhaps surprisingly, is rather modest in volume. The magisterial *Rozpad Československa: Česko-slovenské vztahy 1989-1992* (The Break-Up of Czechoslovakia: Czecho-Slovak Relations 1989-1992), by the Czech historian Jan Rychlík contains an enormous wealth of detail on the separation process. Among others, an important point of reference is the diploma thesis (!) *Rozdělení Československa: Nejvyšší představitelé HZDS a ODS v procesu rozdělování ČSFR: Česko-slovenské soužití v letech 1989-1993* by Vladimír Srb and Tomáš Veselý published in Slovakia, which provides useful and interesting insights by major protagonists of the separation process; this work has received much critical acclaim among professional historians in both the Czech Republic and Slovakia for its unbiased, strictly objective approach..

Further chapters include the portrayals of main protagonists of the separation process, namely Václav Havel, Vladimír Mečiar and Václav Klaus, and their particular perception by major Spanish newspapers. This, a more personalized framework, is significant to the extent that the process was, to a considerable degree, a convergence of their individual efforts, in which they acted, at times, as antagonists and, at times, as “peacemakers”. Against these individual efforts, desires of the population of both states are discussed, with particular respect to the absence of a referendum on the issue.

Finally, two major international aspects of the separation are highlighted in the analysis, as their importance was so seen by the Spanish press: the issue of Slovakia's Hungarian minority and the impact of the conflict in former Yugoslavia. Somehow inevitably, the Spanish press found ample ground for speculating on the status of Slovak Hungarians against the background of its own policies in Catalonia and the Basque Country. This specific feature of the Spanish perception of nationalist politics has reverberations also in the use of Yugoslav catastrophic scenarios by the Spanish press, which repeatedly failed to see their inherent incompatibility with the Czech and Slovak “condition”, and, ultimately, highly appreciated the peaceful and bloodless “velvet divorce”.

## 2. Basic Facts about Spanish Newspapers

Main aim of this work is to present the newspapers in Spain and their orientation. It should help us to understand the way they showed the dissolution of Czechoslovakia to the people of Spain. As the Spanish philosopher Ortega y Gasset said: “We all are just me and my circumstances.” Also these media have their own history and ideology that influenced the way how are / were some things represented. This chapter shows the history of ideology of some Spanish newspapers.

Almost all Spanish newspapers did not have any permanent correspondents in Prague or Bratislava. However, even before 1989, the main newspapers had well established and prestigious correspondents based in Vienna who covered all of Central and Eastern Europe (Hermann Terstch from El País; Ricardo Estarriol from La Vanguardia; Francisco Eguiagaray and Ramiro Villapadierna from ABC). These correspondents traveled frequently to Prague and Bratislava during the events leading up to and after the separation and had the opportunity to interview the main political actors in both capitals.

The newspapers that had no correspondents in the region used only information provided by the news agencies and only occasionally published an opinion article or an editorial reflecting the political views of the newspaper.

In general terms, a parallelism can be found between the positions taken by Spanish newspapers regarding the separation of Czechoslovakia and their positions in the domestic debate regarding the “nationalistic” tendencies in some regions of Spain (especially, the Basque Country, Catalonia and Galicia). Newspapers based in Madrid, that support the permanent unity of the Spanish nation (El País, El Mundo, ABC), usually saw more disadvantages than benefits in the process of separation of Czechoslovakia, while the newspapers based in Bilbao or Barcelona, in different degrees, were much less opposed to the “friendly” separation. However, because the emergence of Slovakia as a new State was eventually not opposed by Prague and was considered not fully democratic in the absence of a referendum, this process could not be viewed exactly as a

precedent by Spanish “nationalists”, who knew that the authorities in Madrid would always try to prevent the separation of any part of Spain.

In any case, the respective positions of the two biggest newspapers, *El Mundo* and *El País* appear very similar, both sharing many of the following views: the nationalist Mečiar was presented as being ultimately responsible for the separation; “Czechoslovakia” was presented as a very successful period of both nations; stress is put on the peaceful character of the separation, yet pointing out the absence of a referendum; they concluded that the separation would have more disadvantages than benefits, especially for Slovakia; the Czech Republic could lose the “dead weight” of Slovakia; there were risks for the Hungarian minority; there could be a risk of “balkanization” of Central Europe if a resurgence of nationalism took place. However, the articles from the correspondent of *El Mundo* appeared to be more neutral than the chronicles of the correspondents of *El País* that were mostly “pro-Czech”.

## 2. 1. *El País*<sup>1</sup>

“*El País* (Spanish for "The Country") is the most widely-circulated daily newspaper in Spain. According to the 2005 Estudio General de Medios (General Media Study), it has about 2.1 million readers. *El País* is often referred to as “the newspaper of record” in Spain, along with its fellow Madrid morning dailies *El Mundo* and *ABC*. Politically and ideologically it is connected with social democrats.”

“It was first published on May 4, 1976, during the early stages of the Spanish transition to democracy. Founder José Ortega Spottorno based it on the model of France's *Le Monde*. *El País* has had four chiefs: Juan Luis Cebrián (until 1988), Joaquín Estefanía (until 1993), Jesús Ceberio (until 2006), nowadays it is Javier Moreno.”

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<sup>1</sup> <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El\\_Pa%C3%ADs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Pa%C3%ADs)> , last visited on September 27, 2008.

These newspapers are considered to be left-oriented. In these times, special reporters were sent to Prague and Bratislava:

Vivianne Schnitzer

Nilda Navarrete

Herman Tertsch

Ilona Kovariková (former agent of the Communist State Security according to Cibulka's public documents)<sup>2</sup>

J. M. Martí Font ( enviado especial)

Manuel Azcarate (artículo de opinión en *El País*)

Ángel Santa Cruz.

## **2. 2. *El Mundo***<sup>3</sup>

“ *El Mundo* (Spanish for "The World", full name *El Mundo del Siglo Veintiuno*, "The World of the 21st century") is the second largest daily newspaper in Spain, and one of the newspapers of record in this country, with a circulation topping over one million newspapers. It first appeared on October 23, 1989, founded by Alfonso de Salas, Pedro J. Ramírez (who still serves as publisher and editor), Balbino Fraga and Juan González. It has maintained a self-defined liberal (in the sense of classical liberalism) editorial line, generally supporting the conservative Peoples Party.”

“It has its headquarters in Madrid, but maintains several news bureaus in outlying cities and different editions are printed for regions such as Andalusia, Valencia, Castile and Leon, the Balearic Islands, Bilbao, etc. Unlike other Spanish newspapers, its editor, Pedro J. Ramirez, is a very prominent public figure who has become totally identified with the paper in the eyes of the public.”

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<sup>2</sup> <<http://www.cibulka.com/cgi-bin/osoby.exe?code=W>>, last visited on September 27, 2008. On the website <[http://osz.cmkos.cz/CZ/Z\\_tisku/Bulletin/03\\_2002/index.html](http://osz.cmkos.cz/CZ/Z_tisku/Bulletin/03_2002/index.html)>, there is a note that Ilona Kovarikova died on the February 25, 2002. She was 54 years old and until her death she was a special correspondent for ČTK.

<sup>3</sup> <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El\\_Mundo\\_\(Spain\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Mundo_(Spain))> , last visited on September 26, 2008.

During the splitting-up of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, *El Mundo* did not have any correspondents in Prague or in Bratislava. It used mostly news from agencies and from its special reporters. This paper was critical to national tendencies and the articles about dissolution were mostly negative. Although *El Mundo* is now the second most important newspaper, that was probably not the case in the early 1990s.

The correspondents in the period of the dissolution of Czechoslovakia:

Freddy Valverde

Charo F. Cotta

Jaime Pastor

### 2. 3. *ABC*<sup>4</sup>

“*ABC* is a Spanish national daily newspaper founded in Madrid on January 1, 1903, by Torcuato Luca de Tena y Alvarez-Ossorio. *ABC* started as a weekly newspaper until it turned daily in June 1905. Today, *ABC* is the third largest general-interest newspaper in Spain, and the oldest newspaper still appearing in Madrid. *ABC* is often referred to as a newspaper of record from Spain, along with *El País* and *El Mundo*. *ABC* is known for generally supporting conservative political views and defending the Spanish monarchy, and was seized in 1936 by the Popular Front (Frente Popular) when the Spanish Civil War started.”

“During the civil war, *ABC* was famously published in two different versions, the Madrid edition supporting the Republic and the Seville edition supporting the Nationalist side. When the war was over, *ABC* in Madrid returned to its legitimate owners and once again became the largest newspaper in Spain. It later moved from its historic landmark offices in Madrid by Paseo de la Castellana.”

The break-up of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic was covered by a correspondent that had in Vienna. Ramiro Villapandierna was also a correspondent for *ABC* during this process. He had a good understanding of

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<sup>4</sup> <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ABC\\_\(newspaper\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ABC_(newspaper))>, last visited on September 26, 2008.

Czech and Slovak issues; his coverage of the issues is balanced and matter-of-fact. The reporters, who wrote about the situation in Czechoslovakia:

Ramiro Villapadierna

Alejandro Muñoz-Alonso

Francisco Eguiagaray

#### **2. 4. *El Periódico de Catalunya***<sup>5</sup>

*“El Periódico de Catalunya* is a morning daily newspaper based in Barcelona, Catalonia, Spain and owned by Grupo Zeta. *El Periódico* is actually two newspapers, publishing separate editions in Spanish (with a red nameplate) and in Catalan (distinguished with a blue nameplate). The two editions combined sell more than 150,000 copies per day, making *El Periódico* the region's second-highest circulation daily.”

“The paper was founded in 1978 by Antonio Asensio Pizarro, to offer a progressive, Catalanian paper unconnected with Catalanian separatism and nationalism. Following the example of *USA Today*, *El Periódico* later began to emphasize graphics and the use of color. Today, it prints every page in color and makes liberal use of charts and photos. It began a Catalan-language edition in mid-1990s, gaining access to substantial regional government subsidies. Previously, it was only published in Spanish.”

During the break-up process of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, *El Periódico* presented huge and usually magnified headlines and economic or geographical statements. It supported the idea of splitting-up, particularly, the peaceful way of making it. In fact, their only ever correspondent in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic was during the break-up process Juan González Yuste.

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<sup>5</sup> <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El\\_Periodico\\_de\\_Catalunya](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Periodico_de_Catalunya)> last visited on September 26, 2008.

## 2. 5. *El Diario Vasco*<sup>6</sup>

“The ideology of this daily newspaper corresponds with the important newspapers that were refusing the nationalistic tendencies. The information was mostly taken from news agencies. Its ideology is moderately right-oriented and supportive of the Spanish constitution.”

Their coverage of the split-up of Czech and Slovak Federal Republic was realistic and without any hint to suggesting the Basque roots of these newspapers; the reporter was Mario García.

## 2. 6. *Deia*<sup>7</sup>

“The Basque newspaper *DEIA* (in the Euskadi language it means challenge) was established in 1977 as representative of Basque nationalistic ideology even though it was and still is issued in Spain. This daily is close to the Basque nationalistic party and was established for this reason.”

*DEIA* is spread mostly in the territory of Basques, however not as popular as *El Diario Vasco*. Because of the nationalistic ideas, descriptions of the dissolution of Czechoslovakia were not as catastrophic as in other newspapers. For descriptions of the situation the semantics and terminology from Spain was in general, the articles were in favor of creating two new states. This newspaper did not have any correspondents in Central Europe and practically relied on news agencies. The articles were written by José Luis Arriaga and they tended to “support” the separation of Czechoslovakia.

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<sup>6</sup> < <http://www.diariovasco.com/>> last visited on September 2ž, 2008.

<sup>7</sup> < <http://www.deia.com/es/>> last visited on September 26, 2008.



## 2. 7. *La Vanguardia*<sup>8</sup>

“*La Vanguardia's* newspaper history began on February 1, 1881, when two businessmen from Igualada, Carlos and Bartolomé Godó, first published the paper. It was defined as a *Diario de los Políticos de avisos y noticias* (Political Newspaper of Announcements and News), intended as a means of communication for a faction of the Liberal Party that wanted to gain control over the Barcelona city council.”

“On December 31, 1887, the paper published its last edition as a party newspaper and on the next day, January 1, 1888, the first day of the Universal Exposition of Barcelona, it presented a new, politically independent format with a morning and an afternoon edition.”

“Although the newspaper's articles are only in Castilian Spanish, letters submitted in Catalan are left untranslated and run next to the Spanish ones. Another unusual trait for a Spanish-language newspaper is its practice of always referring to Catalonia as *Catalunya* (the Catalan name) rather than the Spanish *Cataluña*; the name of Catalan institutions are also left untranslated (such as *Govern* instead of the Spanish *Gobierno* for the regional Government or *consoler* instead of *consejero* for its councilors). Interviews made in Catalan are frequently left untranslated, too.”

Concerning the articles in *La Vanguardia*, not suprisingly, there are very good analyses of the realities in Slovakia and central Europe. Following the articles by dates, it can be seen that many times on of the authors succeeds in advancing what is going to happen in a few months time.

Correspondents for *La Vanguardia* were Ricardo Estarriol and Lluís Foix. Despite having correspondents in all important cities, Ricardo Estarriol informed about the situation in Prague and Bratislava from Vienna. With rather good knowledge of the two nations, he was interested in their separation. Accordingly, his articles were gentle, without any obvious preference for either side. Still,

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<sup>8</sup> <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La\\_Vanguardia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_Vanguardia)> last visited on September 26, 2008.

different shifts in this process were reported. In the “Opinion” section, articles were featured about new borders in Europe, highlighting the peaceful course of the dissolution.

### 3. THE SITUATION BEFORE AND AFTER THE DISSOLUTION IN SPANISH NEWSPAPERS

This chapter concerns the articles describing the situation inside Czechoslovakia before the dissolution. Not only is the political and economic background of the problem shown, but also the attitude of people in the dissolute states. All this information is taken from the Spanish newspapers and is compared to the real situation in the state.

This is one of the article referring to the communist background of Czechoslovakia, entitled “Archivos Rojos.”<sup>9</sup> Things are just like before ten years during the communism in post – soviet countries. Maybe the people there try to change something, like names of streets and squares, also some McDonalds are in towns, but many artifacts from communist history are still there. For example, the sculptures of Lenin and Stalin, pictures, red flags and so on. People are not prepared for such a big change and the mark of Communism will not leave these countries so early. On the other hand, in this article, the good relationship between Spain and Russia is discussed.<sup>10</sup>

This quotation, as well, is a reaction to the fact that things had changed in 1989. In November 1989 the Communist system was overthrown by Czech and Slovak people, who later formed the Civic Forum and Public Against Violence Movements.<sup>11</sup> “In June 1990, the first free elections were held in Czechoslovakia.

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<sup>9</sup> *El País*, 13 April, 1992, p. 14.

<sup>10</sup> “El PSOE aparece en escena en 1974, y es entonces también cuando el panorama se ensancha al conjunto de la situación española. Los centros de información son primero las embajadas soviéticas en Europa, y, a partir de 1976 la delegación comercial soviética en España, reemplazada pronto por la propia Embajada en Madrid. Esta se convierte en el eje de las relaciones políticas, apoyada por las de otros países socialistas, en los contactos con políticos de la izquierda española y con los dirigentes de un PCE puesto siempre en tela de juicio, en especial tras la publicación de Eurocomunismo y Estado, en 1977.” Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>11</sup> “This indicates, a division line between two societies. Each part had to have their own component, or different party.” For a detailed discussion and immediately related issues see in:

They were at both the regional and the federal levels, and the Civic Forum and Public Against Violence won in their respective Czech and Slovak districts. On the one hand, the coalition won these elections.” Although the coalition won these elections, its victory was based on its opposition to Communism, and not upon some coherent vision of the future in Czechoslovakia; it ran on the vague platform of “democratic and pluralistic values.”<sup>12</sup> The coalition was basically a marriage of convenience based on the combined Czech and Slovak celebration of the defeat of communism.<sup>13</sup>

“Economic reforms were the first issue to be discussed on both the Slovak and Czech side. The main purpose of this step was to prove the strength of the new governing coalition. Czech liberal economic agenda started to be implemented through the policies of the central government almost immediately. The Communist system had required the centralization of the economic agenda. The economic reforms fell under the guidance of Vaclav Havel, the President of Czechoslovakia, and Vaclav Klaus, the Prime Minister.”<sup>14</sup> A program of large scale privatization began through the “coupon method”.<sup>15</sup> “This method was based on

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Seiller, Daniela, *Czechoslovakia: A State of Perceived Bias*, Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, (1998), p. 58.

<sup>12</sup> Kirschbaum, Stanislav J., *A History of Slovakia, The Struggle for Survival*, New York: St. Martin's Griffin, (1995), p. 253 For a detailed discussion and immediate related issues see in: Seiller, Daniela, *Czechoslovakia: A State of Perceived Bias*, Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, (1998), p. 58.

<sup>13</sup> Wolchik, Sharon, “The Repluralization of Politics in Czechoslovakia.” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, (1993), 26, 4, pp.412-431. For a detailed discussion and immediate related issues see in: Seiller Daniela, *Czechoslovakia: A State of Perceived Bias*, Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, (1998), p. 64.

<sup>14</sup> “While Petr Pithart was named the Prime Minister of the Czech regional government, Vladimir Mečiar became the Prime Minister of the Slovak National Council until ousted and replaced by Ján Čarnogurský in April 1991.” Directly taken from Wolchik, 1994; Havel, Klaus, and Pithart, 1996. For a detailed discussion and immediate related issues see in: Seiller Daniela, *Czechoslovakia: A State of Perceived Bias*, Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, (1998), p. 64.

<sup>15</sup> Olson, David M., “Dissolution of the State: Political Parties and the 1992 Election in Czechoslovakia.” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 26, 3, (1993), p. 304. For a detailed

the opportunity for individuals to buy shares in factories that the state was selling. However, the shares were quite cheap and foreign corporations had a special liking for buying the controlling interests. According to statistics compiled in the Czech and Slovak lands from 1990 through 1992, these economic reforms created a greater “shock” in the Slovak regions, especially concerning unemployment.”<sup>16</sup> For a comparison see Table 1.

**Table 1: An Economic trends in the Czech and Slovak Republics (annual percentage change)<sup>17</sup>**

<b>Czechoslovakia</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>
Inflation	10.0	57.9	11.8		
Unemployment	1.7	6.6	5.5		
GDP Growth	-0.4	-16.4	-7.2		
Industrial Growth	-3.7	-23.1	-10.0		

  

<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>

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discussion and immediate related issues see in: Seiller Daniela, *Czechoslovakia: A State of Perceived Bias*, Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, (1998), p. 64.

<sup>16</sup> “The differing inflation rates indicate that prices are rising faster in the Slovak areas as compared to the prices in the Czech regions, for two out of the three years covered. The higher inflation rates can be due to a number of causes, some of which include a shorter supply of Western goods or the less competitive nature of the goods produced in the region.” See table 1.

<sup>17</sup>“Deutsche Bank; OMRI Daily Digest; Foreign Broadcast information service, Daily Report on Eastern Europe; World Bank, World Tables 1994 (John Hopkins University Press, 1994), pp. 580-583; Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, OECD Economic Surveys: The Czech and Slovak Republics ( Paris: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Center for Cooperation with the Economies in Transition, 1994); Federal Statistics Office report, reprinted in Smena, August 19, 1992, PlanEcon Reports. Directly taken from Leff, Carol Skalník. *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*. Boulder: Westview. Mamatey, Victor (1997) „Economic Transition“, p. 183.█

Inflation	9.9	56.6	12.7	20.00	10.7
Unemployment	1.1	4.4	2.6	3.5	3.5
GDP Growth	-1.9	-14.5	-7.1	-0.5	2.5
Industrial Growth	-	-25.00	-10.6	-0.2	2.8

<b>Slovak Republic</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>
Inflation	10.3	61.2	10.0	23.2	11.7
Unemployment	2.4	11.8	10.4	14.0	14.3
GDP Growth	-2.0	-15.8	-7.0	-4.6	4.2
Industrial Growth	-2.7	-24.9	-13.7	-13.5	6.4

There is also an article “Los checoslovacos acudirán a las urnas con el destino del país en juego”<sup>18</sup> by Nilda Navarrete that informs about the situation in Czechoslovakia before the elections for the first time in *El País*. It focuses on the voters in Czechoslovakia. The correspondent writes that Slovak voters are confused, even though more than 70% of people wanted to take part in elections.<sup>19</sup> On the other hand, he presented an opinion that one third of Slovaks did not know which party to vote for, however, without producing any evidence. It was well-known that the result could cause the dissolution of the country because it was predicted that Czechs would vote for Klaus’s party and most Slovaks for Mečiar’s party.<sup>20</sup> The article states, correctly, that Havel encouraged

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<sup>18</sup> *EL País*, May 25, 1992, p. 12.

<sup>19</sup> “No obstante, las encuestas más recientes indican que alrededor del 70% de la población se dispone a hacer uso de su derecho al voto los próximos días 5 y 6 de junio, comicios en los que podría producirse un resultado que provocara la ruptura de la federación.” *Ibid.* p.12.

<sup>20</sup> “En la parte checa de la República, el triunfo correspondería al Partido Democrático Cívico, cuyo líder es el actual ministro de Finanzas, Václav Klaus, ultraconservador y padre de la llamada terapia de choque. En Eslovaquia probablemente ganaría el Movimiento por Eslovaquia Democrática, de Vladimír Mečiar, un carismático dirigente que ha pregonado a los cuatro vientos su intención de declarar la soberanía de Eslovaquia después de las elecciones, adoptar una Constitución puramente eslovaca, introducir la figura de un presidente eslovaco y convocar enseguida un referéndum.” *Ibid.*, p. 12.

the citizens to velvet divorce, which he wanted to be arranged in constitutional and peaceful manner.<sup>21</sup> Interestingly, the article shows that president Havel was not a die-hard federalist even before the June 1992 elections but a rather controversial figure in the disintegration process, at a point rather well established among politicians and Czech and Slovak historians.<sup>22</sup> Unlike their situation in the First Republic, dissatisfied Slovaks in the 1990s had the political power to express their displeasure with the government's economic agenda, and they did so by pushing for greater autonomy to implement their own economic agenda. Although the Communists had not completely federalized the government, the Slovaks possessed enough power in the legislature for their consultation and consent to be mandatory in the adoption of a new constitution. As the deadline for the 1992 elections drew near, it was clear that most Czechs and Slovaks had different and incompatible visions of the future. These visions involving the structure of the government and its economic policies were reflected in specifically Czech or Slovak party platforms.

When the population elected these parties to the parliament, it signed the death certificate of the common state.<sup>23</sup> As for Havel and his attitude to dissolution of Czechoslovakia, he was against this step of "his" country. But the information about the splitting up of Czechoslovakia is not truthful. In May 1992 the election campaign had started. It was predicted that Slovaks and Czechs would vote for two totally different candidates.<sup>24</sup> It was quite probable that in this case

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<sup>21</sup> Las ideas de Meciar parecen tan verosímiles que el presidente, Vaclav Hável, en la alocución con que abrió la campaña llamó a los checoslovacos a que, llegado el momento, produzcan una "división de terciopelo", es decir, que lo hagan de forma "constitucional y pacífica". *EL País*, May 25, 1992, p. 12.

<sup>22</sup> See especially Srb Vladimír and Tomáš Veselý, *Rozdělení Československa, Nejvyšší představitelé HZDS a ODS v procesu rozdělování ČSFR: česko – slovenské soužití v letech 1989 - 1993*, Bratislava, Karpaty – Infopress, (2004), pp. 98 –101.

<sup>23</sup> Leff, Carol, Skalnik., *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*. Boulder, Colorado and London, in "National identity and the disintegration of Czechoslovakia", (1997), p. 131.

<sup>24</sup> Roháčová, Irena. *Chronicles 1992*, article: *The election campaign has started in ČSFR*. Bratislava: Fortuna Print spol. s. r. o., (1993), p. 54.

the dissolution would be the only viable solution. Apparently, in the prediction of the separation of Czechoslovakia, Havel saw no point in appealing to the people for velvet divorce.

“One of the problems in Czechoslovakia was the new constitution. The legislature of Czechoslovakia was inherited from the Czech and Slovak communist past and consisted of two Chambers: the Chamber of People and the Chamber of Nations. Somewhat similar to the system in the United States, one Chamber of People was elected on the basis of population, while the other was divided between the Czechs and the Slovaks (Chamber of Nations)”<sup>25</sup>. “Since a new constitution had to pass through both chambers, it was impossible for either the Czechs or the Slovaks to create a new constitution without consulting the representatives of the other nation. Between the elections of 1990 and 1992, the coalition consisting of the Public Against Violence and the Civic Forum attempted to adopt a new constitution. Nevertheless, no acceptable version was found. The members, whose ideology was against Communism and for economic reform and restructuring of the government in theory, did not agree on the paradigm of the new state. So when the parties actually tried to govern and address the issues, there were problems. While the Slovak members advocated greater autonomy for the Slovak regions, the priority of the Czechs was privatization.”<sup>26</sup> The new constitution was a big problem for the new government because of diversity in policy of the Czech and Slovak leaders. Their ideas and

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<sup>25</sup> Olson, David M. “Dissolution of the State: Political Parties and the 1992 Election in Czechoslovakia.” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*. (1993), pp. 301-314, For a detailed discussion and immediate related issues see in: Seiller Daniela, *Czechoslovakia: A State of Perceived Bias*, Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, (1998).

<sup>26</sup> Wolchik, Sharon. “The Politics of Ethnicity in Post-Communist Czechoslovakia.” *East European Politics and Societies*, (1994), p. 153. For a detailed discussion and immediate related issues see in: Seiller Daniela, *Czechoslovakia: A State of Perceived Bias*, Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, (1998), For a detailed discussion and immediate related issues see in: Seiller Daniela, *Czechoslovakia: A State of Perceived Bias*, Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, (1998).



'dreams' about their state were incommensurable and for this reason it was predicted that Czechoslovakia would break up.

A little bit different is an article "Havel teme que el resultado de las elecciones en Checoslovaquia desestablice Europa Central"<sup>27</sup> from these newspapers written by J. M. Martí Font. It is concentrating on Havel's opinion on the result of these elections. According to this reporter Havel was afraid of the elections, because the result could change relations in Central Europe.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, the reporter writes about also such dummies like The Party of Friends of Beer (Strana priateľov piva) or Independent Erotic Initiative (Nezávislá erotická inicitíva)<sup>29</sup>. Participation in the elections and high number of parties (42) is another theme of this article. More interesting is a part about the new constitution, which was promised by Vladimír Mečiar. The set down of the legislative power in the country and the constitution would not be approbated without his agreement. He wanted to set up the new constitution and announced the Slovak sovereignty.<sup>30</sup> Havel is against the dissolution of Czechoslovakia because this step would be a bad choice for Slovakia. According to Havel, the

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<sup>27</sup> *EL País*, June 6, 1992.

<sup>28</sup> "Los checoslovacos acudieron ayer en gran número a las urnas en unas elecciones cuyo resultado, según su presidente Václav Havel, "puede desestabilizar la totalidad de Europa Central". Mientras que en las tierras checas -Bohemia y Moravia- todo apunta a un triunfo del Partido Democrático Cívico (ODS) del actual ministro de Finanzas, el ultraliberal Václav Klaus, en Eslovaquia parece clara la victoria del líder del Movimiento para una Eslovaquia Democrática (HZDS), el populista Vladimir Mečiar, partidario de la ruptura en dos del país." Ibid. *EL País*, June 6, 1992.

<sup>29</sup> Roháčová, Irena. *Chronicles 1992*, article: The first step to the elections in ČSFR. Bratislava: Fortuna Print spol. s. r. o., (1993), p. 46.

<sup>30</sup> "Las leyes deben ser aprobadas por la Cámara del Pueblo y los Consejos de las dos Repúblicas, pero la Cámara de las Naciones puede paralizar el proceso legislativo, y esto es lo que sucederá si los nacionalistas eslovacos de Mečiar consiguen un buen resultado. Mečiar y los líderes más importantes de su partido no se presentan a la Asamblea Federal, sino al Consejo Nacional eslovaco, desde el que pretenden redactar una nueva Constitución eslovaca y proclamar directamente la soberanía, según Mečiar, "sin preguntárselo a nadie, ni siquiera al presidente". "Estamos en nuestro derecho", dice. *EL País*, June 6, 1992.

Czech Republic would be accepted as a country of Western Europe and Slovakia would have still a mark of Soviet Union. In addition to this, the Slovak Republic was too weak to compete together with Western countries. For Czechs, according to this article, the main danger was a big number of political parties. However, both new states would be diminished in many ways.<sup>31</sup> The reporter also mentions the problem with ethnic groups (Hungarians, Ukrainians, Roma) in Slovakia and the Czech fear of Germans.<sup>32</sup> Otherwise this article is from the same newspapers as the clause above, it gives different information about Havel's opinion on the dissolution of the country. Font reports that in the election take part 42 parties, but this fact is not truthful. Only 41 parties took part in the election. Under the number 20, there was not any party because of misprint. However, the fact is that a participation of the parties was very high.

“Profundas grietas en la federación”<sup>33</sup> (The Deep Divisions in the Federation) was a headline of an article which was published after the elections in Czechoslovakia. From the Table two below we can see the results of elections. Ján Čarnogurský and his Christian Democratic Movement were totally defeated and they decided to join the opposition. In accordance to this article, the victory of Vladimír Mečiar and his Movement of Democratic Slovakia would weaken the strength of the federation, social and economic situation in Slovakia would be

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<sup>31</sup> “La posibilidad de una victoria de Mečiar lo suficientemente amplía como para forzar la división del país, supondría para Havel que "Eslovaquia sería percibida inmediatamente como parte del Este y las tierras checas como parte del Oeste". Según el presidente checo, la ruptura de Checoslovaquia sería entendida como la incapacidad de Occidente para coexistir con Oriente". Si esto sucede en Eslovaquia, en la República Checa el peligro está en la excesiva fragmentación del voto, en parte resultado de la división del Foro Cívico, que podría llevar a una situación polaca. Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> “Lo cierto es que, la división del país centroeuropeo debilitaría enormemente a las dos repúblicas resultantes. Eslovaquia, ya de por sí más pobre, tendría que enfrentarse con los problemas causados por sus minorías, tanto la húngara como la ucraniana. En la república checa aumentarían enormemente los temores a una colonización alemana, que ya está produciéndose a nivel económico, permitiendo también un aumento de la presión de los sudetes alemanes que fueron expulsados después de la guerra y que reclaman ahora sus tierras.” *EL País*, June 6, 1992.

<sup>33</sup> *EL País*, June 7, 1992.

worse. The good times had gone for Czechoslovakia because, according to Mečiar, the state would be able to affect economic matters and Klaus claimed a bigger part of the country for the Czech Republic. This situation was waiting for compromise between these two sides.<sup>34</sup> From this article, the dissolution of Czechoslovakia was predictable long before the citizens of this state realized what was going on.

**Table 2: 1992 Election Results in Czechoslovakia<sup>35</sup>**

Czech Lands	Chamber of People	Chamber of Nations	National Council
	% (seats)	% (seats)	% (seats)
<b>Civic Democratic Party</b>	33.9 (48)	33.4 (37)	29.7 (76)
Christian Democratic Party			
Party Left Bloc (Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia, DLCSFR)	14.3 (19)	14.5 (15)	14.1 (35)
<b>Czechoslovak Social Democratic Party</b>	7.7 (10)	6.8 (6)	6.5 (16)
Republican Party	6.5 (8)	6.4 (6)	6.3 (15)
<b>Christian Democratic Union/People's Party</b>	5.8 (7)	6.1 (5)	6.3 (16)

<sup>34</sup> “Los electores han dejado claro lo que ya se sabía: que en las tierras checas, tradicionalmente más ricas y más occidentales, el peso de las brutales reformas económicas se acepta con gusto. La victoria de la derecha es clara y el pobre resultado de los comunistas no hace más que confirmarlo. En Eslovaquia, más pobre, donde las tradiciones son otras y donde el derrumbe de la industria pesada y de armamentos es más notorio, sucede todo lo contrario. Mečiar, un ex comunista reconvertido en populista, es quien mejor ejemplifica el estado de ánimo poco propicio al modelo de capitalismo puro preferido por sus vecinos.” El País, June 7, 1992.

<sup>35</sup> Wolchik, (1994): 185; Olson, (1993): 310-312; Jiří Pehe’s “Czechoslovakia’s Political Balance Sheet, 1990- 1992,” RFE/RL Research Reports 1:25, (June 19, 1992): 29; “Vol’by 1992,” Rešpekt, (June 8-14, 1992); Svobodné Slovo, (June 8, 1992); Federal Election Commission, “1992 Report Disk”; and Rudé Právo, (June 1992).

Liberal Social Union	5.9 (7)	6.1 (5)	6.5 (16)
<b>Civic Democratic Alliance</b>	4.98 ---	4.8 ---	5.9 (14)
Association for Moravia-Silesia	4.9 ---	4.2 ---	5.9 (14)
<b>Civic Movement</b>	4.4 ---	4.7 ---	4.6 ---
Slovakia	Chamber of People	Chamber of Nations	National Council
Movement for Democratic Slovakia	33.5 (24)	33.9 (33)	37.3 (74)
<b>Party of the Democratic Left</b>	14.4 (10)	14.0 (13)	14.7 (39)
Slovak National Party	9.4 (6)	9.4 (6)	7.9 (15)
<b>Christian Democratic Movement</b>	9.0 (6)	8.8 (8)	8.9 (18)
Coexistence/Hungarian	--- ---	---- ---	7.42 (14)
<b>Christian Democratic Movement Coexistence/Hungarian</b>	7.4 (5)	7.4 (7)	--- ---
Christian Democratic Movement/Hungarian People's Party			
Social Democratic Party	--- ---	6.1 (5)	--- ---
<b>Civic Democratic Party</b>	4.0 ---	4.0 ---	4.0 ---
Hungarian Civic Party	2.3 ---	2.4 ---	2.3 ---
<b>Democratic Party/ Civic Democratic Union</b>	3.7 ---	3.4 ---	2.3 ---

New problems rose between the Czech and the Slovak coalition partners and they occurred in times when the political position of these two parties began to crystallize. The Civic Forum dissolved in 1991 with the departure of Klaus to form his own party, the Civic Democratic Party (ODS).<sup>36</sup> His own party was made

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<sup>36</sup> Wilson, Paul, "The End of the Velvet Revolution." *New York Review of Books*, (1992), pp. 57-64, in: Seiller Daniela, *Czechoslovakia: A State of Perceived Bias*, Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, (1998).

because Klaus believed that the former party was too vigourless to his economic reforms. Mečiar was evicted from the Public Against Violence Party, from his position as the Slovak National Council's Prime Minister. He wanted to be independent and created the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia (HZDS). His new party was oriented towards the autonomy of Slovakia. Over twenty parties were spawned by Public Against Violence and the Civic Forum, and over forty parties participated in the 1992 elections<sup>37</sup>.

“In the Czech Republic, the leadership contest centered on the pace and scope of economic reform and on the leadership capabilities of rival Czech parties, with Václav Klaus and his ODS winning handily. The constitutional issue was secondary to his agenda. In Slovakia, where the constitutional/national issue was quite central, Mečiar's HZDS made its successful bid for power on a platform that promised the best deal for Slovakia in a more decentralized confederal state.”<sup>38</sup>

Although Czech observers interpreted the HZDS electoral program as “nothing more nor less than the end of Czechoslovakia,”<sup>39</sup> it was not at all a clear independence platform. “Voters who support the HZDS held a variety of views on that issue, their concern being the protection of Slovak interests. But the electoral debate did nothing on either side to shed light on how Czechs could be reconciled to Slovak preferences or vice versa. The accent was, as is not unusual in any electoral campaign, on general promises rather than the details of accomplishment.”<sup>40</sup>

“ People knew the clear winners of the elections in both states, but they were incompatible in each case. Klaus saw only the economic reform and the

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<sup>37</sup> Olson, David M., “Dissolution of the State: Political Parties and the 1992 Election in Czechoslovakia.” *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, (1993), p. 304, in: Seiller Daniela, *Czechoslovakia: A State of Perceived Bias*, Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, (1998).

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Mlynář, Vladimír, “Volební program HZDS,” *Respekt*, May 11-17, (1992).

<sup>40</sup> Leff, Carol, Skalik., *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*. Boulder, Colorado and London, in “National identity and the disintegration of Czechoslovakia“, (1997), p. 131.

federation was obvious for him. On the other hand, Mečiar wanted to have a decentralized confederation that was totally unacceptable to Klaus. People vote for the parties without any intentions to destroy Czechoslovakia, but they did not expect that the policy of this state would take such a bad direction.<sup>41</sup>”

With the same date in *El País* appeared another article dealing with the mentioned elections. “El resultado electoral en Checoslovaquia pone en peligro la unidad el país<sup>42</sup> is about the predictions of agencies whether Mečiar got enough votes to split the country and statistics like in a Table 1 (see page 21).

There is a part focused on Klaus’s policy. He wants to continue in harsh measurements and changes just like in introducing economic reforms. Klaus did not exclude the dissolution of the country, but at first he wanted to deal with a possible federation which would satisfy both nations. In any other case, the separation would be inevitable. One of the problems was how to put together two different ideas about the state. The question is whether this separation would end peacefully or with civil war. Reforms in the Czech Republic were accepted by people surprisingly well.<sup>43</sup> It was different in Slovakia; traditions were the main part of cultural and political life in this region, so the process of reformation was long – lasting and Mečiar was against strict capitalism. Mečiar promised a slower dismantling of the old communist system. Mečiar’s policy is established on the “rise to power” due to “vague promises to revive the country’s heavy industries, especially weapons production, in order to reverse rising unemployment”<sup>44</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> *EL País*, June 8, 1992, p. 2.

<sup>43</sup> En los territorios de la república checa (Bohemia y Moravia), los tres partidos nacidos del Foro Cívico y que apoyan de hecho la política conservadora practicada por Václav Klaus, consiguen hacerse con una mayoría que les permitirá seguir adelante con el duro programa de reformas económicas. Klaus, sin embargo, declaró anoche que no descarta una separación entre checos y eslovacos, aunque la primera carta que quiere jugar es "la construcción de una federación razonable" entre unos y otros. "Si no es posible, habrá que separarse de manera rápida y civilizada", precisó. Ibid. , p. 2.

<sup>44</sup> Wallace, Bruce, and Susan Morgan, “Death of a Nation.” *Maclean’s*, (1993) 106, pp. 2 – 20.

However, the leading party in the Czech Republic had the opposite approach. The main policy of Klaus' ODS was based on the rapid privatization programs. The platform of the ODS could be summarized as: "The Czech government of Vaclav Klaus is committed to a radical Thatcherization of both our economy and our society. The prime minister told us that our task is to combat socialism, not primarily in its crude Soviet form but in the insidious creeping form poking up its horns in countries like England, Sweden, or Austria."<sup>45</sup> Moreover, Klaus promised to "take a hard line on Slovak nationalism"<sup>46</sup>. This step assumed that his party would not support the Slovak decentralization efforts.

### 3. 1. Czechoslovakia After June 1992 Elections

In the section *Opini3n*, there is an article under title "Dudas en Praga"<sup>47</sup> (Doubts in Prag) briefly analyzing the course of the elections in the Czechoslovak Federal Republic. The articles published under the section are two kinds of articles. Firstly, those that are signed only represent the views of the author. Secondly, those that are not signed and in fact represent the official views of the newspaper. In Spain these articles (unsigned) are called "editoriales" (in Britain they are usually called "leading articles"; in the US they tend to use the same word "editorial"). They are written by members of the editorial board of the newspaper and they are the most important articles reflecting the views of the newspaper on current events.

This concrete one concludes how Czechs and Slovaks would resolve the question of disunity. Czechs voted for Klaus, who preferred the quick advance

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<sup>45</sup> Koh3k, Erazim, "Tattered Velvet: A Country Falls Apart." *Dissent*.(1992), p. 443, in: Seiller Daniela, *Czechoslovakia: A State of Perceived Bias*, Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, (1998).

<sup>46</sup> Wilson, Paul, "The End of the Velvet Revolution." *New York Review of Books*. (1992) p.58, in: in: Seiller Daniela, *Czechoslovakia: A State of Perceived Bias*, Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, (1998).

<sup>47</sup> *EL Pa3s*, June 8, 1992, p. 4.

and the market direct economy system. On the other hand, Slovaks voted for Mečiar, the radical nationalist, who represented the splitting up of Czechoslovakia into two parts.<sup>48</sup>

However, the conclusions in this article seem to allege that the dissolution would harm just the Slovak Republic, because its economy was much weaker than that of the Czech Republic. The question emerges as to why everybody was so optimistic about the Czech Republic? The other conclusions are like the policy of Slovakia was going back to socialism and regime of one authority. However, the same problem is described in the next article from El País, “La República Menos Favorecida”.<sup>49</sup>

This article from the same day is trying to show the economic situation mainly in Slovakia. On the one hand, there was Slovakia, small country with high rate of unemployment. It was caused by liquidation of arms factories and other industries, when lots of Slovaks lost their jobs. Very burning issue was the question of investments, because Slovakia got just 8% of all investments for Czechoslovakia. The rest was used in the Czech Republic.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> “LOS RESULTADOS de las elecciones celebradas en Checoslovaquia -las segundas desde el fin del sistema comunista- dejan sin resolver cuestiones fundamentales sobre el futuro del país. El rasgo más destacado -y preocupante- es que la disparidad entre checos y eslovacos se ha agrandado: entre los primeros ha triunfado el partido derechista de Václav Klaus, actual ministro de Finanzas, artífice de la terapia de choque para imponer la economía de mercado; en Eslovaquia se coloca en primer lugar, con una gran ventaja sobre los otros partidos, el que encabeza Vladimir Meciar, abanderado de un nacionalismo que se ha ido radicalizando a medida que crecía su audiencia en los mítines. Teniendo en cuenta que más de cuarenta partidos competían en la campaña electoral, es positivo que no se produjera una dispersión de tipo polaco, lo que hubiese acrecentado las dificultades para un acuerdo. Hoy dos partidos dominan claramente, cada uno en su república. El problema es saber si entre ellos cabe un compromiso.” *EL País*, June 8, 1992, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> *EL País*, June 8, 1992, p. 8.

<sup>50</sup> “El año pasado, en Eslovaquia fueron despedidos de la industria estatal 45.000 trabajadores, un 85% de ellos de la industria de armamento. Las fábricas empobrecidas de la región este de Checoslovaquia están fuertemente endeudadas y no hay flujo de capital extranjero. En la república eslovaca se ha registrado en el último año sólo un 8% de inversión extranjera y el resto ha ido a parar a los checos.” *Ibid.*, p. 8.



The reaction of Slovak citizens is questionable; the politicians did not know what the people would do in a case of dissolution. This article stated ironically that people were more interested in football than in the situation in the state.<sup>51</sup>

These two articles are from the same day and printed in the same newspapers. They both focus on the economic situation in the state. According to the facts, the unemployment in Slovakia was really high and people had big problems with finding a job. (see Table 1 on page 21 ).

“The interaction of the components of the triple transition – politics, economics and identity – was thus part of the dynamics by which the state fell apart. This was especially true since the Czech and Slovak differences in conception of state organization were paralleled by differences in emphasis regarding the economic agenda. Most Czech politicians were inclined to insist on the logic of a centrally coordinated grand strategy of rapid marketization.”<sup>52</sup>

“Yet the dislocations of economic change hit Slovakia proportionally much harder. The only economic index on which the Slovaks ranked higher than Czechs in 1992 seemed to be unemployment. Hence Slovak public opinion and Slovak leaders were more skeptical of the radical reform program associated with federal Finance Minister (later Czech Prime Minister) Klaus. Support for these reforms in the eve of the 1992 election registered at 49% in the Czech Republic but only 28% in Slovakia”.<sup>53</sup>

“Slovak economic hardship and the resulting resistance to economic reform only made a looser federation doubly attractive, since it would mean

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<sup>51</sup> “La semana pasada, sin embargo, se inició una fiesta espontánea con vítores y banderas cuando el equipo nacional eslovaco ganó por 3-0 a los semifinalistas checos, convirtiéndose así en los campeones nacionales.” Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>52</sup> Directly quoted from Leff, Carol Skalnik, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*, in chapter “National identity and the disintegration of Czechoslovakia” Boulder, Colorado and London: Westview Press (1997), p.136.

<sup>53</sup> Directly quoted from Leff, Carol Skalnik, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*, in chapter “National identity and the disintegration of Czechoslovakia” Boulder, Colorado and London: Westview Press (1997), p.136.

greater control over the character and pace of economic reform in Slovakia. As it were, many Slovaks saw themselves as victims of shock therapy – all shock and no therapy, as the saying went in the region. Many Czechs officially thought this attitude shortsighted and felt the Slovaks were disregarding the benefits of both federal subsidies and stable economic policy.”<sup>54</sup> “The prospect of a separate Slovak economic programme, in turn, appalled many Czech officials, who envisaged the nightmarish prospect of two simultaneous but conflicting economic transitions in course on the territory of a single state. “We cannot have two different reforms in a single economy!” protested the federal minister for strategic planning<sup>55</sup>. This unwelcome possibility only reinforced Czech insistence on preserving real authority at the centre<sup>56</sup>.”

“Rétorica Hecha Realidad”<sup>57</sup> is the headline of an article concerning the fact that Mečiar’s words are turning into the reality and it is very probable that Czechoslovakia will be separated. The leader of HZDS urges the sovereignty of Slovakia and wants the new government to be created. However, this government will be just temporal; it will last until the next referendum.<sup>58</sup> The presidential

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<sup>54</sup> Directly quoted from Josef Kotrba and Karel Kríž. „Cui Bono? The Common State in Economic Perspective,” *East European Reporter* 5:5 (September – October 1992): 3-6. In: *Ibid.*, Directly quoted from Leff, Carol Skalnik, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*, in chapter “National identity and the disintegration of Czechoslovakia” Boulder, Colorado and London: Westview Press (1997), p.136.

<sup>55</sup> Directly quoted from *Hospodářské noviny*, May 2, 1991, p.4, reprinted in FBIS-EEU-91-091, May 10, 1991, p.9 In: *Ibid.*, p.136

<sup>56</sup> Directly quoted from Leff, Carol Skalnik, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*, Boulder, Colorado and London: Westview Press, (1997) „National identity and the disintegration of Czechoslovakia“, p.136.

<sup>57</sup> *EL País*, June 10, 1992, p. 9.

<sup>58</sup> “La retórica electoral del líder nacionalista Vladimír Mečiar sobre la disolución del Estado checoslovaco comienza a hacerse realidad. Según el comunicado elaborado ayer por el Movimiento para una Eslovaquia Democrática (HZDS), tras la entrevista celebrada con Václav Klaus, Mečiar insiste en proclamar la soberanía y promueve la idea de crear un Gobierno provisional federal que funcione hasta la realización de sendos referendos sobre la independencia en las repúblicas checa y eslovaca, organizados por los respectivos Parlamentos nacionales. El

elections are approaching and according to this article, the Slovaks will not mind to have the Czech president again. Despite this fact, Havel will not be supported by HZDS.

Very interesting are the articles from *La Vanguardia* from their reporter Ricardo Estarriol. Among them there is an item “La División de Checoslovaquia”<sup>59</sup> (Division of Czechoslovakia) which analyzes the situation in Czechoslovakia from another point of view because the author tries to show the situation objectively (see chapter newspapers, *La Vanguardia*). It refers to the Czech Minister of Foreign Affairs Josef Zeleniec who sees the split-up of the country endorsed by parliament as a positive action. The Czech Republic has the most important foreign relations with Slovakia. Zeleniec hopes that after the split-up, the relations between these two countries would be even better or remain the same and only the names of the two republics will change. Another task is the matter of duties and the currency in both states.<sup>60</sup> The disadvantage for Slovakia is the fact, except inter alia, that this state is considered not just to be small but also of any interests for western countries. Zeleniec makes comments also on the topic that the future of the Visegrad triangle depends on the development of the Czech – Slovak relations.<sup>61</sup> Zeleniec proclaims that the separation of two countries was legally correct and compares the process of separation of Czechoslovakia to a married couple, where the wife already with packed luggage in her hands decides to leave and her husband cannot stop her. The “family referendum” among

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referéndum, dice el comunicado, será una segunda etapa después de la proclamación de soberanía en Eslovaquia y la creación de una nueva Constitución nacional.“ *EL País*, June 10, 1992, p. 9.

<sup>59</sup>*La Vanguardia*, December 29, 1992, p. 7.

<sup>60</sup> “El ministro checo reconoce que uno de los aspectos más importantes de las aspectos mas importantes de las relaciones exteriores de la República Checa lo constituirán sus relaciones con Eslovaquia. Espera que en el futuro inmediato, gracias a toda una red de tratados (especialmente la unión aduanera) firmados ya antes de la independencia por ambas republicas, para los socios y hombres de negocios extranjeros las cosas continúen más o menos como antes. ... Zeleniec recuerda que se ha acordado mantener una moneda comun, pero también tiene conciencia de que una moneda común sólo será posible si se coordina la política monetaria“ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>61</sup> El futuro del “triángulo de Visegrad“ (sistema de cooperación política Polonia-Checoslovaquia-Hungría) dependerá de las relaciones checo – eslovacas. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

children would be useless because the wife's luggage is already packed.<sup>62</sup> Another question are the relations between the Czech Republic and Germany, Germans do not want to renew the commercial treats.<sup>63</sup>

Firm look into the problem of dissolution is offered in the article "El fin de Checoslovaquia es Fruto de la Tropeza de la Clase política".<sup>64</sup> (The end of Czechoslovakia as a result of clumsy politicians). According to Estarriol, Czechoslovakia is just an artificial country consisting of two different nations. Further he refers to the process of dissolution which is happening in a peaceful manner and is not interesting for most of the people. Estarriol proclaims that Mečiar wanted the country to break up and Klaus supported him unintentionally all the time. Estarriol is quoting Klaus saying that he doesn't want to rule a country where one of the parties could betray him anytime.<sup>65</sup> Estarriol also provides with a table which shows the statistics on redistribution of money<sup>66</sup> while Czechs were given 550 million dollars from foreign investments, Slovakia just got 150 million dollars. Another example of "oppression" from the Czech side to which Estarriol is as follows: "But there were only two central committees: a federal one and a Slovak one (the latter subordinated, obviously, to the central committee of the federation), while the role that would have been played by a Czech central committee was done by the central committee of the federation. The disparity is very clear.<sup>67</sup> So, the criticism of Estarriol is that the Federal

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<sup>62</sup> "...puesto que en la extinta Checoslovaquia existe uná situación semejante a la de una familia en la que la mujer está dispuesta a separarse y está con las maletas an la mano: "Un reférendum familiar entre los hijos para evitar el divorcio no serviría de nada si lamujer se empeña en separarse.Y este es nuestro caso..." Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>63</sup> El segundo centro de gravedad de la política exterior checa serán las relaciones con Alemania, de donde se espera que llegue una buena parte de las inversiones que necesitan los países checos.

<sup>64</sup> *La Vanguardia*, December 31, 1992, p. 10.

<sup>65</sup> Klaus se sentia inseguro:" No puedo gobernar un país sobre la base de poderes que una de las partes puede retirarme en cualquier momento, solía decir". Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>67</sup> ...-Pero soló había dos comités centrales: uno federal y otro eslovaco (subordinado naturalmente al comité central de la federación), mientras que el papel de lo que hubiera tenido que ser un

Central Committee of the Czechoslovak Communist Party was not really representing the interests of the Federation but only of the Czech part of Czechoslovakia and the “Slovak Central Committee” was clearly subordinated to that Federal Central Committee.

The Article “El Eslovaco Mečiar a Favor de la Cohabitación Con los Checos”<sup>68</sup> (The Slovak Mečiar wants a single state with the Czechs) is for deals with the declaration of the Slovak Government leader Vladimír Mečiar that he is keeping with the cohabitation of the Czechs and Slovaks in the confederation. The results of the referendum, according to Mečiar, would be a long lasting decision of the nation.<sup>69</sup> This also means that most of the Czechs want the separation because the weak economy of Slovakia is taking the Czech Republic down. According to the Czech leaders, Czechoslovakia should be a federation, but Slovaks strongly insist on the confederation.

“The state deteriorated rapidly, after the elections when people voted for totally different parties. The ODSKDS alliance decided not to deliberate with Slovak HZDS for many reasons. For example, Klaus was against the system that the state would have opposite economy and because the Slovaks insisted in their confederal adjustment of the state. Secondly, the Czechs view Slovakia as an economic drag”<sup>70</sup>. In case that the Czechs would not be limited by Slovakia, they could invest in their own future. They were confident that they could enter the European Union faster if they were free without any duty to “take care” of

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comité central checo era desempeñado por el comité central de la federación. La disparidad salta a la vista. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>68</sup> EL País, June 13, 1992.

<sup>69</sup> Vladimír Mečiar, líder del Movimiento para una Eslovaquia Democrática (HZDS), vencedor en la parte eslovaca de las recientes elecciones celebradas en Checoslovaquia, se mostró ayer a favor de una cohabitación entre checos y eslovacos en el seno de una confederación y abogó por la celebración de un referéndum que suponga "una decisión duradera" para Checoslovaquia. EL País, June 13 1992.

<sup>70</sup> Morrison, David C. 1993. “Like It or Not, Slovaks are on Their Own.” *National Journal*. 25,4, (1993), p. 202.

Slovakia. However, the compromise would solve this problem, but this chance was out of the question.

The article “Un Triste Recuerdo”<sup>71</sup> (A Sad Recollection) written by Ilona Kovaríková resembles to more or less a brief outline of history of the Czechoslovak Republic seen only from one side. As for an example in the following clause, where Kovaríková mentions that the First Republic helped the Slovaks to develop in cultural and social way and Slovak brothers joined Czechoslovakia by means of Martin’s declaration.<sup>72</sup> The declaration of the Slovak National council was an expression of will to separate from the old Kingdom of Hungary and create a common state with the Czechs.<sup>73</sup> Ilona Kovaríková apparently relates to the inter-war period when Slovakia became part of the Czechoslovak Republic which was founded on 28 and 30 October 1918.<sup>74</sup> This state was born due to changes among the powers caused by the First World War. It was incorporated into the system of international relations of post-war Europe as required by the victorious allied great powers. Slovak politicians saw in the union with the Czechs a promising solution advantageous for both sides. The new

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<sup>71</sup> EL País, June 21 1992, p. 3.

<sup>72</sup>“La primera República checoslovaca, como se denomina al Estado que existió desde 1918 hasta 1939, brindó un amplio espacio a los hermanos eslovacos para que se emancipasen cultural y socialmente y que, por su propia voluntad, se adhirieron a Checoslovaquia a través de la declaración de Martín.” *EL País*, June 21, 1992, p.3,...Referring to the declaration in Martin ... 30 October- The Slovak National Council was founded at an assembly in Martin. It declared its support for the new state by accepting the Declaration of the Slovaka Nation. For an extended discussion and related issues see in Škvarna Dušan, *Lexikón Slovenských dejín*, SPN, (1997), pp. 127-129.

<sup>73</sup> Mannová Elena, *A Concise History of Slovakia*, *Studia Historica Slovaca XXI*, Historický ústav SAV, Bratislava, (2000), p. 240.

<sup>74</sup> On 28 October Edvard Beneš negotiated in Geneva with a delegation of the Czecho-Slovak National Committee, led by its president, Karol Kramář. They agreed that Czecho-Slovakia would be a republic and Masaryk would be a president . A large demonstration in Prague approved the proclamation of an independent Czecho-Slovakia. That evening, the national committee that led the movement passed the first law concerning the foundation of Czecho-slovakia. Vavro Šrobár signed it on behalf of the Slovaks. *Ibid.*, p. 127.

state entity relieved the Slovaks of the pressure of Magyarization<sup>75</sup> of the preceding decades, introduced a parliamentary democracy, raised the level of education of the population, stimulated the development of science and the arts, and made public events accessible to the citizens.<sup>76</sup> However, the implementation of this decision was not simple. The Slovak National Council did not have military units, Slovakia national councils and armed militias formed in towns and villages struggled for power with officials, military units and policemen, who obeyed only the Budapest government. In some parts of Slovakia, like in many parts of the disintegrating Monarchy, anarchy prevailed. Armed soldiers, returning from the front, supported spontaneous uprisings in villages and small towns.<sup>77</sup>

Up to 1918 Slovakia was not a separate administrative unit, and so did not have precisely defined frontiers. In the north and west, there were the historic frontiers of the Kingdom of Hungary with the Austrian provinces of the Empire, in the east an administrative boundary was defined in 1919, between Slovakia and Subcarpathian Ruthenia, which had been joined to Czechoslovakia. The frontier with Hungary to the south was confirmed only after prolonged negotiations at the Paris Peace Conference, by the Treaty of Trianon.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Attempts to make Magyars of the non-Magyar population of the Kingdom of Hungary. Although it contained elements of natural assimilation (spontaneity, voluntary acceptance), it was dominated by the resolute use of force. This form of national suppression accompanied the transformation of the Kingdom of Hungary from a state of estates into a modern state. See in Škvarna Dušan, *Lexikón Slovenských dejín*, SPN, (1997), pp. 245-246.

<sup>76</sup> See in Škvarna Dušan, *Lexikón Slovenských dejín*, SPN, (1997), pp. 127-129.

<sup>77</sup> Károlyi's government tried to keep Slovakia within the framework of Hungary with a promise of autonomy, but the Prague government acted energetically. Slovak members were coopted into the newly formed National Assembly in Prague in November 1918 and the first provisional government of Slovakia began its activity in western Slovakia on 6 th November Cf. <sup>77</sup> Mannová Elena, *A Concise History of Slovakia*, *Studia Historica Slovaca XXI*, Historický ústav SAV, Bratislava, (2000), p. 243.

<sup>78</sup> Signed on 4th June 1920 in the Grand Trianon Palace near Paris. Edvard Beneš and Štefan Osuský signed for the Czecho-Slovak state, while August Benárd and Alfréd Drasche-Lázár signed it for Hungary. It definitively established the state borders of Hungary and obliged it to respect the rights of national minorities. For Hungary Trianon meant partial military and financial limitations.

In comparison to Slovak society, the Czech society had a better possibility to develop than the Slovaks in the Kingdom of Hungary. As a result, the Czechs entered the new state with well organized political parties, voluntary associations, managing elites, a complete Czech education system up to university level and a tradition of Czech statehood. The majority of Czech members of the Constitutional Assembly already had years of experience in the Vienna Parliament and in the provincial councils. Among the 54 Slovak members, only 6 had such experience and mostly only very briefly. Slovakia also lacked politically and economically experienced and leading personalities.<sup>79</sup>

Back to the author's one - sided view of this period in the above article, it can be said that Slovaks were not recognized as a distinct nation and the new state was built upon the principle of centralism. Slovak statehood did not exist, only Czechoslovak statehood existed. But on the other hand, especially the origin of Czechoslovakia undoubtedly accelerated the development of Slovak society. In particular, the democratic system created favorable conditions for this.

Among other facts in the article, it is also mentioned that the Slovak Republic came to existence in 1939 and became the ally of Hitler's Germany.<sup>80</sup> Practically, this indicates that Slovakia is to blame for collaborating with German Nazis. After all, the article concludes with a criticism of a Slovak commemoration of president Tiso.

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The Hungarian Parliament ratified the treaty but no more significant political force in Hungary was reconciled to the break-up of the old Hungarian state and the union of large parts of its territory with Yugoslavia, Austria, Rumania and Czechoslovakia. C.f. in Škvarna Dušan, *Lexikón Slovenských dejín*, SPN, (1997), p. 133.

<sup>79</sup> General Milan Rastislav Štefánik, who could have played an important role in the liberation struggle, was killed in an air crash in May 1919, when returning to his homeland. The cause of Štefánik's death still remains mysterious. For a detailed discussion and immediately related issues see in: Mannová Elena, *A Concise History of Slovakia*, *Studia Historica Slovaca XXI*, Historický ústav SAV, Bratislava, (2000) p. 244.

<sup>80</sup> En marzo de 1939, los eslovacos proclamaron su Estado independiente, aliado de Alemania de Hitler. De esta manera Eslovaquia logró formar su primer y hasta ahora último Estado independiente, entre cuyos méritos figuró el envío a los campos de concentración alemanes a más de 80.000 judíos. *Ibid.*, p. 3.



The Czechs were blaming Slovaks for what they did; they had not done it on purpose.<sup>81</sup> The historical facts show that the Sudeten Germans were finally granted their ultimate demand with the Munich Agreement<sup>82</sup> in September 1938. Germany annexed the Sudetenland and Hungary absorbed Southern Slovakia. The rest of the state was left practically defenceless in the face of further German expansion. It is a sad fact of that time, that as a consequence of this significant weakening of the power of the Czechoslovak Republic, Slovak statehood was able to be implemented in the form of autonomy (6 October 1938). Germany did not have an interest in the further existence of the Czecho-Slovak state, even if it was transformed according to its own conception. It was interested in Czechia becoming a part of Germany. With this as a goal, Germany supported those Slovak politicians who sought to create an independent Slovak state. The history of this epoch concluded with the emergence of the Slovak state on 14 March 1939.<sup>83</sup> Germany had urged

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<sup>81</sup> The Anschluss of Austria on 12 th March 1938 substantially worsened the strategic position of Czechoslovakia. The German frontier was shifted to the suburbs of Bratislava, and the inactivity of the great powers was a bad sign. In the Anschluss of Austria, Hitler used his agency there. In Czechoslovakia, Henlein's Sudeten German party played a similar role. It deliberately made continual increases in its demands. For a detailed discussion and immediate related issues see in: Mannová Elena, *A Concise History of Slovakia*, *Studia Historica Slovaca XXI*, Historický ústav SAV, Bratislava, (2000), pp. 256-257.

<sup>82</sup> An agreement signed on 29 th September 1938 among the great powers concerning the German annexation of the territory of the Czechoslovak state occupied predominantly by a German minority. Its acceptance resulted from the negotiations of the Czechoslovak government with representatives of the German national minority and international negotiations between Adolf Hitler and the British prime minister, Neville Chamberlain in Berchtesgaden and Bad Godespeberg. In the negotiations Germany clearly declared itself for the annexation to its own territory of the part of the Czech state occupied by the German minority. Germany, Italy, Great Britain and France, without the participation of Czechoslovak representatives, dictated Czechoslovakia's new frontiers with Germany, which made the state defenceless against Hitler. At the same time, they dictated a deadline for Czechoslovakia to agree new frontiers with Poland and Hungary. For a detailed discussion and immediate related issues see in: Škvarna Dušan, *Lexikón Slovenských dejín*, SPN, (1997), p. 253.

<sup>83</sup> The Slovak assembly convened in Bratislava. The assembly first accepted the resignation of the government of Karol Sidor. Jozef Tiso acquainted the deputies with the negotiations in Berlin.

the establishment of the Slovak state, so that it could achieve the collapse of the Czecho-Slovak state from within. This did not mean, however, that the idea of the Slovak state was foreign to Slovakia or imposed from outside.

For the Slovaks the Munich Agreement was something like an offence from the government side and the desire for autonomy became even stronger<sup>84</sup>. “A new government and assembly were established, autonomous in everything except defence, foreign policy, and national finances”<sup>85</sup>. Good point was that the federal system was tested before the destruction. However, the Czechs were afraid of a situation like that, the granting of independence to the German minority resulted in the federalization of the republic.

“The Slovak fear before the “Hungarian threat” – i.e. that a fully autonomous Slovak state resulting from the separation of Czechoslovakia might be an easy prey for Budapest for lack of protection by the Nazis – led them to controlling their dreams and compromise with supporting a federalized common Czech and Slovak state.”<sup>86</sup>

“Josef Tiso, the leader of the Slovak People’s Party after Hlinka died, had to agree with the disintegration of the state. For the Czechs it was an irreversible step and an offence from the Slovaks. However, the Slovak leader had no other choice. Tiso was in Germany on March 13, 1939 for a meeting with Hitler. There an ultimatum was addressed to Tiso: “Either Slovakia would declare its independence and become Germany’s ally, or else it would refuse - an act which

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After his presentation the 57 deputies present voted by acclamation (by standing up in their places) on the question: „ Do you agree with the declaration of an independent Slovak state? Shortly after noon, all of the deputies present voted in the affirmative. The adoption of a law concerning an independent Slovak state followed. Following this, the presidium of the Slovak assembly named the first government of the Slovak state. Jozef Tiso became its prime minister. After the situation in Slovakia was clarified, Adolf Hitler approved the request of František Chvalkovský, the Czech-Slovak foreign minister, that negotiations between Hitler and Hácha take place in Berlin. Emil Hácha departed for Berlin. C.f. Škvarna Dušan, *Lexikón Slovenských dejín*, SPN, (1997), p. 144.

<sup>84</sup> Wallace, William V., *Czechoslovakia*. Boulder: Westview (1976), p. 176.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>86</sup> Mannová Elena, *A Concise History of Slovakia*, *Studia Historica Slovaca XXI*, Historický ústav SAV, Bratislava, (2000), pp. 257-258.

would be a reason for the Reich's leaving Hungary's hands free to reconquer the former territory of the crown of Saint Stephan."<sup>87</sup> Tiso was persuaded to declare Slovakia's independence on March 14, 1939. On March 15, Emil Hácha<sup>88</sup>, sent the troops into Slovakia and this was an opportunity for Hitler to rush into the Czech Lands and make of them the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia<sup>89</sup>. The separation of Czechs and Slovaks lasted until the end of WW II. Czechs were under total German control while the Slovaks "enjoy themselves" theoretically an "independent" status.<sup>90</sup>

"Despite the undeniably strong Nazi influence, Slovak leaders had been able to work on developing "autonomous" national programs. The new state adopted policies that led to separation from the Czech supremacy, satisfying the Catholic majority, and helped progressing Slovak cultural life. One of the first decisions was to get rid of the Czechs in their administration and replace them by Slovaks<sup>91</sup>."

"Besides eliminating the Czechs' physical presence, their ideas were also banished. It was only natural that political socialization following this development had a clearly nationalist character. Both the media and the system of education were now systematically tuned to projecting into a difficult and menacing present the genuine and glorious past: a new identity based on language,

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<sup>87</sup> Mikus, Joseph A, *Slovakia: A Political History: 1918-1950*. Milwaukee: Marquette UP, (1963), p. 76.

<sup>88</sup> "The president of Czechoslovakia after Beneš went into exile," see in Kirschbaum, Stanislav J. , *A History of Slovakia: The Struggle for Survival*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, (1995), p. 182.

<sup>89</sup> Taborsky, Edward "Tragedy, Triumph and Tragedy: Czechoslovakia 1938-1948." Pp 113-134 in *Czechoslovakia: The Heritage of Ages Past*, eds. Hans Brisch and Ivan Volgyes. New York: Columbia UP (1979).

<sup>90</sup> Mannová Elena, *A Concise History of Slovakia*, *Studia Historica Slovaca XXI*, Historický ústav SAV, Bratislava, (2000), p.257.

<sup>91</sup> Kirschbaum, Stanislav J. , *A History of Slovakia: The Struggle for Survival*. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, (1995) pp. 186-188.

culture and history – all Slovak. This new Slovak identity was growing and replacing the Czechoslovak idea.”<sup>92</sup>

“Meanwhile, exiled Benes kept struggling to help the idea of a common Czechoslovak identity survive. However, his right to form a Czechoslovak government in exile not having been initially recognized, he has been obliged to resign as president. It was now an open question whether he still had the right to represent decisions taken by others in the state. However, in late 1939 the Allies recognized his right to speak for the “Czechoslovak peoples”, though there was no mention whatsoever of a “Czechoslovak state”<sup>93</sup>. Once again, Beneš won the right to speak on behalf of the Slovaks.”<sup>94</sup>

From the historical point of view it looks like the Slovaks wanted autonomy of their state so much that they forgot on their neighbors Czechs and left them alone. This feeling of having been betrayed by the Slovaks, of their unreliability in state affairs nourished in Czech society, as it was significantly manifested in the controversies and considerations about the position of Slovakia in the renewed republic during the war and after it, with reverberations until dissolution in 1992. Nonetheless, it should be remarked that the Slovak nation demonstrated it was able to build its own state in extraordinarily unfavorable circumstances.

The article “Checos, eslovacos... y Centroeuropa”<sup>95</sup> refers, among other things, to the emerging problems with the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, addressing their concerns of being in a more difficult situation, if Czechoslovakia

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<sup>92</sup> Mannová Elena, A Concise History of Slovakia, Studia Historica Slovaca XXI, Historický ústav SAV, Bratislava, (2000), p.246.

<sup>93</sup> Taborsky, Edward. 1979. “Tragedy, Triumph and Tragedy: Czechoslovakia 1938-1948.” Pp 113-134 in Czechoslovakia: The Heritage of Ages Past, eds. Hans Brisch and Ivan Volgyes. New York: Columbia UP.

<sup>94</sup> Kirschbaum, Stanislav J. , A History of Slovakia: The Struggle for Survival. New York: St. Martin's Griffin, (1995) pp. 194-204.

<sup>95</sup> *EL País*, June 14, p. 6.

desintegrates and the leaders of HZDS limit their cultural and linguistic rights.<sup>96</sup> The quotation must be referenced to the language bill proposed in 1990 by the Matica Slovenská (Slovak national organization) which sought the introduction of a sole official language in the Slovak republic to much opposition of the political leaders of the Hungarian minority. In districts where the Hungarian minority made up at least 20 per cent of the population it was possible to use Hungarian in official correspondence. The bill was accompanied by much controversy and found massive support especially among Slovak „nationalist“ students who took part in an extensive demonstrations orchestrated by Matica Slovenská and its political supporters including the SNS from 25 October to 19 November.

Ultimately, this bill was dismissed in favor of the government bill, which was passed by the Slovak National Council as Act No. 428/1991 Zb.. Under that Act, Slovak was declared the official language in Slovakia, however other languages such as Czech could also be used for official purposes, in addition to languages of minorities comprising at least 20% municipal or town population.<sup>97</sup>

As for the article's reference to „la iniciativa de Havel de una alianza entre Checoslovaquia, Polonia y Hungria“<sup>98</sup> as being „promising“, it should be noted

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<sup>96</sup> “La iniciativa de Havel de una alianza entre Checoslovaquia, Polonia y Hungria fue prometidora. Podrá mantenerse en la nueva situación surgida en Checoslovaquia? Además, con una Eslovaquia soberana se agudizará la amenaza a la minoría húngara (600 000 personas) a la que el nacionalismo eslovaco niega el derecho incluso a su lengua propia. Puede surgir ahí un nuevo foco de conflicto. Mientras se retrasa la creación de estructuras capaces de asegurar una protección real de las minorías, avanzan los fenómenos de inestabilidad en la zona, cargados de peligro.” *EL País*, June 14, 1992, p. 6.

<sup>97</sup> The Matica Slovenská bill initiative and the accompanying events are extensively covered in Jan Rychlík, *Rozpad Československa. Česko-slovenské vzťahy 1989-1992* (Bratislava 2002) 142-144. As for Mečiar's involvement in the language bill controversy, he strongly advocated the government's bill; especially notorious in this context was his televised appearance, in which he publicly attacked Jozef Markuš, the president of Matica Slovenská, for his nationalism. For this episode, see also the chapter „Constitutional Discussions“ in Stanislav J. *Kirschbaum*, *A History of Slovakia. The Struggle for Survival* (London 1995), p. 258.

<sup>98</sup> *EL País*, June 14, 1992, p. 6.

that the alliance of the three countries was already formed in 1991 in the Hungarian town of Visegrad (the Visegrad Three), and was later automatically extended to include the newly independent Slovak Republic, upon its establishment, in 1993, to become known as the Visegrad Four, a form, in which it continues to exist until present times.<sup>99</sup>

The above mentioned article might be also a reaction on the meeting held in June 19 -20, between the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia and the Civic Democratic Party in Bratislava. There they agreed to reduce the number of ministries in the federal government and to parity in the number of ministries they filled. Moreover, the federal government was to understand its mandate as temporary.<sup>100</sup>

This meeting was the last of four meetings<sup>101</sup>, where the leaders of parties tried to find a opinions were totally different<sup>102</sup>. The second problem discussed was the question of the federal government. The result of the fourth meeting was the signing of a political agreement and the agreement on a federal government. The political agreement had nine points, in which the suggestions of both sides were summarized.<sup>103</sup>

To sum up, this meeting accepted the existence of the Czechoslovak Federal Republic, but on the other hand, it did not exclude the extinction of this state in the future.

The author of “La Unidad De Europa”<sup>104</sup> (Unity of Europe) is very surprised by the results of the referendum in Denmark. He writes about the

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<sup>99</sup> Kováč Dušan, *Dejiny Slovenska*, Nakladatelství Lidové Noviny (1998), p. 315.

<sup>100</sup> Škvarna Dušan et al., *Lexikón Slovenských dejín*, SPN, Bratislava (1997), p. 172.

<sup>101</sup> The first meeting was held in Brno in June 8 – 8; the second in Prague in June 11; the third in Prague again in June 17; and the last – fourth was held in Bratislava in June 19 – 20. *Ibid.*, p.172.

<sup>102</sup> ODS insisted on the federal republic with international – legal personality and HZDS wanted to have a confederation with international – legal personality of both republics. *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>103</sup> Roháčová, Irena, *Chronicles 1992*, article: “ČSFR stays on the map of Europe so far“. Bratislava: Fortuna Print spol. s. r. o., 1993, p. 65.

<sup>104</sup> *EL País*, June 23, 1992, p. 9.

European Union and the fact that Europe is crumbling into pieces and Czechoslovakia is part of this disintegration.<sup>105</sup>

In this article, Fernández is reacting to the referendum in Denmark in June 2. The result of this referendum was that the citizens of Denmark voted against the adoption of the Maastricht agreement<sup>106</sup>. This result was regarded by politicians and commentators as a “punch against the European integration”. The main aim of the Maastricht agreement is united currency, economic union and the unique European citizenship. The disagreement of Danish citizens would stimulate the new referendum or this state would not be a part of European Union.<sup>107</sup>

An article of Václav Havel has a headline “La Impotencia de los Poderosos.” (Power of the Powerless).<sup>108</sup> It is referred to Havel’s seminal theoretical work describing east European dissidence under communism.<sup>109</sup> It is about the situation in Czechoslovakia after Communism. According to this clause, socialism destroyed the idea of pluralism of political parties as well as the strength and function of opposition in parliament. On the other hand, opposition was as for this article set in the parliament just for a garnish. Politicians were replaced by

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<sup>105</sup> “Más que el sí o el no de los daneses, me ha sorprendido la convocatoria del referéndum. Porque, vamos a ver: si los Gobiernos de los países que componen la Comunidad Europea están suficientemente legitimados por el voto de sus electores y no basan sus decisiones en apresuradas ocurrencias, ¿por qué no se les deja gobernar en paz, aunque fiscalizada siempre su gestión por los Parlamentos respectivos?” Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>106</sup> The result of referendum was very close. The citizens of Denmark voted against the ratification in 50, 7% an for the ratification in 49,3%. In Roháčová, Irena, *Chronicles 1992*, article: “United Europe without Denmark?”. Bratislava: Fortuna Print spol. s. r. o., (1993), p. 63.

<sup>107</sup> Roháčová, Irena, *Chronicles 1992*, article: “United Europe without Denmark?”. Bratislava: Fortuna Print spol. s. r. o., (1993), p. 63.

<sup>108</sup> EL País, June 24, 1992, p. 8.

<sup>109</sup> C.f., Havel’s most important essay *The Power of the Powerless* was written in October 1978. It is Havel’s statement of who he is, what dissidence means, what he sees as worthwhile in the world and what he thinks trivial or threatenig. See in Shepherd Robin H.E., *Czechoslovakia, The Velvet Revolution And Beyond*, Great Britain, USA, (2000).

“figureheads” and the power was concentrated just in the center.<sup>110</sup> The groups of intellectuals tried to fight against socialism and were open for new dares. It was natural that the group of intellectuals took a part in revolution in 1989. These dissidents took power after the year 1989 and wanted to have a democratic state. However, they were just rebels and intellectuals desiring freedom.<sup>111</sup>

The memorable year 1989 brought unheard of new words into the vocabulary the peoples of the soviet satellite states: *glasnost* and *perestroika* haunted the imagination and the wildest dreams of their peoples and Gorbachev’s reforms symbolize the turning point for the renaissance of political life in Central and Eastern Europe. The people of Czechoslovakia could not remain indifferent to this mighty wave washing away the communist system united in their wish to reform.<sup>112</sup> However, this unity was short lived: democratic consensus collapsed soon after the downfall of the government in 1989 owing to the fact that Czechs condemned the communist system because it lacked political and economic freedom, whereas the Slovaks sought after religious freedom and broader federalization of the state. The turbulent past made a common future impossible.

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<sup>110</sup> “El sistema totalitario de tipo comunista, tal como se desarrolló en la ex Unión Soviética y como más tarde fue impuesto a todos los países de la esfera del poder soviético, no sólo destruyó el pluralismo político y los elementos o posibilidades de una oposición política auténtica, sino que, de hecho, aniquiló la política como esfera de actividades concretas del hombre. El poder se concentró gradualmente en las manos de una burocracia dirigida de un modo estrictamente centralista y los políticos fueron siendo sustituidos por simples administradores, ejecutores obedientes de una voluntad central.” Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>111</sup> De vez en cuando llegaban incluso a rebelarse capas más amplias de ciudadanos, pero al frente de esas insurrecciones, siempre reprimidas, solían estar nuevamente los intelectuales, quienes también eran sus inspiradores ideológicos. Por tanto, cuando en 1989 el sistema totalitario empezó a desmoronarse en todos los países del bloque soviético y especialmente cuando cayó en avalancha en los países de Europa Central y Oriental, era natural que la resistencia popular fuera encabezada por numerosos intelectuales, generalmente conocidos gracias a sus anteriores críticas al régimen, y que el movimiento revolucionario terminara elevando a muchos de ellos a los cargos más altos del Estado. Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>112</sup> Karen Henderson, Neil Robinson, Post- Communist Politics, An Introduction, Prentice Hall Europe, Great Britain, (1997), pp. 67-68.



The priority which the communist rulers in Slovakia had given to uncompetitive and inefficient industrial sectors, nailing the economy in total dependency on imports from the Soviet Union (mines, petrochemicals, paper production, energy and weapons) led to an inevitable dead end after the latter's dissolution. There was no stepping stone for competing in world markets – and the negative effect was much more painful for the Slovak than for the Czech economy. President Havel decided to abolish the weapon industry symbolizing the dark past. However, the decisions being taken in Prague imposed a non-Slovak oriented program of action at a pace too fast for a small country to follow.<sup>113</sup>

Newborn Czech capitalism was a traumatic experience for Slovaks. History tends to repeat itself – as in the case of the First Republic, what for the Czechs meant the short and even way to a prosperous future was seen by the Slovaks as one more attempted negation of their long sought after freedom.<sup>114</sup>

### **3. 2. Czechoslovakia After 1993 Dissolution**

Many articles from Spanish newspapers addressed the situation in the first days of the new Republics. One of them, “La Triste Resaca De Año Nuevo”<sup>115</sup> describes the celebrations of the end of the old and the beginning of the New Year. The author depicts this rather sad occasion, which the citizens don't like. Havel is likely to become the new Czech president. The author remarks that even if Havel is not elected President, he will be a great support for the country in the times to come. The politicians did not manage to fill the citizens with enthusiasm for new states. Havel's opponent Klaus opposes the idea of Havel's presidency; saying he should mind his own business and keep on writing poetry<sup>116</sup>.

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., pp. 232-240.

<sup>114</sup> Mannová Elena, A Concise History of Slovakia, Studia Historica Slovaca XXI, Historický ústav SAV, Bratislava, (2000), p.249.

<sup>115</sup> EL País, January, 1993,p.2.

<sup>116</sup> Un grupito de ancianos se acercó antes de la cena de fin de año a la estatua ecuestre de Svatý Václav (San Wenceslao) en Praga. Alguno lloraba. En el enorme pedestal marmóreo, alguien había

Everybody remembered the 1989 Revolution, which brought up an immense wave of enthusiasm; in contrast, the new government is now attempting to divide the country. The author says that three years ago the best of the nation gathered at the same square that is now filled with the disillusioned men and drunk teenagers. Changes are visible everywhere – typical Czech inns, just like many other things are being sold to foreign investors; the original names are replaced with German or English ones. Slovaks did not feel like celebrating their own independence either. In Bratislava, hardly 3000 people, most of them tourists, came out in the streets. I consider this a picture heavily distorting the reality. Early in the morning squares at Prague and Bratislava were littered with broken glass and smelled after alcohol and vomits. Neither nostalgia nor sadness of citizens ruins politicians' satisfaction. The author intentionally closes his article on a very expressive note, as if likening all the rubbish to the future of Czech and Slovak Republic.<sup>117</sup>

“Checoslovaquia se partió en dos”<sup>118</sup> (Czechoslovakia Is Split-up Into Two Parts) is the headline of an article from *El Mundo*. It refers to the situation before the split-up. The layout was anticipated by many revolutionary changes that allowed the Czech Republic to install new economic reforms and democracy. However, democracy and economy of Slovakia is not mentioned, although these changes occurred during the common state. Success will keep unemployment and

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colocado una gran foto de otro Wenceslao, de Vaclav Havel, el último presidente de la ya extinta Checoslovaquia. Puede que pronto sea el presidente de la nueva República Checa. El poeta seguirá siendo una instancia moral para los checos, tenga o no despacho en el palacio presidencial del Castillo de Praga, pero ya no será la autoridad del Estado. El que ahora manda en Praga es otro, el tercer Wenceslao, Vaclav Klaus, el primer ministro de la República Checa, un hombre duro que cree que los poetas deben limitarse a la escritura y a las tertulias filosóficas. *Ibid.*

<sup>117</sup> “En Bratislava, capital de la nueva Eslovaquia, ni los fuegos artificiales ni las salchichas gratuitas en que el Ayuntamiento había invertido parte de su precario presupuesto animaron a los eslovacos a celebrar su independencia. Menos de tres mil personas, en su mayoría también jueguistas, acudieron a la cita. En otras ciudades eslovacas, las fiestas oficiales se vieron aún menos concurridas. Al despertar la mañana, las dos plazas históricas de Praga y Bratislava estaban cubiertas de basura y cristales, olían a alcohol barato y vómitos.” *Ibid.*

<sup>118</sup> *EL Mundo*, January 2, 1993, p.15.

inflation at low levels. These two problems seem to be very serious for Slovakia. While the Czech Republic is strong, the Slovak Republic has a weak economy. The new Czech Constitution includes references to private ownership, freedom and political pluralism. The Czechs want the Slovaks to preserve pluralist policies.<sup>119</sup> The Czech Republic appears to become the new “success story” in the middle of Europe. On the other hand, there is Slovakia that is taking steps towards its eastern and south-eastern neighbours like Serbia, Romania and Bulgaria. The Slovak Republic is stagnating, and the Czech Republic flourishes, because the burden of benighted Slovakia was taken off the Czechs’ shoulders.<sup>120</sup>

This coverage is a very critical one. It makes the Czech Republic something of a super-hero, and Slovakia just a dull small state somewhere in the Central Europe.

Ramiro Valleparadierna is the reporter, whose articles about the split-up of Czechoslovakia were written in a realistic way (see Chapter: Basic Facts about the Newspapers). For ABC he wrote some very good articles. Just two days after the division, Valleparadierna’s headline read: “Checoslovaquia: la fría separación, que no puede abrigar el terciopelo”<sup>121</sup> (Czechoslovakia: The Cold Separation That Velvet Cannot Warm Up), and description of little “quarrels” between the Slovaks and Czechs followed. Many people are confused. They cannot have dual citizenship anymore and the borders of these states could be crossed only by the citizens of the Czech and Slovak Republic. Valleparadierna claims that the division occurred too quickly, and that the leaders took a very thoughtless decision. Further he reports that “the date of the split-up was known before a good reason for this resolution was given. The state finances are divided into three thirds; one for Slovakia and two for the Czech Republic (this redistribution was made in proportion to the population of the two Republics). The Czech “stole” the federal flag, and this was another point for disagreements between the two nations. The dissolution arose mostly from the political misunderstandings and differences in

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p.15

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. p. 15

<sup>121</sup> ABC, January 2, 1993.

political programmes in the two countries. The panic spreads when it is proclaimed that the two countries with different economy cannot use the same currency. Bratislava had to borrow most of its foreign stock from Prague. The only positive thing is that the koruna (crown) has been the most stable currency in Eastern Europe since the fall of Communism.”<sup>122</sup>

“As for the flag of the Czech Republic, it is the same as the flag of the former Czechoslovakia. Upon the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, the Czech Republic kept the Czechoslovak flag while the Slovak Republic adopted a flag of its own. When the Czech and Slovak Republics separated in 1993, by keeping the flag that was identical with the former flag of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic, the Czech Republic acted in direct violation of the constitutional act that explicitly forbids the former federal symbols to be used by the two successor states. The first flag of Czechoslovakia was white and red. This was identical with the flag of Poland, so a blue triangle was added at the hoist. The flag was banned by the Nazis in 1938, and a horizontal tricolour of white, red, and blue was enforced. The original flag was restored in 1945”<sup>123</sup>. “The current form of the flag of Slovakia was adopted by the Slovak Constitution, which came into force on September 3, 1992. The flag, in common with other Slavic nations, uses the red, white and blue colours.”<sup>124</sup>

It is true that neither the Slovaks nor the Czechs wanted the split-up of Czechoslovakia. On January 1, 1993, the independent Slovak and Czech Republics came into existence. The deputies of the National Council of the Slovak Republic and the government of independent Slovak Republic met at a common solemn session. The deputies took an oath of loyalty to the Constitution of the Slovak Republic and accepted a declaration. The Slovak Republic became a full member of the International Monetary Fund and the Organization for Security

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<sup>122</sup> *ABC*, January 2, 1993.

<sup>123</sup> Flag of Czechoslovakia. In: <[http://www.smso.net/Flag\\_of\\_Czechoslovakia](http://www.smso.net/Flag_of_Czechoslovakia)>, last visited on 28.10.2008. In: Constitutional act. No. 542/1992 Col. on the dissolution of the Czech and Slovak Federative Republic, art. 3 sect. 2.

<sup>124</sup> Flag of Slovakia. In: <[http://www.smso.net/Flag\\_of\\_Slovakia](http://www.smso.net/Flag_of_Slovakia)>, last visited on 28.9. 2008

and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Already in their first hours of existence, the Czech and Slovak Republics were diplomatically recognized by 62 countries of the world.<sup>125</sup> Moreover, the Czech Republic also had many problems at the beginning. Even though the state was freed of the Slovak moans, the Moravians were nevertheless striving for autonomy. For this reason, the pressure and urge for decentralization has not disappeared.<sup>126</sup>

### 3. 3. After Separation: New Problems

Czechoslovakia is dead; the name disappears from the borderline and airports - so "La Triste Resaca De Año Nuevo."<sup>127</sup> The situation is compared to the one in Yugoslavia – both countries were formed at approximately the same time, under similar conditions, but the end of Czechoslovakia involved no bloodshed struggles. "It wasn't the Slovaks who quit; the Czechs were first to leave the common Republic (all articles blame the Slovaks for disintegration of Czechoslovakia; surprisingly enough, Tertsch contradicts them). The Slovaks are annoyed; they feel as if the Czechs somehow tricked them. As early as in 1918 the Slovaks were offered autonomy, but this was never accepted for unknown reasons (it was an agreement for the new state's formation signed by T. G. Masaryk and Woodrow Wilson). Slovaks also deprecate the Prague's centralism that has always pushed them aside. The author reminds the readers of Dr. Tiso and the old Slavic disintegration in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, when the Hungarian tribes arrived and settled in the Danube basin. The national esteem grew separately in both countries. The Czech Republic is planning to become the centre of Europe, while Slovakia is hardly overcoming problems with enormous unemployment and poverty."<sup>128</sup>

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125 Škvarna, Dušan et al., *Lexikón slovenských dejín*, Bratislava: Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo, (1997), p. 170.

126 Leff, Carol Skalnik, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*. Boulder: Westview, (1997), pp. 176-180.

127 El País, January 2, 1993.

128 Ibid.

This article also addresses the issues of differences between the Czech and the Slovak Republics. In Slovakia, unemployment rate was higher than in the Czech Republic, at the time of the division of the Federation. So the situation in Slovakia was worse. “Predictably, the dissolution of the state was itself initially a bad news for the new economies. A major impediment was the flood of new border regulations; the customs union promised at separation collapsed in several months, amid a welter of customs barriers, trade licensing requirements, import duties, tax codes and transit regulations. All of this pushes the trade between the two Republics down to 30% below its former levels in the first six months of 1993.”<sup>129</sup> “Food processing industries were primarily located in the Czech Republic, whereas the Slovak agricultural sector produced most of the raw food. The appearance of international border between the two Republics forced Slovakia into import of poultry, dairy and bakery products, margarine and tobacco, even when the unprocessed agricultural goods had originated in Slovakia.”<sup>130</sup>

The problem between the Slovak majority and the Hungarian minority is very well defined in *La Vanguardia* under the headline “*Hungría busca su lugar entre el polvorín de los Balcanes y la Comunidad Europea*”<sup>131</sup> “The problem between Slovakia and Hungary gets worse. Budapest was used to negotiate with Prague, but it is going to be much harder with Bratislava because of a strong nationalist impact. Mečiar, as usual, is blamed for the animosity between these two countries. The situation among the Hungarian minority is complicated. The Slovaks prolonged the approval of a law on minorities. The dissent deteriorated

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<sup>129</sup> By the end of 1995, the last remnant of the special Czech – Slovak economic relationship was scheduled to be dismantled; since independence, the two economies had operated under a special clearing agreement for payments. The Czech and Slovak governments were negotiating in 1995 for payment arrangements between the two states to shift over to a hard currency basis. Directly taken from Leff, Carol Skalnik. *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State*. Boulder: Westview (1997), pp. 186 – 187.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

<sup>131</sup> *La Vanguardia*, February 1993, p. 9.

when Hungary left the construction of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymáros waterworks after a big investment from Czechoslovakia.”<sup>132</sup>

The problem between the Slovak majority and the Hungarian minority is discussed also in “Dos Caras de Eslovaquia”<sup>133</sup> (Two Faces of Slovakia). “Slovakia has ceased to grow economically and the government is helpless. Mečiar made no effort to change it and the other politicians are turning coats despite the needs of the people, who gave them their votes. Everything is being privatized, unemployment increases, economic crisis grows. Another problem is the disagreement between Slovakia and Hungary concerning the Hungarian minority and the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros waterworks. The author believes that sympathy for Budapest is needed for Slovakia to move on.”<sup>134</sup>

As for the problem with Hungary about the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros waterworks, it all started when the continued increase of Slovakia’s economic indices remained one of the objectives of the plan for the national economy in the 1970s. Considerable funds were spent to finance the development of the Slovak capital, Bratislava, industrialization of the least developed north-eastern part of the country, modernization of the expanding Slovak armaments industry, the first Czechoslovak nuclear power plant located in western Slovakia, and for considerable improvements in the eastern lowlands of the country afflicted by frequent floods or draughts. In the 1980s the joint Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros hydroelectric project on the river Danube, based on a treaty with Hungary, was already under construction. Towards the end of the decade, this project became a highly controversial issue between the two countries involved. This balancing factor in the relationship between Hungary and Slovakia started as a contentious legacy of the communist era, and subsequently turned into a symbolic confrontation of national pride. Prague’s withdrawal from the negotiating process has given all the more importance to the mediating efforts of the European Community. While Slovakia became more assertive in the controversy after the

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<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> El País, April 4, 1994, p. 6.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

separation, the new development in the Hungarian position was a shift from an ecological argument to one questioning the modification of the border as a result of the dam<sup>135</sup>.

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<sup>135</sup> Rupnik, Jacques, The International Kontext, In: Musil, Jiří, The End of Czechoslovakia, Budapest: Central European University Press, (1995), p. 271 - 275.





## 4. PRESENTATION OF THE MAIN ACTORS OF DISSOLUTION IN SPANISH NEWSPAPERS

Concerning the presentation of the main actors in the Spanish press, the easiest way to approach it is to look at the kind of adjectives or explanations are given when mentioning these main actors (including, essentially, Havel, Mečiar and Klaus, as references to Černogurský, Kováč, Mikloško, Křážko and others were scarce). Most commentaries appeared around June 1992, at the time of the elections, and at the beginning of 1993 when the separation effectively took place.

Generally, *El País* considers Havel a great political leader, Mečiar a populist and nationalist and Klaus a liberal, ultraconservative and father of the shock therapy; the harshest among the ultraliberals; a tough man; a pragmatic prime minister. Meanwhile, *La Vanguardia* is much more cautious and only occasionally mentions the communist past of Mečiar; nor do they use praising adjectives to describe Havel. *ABC* does not include many characterizations of these actors.

In addition to the dissolution process itself, the Spanish press covered the Czech and Slovak politicians such as Havel, Klaus and Mečiar and their approach to the break – up of the federal state; when reporting on the major politicians as follows:

### 4. 1. Václav Havel

Havel, as President of ČSFR, is mentioned in the Spanish press on many occasions. *El País* addresses him as a writer and playwright in the article entitled “Un Moralista En Política”,<sup>136</sup> praising his work *Letters for Olga* written during his

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<sup>136</sup> Las Cartas a Olga, de Václav Havel, desde una perspectiva individual, inevitablemente limitada, pero de una concentración y una penetración extrema, permiten conocer el proceso checo mejor que muchos tratados científicos. Havel entró a la prisión en 1979, acusado de formar un movimiento de oposición ilegal, y estuvo en la cárcel, en régimen de trabajos forzados, hasta fines

imprisonment as a highly important and intelligent work. Giving a brief account of his career as a writer, the article focuses on his moral resistance to the communist regime, crowned by his unpredictable fate of the first post-communist president of Czechoslovakia.<sup>137</sup>

Of more weight are the reports from June 6, 1992 “Havel Teme Que El Resultado De Las Elecciones En Checoslovaquia,”<sup>138</sup> in *El País*. This article refers to the elections in Czechoslovakia. According to Havel, the results of these elections could disturb the stability of Central Europe. He also said that should ČSFR split up, it would be bad for the Slovak Republic. The Czech Republic would be considered a “country of the West” and Slovakia a country of Eastern Europe and “Soviet Union”. It appears, from this article, that Havel was not well-disposed towards Slovakia.<sup>139</sup> To support this observation, it could well be argued that Václav Havel acted, in 1990-1992, as a true federalist, although some politicians and scholars tried to present him to the public quite differently. Particularly negative was the impact of his actions following the 1992 elections referred to in this Article, when he participated in the decision over the future fate of the common state. Refused as a candidate for the President of Czechoslovakia by HZDS, he failed to be elected on the 3 July election.<sup>140</sup> According to Petr Pithart, Havel should have abstained from re-running for presidential office following his 3 July debacle, remaining in office until 5 October 1992 (expiry date of his previous term in office as President of CSFR) until the end, without making

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de 1982. En todo ese periodo le permitieron destinar un par de horas por semana a escribir una carta a su mujer. *EL País*, February 6, 1992, p. 18.

<sup>137</sup> “Algunos de sus colegas salieron al exilio, con razones más que justificadas, pero Havel resistió, se fortaleció en la cárcel y escribió una correspondencia de una fuerza moral y estética extraordinaria. Al final se convirtió en el presidente de su país y en el símbolo de las libertades recuperadas. Es una historia que vale la pena conocer por dentro, con atención pensativa”. *EL País*, February 6, 1992, p.19.

<sup>138</sup> *EL País*, June 6, 1992.

<sup>139</sup> “Eslovaquia sería percibida inmediatamente como parte del Este y las tierras checas como parte del Oeste”. *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> Srb Vladimír, Veselý Tomáš, *Rozdělení Československa*, Bratislava 2004, p. 99..

any comments. He failed to do so, thus contributing to the appearance of an irreversible break-up. In the eyes of the public he made an early decision, determining, in a considerable measure, the course of events.<sup>141</sup> Several minutes after the Declaration of Slovak Sovereignty, Havel announced he would abdicate on 20 July at 6 p.m, a fact overwhelmingly criticized by numerous experts and politicians.<sup>142</sup> According to Rastislav Gargulák, a political scientist, Havel resigned in a situation where the fate of the common state was still unresolved, and, most assuredly, still worth fighting for. By abdicating and leaving his office, ČSFR lost its supreme symbol of power, implying that further negotiations between ODS and HZDS would follow.<sup>143</sup>

In the article “Un Jefe De Estado Encargado A Dar Sepultura A Su Propio País”,<sup>144</sup> *El País*, Hermann Tretsch compares the presidency of Václav Havel with that of Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk. He writes that Havel is the second greatest political leader, after Masaryk, in Czechoslovak history.<sup>145</sup> He further describes him as a writer, playwright, the former detainee and a man of great moral and intellectual authority<sup>146</sup>, who suffered from numerous prison sentences imposed on him by the communist regime. The author concludes that Havel, born in the Czech Republic, is naturally a Czech, which means he thinks the Czech way, but not for the Slovaks who felt oppressed under the hegemony of

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<sup>141</sup> Klusáková, J.: *Petr Pithart – Nadoraz*, Praha 1992, p. 97. In: *ibid.*, p. 99.

<sup>142</sup> Srb Vladimír, Veselý Tomáš, p. 99.

<sup>143</sup> Gargulák Rudolf, *Triletí presidenta Václava Havla*, Brno 1993, p. 10,11. In: Srb Vladimír, Veselý Tomáš, p. 99.

<sup>144</sup> *EL País*, June 8, 1992 p. 14.

<sup>145</sup> El resultado de las elecciones generales en las dos repúblicas, checa y eslovaca, que componen la federación que preside, puede suponer el abandono de Havel y la desaparición de este cargo y del propio Estado. Checoslovaquia comenzó hace 75 años su andadura como Estado con una gran figura histórica por jefe del Estado, Thomas Garrige Masaryk. *Ibid.*, p.14.

<sup>146</sup> El presidente de Checoslovaquia, Václav Havel, escritor, dramaturgo, ex preso y gran instancia moral e intelectual, podría sumar pronto a todos estos títulos el de ex jefe del Estado. *Ibid.*, p.14.

Prague.<sup>147</sup> Here it can be again observed that the personality of Havel is always highly admired and presented in a positive sense.

The article called “La Triste Resaca de Año Nuevo”<sup>148</sup> (a Sad Ending of the New Year’s Eve), written by Hermann Tretsch is something of a prediction that Václav Havel might become the new President of the Czech Republic.<sup>149</sup> Contradictory to this, there is also an opinion of Václav Klaus that Havel should not run for the president, but remain what he used to be before, a writer.<sup>150</sup> The facts confirm that the official nomination of his candidacy was submitted on January 18, 1993 by four political parties of the ruling coalition government. On January 26, 1993, the Chamber of Deputies elected Václav Havel to be the first President of the independent Czech Republic.<sup>151</sup> Another source claims that when asked under what circumstances he would not wish to become President of the Czech Republic, Havel made a statement in September 1992, according to which he was haunted by that idea, because the powers of the new Czech presidency were steadily removed in the independent state. “I would not”, he had declared then, like to be a president doomed to wear a tie from morning till evening, to lay flowers on memorials, make festive speeches on anniversaries and attend innumerable lunches and dinners. Despite his claims that he had no desire to be a paper President and that he regarded the collapse of the federation as a personal failure, Havel had acted to maintain the office rather than to stand up or rather stand down for his confidence in the federal Czech and Slovak state, based on the relationship, as he put it, “bound together by thousands of historical, cultural, and

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<sup>147</sup> Sin embargo, Havel es checo y piensa como un checo, y una mayoría de los eslovacos lo considera representante de la hegemonía de Praga y negligente hacia los intereses eslovacos. *Ibid.*, p.14.

<sup>148</sup> *El País*, January 2, 1993, p. 2.

<sup>149</sup> ...Puede que pronto sea el presidente de la nueva República Checa. *Ibid.*, p.2.

<sup>150</sup> El que ahora manda en Praga es otro, el tercer Wenceslao, Vaclav Klaus, el primer ministro de la República Checa, un hombre duro que cree que los poetas deben limitarse a la escritura y a las tertulias filosóficas. *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>151</sup> Srb Vladimír, Veselý Tomáš, *Rozdělení Československa*, Bratislava 2004, p. 99.

personal ties“<sup>152</sup> In this claim he might have been right, his change came within weeks of losing presidency; for Czechs who still believed in the federation it represented an abrupt defeat of the principle.<sup>153</sup>

In ABC, of the same date as the text above, there is an article called “Checos y Eslovacos, más primos que hermanos (The Czechs and Slovaks are cousins rather than brothers.”<sup>154</sup> Havel is mentioned firmly as a “benefactor” who wants to understand the Slovaks and is depressed by the split-up of the state.<sup>155</sup> As already mentioned before in this chapter, for many Czechs President Havel had represented a defender not only of the federation, but also of the citizens’ right to be consulted through referendum on the issue of the country’s fate. Slovaks, on the other hand, had a reason to be irritated by Havel’s aloof attitude to Slovakia. The last nail in the coffin was hammered when HZDS blocked Havel’s re-election as president in July 1992.<sup>156</sup> Later, after Havel’s abdication, an interview with Havel was published in the American Time magazine in August 1992 “.. .to the following question, “Are you relieved to have resigned?” Havel replied: “I am quite relieved, almost happy actually, because when I accomplish something or make an important decision, I always drive others to act rather than react only to what is happening around me, this gives me a feeling of inner freedom and self-confirmation. And everyone needs such self-confirmation. It is

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<sup>152</sup> *Mladá Fronta Dnes*, September 25, 1992. In: Innes, Abby, *Czechoslovakia: The Short Goodbye*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press (2001), p. 216.

<sup>153</sup> Innes, Abby, p. 216.

<sup>154</sup> ABC, January 2, 1993, p. 30.

<sup>155</sup> “ÉL ha sido el checo que más ha intentado entender a los eslovacos, fue el único que luchó hasta el final por la Checoslovaquia unida, porque pensó siempre que ambas repúblicas se necesitaban para no hundirse la una en el Este y la otra en el Oeste, y sin embargo no intentó nunca cortar las alas a Eslovaquia, pero ni él pudo dejar de pensar como un checo y preguntarse ¿Qué harán los eslovacos sin nosotros? Ibid., p. 31.

<sup>156</sup> On 3 July the Federal Parliament failed to elect the new Czechoslovak President, even in repeated rounds of voting. Václav Havel, the only candidate, was rejected by the House of the People and the Slovak section of the House of the Nations, the repeat round elicited only reduced support in the chamber of the Nations. A second election with new candidates was scheduled for 16 July. *Mladá Fronta dnes* 4 July 1992, pp. 1-2. In: Innes, Abby, *Czechoslovakia: The Short Goodbye*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press (2001), p. 216.

*one of the paradoxes of my life that I am experiencing such a creative feeling at the moment of my resignation.” Reacting to the next question: “Some have said the breakup of Czechoslovakia would be a tragedy, some say it is inevitable, and some say it is a good thing.” Havel replied: “If we do become two stable democratic states, then the fact that the state is not large is not a tragedy. If the breakup of our common state should lead to inner instability, chaos, poverty and suffering, that would be the beginning of the emerging tragedy. I do not feel emotionally tied to the Czechoslovak state. I do not place the highest value on the state, but rather on man and humanity.”<sup>157</sup> In this respect, such claims can be marked as signals of the public disappointment on both sides. Following Havel’s abdication, the highly symbolic post was utterly discredited by the failure of the political parties to put forward respectable candidates.*

Another article from ABC “Seis meses después de su renuncia, Havel regresa al Castillo de Praga”<sup>158</sup> also by Ramiro Villapadierna, points out to the boycott of Havel’s presidential election in parliament that did not prevent him from being nominated for the position.<sup>159</sup> Havel congratulates officially Slovakia for its sovereignty.<sup>160</sup> Meanwhile, Slovakia had to develop as quickly as possible the complete structure of state administration. In February 1993, Michal Kováč was elected the President.

In the next article under section “Opinión” entitled El gesto de Havel,<sup>161</sup> the personality of Havel is highly admired and presented in a positive stance. The second paragraph begins with “...an intellectual with a faultless democratic

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<sup>157</sup> Directly quoted from Srb Vladimír, Veselý Tomáš, *Rozdělení Československa*, Bratislava 2004, p. 101, in: Time, August 3, 1992.

<sup>158</sup> ABC, January 27, 1993, p. 30.

<sup>159</sup> “Once de los catorce diputados que tiene este partido en el parlamento pidieron reiteradamente hacer uso de la palabra, durante el debate, para leer uno tras de otro un discurso encendido y por momentos grosero contra Havel, provocando el abondando de la sala por parte del resto de los diputados presentes.” Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>160</sup> “Vaclav Havel es el presidente de los Países Checos, por 109 votos de los 200 que forman la cámara única del parlamento checo, y lo será oficialmente desde el próximo 2 de febrero tras la investidura en el Castillo de Praga, del que salió el pasado 17 de julio con una cazadora al hombro y una felicitación en los labios para Eslovaquia por su declaración de soberanía.” Ibid., p. 30.

<sup>161</sup> El País, July 19, 1992, p. 10.

personal biography, co-founder of Charter 77 – a movement to support human rights that gathered the dissidents to the communist regime-, untiring negotiator, promoter of the so called velvet revolution, visible head of the movement Civic Forum and one of the makers of the transition towards democracy...”<sup>162</sup> It is difficult to find so much praise in so few sentences.

At the beginning of the next paragraph, it appears as if it is the decision of the Slovak parliament, and only this decision, that has decided the separation of Czechoslovakia. The paragraph ends by saying that Slovakia is the less industrialized and with less economic development “y, al parecer, más proclive a pensar que sus males proceden exclusivamente del predominio checo.”<sup>163</sup>(...and, apparently, the one more inclined to think that its ills – misfortunes - come exclusively from the Czech predominance).

Generally, the Spanish press did not bring much information about Havel and his life or career. To sum up, Havel is mentioned mostly as a benefactor of Czechoslovakia, who wanted the best for both Slovaks and Czechs, but Slovakia saw and proclaimed him a non-Slovak. And most of the time he is apparently presented as a clever and wise politician.

#### **4. 2. Václav Klaus**

Václav Klaus, the former Prime Minister of the Czech Republic, the second President of the Czech Republic, is indisputably one of the most important Czech politicians of the recent period. Václav Klaus still has many opponents, who not only criticize him for his alleged arrogance, but they often depict him as a narrow-minded pragmatist interested only in the technology of

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<sup>162</sup> “intelectual de impecable biografía personal democrática, cofundador de Carta 77 –un movimiento en defensa de los derechos humanos que aglutinó a los disidentes del régimen comunista-, negociador incansable, impulsor de la llamada revolución de terciopelo, cabeza visible del movimiento Foro Cívico y uno de los artífices de la transición hacia la democracia...” Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.



power and theoretical economic precepts. However, his personality provides a striking comparison with Mečiar. Although at first look, the eloquent economist seems to stand in complete contrast to Mečiar, their resemblance is unquestionable. Both men created and led the political parties that emerged out of the anti-regime umbrella organizations formed in 1989.<sup>164</sup> In Slovakia, it was VPN –The Public against Violence (PAV) and in the Czech Republic OF – the Civic Forum (CF).<sup>165</sup>

As regards the Spanish press, V. Klaus is often mentioned in *El País*, such as for example “ EL Resultado Electoral En Checoslovaquia Pone En Peligro La Unidad Del Pais<sup>166</sup>.”(The results of the elections in Czechoslovakia are dangerous for the unity of the country). The author, J. M. Marti Font, refers to Klaus’s plans. Font informs how V. Klaus wants to continue the policy of severe re-structuring, changes and economic reforms. Not excluding the possible division of the country; however, at first he supported the attempts to make a federation satisfactory to both nations.<sup>167</sup> On the other hand, if this plan fails, this country

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<sup>164</sup> Haughton Tim, *Constraints and Opportunities of Leadership in Post-Communist Europe*, University of Birmingham, UK 2005, p. 139.

<sup>165</sup> The Civic Forum’s chief goal was indeed sweeping. It was, as if it had been for the dissidents back in 1968, to return Czechoslovakia to Europe, culturally, economically and politically. The Socialist youth also had a legitimate point in that the Forum’s rhetoric of non-partisanship had from the beginning obscured a very real political bias. Financial caution – a strong tradition in Czech government, even under the Communists – was now promoted as a call for austerity. As well as advocating the rapid introduction of a market economy, the Civic Forum encouraged the idea that the reformed economic space would thereafter stand entirely beyond government, in the sense of political jurisdiction. In other words, the Forum, from the very beginning, sought to carve out truly free- market –liberal- territory. Innes, Abby, *Czechoslovakia: the Short Goodbye*, New Haven and London:Yale University Press (2001) p. 80.

<sup>166</sup> *EL País*, June 7, 1992, p. 2.

<sup>167</sup> “En los territorios de la república checa (Bohemia y Moravia), los tres partidos nacidos del Foro Cívico y que apoyan de hecho la política conservadora practicada por Václav Klaus, consiguen hacerse con una mayoría que les permitirá seguir adelante con el duro programa de reformas económicas. Klaus, sin embargo, declaró anoche que no descarta una separación entre checos y eslovacos, aunque la primera carta que quiere jugar es "la construcción de una federación

will have to be divided. Moreover, the strict reforms made by Václav Klaus were well accepted in the country, mostly economic amendments. It is a well known fact that in 1990/1992 Klaus compromised on the social welfare reform, sanctioning the continuation of universal benefits, for instance, keeping in the cabinet those who were not neo-liberals, but also dampening the potential backlash against neo-liberalism<sup>168</sup>. Klaus acted strategically, at times tempering his radical Thatcherite instincts by tailoring them to suit the public opinion and to maintain politically advantageous alliances.<sup>169</sup> There is also a note about the relationship between Klaus and Mečiar.<sup>170</sup> According to this article, the correlation between these two politicians is great and they both want just the best for Czechoslovakia. Though, each supported the coexistence of Czechs and Slovaks on a different basis.

Another remark on Klaus is from the article “Checos y eslovacos, escépticos ante la partición del país”<sup>171</sup>(Czechs and Slovaks are Skeptic of the Break-up of the State). Hermann Tretsch writes about the advantages of the new Czech Republic. At that time Václav Klaus acted as the head of the country, until the new/old president is elected. Klaus is confident that the dissolution of Czechoslovakia is a step forward in progress, a new successful beginning for his country. Klaus says that the Czech Republic can go ahead and develop further on. In his defense of the government in 1992, Klaus said that the main aim was not just to divide the state into two new republics, but also to split the country in peace. According to the author of the article, the new government does not offer an illusion of the future rather its intention is to show the reality to all the people. Klaus maintains that the reform in the Czech Republic is very successful and that

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razonable" entre unos y otros. "Si no es posible, habrá que separarse de manera rápida y civilizada", precisó." Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>168</sup>Orenstein Mitchell, *Out of the Red: Building Capitalism and Democracy in Postcommunist Europe*, Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press (2001)p. 48.

<sup>169</sup> Haughton, p.139.

<sup>170</sup> “Si las relaciones personales entre Václav Klaus y Vladimír Mečiar son excelentes, no sucede lo mismo entre el líder eslovaco y el dramaturgo convertido en presidente.” Ibid., p.3.

<sup>171</sup> *El País*, January 2, 1993, p. 2.

the wicked tongues and bad predictions were just rubbish and gossips. The good relationships with the Slovak Republic are of top importance for Klaus and his government, so are the relations between the Czech Republic and Austria, Germany, Poland, Hungary and the USA.<sup>172</sup> It can be said that Klaus was aware, in particular, of the constraints and opportunities accorded by in the framework of the politics in Czechoslovakia/the Czech Republic, and shaped his strategy accordingly.

Klaus is well known because of his arrogant, strict, haughty, uncompromising policies and ideas. These facts about him are found in the article "Final De Trayecto"<sup>173</sup> (The End of a Way). The author is again Hermann Tretsch who hints at the views of Václav Klaus concerning the break-up of Czechoslovakia. Although it is a failure for the ordinary citizens, Klaus tries to persuade himself, and the people around that the split-up was the best choice. Klaus' idea is to have proud and stern people in his country, such as his political line and his economic policy are<sup>174</sup>. Klaus' austerity is shown also in the article bearing the title "Absurdo Divorcio"<sup>175</sup> (An Absurd Divorce). This article reflects back to the year of 1992, when Klaus gave an option to the Slovaks; there would either be the old regime or the country will be dissolved. Klaus was strictly against autonomy of Slovakia as a part of Czechoslovakia. He proclaimed that the only

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<sup>172</sup> "Según Klaus, "la reforma está siendo un éxito excepcional" en la república checa y su Gobierno ha demostrado que "eran falsos los pronósticos de aquellos enemigos de la reforma que auguraban millones de desempleados y desórdenes sociales". Klaus insistió en que las relaciones con Eslovaquia tendrán máxima prioridad también después de la división, seguidas de los vínculos con Austria, Alemania, Polonia, Hungría y EE UU." Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>173</sup> *El País*, January 1993, p. 2.

<sup>174</sup> "Klaus quiere un país duro como el, con éxito, y emplacable. Una red social, apoyo a las víctimas de la transformación económica, desaceleración de los cambios para intentar salvar algunas empresas; le parecen detestables ideas de socialistas y criptocomunistas. "No hay economía social de mercado. Hay economía de mercado a secas, sin adjetivos," le gusta decir." Ibid., p.2.

<sup>175</sup> *El País*, January 3, 1993, p. 12.

solution was the break-up.<sup>176</sup> The Czechoslovak divorce gave both to Václav Klaus and to Vladimír Mečiar the opportunity to build the two new states on their own visions. As for Klaus, a neo-liberal with a deep antipathy to the state in principle, an ideological rather than entrepreneurial explanation might be offered for his party's continued unwillingness to build productive state institutions; he believed neither in automatic shrinking of the state, nor in the flowering of the Czech civil society, nor in the creation of transparent markets.<sup>177</sup>

The article in *El País*, "Nadie Puede Acusarme De Contribuir A Dividir Checoslovaquia"<sup>178</sup> (Nobody Can Accuse me of Contributing to the Split-up of Czechoslovakia) is focused on the situation in the Czech Republic from Klaus's point of view (an interview by J. M. Marti Font). In this interview Klaus said that he felt Spain was afraid of Prague joining the EU. Klaus also said that those four months after dissolution, the situation in the Czech Republic was stable socially and economically and the break-up is just the matter of the past.<sup>179</sup> As for him, only the Slovaks were in favour of the split-up and the task for the Czechs was to make it in a peaceful manner. On the other hand, he admitted that life in Czechoslovakia was much better and he would prefer living in Czechoslovakia<sup>180</sup>. The economic situation is quite good, and Klaus proclaimed that unemployment was below 5%. Although many factories were closed down, the private sector was growing and spreading quickly. As a propagator of the liberal policies he claimed the state had no right to influence the market economy.<sup>181</sup> As far as Slovakia

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<sup>176</sup> "Klaus rejaza tajantemente la idea confederal: o se mantiene la federación que existe o se va a la separación. El absurdo resultado ha sido una división, que, en principio, nadie quería." Ibid., p.12

<sup>177</sup> Innes, Abby, *Czechoslovakia: the Short Goodbye*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press (2001) p. 220.

<sup>178</sup> El País, May 9, 1993 p. 9.

<sup>179</sup> "Checa es realmente estable, tanto política como socialmente. A nuestro pesar, la división del país ha provocado un choque externo adicional en nuestra economía." Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>180</sup> "La separación la hicieron en un ciento por ciento, repito, en un ciento por ciento, los eslovacos, a los checos nos quedó tener que organizarla pacíficamente, pero estaríamos muy felices de vivir todavía en Checoslovaquia." Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>181</sup> "Ya lo hemos contabilizado incluso en el presupuesto del Estado calculando un crecimiento del desempleo de hasta un 4% o un 5%. Hay muchos procesos paralelos funcionando en este país.

concerns, he said that he could not answer any question about the future of that country. In the past he favoured the federation of the two states. At the end of this interview, he ensures Spain, again, that the Czech Republic was not looking for any financial assistance. Therefore the Spanish government need not worry that Spain may lose its position of a poor state, with all the money from the European Community flowing to the new states.<sup>182</sup> Further in the interview Klaus mentioned that the fact that because of the peaceful break-up of Czechoslovakia, in contrast to Yugoslavia, caused misinformation in Europe, so that many countries didn't know about the split-up.<sup>183</sup>

In the rest of the Spanish newspapers under the scrutiny, there were just few and brief remarks concerning Klaus as a politician. Only in *El Mundo*, the article "Checoslovaquia: un divorcio no deseado"<sup>184</sup> (Czechoslovakia: Undesirable Divorce), there is one paragraph describing Klaus and his theory that Slovakia means a brake for the Czechs and without this little state, the Czech Republic

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Sigue habiendo un almacenamiento de masa laboral, ya que las empresas esperan un aumento de la demanda, pero, al mismo tiempo, hay una gran capacidad de absorción en nuestra economía, ya que el sector privado crece a una velocidad increíble y se están creando grandes oportunidades cada día. Teníamos un sector de servicios muy subdesarrollado y ahí hay otra tremenda reserva de empleo." *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>182</sup> "No sé si España está a favor o en contra de nuestra entrada en la CE, pero me temo que tiene algunos miedos irracionales de que países como la República Checa vayan a constituirse en el grupo de los países pobres de la CE y que la redistribución que va de los ricos a los pobres dentro de la CE cambie en contra de los intereses de los países actualmente pobres, como España. Comprendo que la entrada de los países poscomunistas moverá a España hacia el punto medio de ingresos en el contexto comunitario. Puedo entender este miedo, pero puedo asegurarle que la última cosa que la República Checa pide es dinero. No lo necesitamos, no lo queremos. Militamos agresivamente contra todo tipo de redistribución, por lo que no creo que pueda haber temores de que nos llevemos algo." *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>183</sup> "Seguimos las resoluciones de la ONU. Han pasado varios meses desde la separación de Checoslovaquia y estamos muy satisfechos de haberlo conseguido de manera diferente a la de Yugoslavia. Somos expertos en dividir países, así que si Yugoslavia nos hubiera pedido asistencia técnica se la hubiéramos dado felices." *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>184</sup> *EL Mundo*, January 3, 1993, p. 5.

would be able to join the European Union much earlier.<sup>185</sup> However, the author concludes that Slovakia was not the brake.

Ultimately, Klaus appears in other newspapers mostly because of his strong beliefs and arrogance.

#### **4. 3. Vladimír Mečiar**

This Slovak politician is dealt with by the majority of articles. He was and still is one of the most controversial leaders at the Czechoslovak and Slovak political scene.

Initially, in summer 1992, Mečiar is referred to in the context of the elections in Czechoslovakia. At first, the article “Los checoslovacos acudirán a las urnas con el destino del país en el juego<sup>186</sup> (Czechoslovaks To Vote With Their Country’s Fate At Stake) predicted that two totally opposed parties would win the upcoming elections in the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic. The author points out that Mečiar’s HZDS party plans to set up the new conditions, adopt a new constitution, elect the new President and call for a referendum.<sup>187</sup> Knowingly, HZDS soon after it was formed in 1991, became gradually synonymous with Vladimír Mečiar, as he was both its founder and top representative. In the electoral terminology the party founded and led by Mečiar was the country’s most successful party through the first decade of its independence. The party’s centrist political appeal, with emphasis on the Slovak

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<sup>185</sup> “Puestos en la balanza, los inconvenientes pesan más que las ventajas. El ingreso en la CE se retrasará, pese a que Klaus pensó de lo contrario al haber soltado Praga el lastre de su pariente pobre. El capital exterior dejará de afluir a los dos países, dada la incertidumbre creada y quedará enterrada, en fin, la idea de un Estado-encrucijada centroeuropeo destinado a servir de puente económico y cultural con el Este. “Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>186</sup> *El País*, May 21, 1992 p.6.

<sup>187</sup> En Eslovaquia probablemente ganaría el Movimiento por Eslovaquia Democrática, de Vladimír Mečiar, un carismático dirigente que ha pregonado a los cuatro vientos su intención de declarar la soberanía de Eslovaquia después de las elecciones, adoptar una Constitución puramente eslovaca, introducir la figura de un presidente eslovaco y convocar enseguida un referéndum. Ibid., p. 6.

national interests, Christian basis, and the economic reforms was designed to address a wide spectrum of voters.<sup>188</sup>

The next article from *El País* “Profundas Grietas En La Federación,”<sup>189</sup> (Profound Divisions In Federation) informs on the results of the elections in Czechoslovakia labeling Mečiar as a populist of the winning party.<sup>190</sup> In the Slovak Republic the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia triumphed with 37.26 per cent of the votes, and the Slovak National Party with 7.42 per cent as the fourth strongest party.<sup>191</sup> Having won a substantial plurality of seats in the Slovak National council, Mečiar formed a coalition with the Slovak National Party, but offered its leaders only one Cabinet seat, the Economic Ministry. HZDS’s electoral success placed the party and its dominant leader at the center of the Slovak politics and Mečiar began to be finally projected by himself as the father of the Slovak nation.

The dissolution of Czechoslovakia was taking shape. The evidence in the Spanish press can be found in *El País*, under the title “EL Resultado Electoral Hace Inevitable La División Del País.”<sup>192</sup> Font reports on the situation in Czechoslovakia between Mečiar and Klaus. The election results have set Klaus and Mečiar against each other. Havel entrusted Klaus with the formation of the new government before the official election results.<sup>193</sup> The results of the elections

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<sup>188</sup> Haughton Tim, *Constraints and Opportunities of Leadership in Post-Communist Europe*, University of Birmingham, UK 2005, p. 139.

<sup>189</sup> *El País*, June 7, 1992, p. 3.

<sup>190</sup> “Pero un 37,2% de los 51 escaños eslovacos del Parlamento Federal se los lleva el Movimiento para una Eslovaquia Democrática (HZDS) del populista Mečiar, el hombre que anunció la inmediata soberanía de Eslovaquia tras las elecciones, y los separatistas del Partido Nacional Eslovaco un 7,3%.” *Ibid.*, p. 3.

<sup>191</sup> Škvarna Dušan et al, *Lexikón Slovenských Dejín*, Slovenské Pedagogické Nakladateľstvo, Bratislava (1997), p. 174.

<sup>192</sup> *El País*, June 8, 1992, p. 2.

<sup>193</sup> “Los resultados definitivos de las elecciones celebradas el viernes y el sábado en Checoslovaquia han dejado frente a frente al conservador checo Václav Klaus contra el populista eslovaco Vladimír Mečiar, haciendo prácticamente inevitable la división del país en dos Estados. El presidente Václav Havel, cuyo futuro político pende de un hilo, encargó a Klaus la formación del

in June 1992 strengthened the inclinations towards separation. Based on the victory of this scale and the support of the ultra right SNS, Mečiar took Slovakia to independence, at the same time establishing himself as Prime Minister of the independent country. At the time of achieving independence, however, the coalition was already showing signs of having become a personal vehicle of Mečiar's power building.<sup>194</sup> Gradually, Mečiar replaced ministerial leaders by his friends and supporters, and also expanded the government influence over the state-run radio and television. The opposition parties and even members of his own party were critical. However, the more criticism came his way, the more sensitive and power-grabbing Mečiar became determined of the importance to establish and confirm his personal dominance over the Slovak government.<sup>195</sup> As for the article, reference was made to the fact that the two leaders has different ideas of the state organization, a different form of government.<sup>196</sup> After the elections, the leading Czech and Slovak political figures attempted to find a compromise by negotiations.<sup>197</sup> As it appears, the 1992 elections in Czechoslovakia led directly to the break-up of the federal state, giving Mečiar the leading role in the drama.

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Gobierno federal incluso antes de hacerse públicos los resultados oficiales y sin mencionar para nada al eslovaco Mečiar." Ibid. p. 2.

<sup>194</sup> Goldman, Minton, F., Slovakia Since Independence, A Struggle for Democracy, London (1999), p. 61.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., p.63.

<sup>196</sup> "Mientras que Klaus insistía que la reforma económica en curso, una terapia de choque neoliberal del más puro corte thatcheriano, era "innegociable" Meciar decía que "es muy difícil un compromiso constitucional por el tema de la reforma económica". Ibid.

<sup>197</sup> On 17 June, 1992, Vladimír Mečiar and Václav Klaus negotiated about the composition of the federal government in Prague. Klaus declared that he was interested in the Office of the prime minister of the Czech Republic (which he gained on 2 July 1992) and would not accept any other Office in the federal government. Both sides agreed that each republic would have its own budget and that the distribution of funds from the federal state budget would be halted. On 19-20 June, 1992, negotiations between the representatives of HZDS and ODS took place in Bratislava. They agreed to reduce the number of ministries they filled. Moreover, the federal government was to understand its mandate as temporary. See in Škvarna at al., p.172.



According to an article from Vivienne Schnitzer in *El País Rhetórica hecha realidad*<sup>198</sup> (Rhetorics Turned Truth), Mečiar appeals to the Sovereignty of Slovakia. He called for a new temporary government ruling until the split-up of Czechoslovakia.<sup>199</sup> Within a few weeks, on the 17<sup>th</sup> July 1992, the Slovak National Council proclaimed the Declaration of Sovereignty of Slovakia.<sup>200</sup> The preparation of the new Constitution as the fundamental law of the independent Slovakia accelerated. Arguably, the biggest problem was that the Slovaks agreed on a very tight time limit for adopting the constitution (due to its symbolic value) and allowed themselves little time to deliberate. As mentioned earlier, the drafting of the constitution began with the Declaration of Slovak Sovereignty by the Slovak Parliament in July 1992, and by the end of the month, the draft of the new Constitution was already approved.<sup>201</sup>

The Czech and Slovak leaders tried to reach a compromise. An article from *El País*, *El Eslovaco Meciar A Favor De La Cohabitación Con Los Checos*<sup>202</sup> informs that Mečiar wants the Czechs and Slovaks to live in one country together in a confederation.<sup>203</sup> He meets Klaus and Havel in order to negotiate on his

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<sup>198</sup> *El País*, June 10, 1992, p.2.

<sup>199</sup> Según el comunicado elaborado ayer por el Movimiento para una Eslovaquia Democrática (HZDS), tras la entrevista celebrada con Václav Klaus, Meciar insiste en proclamar la soberanía y promueve la idea de crear un Gobierno provisional federal que funcione hasta la realización de sendos referendos sobre la independencia en las repúblicas checa y eslovaca, organizados por los respectivos Parlamentos nacionales. *El País*, June 10, 1992, p.2.

<sup>200</sup> Voting for the acceptance of the declaration were the deputies of the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, Slovak National Party, and the Party of the Democratic Left (113 for, 10 abstained and 24, mostly from the Christian Democratic Movement and the Hungarian Parties, voted against). See in Škvarna et al. p. 173.

<sup>201</sup> Kopecký Petr, *Parliaments in the Czech and Slovak Republics: Party competitions and parliamentary institutionalization*, Aldershot: Ashgate (2001), p. 36. In: Haughton Tim, *Constraints and Opportunities of Leadership in Post-Communist Europe*, University of Birmingham, UK (2005), p. 83.

<sup>202</sup> *El País*, June 13, 1992.

<sup>203</sup> Vladimír Mečiar, líder del Movimiento para una Eslovaquia Democrática (HZDS), vencedor en la parte eslovaca de las recientes elecciones celebradas en Checoslovaquia, se mostró ayer a favor de una cohabitación entre checos y eslovacos en el seno de una confederación...ibid.

proposal. Mečiar proclaims that he does not want to divide their state, but he wants these two nations to live in the same state. During July and August, Mečiar tried to move closer to the Czech position on power-sharing and confederation. He withdrew the demand for separate Slovak banking and currency system and backed off on previous demands that Slovakia be given its own representation seat in the United Nations. There is evidence of Mečiar's tactic of overbidding, for confederation from the Czech government that many others considered resolutely centrist. It afforded the alibi Klaus would need for hastening the split of the state.<sup>204</sup>

Ricardo Estarriol from *La Vanguardia* writing in *La División de Checoslovaquia no desestabiliza Europa Central*<sup>205</sup> (The Division Of Czechoslovakia does not Destabilize Central Europe) presents Mečiar as a man who made the process of dissolution faster and looking from the neutral standpoint; it is questionable whether this step would be positive or negative in his career and for Slovakia. The same author captured the main idea of Mečiar's policy. Mečiar, primarily supporting officially proclaimed autonomy for Slovakia within the federal state; did not fancy the dissolution of Czechoslovakia. Generally, Estarriol writing about Mečiar, is much less critical than the articles published in *EL País*.

The following articles were written early in 1993. Surprisingly, not blaming Mečiar for the break-up of Czechoslovakia, they claimed he required autonomy of Slovakia within Czechoslovakia but Klaus was against it. Klaus insisted the Slovaks must either accept the federation in its present form or leave the federation. The headline read: "Absurdo divorcio."<sup>206</sup> Yet, the first problems appeared in the new Slovak Republic. The relations with the Hungarian government were not particularly good. Mečiar tried to weaken the rights of Hungarian minority in Slovakia, as described in the article "La Oposición eslovaca

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<sup>204</sup> Abby, p. 184.

<sup>205</sup> *La Vanguardia*, December 29, 1992, p.7.

<sup>206</sup> *EL País*, January 3, 1993, p. 12.

deberá confirmar su lealtad al nuevo Estado”<sup>207</sup> (The Slovak Opposition Has To Confirm Its Loyalty To The New State). Basically, Mečiar and other Slovak nationalist politicians were furious over the Hungarian efforts to help and encourage the Hungarian minority. Mečiar considered the problems with the Hungarian community a matter of domestic concern. This problem was to persist in the Slovak Republic indefinitely.

Another coverage concerning Mečiar and the problems with the Hungarian minority in Slovakia appears in the same newspaper, following the line of the above article “Eslovaquia Inquieta a la Minoría Hungara”<sup>208</sup> (Hungarian Minority at Ease in Slovakia). The author of this article quotes Mečiar saying that the real danger for the Central Europe is not Slovakia, but the state to the south.<sup>209</sup>

The first crisis in Slovakia gets published in *El País* under the headline “Eslovaquia Sufre Su Primer crisis al no lograr el Parlamento elegir presidente”<sup>210</sup> (Slovakia Suffers Its First Crisis Because Parliament Fails to Elect its President). The new president of the Slovak Republic was not elected in the second round. Vladimír Mečiar fell into disfavour for his visits to the countries east of Slovakia, e.g. the Ukraine. Although, according to him the aim of these visits was to improve the relations with eastern neighbours.

As for the problem with the elections in Slovakia, Ramiro Villapadierna, the reporter of *ABC*, using the headline “Cumbre centroeuropea sin Mečiar en la investidura de Havel”<sup>211</sup>,“ (Central European Meeting Without Mečiar at Havel’s investiture) writes a short article about the situation.. “It is strange that Mečiar does not take part in the elections as a candidate, he calls Roman Kováč instead of himself, but then puts his candidate’s political career to death. Roman Kováč was

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<sup>207</sup> *EL País*, January 3, 1993, p. 4.

<sup>208</sup> *EL País*, April 2, 1993, p. 6.

<sup>209</sup> “Eslovaquia no es un riesgo para la seguridad en Europa central, ha repetido el primer ministro de ese país, Vladimír Meciar, pero, "la verdadera amenaza está en el Sur", *ibid.* p. 6.

<sup>210</sup> *EL País*, January 28, 1992, p.4.

<sup>211</sup> *ABC*, February 3, 1993, p. 34.

unsuccessful in two rounds. He was not the right person for the office of the President<sup>212</sup> Here Mečiar is criticized for his non-diplomatic and immature scene, when he could not hide his feelings about the situation.

The article called “Dos caras de Eslovaquia”<sup>213</sup> (Two Faces of Slovakia) has a fitting title, bringing information about the sad economic and political situation in Slovakia. “Mečiar has not done anything good for his country and he is always acting in opposition of the ideas of President Michal Kováč. Mečiar could not accept presidential powers. The president is not just a formal head of state, he is also active in state policies, while the Prime Minister is just his adviser. Ramiro Villapadierna, the author, shares his personal experience during his meeting with Mečiar. He was surprised at his gentle behaviour and perfect manners, wondering why this politician is often criticised for his imperturbable manners and improper expressions. During this interview, Mečiar was not the Prime Minister anymore. He was speaking about problems with the Hungarian minority and blamed the other political parties in Slovakia for their unrealistic political programmes, while his national party tried to form a new Republic.

Another issue was his privatization attempts, which were much criticised. Mečiar was for a slow and gradual privatization; the other politicians wanted to acquire property in a short time.

Mečiar’s comeback to the political scene in September 1993 before the elections is extensively covered. Mečiar is blamed for the catastrophic policy, but defends himself because the results of his governance are very positive. For example the Slovak monetary unit, koruna is stable, the state reserves are growing, foreign trade is advancing and more than 15% of domestic production is being exported.<sup>214</sup>

To conclude, Mečiar is a politician with two faces. On the one hand, he is a great powerful man with big ambitions. However, his second face is that of an

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<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

<sup>213</sup> EL País, April 4, 1994, p.6.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

arrogant and unpredictable person. In the Spanish press he is presented as a big man of big ideas. On the other hand, his decisions are frequently criticised.

## **5. LANGUAGE IN SPANISH NEWSPAPERS**

Based on the fact that most Spanish readers are not familiar with the social and political situation in Czechoslovakia or in the two new countries formed after the split-up, it may be interesting to analyze the vocabulary and some statements and phrases appearing in the main-stream media, the news and articles dealt with in this work. In many cases the same sentences, adjectives or verbs used in different articles can exceed the meaning originally intended. It is a well known fact that in Spain, full of history of internal problems, national demands, and the civil war of the first half of the last century, provoked mainly by the Spanish nationalism – the words occur in typical semantic fields. The following brief outline is based on most frequent words and phrases appearing in the headlines and the contents of the articles and editorials covered by this study.

### **5. 1. *EL PAÍS***

As early as in 1991, when the future two Republics began to take diverging roads, with the demands on the Slovak side growing stronger and with the uncompromising attitude increasing on the Czech side, the language chosen by the *El País* daily implied the side it was taking, patronizing one of the two rivals, clearly without any previous attention drawn (in the articles produced) to its favorite. The attitudes of special correspondents, reporters from Vienna or Prague, and quite rarely from Bratislava, were unambiguously and clearly opposing the new borderline being imposed in Europe. The most noteworthy articles were written for example by Hermann Tertsch, the opponent of disintegration of the Federation throughout the whole process, raising the issue of

the former Slovak State constituted with the support of the German National Socialists during W.W. II, looking for its parallels with current trends, and hoping that the readers will find the interconnection between the new Slovak state and the former (fascist) state on their own. A good example of this reporter's aversion to the process of disintegration was his article published in the daily's supplement under the headline "Eslovaquia, una, pobre y libre"<sup>215</sup> (Slovakia, a single, poor and free country), in which he tried to invoke the links between the ideas of the developing democratic Slovak state and the fascist Spanish regime of General Franco whose slogan was quite similar: "one-single, great and free country", referring to Spain. Tertsch's article is a *par excellence* case of journalist xenophobia in describing Slovakia not infrequently with adjectives such as "pobre, católico, antisemita"<sup>216</sup> (poor, Roman Catholic, antisemitist), and designating the Federation as a "progresista, fraternal"<sup>217</sup> (progressive and brotherly) institution.

Without any hesitation the daily often applies negative attributes commonly used in the Spanish politics, for example "separatist", when relating to the Slovak side but never to the Czech side. Vivianne Schnitzer, the *El País* correspondent in Vienna occasionally visiting Bratislava, does not hesitate to include catastrophic factors in her commentaries "una nueva división entre el este y el oeste en Europa"<sup>218</sup> (a new division between the East and the West in Europe), as the only damaging outcome of the split-up of the country. Understandably, the Slovak embassy in Madrid voiced, internally, its concerns about these issues, proposing solutions promoting the interests of Slovak diplomacy<sup>219</sup>.

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<sup>215</sup> *EL País*, November 22, 1992, p. 42.

<sup>216</sup> Ibid.

<sup>217</sup> Ibid.

<sup>218</sup> *El País*, June 8, 1992, p. 3.

<sup>219</sup> Such as in its note to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bratislava, which raises concerns about the media coverage of Slovakia in Spanish print media, particularly in *El País*, where "[Schnitzer's article] is the first such of its kind bringing unfavorable and non-objective information about Slovakia[...]. To counter this, it is proposed to invite several Spanish journalists for a one-week stay in Slovakia, with a reasonable schedule, arrange their interviews with leading Slovak politicians

The daily's editorials frequently make use of the terms raising negative attitudes and feelings towards the split-up process or towards the participants of this process, in particular one of the parties, to which most of the critical adjectives are being attributed. The split-up is associated with economic failure brought about by capricious autocrats as described specifically in the issue under the headline in the section opinion "*Separación pacífica*"<sup>220</sup> (Peaceful Separation). Numerous phrases and attributes appearing in succession predict bad and poor results caused by the split-up, evoking the ghosts of uncompromising Spanish nationalism. La "inquietud europea ante la conmoción que sacude a Checoslovaquia"<sup>221</sup> (European Concerns for Shuddering and Shaking Czechoslovakia ), "pérdida con el proceso de seguridad y estabilidad de Europa"<sup>222</sup> (the great loss for the European Security and Stability), "los serios motivos de preocupación ante el proceso"<sup>223</sup> (deep concerns for the current development ), "la afirmación de que la separación solo puede empeorar las cosas"<sup>224</sup> (contentions about 'the split-up only making the matters worse'), "que la población tenga que pagar un alto precio"<sup>225</sup> (that or about 'the population that will pay a high price'), "las mentiras impresas como sobre, "la exigencia de que se hable sólo eslovaco"<sup>226</sup> (haciendo referencia a la minoría húngara), (presentation of lies, such as the requirement of one official majority language is the proof of the exclusion of the vernacular of the Hungarian minority), or comparisons with a permanent nightmare of reappearance of the Kosovo situation, with the process

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and a tour of places and sights of interest[...] This practice [...] is common in countries such as Germany, in Spain itself and certainly Hungary, as clearly follows from articles by certain journalists." See Slovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs Archive ref. no. 381/93 of 05 April 1993. For similar concerns, involving stances, see 380/93.

<sup>220</sup> *EL País*, June 22, 1992, p.14.

<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

serving the sole purpose of opening the topic of the “la revisión de fronteras”<sup>227</sup> (revision of the borders). All of these phrases and attributes, maintained by the daily throughout the entire process of the split-up of Czechoslovakia, show the position, in which, viewed from the present standpoint and seen in the historical perspective, any person should be blushing with shame for supporting such visions.

## **5.2. *EL MUNDO***

Despite its conservative outlooks, the publishing line is against the changes of any borders in Europe, reporting and bringing factual information without any biased side-taking.

However, in one of its issues, the opinion of the split-up was fully revealed. Under the headline “Checoslovaquia, un divorcio no deseado”<sup>228</sup> (Czechoslovakia, Undesired Divorce) the attention is drawn to unfavorable impact of the entire process. The reader is made to believe that it is necessary and useful to continue with the existence the common state, or otherwise the situation will result in skepticism and uneasiness in the divided nations. It may, however, be mentioned, that the author, although referring to peaceful divorce, stresses that the divorce was not desired by the people, anyway. This issue is marked with a generally pessimist accent of the resulting disadvantages prevailing over the advantages, also slowing down access to the European Union. The author blames Slovakia for being the initiator of the process, maintaining that even justified demands could bring unfavorable effects. It is also claimed that nationalistic demands may prove to be very harmful. And finally, in its conclusion, the article attacks the European politicians and the politicians in Czechoslovakia approving the division of Czechoslovakia for it may mean the end of any promising and optimistic future.

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<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> *El Mundo*, January 3, 1993, p.5.



This daily also published an interview with a Moravian translator from the Spanish language Miloslav Uličný who places all the responsibility on the Slovak politicians for their preference of independence before insistence on the common state with the Czechs, considering the creation of the new state a “prueba de fascismo made in USA”<sup>229</sup> (test of fascism made in USA) in the BABELIA supplement).

### 5. 3. *ABC*

Conservative and monarchist ideology of the famous Madrid daily is no obstacle for criticism, found in the majority of its articles, of the entire process occurring in the Czech and Slovak Federation, emphasizing that the benefits will be scarce, calling the division a cold-blooded act. The newspaper had a permanent correspondent in the zone, Ramiro Villapadierno, well known among the European journalists by his polite and well-mannered articles, in which, despite reference to a “cold, merciless split-up” he was the first who dared to oppose the official theory of the split-up, maintaining that “Checoslovaquia desapareció también, demostrando en el fondo, la artificialidad de su concepto y en la forma educada la impronta de la alta civilización a la que checos y eslovacos pertenecieron una vez”<sup>230</sup>, (Czechoslovakia showed the disingenuous and artificial nature of the common state in a cultural manner adapted from the civilized world to which the Czechs and Slovaks justly belonged.) His statement “no habrá dos pueblos que, artificialmente obligados a vivir juntos, se lleven mejor al fin y al cabo que los eslovacos y los checos”<sup>231</sup> (there are no other two nations bound to be living together in an artificial union terminating the existence of a common state in a way superior to what the Czechs and Slovaks did) is a lucid example of how to perceive the process also by the remaining parts of the Spanish press. The

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<sup>229</sup> *El Mundo*, January 4 1992, p. 3.

<sup>230</sup> *ABC*, January 2 1993, pp. 30-31.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*

author, however, continues that a possibility of uncertain effects of the process, still exist, “dada la imprevisibilidad de ciertos esquemas mentales heredados del totalitarismo individualista que invitan a no sentar nunca dogma sobre la compleja área centroeuropea”<sup>232</sup> (bearing in mind unpredictability of some mental schemes of the heirs of individual totalitarianism and impossibility of creating any dogma applicable to the whole territory of Central Europe). The biography of and interview with this reputed journalist of European standards is included in the Annex, pages 166 and 160.

According to another journalist, Francisco Eguiagaray, Czechoslovakia is described as “estado inventado al final de la 1ª. Guerra Mundial”<sup>233</sup> (a state invented at the end of WW I). In the intentions of the majority of Spanish press, however, he underlines that the newly constituted states “no son sin embargo más viables, sobretodo Eslovaquia, por haber concluido su infeliz coyunda”<sup>234</sup> (it will however, not be more viable, particularly Slovakia, because they have terminated their unhappy marriage), but its “ruina económica, ecológica y moral no se resuelve con la segregación”<sup>235</sup> (ruins in economy and ecology and moral remains will NOT be fixed by a split-up).

Another commentator and contributor of opinion articles for ABC is Alejandro Muñoz-Alonso. He is a university professor and politician belonging to the People’s Party. For many years he was an MP and since March 2000 he has been a senator. In the following article he held that the “los vencedores en 1918 fueron extraordinariamente generosos con Checoslovaquia e incluyeron dentro de sus fronteras, trazadas arbitrariamente, una fuerte minoría húngara”<sup>236</sup> (winning powers of 1918, acting with extraordinary generosity, implanted within the Czechoslovak borders, unlawfully demarked, a strong Hungarian minority), thus generating possible discords and conflicts in the given zone. The author presents

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<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

<sup>233</sup> ABC, January 8 1993, p.35.

<sup>234</sup> Ibid.

<sup>235</sup> Ibid.

<sup>236</sup> ABC, January 4 1993, p. 17.

his view concerning Czechoslovakia, and now also Slovakia, which came into existence on unjust and unfair grounds, maintaining that neither in 1918 nor at present, the Slovaks alone ever tried to form a state of their own minority regarded insignificant at that time, and concluding by describing the new Slovakia “si Checoslovaquia era artificial, la nueva Eslovaquia no lo es menos”<sup>237</sup> (being no less artificial than the former Czechoslovakia).

#### 5. 4. *EL PERIÓDICO*

This Barcelona daily is characterized by summarizing the typical features of Catalanian and Basque dailies, in which the process of the split-up is perceived with understanding, or even with compassion in regard of to how this process occurred in the two nations (Czechs and Slovaks), and this is what distinguishes this daily from prevailing majority of the Spanish ideology. The Catalan and Basque dailies, and *El Periódico* in particular, stress primarily that the split-up occurred peacefully, mainly because, “los checos nunca hayan sentido una vocación *serbia* de dominio sobre los eslovacos”<sup>238</sup> (the Czechs never had any inclinations to the Serb pattern of dominion over the Slovaks). Unlike the Madrid press, *El Periódico* offers the conclusions: “del sentido de la responsabilidad de los dos pueblos dependerá que el futuro sea positivo para los dos Estados vecinos”<sup>239</sup> (the constructive future of the two neighboring countries will depend on the responsibility of the Czechs and the Slovaks). The same reality is clearly presented from different standpoints. This may be best illustrated by a columnist. Joan Tudela, *El Periódico* co-worker, who opens his article by saying “El año 1993 no podía comenzar mejor. Acabamos de asistir a uno de esos raros acontecimientos capaces de reconciliarnos con al naturaleza humana. Dos pequeños pueblos centroeuropeos han decidido poner punto y final a la historia del Estado

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<sup>237</sup> Ibid.

<sup>238</sup> *El Periódico*, Editorial January 3, 1993, p. 8.

<sup>239</sup> Ibid.

común.”<sup>240</sup> (There couldn't be a better beginning of the year 1993. We are witnessing a very special occasion of humane conciliation. in how the two small Central European nations have resolved to terminate the development of their common state.)

## 5. 5. *EL DIARIO VASCO*

The Basque daily, dealing with the topic mainly in the last months of 1992 and in January 1993, addressed the occasion under the headline “checos y eslovacos podrían unirse en el marco de unificación europea”<sup>241</sup>, (the Slovaks and the Czechs could meet again in the European Union). Similarly like other Catalan and Basque press, the article signed by Marc Fisher claims that “más de la mitad de la población – y probablemente más en Eslovaquia- creen que la independencia no es buena”<sup>242</sup> ( the majority of the people, and probably more so in Slovakia, thinks that „independence is not good), supporting the idea based on non-political motives, for example by showing that “uno de cada doce matrimonios checoslovacos están formados por un checo y un eslovaco y todo el mundo puede encontrar un familiar de la otra nacionalidad”<sup>243</sup> (every twelfth marriage has been made between a Czech and a Slovak, i.e. it is mixed, or that each family has a member of another nationality).

The process of separation may be well illustrated by the headline of the interview with a Slovak handball player Zoltán Bergendi, a member of a Basque club, who described the split-up as a “mania”<sup>244</sup>. It is quite funny to see a statement made by a politically insignificant person reaching a headline.

In another article of *El Diario Vasco* , the attention is drawn to “preocupación en Eslovaquia por el interés (sic) de Hungría por revisar la

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<sup>240</sup> *El Periódico*, January 9, 1993, p. 6.

<sup>241</sup> *El Diario Vasco*, December 26 1992.

<sup>242</sup> *El Diario Vasco* , January 2 1993.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid.

<sup>244</sup> *El Diario Vasco* , January 3, 1993, p. 13.

frontera”<sup>245</sup> (Slovak concerns for the Hungarian interests in revising the borders). Just like the preceding article, also here an amusing detail is presented by a private interview with a Slovak pensioner traveling twice a month to Prague, calling the split-up “una locura y un anacronismo que me causa una sensación de vergüenza y rabia”<sup>246</sup> (crazy business, an anachronism, causing lots of shame and anger).

## 5. 6. *DEIA*

The newspaper, typically reproducing the ideology of the dominating party Comunidad Autónoma Vascongada with pressing nationalist inclinations, shows consent and some sympathy with the events in Central Europe and the separation processes. In one of the opinion forming articles signed by José Luis Arriaga, there are several statements showing understanding, revived by similar processes in the Basque society, e.g. “los checos y los eslovacos han demostrado al mundo que la guerra no es la consecuencia inevitable de una desmembración estatal”<sup>247</sup> (the Czechs and Slovaks showed the world that a war is not the only and inevitable consequence of a division of the State), or “dos Estados nacen a la vida independiente porque así lo han querido, sin hacer uso de las armas”<sup>248</sup> (the two states became constituted for independent existence based on their own aspirations and in absence of any weapons at all). The entire article shows a positive attitude towards the process growing from the will of the protagonists.

## 5. 7. *LA VANGUARDIA*

And finally, although conservative and monarchist, *La Vanguardia* brings the attitude of the majority prevailing in the Catalan society during the process of the split-up of the Czechoslovak Federation. The whole process was covered by

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<sup>245</sup> *El Diario Vasco*, January 5, 1993, p. 34.

<sup>246</sup> Ibid.

<sup>247</sup> *Deia*, January 1993, p. 8.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid.

Ricardo Estarriol, the newspaper's correspondent staying in the zone. The biography of and an interview with this outstanding Spanish journalist is included in the Annex, pages 157 and 145. His language was proper and tactful, reflecting authentically the situation and circumstances of the division without any reference to distorted historical and political judgments.

Additionally, Ricardo Estarriol wrote separate articles and interviews with Slovak politicians, for instance, Ján Čarnogurský in Bratislava, on 29 April 1992, entitled "Checoslovaquia, Entrevista con el jefe del gobierno eslovaco, Jan Carnogurski,"<sup>249</sup> where he compared his politics, among other things, with Catalanian politics. Reacting to one of Čarnogurský's responses, Estarriol made the following comment: "Puede usted estar seguro de que, por lo menos en el noreste de la Península, pocos piensan que esto sea puro bizantinismo"<sup>250</sup> (I can assure you that few people in the northwestern part of our Peninsula would consider this trifles).<sup>251</sup>

Observing Estarriol throughout his articles in *La Vanguardia*, it can be said that Estarriol does not "judge" the separation (he explains neutrally what is

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<sup>249</sup> *La Vanguardia*, May 3, 1992.

<sup>250</sup> "... permítame una interrupción: significa esto que las competencias de las repúblicas, de lo que en España llamamos "autonomías", no serían delegaciones del centro a la periferia, sino...?"

- eso es: que seríamos nosotros los que delegaríamos competencias al centro, y no ellos a nosotros. Esta ha sido la razón por la cual fracasaron las conversaciones que llevamos a cabo con los representantes checos. Pero quizás sus lectores piensen que se trata de una cuestión bizantina.

- Puede usted estar seguro de que, por lo menos en el noeste de la Península, pocos piensan que esto sea puro bizantinismo." *La Vanguardia*, May 3, 1992.

<sup>251</sup>This interview was made in 1992, prior to the split-up of Czechoslovakia. According to Čarnogurský, the Slovak side wanted all competencies of the central government to be transferred to the Slovak Republic. However, the Czechs, including the then federal government saw things the other way round; hence Czech and Slovak political representatives were unable to reach agreement on this issue. Čarnogurský comments that Catalanian readers might find this issue irrelevant, as opposed to Estarriol, who responds that, on the contrary, Catalonians would find this issue extremely important. See in *La Vanguardia*, May 3, 1992, Checoslovaquia, Entrevista con el jefe del gobierno eslovaco, Jan Carnogurski.

happening but does not give his opinion of whether it is good or bad). He rather criticizes those leaders in the European Union who try to oppose the separation or speak out against it. He explains quite clearly that to a great extent the separation is more the product of the will of the Czechs rather than of the wish of the Slovaks. While he avoids in his articles to criticize openly anybody, he does mention the problems that a “centralistic mentality” of the Czechs and of Prague have created in Czechoslovakia. He also mentions the risks and fears that the creation of Slovakia provokes in the Hungarian minority in Slovakia and in the Hungarian Government.

His approach to the many Czech and Slovak leaders is very different from the one seen in *El Pais*. He speaks very correctly about Havel but without presenting him as an extraordinary man. Normally he refers to Havel as the “czech playwright president and former dissident” but rarely uses the kind of adjectives used in *El Pais* (prestigious, outstanding intellectual, etc). Also when speaking of Meciar he is much less critical. Only once does he mention that he is a “former communist politician and former boxer” and characterizes him as having a “populist leadership”. Normally he just refers to Meciar as “leftwing nationalist” and says that he is rather “undefined” ideologically.

Overall, Estariol’s articles, including the interview cited above, clearly sought to provide a most close and authentic account of the split-up to Catalanian readers as closely and authentically as possible; at times, he even went as far as dissenting from the prevailing political opinions.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The quantity and the quality of information concerning the split-up of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic covered by the Spanish press, may be considered in a positively way, despite some reservations, primarily in regard of the descriptions and explanations relating to that process. At the time of the split-up, the information was clearly of high significance and relevance in the environment of the world of politics, considering that the processes of disintegration of that time occurred quite frequently also in other countries, but, unfortunately, accompanied on many occasions with a lot of violence. The events in Yugoslavia clearly influenced Spanish newspapers anxious that something similar could happen also in Czechoslovakia, the very heart of Europe. This case of non-violent separation made it, however, an exceptional event, and therefore also the Spanish media handled the information concerning this process in an exceptional way. In addition, because of the specific features of the Spanish situation, this topic drew the attention of readers of diverse dailies, and the whole political community, all of whom frequently commented on these events during their visits to the then capital of Prague.

It can, therefore, be concluded that the Spanish press paid sufficient attention, offering quite extensive reports to inform the readers about the process resulting in the two new Central European States being constituted. Although it is quite obvious that the Spanish periodicals did not use the same amount of pages or the funds to cover the topic, there was a broad spectrum of newspapers dealing with these matters almost on daily basis, starting for example *EL País*— having correspondents operating both locally (directly on the spot) and timely, and ending with the papers that started to bring the news only when the whole process was approaching its finale, often only by quoting the big press agencies. Thus, I relied in this thesis on the commentaries published mostly in *El País*, giving a little less emphasis on the two other dailies bringing adequate volume of information on the Czechoslovak processes, namely the Madrid *ABC* and the Barcelona *La Vanguardia*. The three periodicals represent a wide ideological range,



upon which I tried to focus in my analysis of how regularly and how adequately the information was delivered by the Spanish press to the Spanish majority. In addition, this work shows that different periodicals approached the process of the Czechoslovak split-up essentially from the one, and often the prevailing aspect – mainly in respect to the internal Spanish politics – i.e. aiming to keep the readers informed without any attempts to overestimate the causes leading the two nations to depart from their common state.

Quite naturally the Spanish newspapers were concerned that the separation of the Czech and the Slovak Republic may become a precedent for the separation of some territories in Spain (Catalonia or the Basque Country) but eventually they realized the difference: in case of Czechoslovakia “both sides” accepted the separation, while in Spain the “central authorities” and other regions would never accept any separation.

As for *El País*, I was quite critical to the ideas of one journalist named Hermann Terstch covering the topic, in my view, in a counterproductive manner and without sufficient explanations of the reasons resulting in such conclusion, and throwing pessimistic anticipations, especially with regard to the Slovak economic development. This however, has not been confirmed in the actual reality. In fact the Spanish newspapers tended to portray Slovakia and its leaders as those who were responsible for the separation, while the Czechs were presented as if they were in the supporters of further development of the single Czechoslovakia, finally accepting the fact that the separation was the will of the Slovaks.

In fact, in my view, one of the reasons for the support of El País to the continuation of Checoslovakia instead of the separation is this different appreciation of Havel and Meciar. Havel is considered a great intellectual and former dissident; Havel is against the separation; Meciar is a populist and former communist; Meciar is in favour of separation; so...the continuation of Checoslovakia must be good and the separation must be bad.

There is also a very little explanation of the reasons for the Slovak nationalism. It is sometimes presented as one more example of a “trend” in Europe but without analysing its causes.

It is also interesting that somebody like the Spanish Prime Minister, Felipe Gonzalez (who was well known for being against the separation of Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and even the USSR), already in November 1991 recognises that the “exemplary peaceful coexistence –between czechs and slovak- will not create instability in the region”.

Some other reporters of the same periodical (*El País*) treated the issue of the division of Czechoslovakia, similarly, being affected, quite naturally, by the publishing line of the daily exerting influence on the assessment of the split-up.

On the other hand, the other dailies already mentioned before, *La Vanguardia* (centre right, from Barcelona) and *ABC* (centre-right) who placed significant correspondents in the relevant territories, used their knowledge of and expertise concerning Central European circumstances, the nationalist, and border revisionist movements, even though the two dailies’ strategies were similar to *El País*. It can be said that the articles that appeared in *ABC* and *La Vanguardia* are clearly more critical of the history of Czechoslovakia. Referring to Czechoslovakia, they used the terms of “non viable State”, “artificial State”, “only their common Slavic root unites them” and *La Vanguardia* even says that Czechoslovakia was “a Czech State with a slovak province, more or less autonomous”. There is a firm criticism of the Treaty of Versailles (and the Czech nationalists in the US) as the origin of the problems encountered in 1992. So generally there is more reference to the grievances of the Slovaks towards the dominant Czechs. At the same time, there is praise to the political maturity and high level of civility of both Czechs and Slovaks in dealing with their separation. There are also many less criticisms of Meciar and they tend to point to the ultimate responsibility of the Czech authorities in opting for the full separation.

The correspondents mentioned earlier showed much respect and understanding towards their readers when showing the processes of how the two emerging republics kept the door open to their own problems, as well as the issues of integrated Europe. Moreover, *La Vanguardia*, a Catalanian periodical, just like *El Periódico*, permitted differing views, too, more specifically observations made by the supporters of the peaceful solution, welcoming the non-violent resolution of the political arguments, as contrasted with the events occurring in

the former Yugoslavia. In *La Vanguardia*, I obtained the first-hand document containing an interview with Ricardo Estarriol, a reporter covering the development in Czechoslovakia. This interview was very important, because in addition to the facts, it also presented the journalist's perception of the events, the facts seen through his own eyes, in the recollection of the circumstances evaluated after some years later.

As mentioned above, ABC offered some historical surveys of the processes, relying, predominantly, on impartial views of a correspondent with superior knowledge of the issues of the region, Mr. Ramirez Villadapierna, whom I directly contacted via e-mail, and who was kind enough to provide many answers to my questions.

I have also discussed the fact that most of the information came through the prism of some of the Prague politicians, meaning that the Spanish press partly sided with the Prague views, trying, at least theoretically, to defend the continuation of the Federation. This, however was only a superficial impression not founded in the economic reality of the period, because the Prague leaders supported, in reality, to shake off the weaker Slovak "brother". Very few Spanish journalists studied or reported on the situation concerning the Slovaks or the decision-making concerning the Slovaks taken in Prague. Vaclav Havel enjoyed great popularity and support among the Spanish newspapers, and there was very few criticism of his acts. By contrast, Vladimir Meciar, never received positive appraisal.

So, it is not surprising that the separation of the two countries was not criticized as something negative or adverse. Maybe due to the fact no notice was taken of the feelings and the mood of the general public in the given situation. Wouldn't it be an example for Spain, if ordinary people were asked about the future they wished to choose for their nations/nationalities? The criticism related purely to the fact that the country was divided.

Even the language and the expressions used by the Spanish media, may serve as an illustration of fragile objectivity with which the journalists tried to describe the situation. As analyzed in one of the chapters of this work, many articles and commentaries apply imprecisely defined terms in an effort to haze the

essence of the merit of the matters, making an impression that it was not their major task to come to clearly defined conclusions.

On the other hand, the inclusion of the chronology of the most important historical events occurring in the two Republics aimed to emphasize the global nature and significance of the approach to the topic of my thesis by making references to mutual links concerning the dates, published articles and responses to various significant actions.

Finally I must say that I have not presented a detailed survey of the articles published by the *EL MUNDO* daily, because of its relative insignificance and trivial nature, and what is more, unlike in other Spanish periodicals, it lacked much of the independent or autonomous lines. In any case, I found the positions of El Mundo very similar to the ones of El Pais, in particular its “editorial” of 3 January, 1993: the nationalist Meciár was presented as the main responsible of the separation;

To conclude, the Spanish newspaper of the period concerned manifested often varied, but also quite similar idea, when viewed ideologically in an effort to do away with the label that the comments relating to the processes of the split-up of the former Czechoslovak Federation were mistaken, the resulting conclusions exaggerated, and the facts adjusted to the Spanish reality, which had and still has had, very little in common with what happened in the Central Europe.

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## 8. Annex 1

The following is the narrative chronology of events leading up to the dissolution of Czechoslovakia beginning in 1991. In it, the relevant short correspondent reports from the Spanish press are attached to each event, also chronologically. Specific articles in the Spanish newspapers dealing with the issues as editorials (*editoriales*) and commentaries or opinion pieces (*opiniones*) are described separately further down.

### 8.1. Chronology of the Czech-Slovak Conflict, 1991 - 1992<sup>252</sup>

#### “18 January 1991

Slovak Prime minister Mečiar tells journalists that Slovakia will try to expand its role and profile on the international scene, accusing two Prague papers of spreading misinformation about Slovakia. By presenting Slovakia as unstable, they might discourage investment from abroad.”

#### “21 January 1991

The federal government approves an emergency bill stipulating that a state of emergency can be declared by the president with the consent of the federal government or one of the two national governments. It includes provisions for limiting the freedom of assembly and the right to strike. A state of emergency could be proclaimed for a maximum period of ninety days if the constitutional system were endangered, in case of war, or other extraordinary circumstances.”

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<sup>252</sup> Directly quoted from Michael *Kraus*, Allison *Stanger*, *Irreconcilable Differences? Explaining Czechoslovakia’s Dissolution* ( United States of America 2000). P.

**“22 January 1991**

The Slovak National Council rejects the state of emergency bill for leaving too much power in the hands of the federal government.”

**“3-4 February 1991**

President Havel gathers top officials in Prague to discuss the preparation of new constitutions for Czechoslovakia, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic. On behalf of the KDH, Ján Čarnogurský demands that national parliaments first approve the constitutions of their respective republics, than agree to enter into a state treaty, and only then create a federal constitution.”

**“17 February 1991**

During the second round of constitutional talks, the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) of Slovakia continues to insist that a state treaty be concluded. Moreover, the idea has gained the support of other Slovak political parties, including the Public Against Violence (VPN), presently the leading political force in Slovakia, and the Slovak Democratic Party, the coalition partner in the Slovakia government of both the KDH and the VPN. After the talks, Havel maintains that neither the Czech Republic nor Slovakia could sign a state treaty, since neither has the status of a sovereign state, which is required by international law for the signing of such a document.”

**“27 February 1991**

The Federal Assembly approves the establishment of a constitutional court by a 215 to 7 vote. The court will settle disputes over the division of powers between the federal government and the Czech and Slovak republics.”

**“2 March 1991**

Tens of thousands of people rally in Brno, Ostrava, and Olomouc to demand that the government and other legislative bodies promptly settle

Moravia's status within the federation. They call for autonomy and better treatment.”

**“5 March 1991**

Slovak Prime minister Mečiar and fourteen other members walk out of the meeting of the Public Against Violence council in Bratislava, saying they intend to draw up a new platform of their own.”

**“6 March 1991**

The Public Against Violence (VPN) splits into two groups: one advocating the movement's original program, which emphasizes Slovak national concerns within the existing federal framework, and the other aiming at putting Slovak issues before all others.”

**“7 March 1991**

Five radical nationalist groups issue a Declaration of the Sovereignty of Slovakia. The declaration proposes steps leading to the full independence of Slovakia.”

**“8 March 1991**

Federal Prime minister Čalfa points out that the supporters of the declaration of Slovak sovereignty are primarily political forces that had opposed the current government. Havel and Mečiar meet. The Slovak prime minister assures the president that he is an advocate of the federation. Both politicians agree that a referendum on Slovak independence should be held soon, and Mečiar tells Havel that he believes the voters will choose to remain in Czechoslovakia.”

**“10 March 1991**

Responding to the possibility of demonstration, Mečiar says that the declaration's demands will not be approved by the Slovak parliament, since the Slovak people do not support Slovak independence.”

### **“11 March 1991**

Thousands fill a large square in Bratislava, chanting slogans supporting Slovak independence and criticizing the federal government.

Presidential press secretary Michal Žantovský proposes that both Czechs and Slovaks be given the right to say in a referendum whether they want to remain in one state. Federal Prime minister Čalfa declares that the Slovak National Council is not constitutionally entitled to adopt a declaration of sovereignty.

Dagmar Burešová, the chair of the Czech National Council, announces that she does not believe that the majority of Slovaks want to break up Czechoslovakia. Arguing that such an important question should not be addressed in the streets but through constitutional means, she calls for a referendum. The leadership of the Public Against Violence repeats its call for a referendum. The presidium of the Czech government issues a statement that the future of federation is being decided. upon”

### **“12 March 1991**

The call for a referendum receives support from the Slovak Heritage Foundation. Chairman Jozef Markuš says that his group favors a referendum on the sovereignty issue. The group, however, also urges the Slovak National Council to issue an immediate declaration of sovereignty.”

### **“13 March 1991**

Slovak nationalists honor the leader of the Slovak fascist state of World War II. Between 5, 000 and 10,000 people attend a ceremony in a Bratislava cemetery to consecrate a cross on the grave of Jozef Tiso.”

### **“14 March 1991**

5,000 people gather in the center of Bratislava to celebrate the fifty-second anniversary of the founding of the Slovak state, which also signified the end of democratic Czechoslovakia. On a one day visit to Slovakia, Havel unexpectedly appears at the rally, accompanied by his supporters and bodyguards. Angry demonstrators scream at the president, and some attack him and his entourage.

Havel escapes unscathed, but several scuffles break out between nationalists and supporters of Havel. In a televised address to the Slovak nation that same day, Havel warns against attempts to attain independence by unconstitutional means but also declares that he would respect the decision of the Slovaks to live in an independent state if that decision were made in a referendum.”

- EL PAÍS: Havel agredido en su visita a Bratislava 16-03-1991 Vivianne Schnitzer

**“16 March 1991**

Federal government issues a statement warning against the country’s disintegration.”

**“17 March 1991**

The VPN passes a vote of no confidence on Vladimir Mečiar.”

**“18 March 1991**

Despite losing the support of VPN, Mečiar says he will not step down. The charges against him include sympathizing with separatists and using the files of the former communist secret police to blackmail opponents.”

**“19 March 1991**

Under increasing pressure from the government coalition, Mečiar does not attend a Slovak cabinet meeting, allegedly because of illness.”

**“22 March 1991**

At a press conference during his visit to the Netherlands, President Havel promises to hold a referendum on Slovak independence.”

**“23 April 1991**

The Slovak parliament votes to dismiss Prime Minister Mečiar and replace him with Ján Čarnogurský.”

**“28 April 1991**

In his weekly radio address, President Havel describes the Slovak parliament’s ouster of Mečiar as a triumph for parliamentary democracy.”

**“1 May 1991**

The Public Against Violence formally splits in two. The new fraction, led by former Prime minister Vladimir Mečiar, is to call itself the Movement for Democratic Slovakia (HZDS).”

**“21 May 1991**

In a closed session, the Czech National council discusses various scenarios drawn by the Czech government in the event of the disintegration of the federation.”

**“24 May 1991**

HZDS, the new political group led by former Prime minister Mečiar, asks the Slovak National Council to take steps similar to those taken by the Czech National Council on 21 May.”

**“5 June 1991**

Slovak Prime minister Ján Čarnogurský says Slovakia will seek separate membership in the European Community if Czechoslovakia becomes a member and „ if the time is ripe.“ Since EC members are required to yield part of their sovereignty, it would be just as easy for Slovakia to do so as for all of Czechoslovakia.”

**“17 June 1991**

At a meeting in the Moravian town of Kromeríž, leading federal, Czech, and Slovak politicians agree on the principles for adopting the state treaty and, subsequently, the federal constitution.”

- EL PAÍS: Acuerdo Constitucional en Eslovaquia 19-06-91 AFT



**“3 July 1991**

In a statement on the Yugoslav conflict, Slovak opposition leader and former Prime Minister Vladimir Mečiar says that the struggle of Slovenes for their identity is a model for the struggle of Slovaks.”

**“7 July 1991**

Václav Havel says that the Czechs would not hinder the Slovaks if they want to secede from the federation, but if a referendum were held, it looked as if the majority of Slovaks would opt to remain in Czechoslovakia.”

**“19 July 1991**

The Federal Assembly approves the so-called Law on Referendums that enables referendums to be held on the constitutional setup of the country. It also provides for a referendum aimed at determining whether either or both republics wish to secede from federation, in effect ending the existence of Czechoslovakia.”

**“22 July 1991**

Slovak Prime Minister Ján Čarnogurský says that he expects to see an independent Slovakia by 2000.

Federal Assembly chairman Alexander Dubček leaves the VPN, which he has helped found in 1989, because it has abandoned its “centrist policy”.

**“5 September 1991**

Havel meets with Slovak Prime Minister Ján Čarnogurský to discuss the future structure of the federal government and Slovak economic troubles. Havel promises to step up the process of working out a new government structure. Čarnogurský wants to guarantee the Slovak Republic’s sovereignty through a state treaty with the Czech Republic.”

### **“6 September 1991**

The presidiums of the Czech and Slovak national councils meet in Bratislava to discuss problems surrounding the preparation of the federal and republican constitutions. The meeting takes place amid growing tension between the Czech and federal authorities on the one hand and the Slovak representatives on the other. A communiqué is issued listing all of the issues on which the two sides have been able to agree, stating that by the end of 1991 all “basic documents” on the constitutional setup of Czechoslovakia should be completed.”

### **“12 September 1991**

Mečiar and thirty- four other leading Slovak politicians and intellectuals sign a document under the title “Initiative for a Sovereign Slovakia”. The document states that no progress has been made since the talks in Kromeríž and that the Slovak National Council should adopt the declaration of Slovak sovereignty issued in March and approve a “full” Slovak constitution, meaning one whose content and form are distinct from that of the federal constitution.”

### **“16 September 1991**

No fewer than 1,000 prominent Slovaks issue a statement condemning all efforts aimed at presenting the division of the country to Slovaks as a fait accompli. The signatories also called for a referendum on the future of Czechoslovakia. Another petition (“A Call to Citizens”, calling for a referendum on whether Czechs and Slovaks should continue to live in a unified state), originating from the Bratislava headquarters of the magazine Kultúrny život and initiated by Havel’s adviser Pavel Tigrid, gathers 1,300 signatures in a few hours, including those of a number of prominent Slovaks. The petition asserts that dividing Czechoslovakia would cause irreparable economic and moral damage. By the end of October, more than half a million Czechs and Slovaks have signed it. Slovak Prime Minister Ján Čarnogurský criticizes the Initiative for a Sovereign Slovakia, saying that the sovereignty of Slovakia is already anchored in the current Czechoslovak constitution. He also points out that the text of the declaration of Slovak sovereignty violates the current Czechoslovak constitution.”

### **“19 September 1991**

Some 30, 000 Slovaks demonstrate in Bratislava for Slovak independence. Federal president Václav Havel supports the call for a referendum but appeals for unity, saying a declaration of sovereignty would create enormous problems.”

- EL PAÍS: Nacionalistas eslovacos se manifiestan en favor de la separación 20-09-91 Vivianne Schnitzer

### **“20 September 1991**

The Czech National Council adopts a resolution stating that the declaration of full sovereignty by one of the two republics would be an unconstitutional act. In such a case, the other republic would start taking immediate steps to “secure its own independent existence”. Such steps would be coordinated with the federal bodies. What remained of Czechoslovakia after one of the republics has seceded would be entitled to become Czechoslovakia’s successor in international affairs. This means that the republic that unilaterally takes steps ultimately leading to full independence will have to seek international recognition, including membership in international organizations.”

### **“23 September 1991**

The Slovak National Council rejects a bid by a group of deputies to force a vote on a declaration of Slovak sovereignty. The motion for an immediate vote on sovereignty is supported by 61 of the 132 deputies present.”

- EL PAÍS: El Parlamente de Eslovaquia aplaza la declaración de independencia 24-09-91 Vivianne Schnitzer

### **“24 September 1991**

After opening the fall session of the federal parliament, Václav Havel says he wants a national referendum on the future relationship between Slovakia and the Czech Republic before the end of year.”

### **“25 September 1991**

The Slovak National Council rejects yet another bid to force a vote on the declaration of Slovak sovereignty.

The former Slovak Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar declares that a referendum is not the way to decide whether Czechoslovakia will remain a unified state.”

### **“29 September 1991**

President Havel repeats his call for an early referendum on the country’s future setup.”

### **“16 October 1991**

Slovak parliamentary chairman František Mikloško complains publicly that not a single step forward has been made during the eighteen-month discussions on the future setup of Czechoslovakia.”

### **“28 October 1991**

At a rally in Bratislava commemorating the seventy-third anniversary of the united Czech and Slovak state, President Havel is booed offstage by Slovak pro-independence demonstrators when he calls for a moment of silence to commemorate the anniversary of a united Czechoslovakia.”

- EL PAÍS: Nacionalistas eslovacos impiden hablar a Havel 31-09-91  
Vivianne Schnitzer

### **“30 October 1991**

926, 000 Czechoslovak citizens have signed a petition urging the Federal Assembly to call an early referendum on the country’s future.”

### **“1 November 1991**

At the founding meeting of the Moravian-Silesian Council, representatives of thirteen political parties and movements call for equal and independent status for Moravia and Silesia in the Czechoslovak federation. In the event of the breakup of the Czechoslovak federation, the Moravian and Silesian factions say

they will support a federative arrangement within the Czech Republic, which comprises Moravia, Silesia, and Bohemia.”

### **“3 November 1991**

Havel invites leading Czech, Slovak and federal politicians to join him at his summer retreat in Hrádeček, northern Bohemia, to discuss outstanding constitutional issues. It is the twelfth such meeting called by Havel since the beginning of 1991.”

### **“5 November 1991**

Alarmed by the lack of real progress in the talks between the presidiums of the republican legislatures, and after an emergency session, the federal government issues a statement asserting that both the federal government and the Federal Assembly will have to start playing a more active role in the constitutional talks.”

### **“6 November 1991**

The Federal Assembly passes a bill setting procedures and guidelines for all referendums. The law requires referendum question to be answerable by a clear yes or no, a campaigning period of twelve days; and a span of at least twenty days between the calling of referendum and the actual vote.”

### **“7 November 1991**

The Federal Assembly passes a bill finalizing procedures for laws to be reviewed by the country’s constitutional court. The law establishes procedures the court will follow when considering the constitutionality of referendums, power sharing disputes, and international agreements.”

### **“13 November 1991**

The Federal Assembly fails to agree on the wording of a referendum question on the fate of the country, despite the fact that President Havel and the major political parties presented no less than six alternative questions for

consideration. The majority of Slovak and virtually all communist deputies bind themselves together to bring all six drafts to fall.

In Bratislava, the Slovak parliament rejects (by just six votes) a proposal of a declaration on Slovak sovereignty.”

- EL PAÍS: La disputa entre checos y eslovacos amenaza la unidad del país  
15-09-91 Vivianne Schnitzer

### **“17 November 1991**

In response to the stalemate, President Havel proposes a number of constitutional and other changes on the second anniversary of the Velvet Revolution. The changes would empower Havel to call a referendum without the parliament’s approval and to dissolve the Federal Assembly if necessary; they would also give him special powers before new elections are called. Havel also proposes that the Federal Assembly have only one chamber instead of the current two.

Gustáv Husák, former Communist Party leader and president, dies. Ján Čarnogurský, Slovak prime minister (and former prisoner of Husak’s secret police), attends the funeral.”

- EL PAÍS: 40.000 personas se manifiestan en Praga a favor de una Checoslovaquia unida 22-11-91 Vivianne Schnitzer
- EL PAÍS: Havel llama a la unidad checoslovaca en un mitin multitudinario 23-11-91 Nilda Navarrete
- EL PAÍS: El Gobierno checoslovaco aprueba un proyecto de Estado común 29-11-91 Nilda Navarrete

### **“3 December 1991**

The president urges the federal parliament to grant him extra powers in an effort to forestall a constitutional crisis that could split Czechoslovakia.”

**“31 December 1991**

“A Call to Citizens” petition in support of a referendum on the future of Czechoslovakia gathers 2,259,000 signatures.”

**“21 January 1992**

The federal parliament rejects two of five amendments proposed by President Havel: that a new constitution be adopted only after it has been approved by the Czech and Slovak parliaments and that a referendum be held on whether Slovakia should remain in the federal state.”

**“22 January 1992**

Havel withdraws a third proposed amendment whereby the bicameral federal parliament would have been reorganized into one chamber.”

**“28 January 1992**

The Federal Assembly rejects President Havel’s proposal that the president be given the power to dissolve the parliament.”

**“29 January 1992**

Slovak prime minister Ján Čarnogurský states at a political rally in Košice that Slovakia wants to achieve step-by-step the same sovereignty enjoyed by other European nations.”

**“9 February 1992**

After months of negotiations, an agreement is reached at Milovy on an accord defining the relationship between the two republics in the future federation. The treaty was drafted by a commission of experts formed by the Czech and Slovak parliaments. The draft will now be submitted to the republican and federal parliaments for discussion. President Havel hails the agreement as a great step forward.”

**“12 February 1992**

The Slovak parliament’s presidium rejects by only one vote the Milovy accord aimed at keeping the country together.”

- LA VANGUARDIA: Autonomismo e independentismo: Los parlamentos de la República Checa y Eslovaquia suspenden las negociaciones sobre el futuro de Checoslovaquia, 12-02-92, Ricado Estarriol

**“15 February 1992**

Federal Prime Minister Čalfa calls the Slovak parliament’s rejection of the Milovy accord the beginning of the separation of the Czech and Slovak republics.”

**‘18 February 1992**

The Czechoslovak Federal Assembly fails to approve amendments to three sections of the country’s constitution aimed at establishing new relations between the president, the parliament, and the government. The amendments failed to gain the necessary total of forty-five votes among the Slovak deputies in the Chamber of the Nations.”

**“19 February 1992**

Prime Minister Ján Čarnogurský warns that the rejection of the draft treaty between the Czech and Slovak republics (the Milovy accord) by the presidium of the Slovak parliament has increased the danger of Czechoslovakia disintegrating.”

**“20 February 1992**

In a televised address, Čarnogurský calls on Slovakia’s parliament to avoid illegal moves toward independence.”

**“28 February 1992**

In an interview with Le Figaro, Slovak Prime Minister Čarnogurský says he wants Slovakia to enjoy the same international status as the former Soviet republics and to have its own representation in the EC. He adds, however, that he



would be willing to share a foreign affairs and defense ministry and a national bank with the Czech lands. In Čarnogurský's view, there are two possible paths for Slovakia: (1) to immediately seize the opportunity for international recognition while it exists, or (2) to work for the same goal through gradual steps. He is in support of the latter."

#### **"3 March 1992**

The presidium of the Czechoslovak parliament announces that general elections will be held on 5 and 6 June."

#### **"4 March 1992**

In an interview with the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, Václav Havel criticizes those who advocate an independent Slovakia but oppose a referendum; they know that a clear vote for unity would undercut separatism for a long time."

#### **"7 March 1992**

The Christian Democratic Movement in Slovakia splits into two factions because of differences over Slovakia's position within the federal Czechoslovak state. Both parties announce they will remain in the Slovak ruling coalition to avert a government crisis."

#### **"11 March 1992**

After more than a year of failed efforts to agree on Czechoslovakia's future state structure, the leaders of the Czech and Slovak parliaments, Dagmar Burešová and František Mikloško, say that further Czech-Slovak talks should be suspended until new parliaments are elected in June."

#### **"15 March 1992**

Alexander Dubček joins the Social Democratic Party in Slovakia."

### **“20 March 1992**

The Czech parliament announces its decision to establish a Foreign Ministry for the Czech Republic on 1 June. The Czech Prime Minister denies, however, that the move is being made in reaction to the creation of the Slovak Ministry of International Relations some two years earlier.”

### **“22 March 1992**

The HZDS draft election program is adopted. It outlines the following sequential post-election imperatives: (1) The sovereignty of the Slovak Republic will be declared unconditionally and without consultation with anyone at all; (2) a new Slovak constitution will be promulgated, with a president as the head of state; and (3) a referendum will be held on which form coexistence with Czech Republic should take – if the latter is really interested in coexistence.”

### **“23 March 1992**

Slovakia’s parliament rejects another attempt to proclaim the republic’s sovereignty.”

- LA VANGUARDIA: Dubcek con los socialdemócrata: Dubcek, el protagonista del “socialismo de faz humana” presenta su candidatura con los socialdemócratas eslovacos, 30-03-92, Ricardo Estarriol

### **“ April 1992**

Vladimír Mečiar predicts that Slovakia will declare its sovereignty after the June parliamentary elections and will achieve it by the end of 1992.”

- EL PAÍS: Bloqueada por tercera vez una moción de soberanía en Eslovaquia 04-04-92, Nilda Navarrete
- LA VANGUARDIA: El conflicto de minorías entre Eslovaquia y Hungría, 01-05-92, Ricardo Estarriol

### **“3 May 1992**

The twenty-three-day general election campaign officially begins in Czechoslovakia amid concern that the results could lead to a breakup of the federation.”

- Los checoslovacos acudirán a las urnas con el destino del país en juego, 21-05-92, Nilda Navarrete
- Los nacionalistas de Eslovaquia proclamarán un Estado soberano si ganan las elecciones, 01-06-92, Vivianne Schnitzer
- EL PAÍS: Cuenta atrás en Checoslovaquia 02-06-92 Hermann Tertsch
- LA VANGUARDIA: Los partidos de la derecha son los favoritos en la República Checa, 03-06-92, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: Havel pide el voto para los partidarios de la unidad de Checoslovaquia 03-06-92 Herman Tertsch
- LA VANGUARDIA: Los eslovacos quieren ser dueños, Praga se llevará muchas sorpresas en Eslovaquia, 04-06-92, Ricardo Estarriol

### **“5 – 6 June 1992**

In general elections, Václav Klaus’s Civic Democratic Party (ODS) wins in the Czech Republic, while Vladimír Mečiar’s movement for Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) triumphs in Slovakia.”

- LA VANGUARDIA: Inestable Parlamento Federal: las elecciones del viernes y sábado serán las últimas de la actual Federación Checoslovaca, 05-06-92, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: Temor de la minoría húngara al extremismo de Meciar, 06-06-92, Vivianne Schnitzer
- LA VANGUARDIA: Durante las elecciones la cerveza no puede ser de más de 10 grados, 06-06-92, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: Havel teme que el resultado de las elecciones en Checoslovaquia desestabilice Europa Central, 06-06-92, J.M. Martí Font

### **“7 June 1992**

Václav Havel asks Václav Klaus to form a new government, a move promptly criticized by Mečiar, who argues that talks between the political parties should precede negotiations on forming the government.”

- EL PAÍS: El resultado electoral en Checoslovaquia pone en peligro la unidad del país. Meciar árbitro de la situación checoslovaca, 07-06-92, J. M. Martí Font
- EL PAÍS: Profundas grietas en la Federación, 07-06-92, Vivianne Schnitzer
- LA VANGUARDIA: Aumenta la polarización checa – eslovaca: La derecha gana con creces en los Países Checos y la izquierda nacionalista, en Eslovaquia, 07-06-92, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: Separatismo en Centroeuropa: El resultado electoral en Checoslovaquia hace casi inevitable la división del país, 08-06-92, J. M. Martí Font
- EL PAÍS: Separatismo en Centroeuropa: La república menos favorecida, 08-06-92, Vivianne Schnitzer
- LA VANGUARDIA: EL vencedor de Eslovaquia, Meciar, dispuesto a negociar con los checos, 08-06-92, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: Meciar convocaré un referéndum sobre la independencia de Eslovaquia 08-06-92 Vivianne Schnitzer
- EL PAÍS: Un jefe de Estado encargado de dar sepultura a su propio país 08-06-92 Hermann Tertsch

### **“9 June 1992**

After the first round of post-election talks between Klaus and Mečiar in Brno, Klaus maintains that the Slovak side perceives the future federal government as one of liquidation and that he is unwilling to become federal prime minister under such circumstances.”

- LA VANGUARDIA: Václav Klaus retrasa el comienzo de las negociaciones para formar gobierno, 09-06-92, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: Klaus admite, tras reunirse con el secesionista Meciar, que la

federación checoslovaca está perdida 10-06-92, Iлона Kovariková, V. Schnitzer

- LA VANGUARDIA: Klaus no quiere negociar la separación y amenaza a su vez con un referéndum sobre la escisión de Checoslovaquia, 10-06-92, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: Retórica hecha realidad, 10-06-92, Vivianne Schnitzer
- EL PAÍS: El líder eslovaco propone a los checos crear una comunidad de dos estados, 10-06-92, Vivianne Schnitzer

### **“11 June 1992**

The second round of talks between the winner of the Czech elections, Václav Klaus, and his Slovak counterpart, Vladimír Mečiar, takes place.”

- EL PAÍS: El líder eslovaco Mečiar se niega a hablar con Havel 11-06-92, Iлона Kovariková
- EL PAÍS: Fracasan las conversaciones entre los eslovacos y Václav Klaus sobre la unidad de Checoslovaquia 12-06-92, Iлона Kovariková
- LA VANGUARDIA: Klaus y Mečiar alejan el fantasma de una rápida ruptura de Checoslovaquia, 12-06-92, Ricardo Estarriol x
- EL PAÍS: “Carta de las Minorías” en Europa, 12-06-92, Vivianne Schnitzer
- EL PAÍS: El eslovaco Mečiar, a favor de la cohabitación con los checos, 13-06-92, AFP
- LA VANGUARDIA: Mečiar, dispuesto a una "cohabitación" entre las repúblicas checa y eslovaca, 13-06-92, Ricardo Estarriol x
- LA VANGUARDIA: Los checos dictan las reglas de juego a los separatistas eslovacos, 14-06-92, Ricardo Estarriol x
- EL PAÍS: El eslovaco Mečiar se entrevista hoy en Praga con el presidente Havel 15-06-92 Iлона Kovariková
- LA VANGUARDIA: Los partidos de Klaus y Mečiar necesitan más tiempo para elaborar sus posiciones, 15-06-92, Ricardo Estarriol

### **“16 June 1992**

Mečiar tells reporters in Vienna that if Czech leaders continue to reject his call for a confederation of two sovereign states, Slovakia will have to go the way alone. The Slovak premier also states that public opinion polls show that 78 percent of Slovaks want Slovakia to be a subject of international law, but at the same time they also want to maintain the common state.”

- EL PAÍS: Discrepancias radicales entre Havel y Meciar sobre el futuro de Checoslovaquia. 16-06-92 Ilona Kovariková
- LA VANGUARDIA: Havel no quiere ser el “liquidador” de Checoslovaquia, 16-06-92, Ricardo Estarriol

### **“17 June 1992**

Vladimír Mečiar and Václav Klaus hold a round of talks on the future of the Czechoslovak state. As in the two previous rounds, the two leaders fail to agree on the fundamental principles of a new federation. They do, however, decide to form a caretaker federal government. Klaus tells the press that he would rather be Czech prime minister than head a federal government programmed to self-destruction. Mečiar says he plans to become Slovak premier.”

- EL PAÍS: Entrevista con V. Meciar: En Checoslovaquia no existe la amenaza de una crisis yugoslava 17-06-92, Vivienne Schnitzer

### **“18 June 1992**

President Havel shrugs off Klaus’s decision to turn down the post of federal Prime Minister and dismisses the claim that the incoming government will serve only long enough to dissolve the federation.”

- EL PAÍS: El partido de Václav Klaus le propone como presidente de un Gobierno Checo, 18-06-92, Ilona Kovariková
- LA VANGUARDIA: Klaus y Meciar centran sus negociaciones en la formación de un gobierno federal provisional, 18-06-92, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: Las minorías de Hungría critican la ley preparada para

protegerlas 20-06-92, Vivianne Schnitzer

- LA VANGUARDIA: Klaus y Meciar discuten en Bratislava el "programa de la liquidación", 20-06-92, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: Václav Klaus y Vladimir Meciar firman un acuerdo para partir Checoslovaquia, 20-06-92 Ilona Kovariková

### **“21 June 1992**

In his regular radio address, Havel insists that the future setup of the country should be decided by a referendum, but he welcomes the fact that both parties have agreed to form a temporary federal government. He also reaffirms his intention to stand for another term as federal president. In response, the former Slovak communists, now the democratic left, announce that they will act with Mečiar’s party to block Havel’s reelection.”

- EL PAÍS: Checos y eslovacos acuerdan una participación pacífica, 21-06-92, Ilona Kovarikova
- EL PAÍS: Un triste recuerdo, 21-06-92, Ilona Kovariková
- LA VANGUARDIA: Los húngaros de Eslovaquia se sienten amenazados, 21-06-92, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: La CE advierte que la separación de Checoslovaquia es un gran error, 21-06-92, Ilona Kovariková
- EL PAÍS: Havel califica como bueno el acuerdo de partición de Checoslovaquia, 22-06-92, Ilona Kovariková

### **“23 June 1992**

At its opening session, the new Slovak parliament instructs Mečiar to form a new Slovak government. Mečiar tells reporters that he expects the new parliament to declare Slovak sovereignty in July and adopt a new constitution in August.”

### **“24 June 1992**

The new Slovak government is sworn in, with Vladimír Mečiar as prime minister.”

- EL PAÍS: Eslovaquia se proclamará república soberana en julio, 24-06-92, Vivianne Schnitzer
- EL PAÍS: Meciar dice que la escisión eslovaca ha sido impuesta por los checos, 25-06-92, Ilona Kovariková
- EL PAÍS: Havel dice que no será el enterrador de Checoslovaquia, 26-06-92, Ilona Kovarikova / Vivianne Schnitzer
- EL PAÍS: Havel denuncia un plan de Meciar y Klaus para dividirse el “aparato” estatal, 29-06-92 J. M. Martí Font
- EL PAÍS: El caos engendra el caos, 29-06-92 J. M. Martí Font

### **“1 July 1992**

Speaking in Bratislava, Václav Havel announces the composition of the caretaker federal government, which he acknowledges might have a limited term but should still be seen as a legitimate. Four right-of-the-center parties represented in the new Czech National sign a coalition agreement that Václav Klaus should become Czech prime minister.”

- EL PAÍS: Una grave pérdida para Europa: Havel dimite como presidente de Checoslovaquia, 01-07-92, Hermann Tertsch

### **“2 July 1992**

The new federal and Czech governments are sworn in. The growing significance of the republican bodies is reflected in both the composition and the structure of the republican governments. Not only do they have more ministries than the federal government, but they are also composed of the most prominent representatives of the parties that emerged victorious from the elections of 5-6 June.”

- EL PAÍS: Havel, Klaus y Meciar se ponen de acuerdo sobre el Gobierno checoslovaco, 02-07-92 J. M. Martí Font



### **“3 July 1992**

Havel fails in his bid to be reelected Czechoslovak president in two consecutive rounds of voting in the Federal Assembly.”

- EL PAÍS: Los nacionalistas eslovacos bloquean la reelección de Havel como presidente, 04-06-92, J.M. Martí Font
- LA VANGUARDIA: Havel no ha sido reelegido Presidente. Tiene la posibilidad de ser presidente interino hasta el próximo cinco de octubre, 04-07-92, Ricardo Estarriol

### **“7 July 1992**

Mečiar announces that his party wants Slovakia to elect its own president at the end of August, adding that the Czech Republic should do the same. The Slovak and Czech presidents, he argues, could then serve as Czechoslovak president and vice president.”

### **“8 July 1992**

Czech Prime Minister Václav Klaus announces that the Czech parliament will soon start to discuss a draft constitution, including plans to introduce the post of Czech president.”

### **“13 July 1992**

Klaus presents his government’s program to the Czech National Council. It involves all necessary measures to enable the republic to exist as an independent state, including the adoption of a republican constitution and the creation of the post of Czech president. Klaus also vows to pursue radical economic reforms based on rapid privatization and to build a state based on the rule of law.”

### **“14 July 1992**

Klaus’s program is approved by a vote of 105 to 60. Mečiar presents his new government’s policy statement to the Slovak National Council, outlining the sequence of constitutional steps that Slovakia will take: (1) declaration of

sovereignty, (2) adoption of a new constitution, and (3) a referendum on these measures.”

#### **“15 July 1992**

The Slovak National Council approves the program presented by the Slovak government.”

#### **“16 July 1992**

The federal government program, presented by Prime Minister Jan Stráský, is approved by the Federal Assembly. The document calls for the Czech and Slovak parliaments to reach an agreement on the future of Czechoslovakia by 30 September; it is criticized by some deputies as being too provisional. Until the country’s fate is decided, the federal government will maintain control of foreign affairs, finance, defense, transport and communications, economic policy, and environmental affairs.”

#### **“17 July 1992**

The Slovak National Council overwhelmingly approves the Slovak Republic’s declaration of sovereignty. Opposition to the declaration comes only from former Slovak prime minister Ján Čarnogurský’s Christian Democratic Movement and from members of the Hungarian coalition.

Within minutes of the close of the ceremony in the Slovak National Council, one of President Havel’s advisers delivers a letter to the Federal Assembly in Prague in which the president announces that he will resign on Monday, 20 July, at 6.00 p.m.”

- EL PAÍS: Eslovaquia se proclama soberana y Havel dimite, 18-06-92  
Ilona Kovariková
- LA VANGUARDIA: Havel presenta su dimisión como presidente de Checoslovaquia. La Dieta de Bratislava proclama la soberanía de Eslovaquia. 18-06-92, Ricardo Estarriol

### **“19 July 1992**

In his last regular weekly radio address, Havel says that his decision to resign was not an “impulsive act of protest” against the Slovak declaration of sovereignty; he simply did not want to stand in the way.”

- EL PAÍS: Editorial: El gesto de Havel, 19-06-92

### **“20 July 1992**

At 6.00 p.m. the presidential flag is lowered over Prague castle, as Václav Havel officially steps down from the presidency.”

### **“22-23 July 1992**

Klaus and Mečiar meet in Bratislava and agree to submit a law entitled “On the End of the Federation“ to the Federal Assembly by 30 September. They also agree to split up the Czechoslovak Security and Information Agency and propose to privatize state radio and television and the official news agency ČSTK.”

### **“24 July 1992**

Alexander Dubček, the former chairman of the Federal Assembly, says that a referendum is the only legitimate way to decide whether Czechoslovakia should be split into two states. Speaking to reporters he says hat this is his opinion but simultaneously notes that referendums have never been held at critical points in Czechoslovak history.”

### **“30 July 1992**

In the third round of federal presidential elections, none of the three candidates is elected. The Federal Assembly cancels the fourth round of elections, which had been scheduled for 6 August, as no candidates have been proposed.”

### **“5 August 1992**

Vladimir Mečiar tells the Slovak parliament that a referendum on the future of Czechoslovakia is now contrary to Slovak interests. At this point in time

a referendum will only complicate the question of the “successor rights” of the two new states.”

#### **“20 August 1992**

Speaking on television, Czechoslovak Prime Minister Jan Stráský says that there are indications that HZDS is retreating from its original separatist positions. Stráský points out that it is still possible to save the federation but suggests that splitting Czechoslovakia would be the best solution to the country’s problems. The ministers of internal affairs of Czechoslovakia, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic meet in Bratislava to discuss the transfer of the federal ministry’s powers to the republican ministries in the event of breakup. The ministers agree to set up seven commissions to solve legal issues associated with the transfer of powers. The commissions will also deal with cataloguing the federal ministry’s property, dividing its archives, and establishing the border between the Czech Republic and Slovakia.”

#### **“24 August 1992**

Czech Prime Minister Klaus announces that the Slovak prime minister has refused to participate in the HZDS/ODS talks on Czechoslovakia’s future scheduled to take place on 27 August in Prague. In a letter to Klaus dated 21 August, Mečiar outlined his reasons, which include the ODS failure to apologize for recent statements suggesting that HZDS was orchestrating a left- wing putsch.”

#### **“25 August 1992**

The talks between Mečiar and Klaus on the breakup of Czechoslovakia will take place after all. The two leaders will meet in Brno on 26 August, and the meeting’s agenda will remain the same. No reason for Mečiar’s about-face is given.”

**“26 August 1992**

Meeting in Brno, Klaus and Mečiar agree that the Czechoslovak federation should split into two separate states by 1 January 1993. Their timetable calls for the Federal Assembly to adopt a law on the dissolution of the federation, division of property, and delineation of successor rights by the end of September. It also envisages that by the end of November each republic will have passed legislation on areas of future coexistence, including economic and political ties. The two sides agree to set up a customs union and a transitional monetary union; the long-term goal, however, is to create two separate currencies.”

**“27 August 1992**

At a press conference in Prague, Klaus says he hopes that the federal parliament will approve of a constitutional amendment abolishing the Czechoslovak federation.”

**“31 August 1992**

A session of the Slovak National Council devoted to drafting the Slovak constitution opens in Bratislava.”

**“1 September 1992**

The Slovak National Council adopts a new Slovak constitution.”

**“2 September 1992**

Radio Budapest reports that Hungarian deputies in the Slovak parliament believe that the new Slovak constitution does not guarantee the protection of Slovakia’s national minorities.”

**“3 September 1992**

In a ceremony at the Bratislava castle Vladimír Mečiar and parliamentary chairman Ivan Gašparovič sign Slovakia’s new constitution. The constitution goes into effect immediately after the signing ceremony, but some of its provisions are frozen until 1 January 1993 to avoid clashes with federal law.”

- EL PAÍS: Eslovaquia suscribe su Constitución como país independiente, 04-09-92, Ilona Kovariková

#### **“8 September 1992**

Speaking to reporters in Prague, the Czech Republic’s new foreign minister, Jozef Zieleniec, says that the Czech Republic and Slovakia will exchange ambassadors early in 1993. He also explains that the priorities of Czech foreign policy will remain the same as those of Czechoslovak foreign policy, but that the Czech Republic will wield less international influence and will consequently scale down some of the foreign policy projects initiated by former Czechoslovak foreign minister Jirí Dienstbier. Attaining membership in the EC, NATO, and the Western European Union will be his priorities.”

- EL PAÍS: Sentencia de muerte, 13-09-92, Vivianne Schnitzer

#### **“18 September 1992**

In an interview on Slovak radio, Mečiar reveals that the territorial principle has been adopted for the division of Czechoslovakia’s assets, assets will be kept on the territory where they presently reside.”

#### **“22 September 1992**

The Federal Assembly asks the government to submit to it by 15 October a program of steps to prevent an unconstitutional breakup of the federation, and by 15 November contingency plans for Czech-Slovak cooperation in the event of a constitutional split.”

- EL PAÍS: El Parlamento debate la disolución de Checoslovaquia, 30-09-92, Ilona Kovariková

#### **“1 October 1992**

The Czechoslovak Federal Assembly fails to pass a law on permissible ways of splitting the country. Currently, secession by one republic based on the

results of a referendum held in that republic is the only “constitutional” means of dissolving the country.”

### **“3 October 1992**

After an emergency session of the Czech government, Klaus makes it clear that he has no intention of postponing scheduled meetings with the Slovak government to discuss further steps toward dividing the country, although Mečiar has urged him to do so. Klaus also says that Czechoslovakia will cease to exist on January 1993.

Making his first public appearance since his resignation on 20 July, Havel urges acceptance of the breakup of Czechoslovakia (at news conference held at Divadlo Na zbradlí). He makes recommendations to the Federal Assembly for doing such in a civilized manner, reminding them that “states do not begin and end constitutionally“.

- LA VANGUARDIA: Divorcio a la bohemia en Praga. Klaus amenaza con saltarse el Parlamento Federal, 03-10-92, Ricardo Estarriol

### **“4 October 1992**

At a press conference, Mečiar pronounces the federal government ‘s proposals on the division of state property to be “unacceptable” to Slovakia. The federal government had proposed that all fixed property located on the territory of either republic should be awarded to that republic and that the result should be divided on a two-to-one basis in favor of the Czech Republic (whose population is twice the size of Slovakia ).”

### **“6 October 1992**

After an eight-hour meeting of the leadership of ODS and HZDS in the Moravian town of Jihlava, Klaus and Mečiar sign an agreement, which confirms earlier agreements between the two parties stipulating that Czechoslovakia will cease to exist on 1 January 1993; a series of treaties specifying the relationship between the two new states will go into effect that same day. The agreement does not define specific terms for Czechoslovakia’s split.”

- EL PAÍS: Checoslovaquia se partirá en dos el próximo 1 de enero, 07-10-92, Ilona Kovariková
- LA VANGUARDIA: "Cumbre" entre Klaus y Mečiar en Jihlava. Klaus: los Países Checos, dispuestos a defenderse "con las armas en la mano", 07-10-92, Ricardo Estarriol

#### **“8 October 1992**

The Federal Assembly passes two constitutional amendments aimed at transferring federal powers to the Czech and Slovak republics. The first amendment reduces the number of federal ministries from fifteen to five (foreign affairs, defense, internal affairs, economics, and finance). The second bill gives the republics the power to investigate crimes against the state and jurisdiction over state media institutions; it also ends the federal monopoly on film.”

- LA VANGUARDIA: Checos y eslovacos se comprometen a regular la escisión con decisiones parlamentarias, 08-10-92, Ricardo Estarriol

#### **“10 October 1992**

At a meeting near Prague, Klaus and Mečiar agree to introduce a customs union and to maintain temporarily a common currency following the breakup of the federation.”

#### **“19 October 1992**

HZDS announces that a referendum will be held in December 1992 to confirm the creation of an independent state (the referendum never takes place).”

#### **“26 October 1992**

Czech and Slovak leaders, meeting in Javorina, Slovakia, conclude a total of sixteen agreements designed to govern Czech-Slovak relations after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia on 1 January 1993.”

- EL PAÍS: Checos y eslovacos viven con miedo los últimos días del estado unitario, 23-11-92, EFE



**“27 October 1992**

The draft law on the abolition of the Czechoslovak federation is approved by the federal government and submitted to the Federal Assembly.”

**‘29 October 1992**

Klaus and Mečiar sign the sixteen agreements defining relations between the Czech and Slovak republics after the breakup of Czechoslovakia on 1 January 1993. The agreements include provisions for creating a customs union and retaining a common currency after 1 January 1993. The accords will be sent to the Czech and Slovak republican parliaments for ratification.”

**“7 November 1992**

Alexander Dubček dies.”

**“10 November 1992**

The Czech government submits a draft constitution to the parliament for approval.”

**“13 November 1992**

Federal Assembly deputies pass a bill on the division of federal property, laying the foundation for the “civilized“ separation of Czechoslovakia. Movable assets will be divided according to a two-to-one ratio, while fixed federal property will remain the property of the republic on which it is located. The division of some property, including the assets of federal television and radio, will be covered in separate legislation. The Czechoslovak parliament also adopts a law on the dissolution of the Federal Security and Information Agency.”

- LA VANGUARDIA: Alexander Dubcek, enterrado con honores de jefe de Estado en su Eslovaquia natal, 15-11-92, AFP/EFE

**“16 November 1992**

Former Czechoslovak President Václav Havel announces that he will run in the Czech Republic’s presidential elections.”

### **“17 November 1992**

On the third anniversary of the Velvet Revolution, both the Czech and Slovak republican parliaments pass resolutions recommending that the Federal Assembly pass a bill on the dissolution of the federation.”

### **“18 November 1992**

The Federal Assembly fails to approve legislation on the dissolution of the Czechoslovak federation. The bill had to be approved by a three-fifths majority in all three parts of the Federal Assembly. It gains the necessary majority in the Chamber of the People and in the Czech section of the Chamber of the Nations, but fails by three votes in the Slovak section. Passage is blocked by opposition deputies demanding that a retroactive “ratification referendum” on the split be held in December.”

### **“19 November 1992**

The Czech National Council approves a resolution declaring that it is assuming “full responsibility” for the republic, falling just of a declaration of sovereignty. Most opposition deputies walk out before the vote. Klaus tells Czech Television that the declaration was needed to give the Czech government a stronger mandate.”

- LA VANGUARDIA: Caos total en Checoslovaquia al rechazar la Cámara federal la separación, 20-11-92, EFE

### **“23 November 1992**

Czech and Slovak government leaders meet in Bratislava to discuss Czech-Slovak relations after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, including an agreement on army archives and one on cooperation in defense matters. The leaders sign nine agreements but fail to agree on how to divide immovable property belonging to federal institutions. The Czech side insists that such property remain in the possession of the republic on whose territory it is located-as stipulated by the 13 November constitutional law on the division of the federation’s assets. But since

there is more than twice as much such fixed property in the Czech Republic, the Slovaks want financial compensation for the Czech share exceeds the stipulated two-to-one ratio.”

- EL PAÍS: Checos y eslovacos viven con miedo los últimos días del Estado unitario, 23-11-92,

#### **“24 November 1992**

The Czech parliament approves fifteen and the Slovak parliament sixteen treaties governing relations between the Czech Republic and Slovakia after 1 January 1993.”

#### **“25 November 1992**

After two unsuccessful attempts, the Czechoslovak Federal Assembly finally approves legislation providing the legal basis for the federation’s dissolution; the measure is passed by a very narrow (three-vote) majority.”

#### **“2 December 1992**

The Federal Assembly approves the dissolution of Czechoslovak Television, Czechoslovak Radio, and the Czechoslovak Press Agency (ČSTK) on 1 January 1993. While Czechoslovak Television and Radio will continue to operate until 31 December 1992, ČSTK was abolished de facto in November, when its assets were divided between two newly established republican press agencies—the Czech Press Agency (ČTK) and the Press Agency of the Slovak Republic (TASR). The Federal Assembly also votes to dissolve the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences as of 1 January 1993 and to transfer its assets to the Czech Academy of Sciences and the Slovak Academy of Sciences. The Czechoslovak Red Cross organization will be divided into the Czech Red Cross and the Slovak Red Cross following the split of the federation on 1 January 1993.”

#### **“4 December 1992**

The presidium of the Czech National Council releases a statement saying that the governing coalition and the opposition are unable to agree on a draft Czech constitution.”

### **“16 December 1992**

Lawmakers from the Czech Republic finally endorse a new constitution, which provides for a two-chamber parliament and a weak presidency once the Czechoslovak federation dissolves 1 January 1993. The final vote is 172-16 with 10 abstentions. The constitution will go into effect 1 January 1993. Deputies vote on nearly ninety amendments to the constitution in one session, adopting about twelve changes on the floor. Not surprisingly, the final text is not immediately available to journalists. Among the key compromises are the addition of a bill of rights as an amendment to the constitution. Deputies will still have to resolve how the new upper house or senate will be created.”

### **“17 December 1992**

The federal parliament holds its final session. In the first unanimous vote in recent memory, 151 deputies in the Czech National Council approve a law making the Czech flag identical to the flag of the Czechoslovak Federation. This violates the law on splitting the federation, which forbids either side from using any Czechoslovak state symbols. Slovakia has no official reaction to the Czech move.”

- EL DIARIO VASCO: Checos y eslovacos podrían unirse en el marco de unificación europea, 26-12-92, EFE
- LA VANGUARDIA: La división de Checoslovaquia no desestabiliza Europa Central, 29-12-92, Ricardo Estarriol
- DEIA: Las repúblicas checa y eslovaca establecen el 1 de enero relaciones diplomáticas, 30-12-92, Agencias
- EL PAÍS: Checoslovaquia muere a medianoche y se rompe en dos, 31-12-92, Hermann Tertsch
- LA VANGUARDIA: El fin de Checoslovaquia es fruto de la torpeza de la clase política, 31-12-92, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: Desaparece un estado, nacen dos, 31-12-92, Hermann Tertsch
- ABC: Checoslovaquia desaparece con el fin de 1992, 31-12-92, Agencias
- EL MUNDO: El “divorcio de terciopelo”, las últimas horas de vida del

estado checoslovaco, 31-12-92, Agencias

### **“1 January 1993**

The Czech and Slovak Federal Republic ceases to exist.”

## **8. 2. Chronology of Slovak History in 1993<sup>253</sup>**

### **„1 January 1993**

The independent Slovak Republic came into being. The Deputies of the National Council of the Slovak Republic and the government of the independent Slovak Republic met together in a solemn session. The deputies took an oath of loyalty to the Constitution of the Slovak Republic and accepted a declaration that stated: “On 1 January 1993 the Slovak Republic became an independent and democratic state. As a sovereign, independent, and legitimate state the Slovak Republic is one of two successor states of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic. The National Council of the Slovak Republic confirms its will and readiness to become a regular member of the United Nations Organization... and equally declares its interest in membership in the Council of Europe and the status as a contracting partner of the European agreement on the defense of human rights and fundamental liberties... The National Council of the Slovak Republic solemnly declares that the Slovak Republic is continuing in the democratic tradition and the humanistic legacy of our forefathers and is prepared to initiate and maintain diplomatic relations with all democratic states of the world“. Already in the first hours of its existence the independent Slovak Republic was diplomatically recognized by 62 countries of the world.

The Slovak Republic became a full member of the International Monetary Fund and the organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).“

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<sup>253</sup> Directly quoted from Škvarna Dušan, Škvarna, Dušan, Slovak History, Chronology and Lexicon, Bratislava: Slovenské pedagogické nakladateľstvo, (1997), pp. 173 - 175.

- LA VANGUARDIA: Checoslovaquia ya no existe, 01-01-93, Ricardo Estarriol
- LA VANGUARDIA: La desaparición de Checoslovaquia crea dos nuevos estados europeos, 01-01-93, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: Checos y eslovacos, escépticos ante la partición del país, 02-01-93, Hermann Tertsch
- EL PAÍS: La triste resaca de Año Nuevo, 02-01-93, Hermann Tertsch
- EL DIARIO VASCO: Se consumó el divorcio checo-eslovaco, 02-01-93, Marc Fisher
- DEIA: Checoslovaquia desapareció del mapa europeo con el Año Nuevo, 02-02-93, Agencias
- EL PERIÓDICO: Checoslovaquia consume su ruptura, 02-01-93, Juan González Yuste
- ABC: Checoslovaquia: la fría separación que no pudo abrigar el terciopelo, 02-01-93, Ramiro Villapadierna
- ABC: Checos y eslovacos, más primos que hermanos, 02-01-93, Ramiro Villapadierna
- EL MUNDO: Adiós a Checoslovaquia, 02-01-93, Freddy Valverde / Charo F. Cotta
- EL MUNDO: Checoslovaquia se partió en dos, 02-01-93, Freddy Valverde
- EL DIARIO VASCO: Pulso del día: Checoslovaquia ya no existe, 02-01-93,
- EL DIARIO VASCO: Checoslovaquia, tras 74 años, se transforma en dos estados, 02-01-93, EFE
- EL PAÍS: La oposición eslovaca deberá confirmar su lealtad al nuevo estado, 03-01-93, Hermann Tertsch
- EL PAÍS: Editorial: Absurdo divorcio, 03-01-93
- EL PAÍS: Final de Trayecto, 03-01-93, Hermann Tertsch
- EL PERIÓDICO: Editorial: Checos y eslovacos, 03-01-93

- ABC: Separación, 03-01-93 Francisco Eguiagaray
- EL PERIÓDICO: La pesadilla del “capitalismo salvaje” – Checos y eslovacos despiertan del sueño independentista con importantes subidas de precios en los productos básicos, 04-01-93, Juan González Yuste
- EL DIARIO VASCO: Preocupa en Eslovaquia el interés de Hungría por revisar la frontera, 05-01-93, Agencias
- EL PAÍS: Relevado el director del principal periódico eslovaco, de propiedad estatal, 06-01-93, REUTERS
- EL DIARIO VASCO: Meciar culpa a Havel de la división checoslovaca, 06-01-93, Agencias

### **„12 January 1993**

The French foreign minister, Roland Dumas, arrived for an official visit to the Slovak Republic. It was the first visit of a representative of a foreign government to the independent Slovak Republic.“

### **„16 January 1993**

The Slovak Republic became a member of the World Bank.“

### **„19 January 1993**

At a session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in New York, the Slovak Republic was accepted as the 180th member-state. The Slovak state flag was ceremonially raised in front of the United Nations building.“

### **„22 January 1993**

The Slovak Republic was accepted as a special observer in the Council of Europe.“

- EL MUNDO: Los parlamentos checo y eslovaco eligen mañana a los jefes de ambos Estados, 25-01-93, Freddy Valverde
- ABC: Eslovaquia y la República Checa eligen hoy a sus primeros jefes de Estado de la Historia, 26-01-93, Ramiro Villapadierna

- LA VANGUARDIA: Havel, elegido presidente checo en una sesión llena de incidentes , 27-01-93, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: El cambio que pudo haber sido y no fue, 27-01-93, Hermann Tertsch
- EL PAÍS: Havel, elegido presidente checo tras una jornada de insultos de la ultraderecha, 27-01-93, Ilona Kovariková
- EL PAÍS: El candidato de Meciar a la presidencia de Eslovaquia fracasó en el primer intento, 27-01-93, Vivianne Schnitzer
- ABC: Seis meses después de su renuncia, Havel regresa al Castillo de Praga, 27-01-93, Ramiro Villapadierna
- EL MUNDO: El Parlamento checo nombra a Havel nuevo presidente de la República, 27-01-93, Freddy Valverde
- DEIA: Václav Havel, elegido primer presidente de la República Checa independiente, 27-01-93, Agencias
- EL DIARIO VASCO: Václav Havel fue elegido primer presidente de la República Checa, 27-01-93, Agencias
- LA VANGUARDIA: La elección del Presidente provoca una crisis política en Eslovaquia, 28-01-93, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: Eslovaquia sufre su primera crisis al no lograr el Parlamento elegir presidente, 28-01-93 Vivianne Schnitzer
- ABC: Havel: „Estrechar las relaciones con Eslovaquia será mi labor preferente“. 28-01-93, Ramiro Villapadierna
- EL PAÍS: Editorial: El drama de presidir, 28-01-93

## **„2 February 1993**

The National Council of the Slovak Republic adopted a law concerning the separation of the currencies of the Czech and Slovak republics.“

- EL PAÍS: Havel jura como primer presidente checo, 03-02-93, Ilona Kovariková
- ABC: La frágil unión monetaria checa y eslovaca, condenada



a desaparecer, 03-02-93, Ramiro Villapadierna

- ABC: Cumbre centroeuropea sin Meciar en la investidura de Havel, 03-02-93, Ramiro Villapadierna
- EL DIARIO VASCO: Havel jura fidelidad a la Constitución checa, fracaso en Eslovaquia, 03-02-93, B. Iraburu

### **„8 February 1993**

A new currency, the Slovak crown (SK), began to be used in Slovakia.“

### **„9 February 1993**

The Slovak Republic became a member of UNESCO.“

- LA VANGUARDIA: La oposición no consigue presentar un candidato común para la Presidencia de Eslovaquia, 09-02-93, Ricardo Estarriol

### **„15 February 1993**

In a secret ballot, 106 of the deputies of the National Council of the Slovak Republic voted for the candidate of the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, Michal Kováč, to become president of the Slovak Republic.“

- EL PAÍS: Kovac, el candidato de Meciar, primer presidente de Eslovaquia, 16-02-93, Vivianne Schnitzer
- LA VANGUARDIA: Un funcionario de banca, nuevo presidente de Eslovaquia, 16-02-93, Ricardo Estarriol
- ABC: Michal Kovac, elegido primer jefe de Estado eslovaco, 16-02-93, Ramiro Villapadierna
- ABC: Chequia se convierte en la nación más floreciente y estable del antiguo Este, 24-02-93, Ramiro Villapadierna

### **„8 March 1993**

President Michal Kováč named Milan Čič as the president of the constitutional court of the Slovak Republic.“

- LA VANGUARDIA: Meciar pierde su único aliado en el Parlamento, 19-03-93, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: Vladimir Meciar hace frente a su peor crisis de gobierno desde la creación de Eslovaquia, 20-03-93, Vivianne Schnitzer
- EL PAÍS: El enfrentamiento entre Chequia y Eslovaquia puede llegar a la guerra comercial, 22-03-93, Ilona Kovariková

### **„2 April 1993**

In Bratislava an options and futures exchange, the first in central or eastern Europe, began to function.“

- EL PAÍS: Eslovaquia inquieta a la minoría húngara, 02-04-93, Vivianne Schnitzer

### **„12 April 1993**

At the 89th session of the Inter-parliamentary Union in New Delhi in India, the Slovak Republic became a member of the organization.“

- EL PAÍS: El error checoslovaco, 11-05-93, J. M. Martí Font
- EL PAÍS: Pugna por el reparto de bienes, 11-05-93, J. M. Martí Font

### **„23 June 1993**

The Slovak Republic signed an agreement of association with the European Community in Brussels.“

### **„30 June 1993**

The Slovak Republic became the 31st member of the Council of Europe.“

- EL PAÍS: Ultimátum húngaro a Eslovaquia para que respete a la minoría magiar, 30-06-93, J.M. Martí Font

### **„10 July 1993**

The National Bank of the Slovak Republic devalued the Slovak crown by 10 percent.“

- LA VANGUARDIA: Meciar congela la nueva ley sobre las minorías, 20-07-93, Ricardo Estarriol

### **„8 August 1993**

The remains of the writer Jozef Cíger Hronský, which had been brought from Argentina to Slovakia (3 July 1993), were buried in the National Cemetery in Martin in the presence of President Michal Kováč and Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar.“

### **„9 August 1993**

The trade balance of the Slovak Republic concluded with a surplus of 2.9 billion Sk.“

### **„17 August 1993**

The government of the Slovak Republic accepted an agreement of association with the European Community. The agreement was signed in the Kirchberg European Center in Luxemburg on 4 October 1993. The European parliament ratified it on 27 October 1993 and the National Council of the Slovak Republic ratified it on 15 October 1993.“

### **„29 September 1993**

The National Council of the Slovak Republic adopted a law for mitigating some of the property injustices inflicted upon churches and religious societies during the communist regime.“

### **„September 1993**

During the first nine months of its existence the Slovak Republic had been recognized by 122 states of the world. Diplomatic relations with Slovakia were maintained by 106 states. The Slovak Republic opened embassies and consular offices in 53 states of the world.“

- EL PAÍS: Arena y cal, los checos adoptan el mercado libre a ritmo de

bajos salarios y precios elevados, 12-12-93, Jay Branegan

### **„22 December 1993**

The National Council of the Slovak Republic adopted a law on the state budget allowing a deficit of 14 billion Sk.“

### **8.3. UNCLASSIFIABLE ARTICLES**

EL PAÍS: González pide sensatez a checos y eslovacos para preservar su federación 12-11-91, Ignacio Cembrero

- EL PAÍS: Checoslovaquia se abre a España para no depender de Alemania, según González 13-11-91, Ignacio Cembrero
- EL MUNDO: Cuaderno de Cultura BABELIA: Eslovaquia, fascismo „made in USA“. Entrevista con Miloslav Ulicny, traductor y poeta, 04-01-92, Miguel Bayón
- EL PAÍS: Un moralista en la política, 06-02-92, Jorge Edwards
- LA VANGUARDIA: Entrevista con el Jefe de Gobierno eslovaco, Ján Carnogursky/ Perfil, 29-04-92, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: El Nacionalismo en Centroeuropa: Eslavos y Magiares, 03-06-92, Carmén González Enríquez
- EL PAÍS: Editorial: Dudas en Praga, 08-06-92
- EL PAÍS: Análisis Internacional: Checos, eslovacos ...y Centroeuropa, 14-

06-92

- EL PAÍS: Entrevista con Vladimír Mečiar, Líder del Movimiento para Eslovaquia Democrática „En Checoslovaquia no existe la amenaza de la crisis yugoslava“, 17-06-92, Vivianne Schnitzer
- EL PAÍS: Editorial: El gesto de Havel, 19-06-92
- EL PAÍS: Editorial: Separación pacífica, 22-06-92
- EL PAÍS: La unidad de Europa, 23-06-92, Martín Balboa Fernández
- EL PAÍS: Editorial: Proteger a las minorías, 24-06-92
- EL PAÍS: Tribuna: Václav Havel: ¿La impotencia de los poderosos?, 24-06-92
- EL PAÍS DOMINGO: Otra raya en el mapa. 28-06-92, J.M. Martí Font
- EL PAÍS: Checoslovaquia y Europa, Ralf Dahrendorf
- EL PAÍS: Europa y el nacionalismo, 22-07-92, Miroslav Hroch
- LA VANGUARDIA: Opinión: El último Dubcek, 10?-11-92
- EL PAÍS Suplemento: Eslovaquia, Una, pobre y libre, 22-11-93, Hermann Tertsch
- LA VANGUARDIA: Transición en el Este, Lluís Foix, 28-11-92
- LA VANGUARDIA: La partición de Checoslovaquia, Lluís Foix, 28-12-

- LA VANGUARDIA: La separación checoslovaca da origen a dos nuevas televisiones, 28-12-92, Rodrigo Morales
- EL DIARIO VASCO: Análisis: País rico, país pobre, 02-01-93, Mario García
- DEIA: Opinión: Checoslovaquia ha muerto, 02-01-93, José Luis Arriaga
- EL PAÍS: Editorial: Absurdo divorcio, 03-01-93
- EL MUNDO: Editorial: Checoslovaquia: un divorcio no deseado, 03-01-93
- EL MUNDO: Opinión: Nueva frontera, 03-01-93, Jaime Pastor
- EL DIARIO VASCO: Deportes: El eslovaco Zoltan Bergendl califica de „aberración“ la división de su país, 03-01-93, Alberto Echaluze
- LA VANGUARDIA: Editorial, Dos Checoslovaquias, 04-01-93
- ABC: Opinión: Estados artificiales, 04-01-93, Alejandro Muñoz-Alonso
- LA VANGUARDIA: Opinión: Chequia y Eslovaquia, 05-01-93, Norbert Bilbeny
- EL PERIÓDICO: Opinión: Eslovacos y Checos, 09-01-93, Joan Tudela
- DEIA: Nacionalismo y atraso, 17-01-93, Xabier Arzalluz

- EL PAÍS: Chequia, 22-01-93, Xabier Zabaltza Pérez-Nievas
- EL PAÍS: No vamos a andar a tiros. 25-01-93, Iva Horák/ Ludmila Čechová
- EL MUNDO: EL papel del futuro presidente checo, 25-01-93, Václav Havel
- EL PAÍS: Editorial: El drama de presidir, 28-01-93
- LA VANGUARDIA: Ideas, Cuaderno de Cultura: El ángel de la historia, 16-02-93, Monika Zgustová
- LA VANGUARDIA: La fractura discreta, 16-02-93, Josep Ramoneda
- LA VANGUARDIA: Cultura: Entrevista a Petr Fidelius, filósofo checo: „El comunismo cultivó el odio como el máximo valor moral“, 16-02-93, Monika Zgustová
- LA VANGUARDIA: Responso para Dubcek, 21-02-93, Bohumil Hrabal
- LA VANGUARDIA: Hungría busca su lugar entre el polvorín de los Blancos y la Comunidad Europea, 22-02-93, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: Entrevista: Václav Klaus: “Nadie puede acusarme de contribuir a dividir a Checoslovaquia”, 09-05-93, J.M. Martí Font
- LA VANGUARDIA: Entrevista con el Presidente de Eslovaquia, Michal Kovac, 20-09-93, Ricardo Estarriol
- LA VANGUARDIA: Entrevista con el Ministro de Defensa eslovaco,

Imrich Andrejcak, 22-09-93, Ricardo Estarriol

- LA VANGUARDIA: Los Sudetes, entre Praga y Bonn, 29-10-93, Ricardo Estarriol
- LA VANGUARDIA: Entrevista con el viceministro de defensa checo Jiri Popisil, 21-11-93, Ricardo Estarriol
- EL PAÍS: Dos caras de Eslovaquia: entrevista con Michal Kovac, Presidente de Eslovaquia y Vladimir Meciar, ex primer ministro eslovaco, 04-01-94, Ángel Santa Cruz
- EL PAÍS: República Checa, el „milagro“ poscomunista: Fascinados por el dinero, 17-04-1994, Ángel Santa Cruz
- EL PAÍS: Eslovaquia, la tentación vive al lado, 21-04-94, Ángel Santa Cruz
- EL PAÍS: Dos heridas abiertas con Hungría, 21-04-93, Ángel Santa Cruz
- EL PAÍS: El arte de regar la historia, 08-11-94, Václav Havel
- LA VENGANZA DE LA HISTORIA: La Suiza malograda; La historia de Maria Poda, Hermann Tertsch, 1993
- EL PAÍS: Dos países a la sombra de un imperio. La europa de los 25, los nuevos socios: República Checa y Eslovaquia, 02-04-2004, Miguel Á. Villena



## 9. Annex II

### 9. 1. Evelina Mäsiarová's Interview with Sr. Ricardo Estarriol on April 15, 2008. Bratislava- Rome

#### Cuestiones

1. *¿Qué relación tiene usted con la antigua Federación Checoslovaca? ¿Fue Usted alguna vez corresponsal en Praga?*

En 1964 empecé a trabajar como corresponsal de “La Vanguardia” en Viena con especial centro de atención en los países del Pacto de Varsovia. En abril de 1967 viajé por vez primera a Checoslovaquia y desde entonces hasta la separación estuve 40 veces y alrededor de 170 días en Checoslovaquia. Mi última estancia en la Checoslovaquia unida tuvo lugar en diciembre de 1992 para entrevistar al ministro de asuntos exteriores Zieleniec. Estuve acreditado sólo temporalmente en Praga. Después de la separación he hecho naturalmente bastantes viajes tanto a Chequia, como a Eslovaquia.

2. *¿Puede explicarnos su relación personal con la República Checoslovaca?*

Lógicamente, muy estrecha, tanto en los países checos como en Eslovaquia. A pesar de la vigilancia del SB y de las represalias que solía tomar la policía, tuve y continúo teniendo no tan sólo relaciones profesionales, sino también muy buenas relaciones personales. Debo añadir que he conocido muy bien la policía política de todos los países comunistas y los peores (para nosotros, los periodistas) eran los checos y los serbios. Durante la época comunista, en las dos naciones (Chequia y Eslovaquia) he conocido personas inteligentes, generosas y valientes. El problema para mí era evitar que estas personas fueran luego sometidas a represalias. Imborrables son mis recuerdos de las entrevistas que tuve

con el Cardenal Tomasek, por ejemplo, o con Jiri Hajek, con intelectuales de Brno, con bastantes personas de Eslovaquia. Durante la larga crisis polaca después de 1980/1981 viajé numerosas veces a Varsovia a través de Moravia: era evidente el terror que tenían los agentes del gobierno al “virus polaco”, un terror que se manifestaba en la forma en que nos trataban.

3. *¿Cómo situaría el proceso de división checoslovaca en la Europa posterior a la caída del sistema socialista y del muro de Berlín?*

Fue un proceso lógico y Europa debería estar agradecida a las dos naciones y a las respectivas minorías en el territorio de ambas naciones de que la separación hubiera sido pacífica. Fue un proceso necesario, debido a que uno de los dos socios (Chequia) nunca abandonó la idea de una unión/federación/comunidad asimétrica. No voy a darle a usted una clase de historia, pero sí decirle que estoy convencido de que la unión de ambas naciones, dictada por la Entente después de la segunda guerra mundial, no tenía nada que ver con el romántico y pasajero deseo de algunos checos y eslovacos de fomentar la “solidaridad, hermandad y unidad de los pueblos eslavos”, sino que era el producto del deseo de los vencedores de la primera guerra mundial de cerrar un cordón sanitario alrededor de Austria. Los que conozcan un poco los regímenes comunistas conocen la táctica comunista de no permitir nunca “estructuras horizontales”. La creación de estructuras horizontales en el partido fue uno de los caballos de batalla de los reformistas en el pc polaco cuando “Solidarnosc” les estaba quitando la clientela. Muy pocos se han detenidos a pensar cómo era posible que nunca hubiera existido un comité central del partido checo, o del partido ruso, o del partido español no catalán. La razón es muy sencilla: el método leninista no permite que el que manda esté al nivel de los mandados. Por lo tanto, los armenios, los usbecos, los catalanes, los tasajos, los eslovacos etc. podían tener un comité central propio de carácter más o menos cosmético, pero por encima de sobre ellos estaba jerárquicamente el comité central del partido a nivel de todo el estado (el cc soviético, el cc checoslovaco, el cc español). Pero los rusos, los checos y los españoles no catalanes no necesitaban un comité central propio, sino

que se servían del comité central a nivel de todo el estado, con lo cual se colocaban automáticamente por encima de los comites centrales “nacionales”. Sé que es difícil de entender, pero me imagino que una eslovaca me entiende.

4. *¿Cómo valora el proceso checoslovaco? ¿Realmente no había otra salida? ¿Por qué cree que no se preguntó a la población?*

Seguramente había otra salida, pero los hombres que hicieron la historia entonces no pudieron o supieron dar con ella. No consideré nunca que hubiera sido imposible llegar a algún tipo de unión confederada. Si Vaclav Havel y Jan Carnogurski hubieran podido negociar por su cuenta, seguramente hubiera sido posible encontrar una solución pragmática. Tenga en cuenta que la Unión Europea es de hecho una especie de confederación, que en algunos aspectos ejerce a veces funciones soberanas que los eslovacos no hubieran querido ceder tan fácilmente a los checos, pero en cambio han cedido a la UE. Pero Havel tuvo que dejar las negociaciones en manos de Klaus y en Eslovaquia Carnogurski, que tenía muy poca habilidad para mantenerse en el poder, dejó el poder en manos de un ambicioso nacionalista y populista. Creo que fue Carnogurski quien me dijo un día algo así como: “mire usted, lo que nosotros no queremos es que las decisiones que afectan a Eslovaquia se tomen fuera de Eslovaquia”, en todo lo demás estamos dispuestos a colaborar. Klaus en cambio, había dicho con mucha claridad que “mir ist der permanente Konsens zweier Nationen bei der Regierung zu unsicher: so kann man weder arbeiten, noch regieren“. En su día entendí que no se preguntó a la población, porque la pregunta no hubiera aclarado nada: la mayoría de los checos hubieran votado contra y la mayoría de los eslovacos habrían votado a favor.

5. *¿Cuál es su opinión personal sobre la postura de la delegación checa y la eslovaca en los encuentros entre Klaus y Meciar? ¿Cree que los eslovacos buscaban la independencia, o más bien considera que los checos expulsaron a los eslovacos de la federación?*

Yo no pienso ni una cosa (que los eslovacos quisieran la independencia), ni otra (que los checos les echaran de la federación), sino que la inconsciente arrogancia de Klaus y la necesidad que tenía Meciar de ampliar (con decisiones populistas) la base popular de su poder fue lo que condujo al resultado actual. No puedo decir que los eslovacos hubieran negociado mal, pero en estas negociaciones tenían poco espacio de maniobra. Recuerdo que, cuando los dos países y Polonia iban a entrar en la OTAN hice una serie de entrevistas con los respectivos ministros de defensa. Un viceministro checo que contó que, antes de las negociaciones sobre la distribución del patrimonio del ejército federal, Klaus le dijo al viceministro una directiva: “nosotros queremos dinero: deje las armas a los eslovacos”. Y así surgió la absurda situación de que Eslovaquia se quedó con unos fantásticos caza-bombarderos soviéticos MIG-29 que no le servían de casi nada y para los que no tenían ni campos de aviación, ni servicio, etc. de tal forma que el nuevo ejército eslovaco tuvo que alquilar aparcamientos en los campos checos...

*6. ¿Cuál fue, para Usted, el tratamiento que recibieron los políticos implicados en el proceso: Havel, Klaus y Meciar, en la prensa española? ¿Considera que alguno de ellos hizo el papel de bueno, y otro el de malo?*

Nunca me extrañó el trato que recibieron en la mayor parte de los medios españoles. La prensa española reflejó la forma de pensar de la nación dominante, que prefiere por principio la asimetría: es la constante de todos los estados europeos, desde Rumanía a Francia, pasando por Italia. No creo que los medios españoles piensen que Klaus había hecho el papel de bueno, sino que hizo el papel que convenía a su nación. Pienso que Meciar perdió prestigio fuera de su país, no con la independencia, sino más tarde, cuando empezó a hacer más tonterías, como por ejemplo el intento de “filetear” en franjas de sur a norte las zonas de población húngara, para evitar que la población magiar pudiera disponer de distritos o zonas en los que ellos fueran la mayoría. Recuerdo muy bien una visita de Solana en la que avisó a Meciar de los peligros que entrañaba su populismo nacionalista.

7. *Imagino que usted ha seguido con posterioridad el proceso de ambos estados. ¿Considera que se han cumplido las previsiones: el enriquecimiento rápido de Chequia y el hundimiento eslovaco?*

No. Lo único que yo pensé entonces es que los eslovacos lo tendrían algo más difícil que los checos, pero nunca pensé en que fueran a hundirse. Y hoy basta con mirar los Eckdaten del país (Eslovaquia) para darse cuenta de que progresa mucho.

8. *¿Cuál ha sido para Usted el proceso que han seguido los problemas nacionales y las reivindicaciones autonomistas en los dos nuevos estados: los checos con los moravos y los eslovacos con la minoría húngara? ¿Considera cerrado el proceso?*

Pienso que entre checos y moravos no habrá nunca grandes problemas. En cambio sí creo que todavía no ha sido superado el problema de los húngaros en Eslovaquia. Pero pienso que quizás el tiempo será la mejor fórmula. No veo ningún movimiento irredentista en Hungría y además, si lo hubiera, ya se encargaría la UE de que desapareciera pronto: hay demasiados estados en la Unión Europea que tienen sus propios problemas de minorías que podrían re-explotar. Pero Eslovaquia debería ser más abierta. Sólo a modo de ejemplo, creo que cualquier eslovaco que haya viajado algo por el mundo se avergonzará de que sus autoridades obliguen a los húngaros a declinar sus apellidos magiares de acuerdo con una declinación eslava. En cambio, pienso que tanto Chequia como Eslovaquia están cometiendo un error al mantener la vigencia de la legislación de Benes: los alemanes han sido expulsados y ya no regresarán, pero hay que reconocer los errores del pasado, aunque – en comparación con los que hicieron otros - sean de menor cuantía. Incluso, yo aconsejaría a los eslovacos a dar un paso por su cuenta, sin necesidad de acordarlo con los checos, de la misma forma que Benes tampoco consultó sus decretos a los eslovacos.

9. *¿Cuál fue, según su punto de vista, el tratamiento que se dio al proceso en la prensa española? ¿Predominó el hecho de que fuese una separación pactada e incruenta, o bien se hizo hincapié en el hecho de que con ello se rompía otro estado europeo, un mal ejemplo por tanto?*

Pienso que la prensa reflejó la forma de pensar de sus lectores. Recuerdo que, bastantes años de que cayera el régimen yugoeslavo, participé en un debate televisivo (“La Clave”) en Madrid y defendí el punto de vista de que el Occidente debería empezar a darse cuenta de que Yugoslavia era un proyecto de estado inviable, etc. Uno de los televidentes hizo un comentario telefónico live diciendo: “no es de extrañar que Estarriol defienda la desintegración de Yugoslavia, puesto que es catalán...”. Lo mismo me hubiera dicho alguien seguramente, si el debate versado sobre Checoslovaquia. En 1990/1991 nuestro ministro de asuntos exteriores, Fernández-Ordóñez, era incapaz de imaginarse que la URSS se desintegraría. Respondiendo a su pregunta de usted, predominó la segunda versión, pero ahora ya en vista de la positiva experiencia pienso que los juicios negativos ya no existen o existen en mucha menor medida.

10. *¿Considera que el punto de vista de la prensa española fue unitario? ¿Cuál fue, a su entender? ¿Se posicionó a favor o en contra de la separación? ¿Cree que el mensaje que se estaba lanzando era contrario a la creación de nuevas fronteras?*

No, no fue unitario. Pienso que la prensa catalana (por lo menos el diario para el que yo trabajé) enjuició positivamente la separación. Un país con una ETA que no para de matar y con seis millones de catalanes que —a juicio de los nacionalistas del centro— continuamente ponen dificultades al gobierno central, los medios del centro en general eran opuestos a la separación. Efectivamente entonces todavía se consideraba que el principio de que las fronteras no pueden modificarse como un sacrosanto principio de derecho natural, cosa que se ha demostrado no ser cierta. Pienso que cuando llegó a reunificación alemana, el entusiasmo de nuestros políticos por la “sacralidad de las fronteras” fue disolviéndose.

11. *¿Recuerda alguna diferencia entre la prensa estatal (El País, El Mundo, ABC, La Vanguardia) con la prensa catalana y vasca, especialmente (AVUI, Deia, El Diario Vasco) en el tratamiento de esta separación?*

Hay una gran diferencia, sí, y le agradezco que coloque a “La Vanguardia” en el capítulo de la prensa “estatal” (entiendo que usted designa con este adjetivo lo que en alemán llamaríamos “bundesweit”), pero mi periódico se vende poco en Madrid y tiene una línea muy diversa de los periódicos de Madrid. Pero tampoco pueden establecerse paralelismos entre las naciones no castellanas: los vascos se ocupan de la autodeterminación y de la independencia, mientras que los catalanes quisiera para Cataluña algo semejante a lo que hubiera querido hacer Carnogurski en Eslovaquia. El hecho de que haya un partido separatista en el gobierno catalán es la mayor paradoja política que uno puede imaginarse en Europa: para que el partido mayoritario gobernante en todo el país (PSOE), pueda también gobernar en la autonomía catalana, han necesitado no tan sólo una alianza con los comunistas (lo cual hasta cierto punto es comprensible), sino una alianza con el único partido verdaderamente separatista que existe en Cataluña.

12. *¿Llegó a España la información de la que se habló también sobre la injusta repartición de los bienes federales en beneficio de la República Checa y en contra de la Eslovaca? En ningún artículo he leído ningún comentario al respecto.*

No, seguramente, porque los mismos eslovacos no quisieron. Aparte de anécdotas, como la que le he contado del ejército, yo personalmente no investigué el asunto, porque partí de la base de que la parte objeto de la injusticia hubiera tenido que decirlo. Y, si no lo decía el gobierno, hubiera tenido que tomar la palabra la oposición. Personalmente, tengo la impresión de que esto de repartir el patrimonio nacional es algo muy difícil, sobre todo cuando la mayor parte de la propiedad productiva es estatal. Yo tuve un amigo croata que formó parte de una comisión fomentada por la apoyada por la Comunidad Europea encargada de repartir el patrimonio estatal entre la ex Yugoslavia y las repúblicas. Era un trabajo de Sísifo, porque no había forma de ponerse de acuerdo ni en el método, ni, por

ejemplo, en la propiedad de inversiones hechas en común, como centrales eléctricas y autopistas, o en la amortización de inversiones hechas asimétricamente, etc. etc.

13. *¿Por qué es tan pobre el conocimiento que tiene la juventud española sobre Eslovaquia, o sobre la misma división de la Federación Checoslovaca? ¿Qué piensa usted al respecto?*

El día en que la juventud (y la senectud) española empiece a distinguir entre Eslovaquia, Eslovenia y Eslavonia lanzaré las campanas al vuelo. No es una falta de los eslovacos, sino de mis compatriotas. De todas formas, permítame que le pregunte: ¿que es lo que sabe la juventud eslovena sobre Cataluña? Pienso que si el gobierno eslovaco inicia una buena campaña turística, quizás las cosas cambien poco a poco. Con ello quiero decir, que en primer lugar hay que arreglar la infraestructura que tendría que recibir los turistas, porque sólo con una propaganda no se consigue nada. Yo pienso siempre que ustedes tienen unas zonas fantásticas en el centro del país (por ejemplo, toda la parte de Spis, pero también los Tatra, etc.) que muy pocos conocen. Desgraciadamente, les ha tocado a ustedes tener la capital en una zona del país que es poco atractiva, pero Eslovaquia en su conjunto es un país bellísimo y la población es hospitalaria y generosa.

14. *¿Tiene alguna información sobre cómo observaron el proceso de división checoslovaco los países vecinos a España, por ejemplo Francia y Portugal?*

No, lo siento, pero no me cuesta imaginar que Francia -- que con su jacobinismo y en aras del centralismo ha destruido prácticamente todas las estructuras geográficas y históricas no orientadas al centro -- nunca habrá sentido un especial interés por una Eslovaquia independiente. Francia fue además la vanguardia de la Entente que en 1918 quitó Eslovaquia a los húngaros para dársela a los checos.



15. *¿Piensa que sería posible aplicar el modelo checoslovaco de división también en el marco de solucionar los respectivos problemas con las nacionalidades existentes en el Estado Español?*

No lo creo. En España son las regiones ricas las que se sienten más o menos maltratadas por las más pobres, en Checoslovaquia eran los ricos quienes hostigaban a los pobres. En España hay quien utiliza el terrorismo para reclamar la independencia, cosa que nunca se registró en Checoslovaquia. España era un estado desde el siglo XV, mientras que Eslovaquia de hecho fue independiente por vez primera el siglo XX. Me cuesta mucho imaginar que un país miembro de la UE pueda llevar a cabo una separación.

16. *¿Cómo compararía la separación de Checoslovaquia con la de Yugoslavia? Usted ha pasado muchos años en Belgrado. ¿Cuál fue el proceso yugoslavo, hasta que empezaron las declaraciones de independencia de Eslovenia y Croacia?*

Los paralelismos históricos proceden del siglo XX. Anteriormente el paralelismo era relativo: en ambos hay eslavos es cierto, pero unos son eslavos del sur y otros eslavos del norte. Ambas creaciones eran artificiales. En el caso de Checoslovaquia hay que hacer una diferencia: mientras que los checos dependían de la corona imperial, los eslovacos dependía de la coronal real. Y esto fue culturalmente y socialmente muy importante. Los Habsburgos tenían una concepción del Estado de la nación muy distinta de la que tenían los húngaros: los Habsburgos no “germanizaban” su imperio, mientras que los húngaros (aún bajo los Habsburgo) intentaban “magiarizar” los territorios que dominaban. Los emperadores distinguían perfectamente entre Estado (estructura política y jurídica de una o varias naciones) y nación (concepto étnico, religioso, lingüístico, cultural), cosa que hoy día todavía no acaban de distinguir españoles, italianos y franceses. Para un español de lengua castellana España es un Estado nacional, y por ello teme que aquellos grupos que se califican de nación dentro del estado cometen un atentado contra el Estado, cosa que no sucedía en Austria. Otro ejemplo: cuando los húngaros maltrataban a los rumanos en la Transilvania, los

representantes rumanos recurrieron (pasando por encima de los húngaros) al Emperador, quien atendió sus ruegos e intentó frenar a los nacionalistas húngaros. Esta es la razón por la cual la cuna de la independencia del estado de los rumanos fue precisamente la Iglesia greco católica (ortodoxos re-unidos a Roma), generosamente creada y apoyada por el Emperador: ésta es la razón por la cual sólo en Transilvania hay grecos católicos (los que hay en el resto de Rumanía son diáspora). El paralelismo entre Checoslovaquia y Yugoslavia procede del deseo de las potencias de la Entente de crear un “cordon sanitario” que fuera capaz de detener el supuesto apetito hegemónico habsbúrgico.

El proceso yugoslavo fue distinto. La creación del estado fue obra de Wilson y de la Entente. El “Reino de los serbios, croatas y eslovenos” duró sólo diez años y acabó con una dictadura del rey serbio (1929). Los croatas, que (como los eslovenos) habían sufrido el régimen húngaro nunca se sintieron en su casa en aquel estado tan extraño, en el que había muchas naciones que no eran en absoluto yugoslavas o sud-eslavas (fundamentalmente, alemanes, albaneses, italianos). Un paralelismo muy importante con Eslovaquia. Tanto Croacia como Eslovaquia se entregaron en manos de los nazis, cuando pensaron que les permitiría conseguir una independencia nacional (fue penoso, pero es también fácil comprenderlo). Los que trabajamos en Yugoslavia a partir de los años setenta sabíamos que aquello no podía durar. A medida que mejoró el nivel de vida, disminuyó la presión policíaca y resurgieron los sentimientos nacionales (en 1970 en Croacia, por ejemplo). A partir de 1974 Tito reconoció una auténtica autonomía a Kosovo y la calidad de “nación” a los bosníacos musulmanes. Al comenzar los años noventa Yugoslavia era sólo una fachada, pero nuestros diplomáticos y políticos occidentales no querían reconocerlo. Invocaban el principio de la inviolabilidad de las fronteras como si se tratara de un derecho fundamental. En 1990 el gobierno de Belgrado no podía ejercer su soberanía fiscal (la repúblicas se quedaban con los ingresos fiscales), ni monetaria (los bancos llevaban a cabo emisiones monstruosas para financiar la administración, la corrupción y el ejército sin avisar al gobierno), los diputados en el parlamento federal se auto-prolongaban sus mandatos, el ejército modificaba su estructura sin preguntar al gobierno federal, etc., etc. De manera que la disgregación de

Yugoslavia sólo sorprendió a los que llevaban gafas oscuras. Naturalmente, la mayoría de los estados europeos tenían mala conciencia con sus naciones: España con los catalanes y vascos, Francia con todas las naciones asimiladas que tienen disimuladas, Inglaterra con los irlandeses, Bélgica con las dos naciones que todavía hoy día están a punto de destruir el estado, Italia, con los sudtiroleses, etc. etc. Nadie quería tomar noticia de que en la entreguerras en Yugoslavia mandaban los serbios disfrazados de monarquía, y en la postguerra eran los mismos serbios disfrazados de comunistas (en Bosnia, gobernaba una fascinante coalición de comunistas y musulmanes). Puesto Europa no fue capaz de ayudar solucionar el problema de la desmembración de Yugoslavia, tuvieron que intervenir finalmente los americanos en Bosnia (1995) y la OTAN en Kosovo (1999). Y ahora nadie quiere tomar responsabilidades.

El paso de Eslovaquia a la independencia fue distinto como explico en la siguiente respuesta.

*17. ¿Cómo se explica el hecho de que en los artículos de algunos periódicos españoles, a diferencia de los publicados en la Vanguardia, se afirmaba que a Eslovaquia le esperaba un „mal“ futuro y, por el contrario prosperidad y éxito para los checos? La mayoría pintan a una Eslovaquia retrasada, haciendo vaticinios de una mala situación económica?*

Porque desgraciadamente los eslovacos (debido a la estructura asimétrica del Estado) nunca había tenido ocasión de manifestarse de forma clara y de dar a conocer la realidad de su país. Y los que explicaban a los occidentales lo que eran los eslovacos eran precisamente los checos. O, algunos eslovacos que trabajaban en Praga y que no querían tener conflictos con los checos. Tenga en cuenta que Eslovaquia no tenía tradición de estado (a no ser que regresemos al Reino Gran Moravo...). Es muy difícil aprender a ser estado: yo lo he visto bastante directamente con los eslovenos, que me pedían ayuda y recuerdo que todo era nuevo para ellos: ¿Cómo se emite moneda? ¿Qué hace un banco nacional? ¿Cómo se crea el servicio diplomático?, etc. etc.

En cuanto al trato diferenciado de la prensa, yo tenía la suerte de tener lectores que, cuando yo me equivocaba en alguna cuestión geográfica, por

ejemplo, me escribían enseguida para corregir. Era lógico que los catalanes tuvieran interés y simpatía por conocer el desarrollo de una nación como la eslovaca que luchaba por su independencia. Cada vez que doy una conferencia para explicar a los catalanes lo que son los ucranianos del este de Eslovaquia, les describo lo que Eslovaquia perdió después de la guerra y les hablo de Uzhgorod o de Muchacevo, les hablo de que esta última ciudad tiene un nombre distinto en once lenguas distintas, y se lo pasan en grande.

18. *¿Qué le parece la actual situación de Eslovaquia, y la de la República Checa, después de 15 años? Cree que sigue habiendo diferencias o se han igualado. ¿Se cumplieron los pronósticos de la prensa española?*

Naturalmente que sigue habiendo diferencias después de 15 años. Y ahora son más claras. Pienso que los dos estados se han comportado de una forma muy racional y que constituyen un ejemplo muy importante para el futuro de Europa. La UE, que hubiera tenido dificultades para digerir un estado con tensiones internas como en un estado checoslovaco, ha podido digerir con facilidad dos estados sin tensiones. Además, lo importante es que no han necesitado los consejos de ninguna troica europea de ministros inútiles, como el italiano De Michelis que prefería las discotecas a las meses de conferencias durante la ofensiva del ejército yugoslavo/serbio en 1990/1991.

19. *En la parte final de su respuesta a la pregunta número 4 de mi anterior cuestionario se refiere a que no se preguntó a los ciudadanos porque no se hubiera aclarado nada, ya que los checos hubiesen votado en contra, y los eslovacos a favor. ¿Puede aclararme esos datos? Hasta ahora, todas las encuestas conocidas indican que también la población eslovaca, al menos en aquel momento, estaba en mayoritariamente contra de iniciar un proceso de división de la federación. ¿Tiene datos más concretos al respecto?*

No puedo aclararlo, tengo mi archivo en Viena, pero pienso que los resultados electorales parlamentarios indicaban que la mayoría de la población tendía a votar a los políticos partidarios de la independencia. Usted debe saberlo

mejor. Tengo la impresión de que entonces nadie se preocupó mucho por la cuestión del referéndum. He mirado por encima mis crónicas y veo que en junio de 1992 “el jefe del gobierno saliente, el cristianodemócrata Carnogurski, declaró el viernes en una conferencia de prensa que él estimaba que la separación llegaría *dentro de unos meses*. A su modo de ver, si ahora se llevara a cabo un referéndum en Eslovaquia, la mayoría de los eslovacos votaría contra la salida de la federación”. No recuerdo que este asunto hubiera desempeñado ningún papel decisivo en todo el proceso, pero a lo mejor me equivoco. Tendría que repasar las fuentes de que yo disponía entonces y no tengo tiempo. Todo depende seguramente de cómo se hubiera hecho la pregunta. Yo pienso que si entonces hubiéramos preguntado a los eslovacos si querían organizar su propia defensa, determinar su política exterior, que los asuntos de Eslovaquia se decidieran en Bratislava, etc. hubieran dicho que sí y esto significa que, en realidad, querían la independencia, porque estas funciones soberanas sólo las puede ejercer un estado independiente. Al nivel político, es cierto que Klaus (con su intransigencia) empujó a Meciar a la independencia. Pero no lo hizo Havel. En privado le diré que con su forma de actuar Klaus hizo un gran favor a los eslovacos.

### **9. 1. 1. Curriculum vitae of Ricardo Estarriol<sup>254</sup>**

Born the 27 of February of 1937 in Girona (Spain). Middle School in Gerona.

He studied Journalism in Barcelona and Madrid and graduated 1958 from the Official School of Journalism. During his studies he was volunteering in “Los Sitios de Gerona” and in “Diario Regional” (Valladolid). Later Licenciado en Derecho by the University of Valladolid in 1960.

Immediately after finishing his studies he was correspondent in Vienna of Europe-Press Agency until 1964. From 1964 correspondent of "La Vanguardia" in Vienna for the East of Europe. From 1968 to 1989 he was co-accredited in the

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<sup>254</sup> As submitted by himself.

Soviet Union, Poland, Hungary, Rumania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. More than six hundred trips to these countries with alternative residence in Vienna, Moscow and Warsaw. Also he has been special correspondent in Belgium, Spain, Italy and China. Estarriol was the first Spanish journalist who covered a regular political information from the countries within the Soviet socialist block during the time in which Spain still did not have diplomatic relations with these countries. From 1989 to date he has been working in all States arising from former Yugoslavia, where it has made numerous trips.

He has interviewed almost all most important politicians of the zone: Gromyko, Walesa, Jaruzelski, Iliescu, Kucan, Gligorov, Bartoszewski, Mazowiecki, Havel, Tudjman, Izetbegovic, Boban, Cervenkowski, Bulatovic etc. He has covered the most important events with the zone from 1964: intervention of the Warsaw Pact in Czechoslovakia (1968), almost all the congresses of the communist parties of the Warsaw Pact and the world-wide conferences of the communist parties, the Russian-Chinese war in the Ussuri (1969), the nationalist revolutions in Yugoslavia (1970 and 1971), the end of the Cultural Revolution in China (1973), the preparations of the Conference of Helsinki (1975), the death of Tito (1980), the birth of Solidarnosc in Poland (1980), the martial law in Poland (1981), the ascent to power of Gorbachov in the USSR (1985), the social pact in Poland (1989), the fall of the communist regimes in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Bulgaria (1989 and 1990), trips of the Pope John Paul II to Poland, Hungary, Croatia, Czech Republic and Slovakia. In 1991 he covered the declaration of independence of Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Macedonia. From 1991 to 1995 he covered the wars in Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina. In 1998 and 1999 he was in Kosovo during the Serb repression. On April 13, 1999, during the NATO bombing of Serbia, Estarriol was expelled from Belgrade. After the withdrawal of Serb forces from Kosovo, he came in Prishtina with the first British NATO convoy on the 12 of June 1999.

He has written several monographic studies: "Shade in the horizon of the international Communism" ("Nuestro Tiempo", Pamplona, October of 1962), "Fifteen years of religious policy in Czechoslovakia" ("Ius Canonicum", Pamplona, 1964) and "The Soviet approach to the Polish crisis" (Russian

Research Center of the Harvard University, Cambridge, December of 1982) and "Communist Europe 1945 1990" (Publishing History Actas, Madrid, 1990), ¿Quién es Slobodan Milosevic? ("Nueva Revista", Magazine, Madrid, June 1999). "L'allargamento a Est dell'Unione europea" ("Est-Overst", ISDEE, Trieste 2002).

Conferences and seminars: He was professor of Sciences of Information in the University Internacional Menéndez Pelayo of Santander (1974 and 1999), of the Seminary on Eastern Europe of the Institute of Superior Studies of the Company (Barcelona, 1981) and of the Program of Latin American Graduados (PGLA) as the University of Navarre in February of 1986. Visiting fellow in the Russian Research Center of Harvard University during the winter semester 1982. Member of the Spanish delegation in the Forum of Information of the CSCE in London (May 1989).

In 1982 it received in Barcelona the Prize Godó de Periodismo. In 1985 the President of the Republic of Austria, Rudolf Kirchschläger, awarded him in Vienna the "Silbernes Ehrenzeichen für die Verdienste um die Republik Österreich". In 1996 he received in Zagreb the Medal of Merit of ECTF (European Community Task Force) of the European Union. In 1999 July 22 he received in Madrid the Prize of Journalism of the Fundación Rafael Calvo Serer, and in December 1999 His Majesty King Juan Carlos II awarded him the Cross of Officer of the Meritorious Civil Service Order. Vienna, November 10, 2005

## 9.2. Evelina Mäsiarová's Interview with Sr. Ramiro Villapadierna on May 4, 2008. Bratislava- Berlin

Cuestiones

1. *¿Qué relación tiene usted con la antigua Federación Checoslovaca? ¿Fue Usted alguna vez corresponsal en Praga?*

Fui destinado a Praga en 1990 para abrir la primera corresponsalía de ABC en los antiguos países del Este. Permanecí en Praga hasta 1997, siendo trasladado luego a Viena, pero seguí a cargo y visitando la República Cehca.

2. *¿Puede explicarnos su relación personal con la República Checoslovaca?*

Fue mi puerta al desconocido mundo, primero eslavo, y luego socialista, ambos muy desconocidos para los occidentales. Una gran experiencia cultural y social.

3. *¿Cómo situaría el proceso de división checoslovaco en la Europa posterior a la caída del sistema socialista y del muro de Berlín? ¿Cómo compararía la separación de Checoslovaquia con la de Yugoslavia?*

Checoslovaquia tuvo, gracias a la Revolución de Terciopelo y a la singularidad de Havel y Dubcek, un "plus" de atención y aprecio mediático internacional muy importantes. La división rompió un poco ese encanto, pero su ejemplaridad política incluso en un proceso doloroso y difícil, frente al desastre nacional-golpista yugoslavo, mantuvieron pese a todo la admiración de muchos. Luego la "gran Checoslovaquia" pasó a ser dos países pequeños, más auténticos pero con menor interés y peso.



4. *¿Cómo valora el proceso checoslovaco? ¿Realmente no había otra salida? ¿Por qué cree que no se preguntó a la población?*

Pienso que sí había salida, pero las ruedas de la historia habían empezado a girar ya en dirección a la ruptura y, cuando Havel, Carnogursky y otros lo comprendieron, se retiraron para no participar del proceso.

5. *¿Cuál es su opinión personal sobre la postura de la delegación checa y la eslovaca en los encuentros entre Klaus y Meciar? ¿Cree que los eslovacos buscaban la independencia, o más bien considera que los checos expulsaron a los eslovacos de la federación?*

La relación de equilibrio no existía, pero no era tan importante. Cuando los eslovacos exageraron su victimismo, los checos también se sintieron víctimas y echaron sus cuentas. El desarrollo golpista en Yugoslavia llevó a Klaus y Meciar a pisar el acelerador y declarar el fin con el menor coste posible. Las dos cosas son verdad, una inercia empujó a la otra y al revés.

6. *¿Cuál fue, para Usted, el tratamiento que recibieron los políticos implicados en el proceso: Havel, Klaus y Meciar, en la prensa española? ¿Considera que alguno de ellos hizo el papel de bueno, y otro el de malo?*

Havel se beneficiaba de una imagen intocable y además siempre desempeñó un papel honroso. Klaus y Meciar quedaron como una mezcla de “malos pero listos y pragmáticos”. La hábil resolución de la ruptura les ganó un crédito que, no obstante, luego dilapidaron con sendos nuevos nacionalismos; aún lo empeoraron luego, en el caso de Meciar, por su deriva autárquica; y, en el de Klaus, por su antieuropeísmo.

7. *Imagino que usted ha seguido con posterioridad el proceso de ambos estados. ¿Considera que se han cumplido las previsiones: el enriquecimiento rápido de Chequia y el hundimiento eslovaco?*

Los primeros cinco años casi hundieron a Eslovaquia, pero el gobierno de Dzurinda logró el milagro de reconducir al país a la UE y a la OTAN. Creo que Eslovaquia debe mucho de su éxito posterior a ese gran giro. Los Países Checos, por el nacionalismo de Klaus, no se recuperó bien del fin del Občanské Forum, y han tenido que sufrir luego malos gobiernos socialdemócratas. Su economía se ha visto así retrasada.

*8. ¿Cuál ha sido para Usted el proceso que han seguido los problemas nacionales y las reivindicaciones autonomistas en los dos nuevos estados: los checos con los moravos y los eslovacos con la minoría húngara? ¿Considera cerrado el proceso?*

No me considero capaz de opinar sobre los últimos cinco años, pero tengo la idea de que los Chequia llevó a cabo por fin una regionalización más racional, y también los gobiernos de Dzurinda lograron una descentralización y mejorar mucho las relaciones con Budapest y la participación política magyár.

*9. ¿Cuál fue, según su punto de vista, el tratamiento que se dio al proceso en la prensa española? ¿Predominó el hecho de que fuese una separación pactada e incruenta, o bien se hizo hincapié en el hecho de que con ello se rompía otro estado europeo, un mal ejemplo por tanto?*

El único diario que siguió detenidamente el proceso fue ABC, porque era el único con corresponsal permanente sobre el terreno, aunque La Vanguardia también se ocupó bien. Se vio: con pena el fin de un país funcionante, por una decisión tomada por la élite y de espaldas al público; pero con lógica, también, como resultado de un estado artificial y del fin del comunismo; y con alivio, por fin, al ver la sensatez con que se procedió.

*10. ¿Considera que el punto de vista de la prensa española fue unitario? ¿Cuál fue, a su entender? ¿Se posicionó a favor o en contra de la separación? ¿Cree que el mensaje que se estaba lanzando era contrario a la creación de nuevas fronteras?*

Creo que no se hicieron ningunas comparaciones con los nacionalismos en España y se evitó hablar de “nuevas fronteras”. Aunque no seguía la prensa de la competencia, no creo que hubiera posturas contrarias sino sólo un tratamiento más profundo o más superficial.

*11. ¿Recuerda alguna diferencia entre la prensa estatal (El País, El Mundo, ABC, La Vanguardia) con la prensa catalana y vasca, especialmente (AVUI, Deia, El Diario Vasco) en el tratamiento de esta separación?*

Sí ví un interés particular y algo distinto por parte de medios de regiones fuertes, como Cataluña, como también sucedió con la desintegración yugoslava, pero no por parte de los medios de Madrid y, desde luego, no por parte de ABC.

*12. ¿Llegó a España la información de la que se habló también sobre la injusta repartición de los bienes federales en beneficio de la República Checa y en contra de la Eslovaca? En ningún artículo he leído ningún comentario al respecto.*

Sí, ABC lo abordó, ya digo que era el único diario permanente, pero también reconozco que sólo como planteamiento y no como conclusión final.

*13. ¿Por qué es tan pobre el conocimiento que tiene la juventud española sobre Eslovaquia, o sobre la misma división de la Federación Checoslovaca? ¿Qué piensa usted al respecto?*

El desconocimiento es enorme, tanto sobre Eslovaquia, como sobre la mayoría de los pueblos de Europa que no salgan en la MTV, incluidos los propios pueblos de España. La gente joven no suele leer, ni prensa ni casi nada.

*14. ¿Tiene alguna información sobre cómo observaron el proceso de división checoslovaco los países vecinos a España, por ejemplo Francia y Portugal?*

No puedo contestarle, aunque sé que Francia tenía una postura claramente en contra y sentía a Checoslovaquia casi como una hija suya (de Clémenceau) y los periodistas franceses solían estar influidos por esa idea y un “anti regionalismo”.

*15. ¿Piensa que sería posible aplicar el modelo checoslovaco de división también en el marco de solucionar los respectivos problemas con las nacionalidades existentes en el Estado Español?*

Si —sólo si— un día llegara una separación: a) yo desearía un modelo checoslovaco de separación; b) no lo creo posible, porque la rabia, odio y frustración que se crearía entre unos y otros pueblos no permitiría una lógica de “reducción de daños” y un arreglo tan “amable”.

*16. ¿Cómo se explica el hecho de que en los artículos de algunos periódicos españoles, a diferencia de los publicados en la Vanguardia, se afirmaba que a Eslovaquia le esperaba un „mal“ futuro y, por el contrario prosperidad y éxito para los checos? La mayoría pintan a una Eslovaquia retrasada, haciendo vaticinios de una mala situación económica.*

Eslovaquia tenía una situación industrial, agrícola y energética muy distinta a la Rep. Checa. Algunos cálculos de reconversión y paro, así como el proceso nacional-autoritario emprendido en los primeros años, y el enfrentamiento con Budapest, prometían un mal futuro. Pero desde 1998 se produjo un cambio difícil y valiente, con un éxito que mi diario siguió de cerca y elogió en todo momento.

*17. ¿Qué le parece la actual situación de Eslovaquia, y la de la República Checa, después de 15 años? Cree que sigue habiendo diferencias o se han igualado. ¿Se cumplieron los pronósticos de la prensa española?*

Respecto a los últimos años, no puedo opinar. Creo que ambas situaciones y niveles de vida se han igualado “grosso modo”, tal vez como antes de la separación; pero Eslovaquia ha tenido que sufrir también una emigración, por el alto nivel de paro.

*18. En sus artículos se hacía hincapié, básicamente, en la situación checa. ¿Cuál era la razón? Un mayor interés de los lectores españoles por la situación política en ese nuevo país? Una cuestión sencillamente demográfica o de proximidad sentimental a España? O el hecho de que para los lectores españoles, podía ser considerada más próxima –ideológica y sentimentalmente hablando- la nación checa, como “víctima” de las veleidades nacionalistas que dividían la federación?*

Informaba más de la República Checa porque vivía la mayor parte del tiempo en Praga; no creo de ningún modo que los españoles sientan más o menos cercanía con unos u otros. Tal vez sólo Eslovaquia es un concepto más nuevo para ellos que “checo”, aunque a veces no sepan bien cuál es el nombre del país de los checos. A veces es tan simple como que, en España, “checo” suena un poco más conocido, porque se entendía como diminutivo de “checoslovaco”; mientras tal vez “eslovaco” se confunde con “eslavo”, “esloveno”, “eslavón”, etc.

*19. A menudo utiliza el término “Países Checos” que ningún medio de prensa española de la época utilizaba.. ¿Puede explicarnos por qué razón? ¿Lo interpreta como una traducción del término checo “?echy”?*

Como digo, durante años no había un nombre oficial claro para “el resto” de Checoslovaquia que no era Eslovaquia. “Chequia” no les gustaba a los checos, porque era el nombre usado por los nazis (“Tschechei” o “Tschechien”) Había un nombre antiguo que era Ceské Zemie y yo, mientras decidían un nombre oficial, lo empleaba alternativamente con el de República Checa. No tiene mayor importancia.

### 9. 2. 1. Curriculum vitae of Ramiro Villapadierna

“Ramiro Villapadierna<sup>255</sup> (Madrid, Spain, 1964) is the Berlin based Central Europe Bureau Head for the Spanish national daily ABC and long time flying Eastern Europe and Balkan Correspondent.”

“Born in Madrid, 1964. University Degree in Communication Arts (Universidad Complutense) Working languages: Spanish, French, English, German, Italian, Serbo-Croat and Czech.”

“In 1990, at the time of the collapse of communist regimes and the beginning of democratic transition, he was assigned to open the Eastern Europe ABC office. Based in Prague, Vienna and since 2002 in Berlin, as well as eventually residing all over the Balkans, he has been one of the most long-standing European reporters travelling through the eastern regions where he consistently accounts among the most knowledgeable.”

“He has continuously reported on the political, social and economic transition in Central and Eastern Europe, including historical processes like the split of Czechoslovakia and the collapse of Yugoslavia, the subsequent wars in the Balkans (where he was shot at, wounded, arrested and robbed at different times). As for a change he was exceptionally assigned to touring the USA, in the year 2000, for a series on American society, between the Clinton and the Bush eras.”

“Over 4,000 reports, articles and analyses on the Central European and the Balkan peoples, interviewing dozens of heads of State and Government, ministers, intellectuals and artists, through more than 300,000 km toured in the region.”

“Formerly he was a cultural reporter and music and jazz commentator with ABC (where he was staff writer since 1986) as well as other outlets.”

“Articles published by the local Press in the Czechlands, Serbia, Croatia, Bulgaria and Poland. Travel writings and special country reports published in Spanish magazines and Encyclopaediae.”

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<sup>255</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramiro\\_Villapadierna](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramiro_Villapadierna), last visited September 19, 2008.

“Requested correspondences and comments for the BBC, CNN, Deutsche Welle, Radio France International, Radio Nederland, Radio Nacional de España.”

“Lectures on Europe and the Balkans at the end of Communism, Nationalism, War reporting and conflict resolution, at events and meetings like the International Balkan Correspondent Congress; Prague NATO Atlantic Club; International Summer University - Menéndez Pelayo; Foro Formentor; Fondazione Giorgio Cini de Venecia; Universidad de Alicante; Universidad Complutense de Madrid; Academia de la Guardia Civil and Escuela de Guerra. Commenting guest to special TV broadcasts on the region.”

“At Diván Este-Oeste he keeps one of the very few spanish language blogs on old Mitteleuropa issues as well as non-typical stories from Germany, Austria, Poland, Czechlands, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovenia, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia, Kosovo and Albania.”

“A selection of articles regularly appear in the internet at Visiones desde Berlín. He has written or taken part on several collective books and projects on nationalism, Central Europe, and journalism in conflict areas, as well as a literary family saga *La Grande Vie: Lances y pasión de los Villapadierna* for The Ritz Villa Padierna.”





## 10. ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In der Arbeit, die zum Teil während eines Studienaufenthaltes in Alcalá de Henares verfasst wurde, werden diverse Aspekte der Auseinandersetzung mit dem Teilungsprozess der ehemaligen Tschechoslowakei in der spanischen Presse besprochen und analysiert. Eine Frage war die nach den Reaktionen der spanischen Druckmedien auf die Auflösung eines Landes, mit dem Spanien verhältnismäßig wenig gemeinsam hatte. Die beiden Länder hatten nie besonders enge wirtschaftliche oder kulturelle Beziehungen, was sich auch nun, da die Slowakische Republik selbständig ist, nicht zu ändern scheint.

Der Schwerpunkt der Analyse liegt auf Artikeln, die sich mit dem Aufteilungsprozess der Tschechoslowakei in den bedeutendsten Mainstream-Tageszeitungen beschäftigten. Die in *El País*, *ABC* und *La Vanguardia* veröffentlichten Artikel werden detailliert analysiert, während *EL Mundo* als weniger repräsentativ und ohne deutlich autonome journalistische Linie als eher „trivial“ außer Acht gelassen wurde. Darüber hinaus wurden auch Periodika der spanischen Minoritäten – wie *El Periódico de Catalunya*, *El Diario Vasco* und *DELA* – herangezogen.

Nach der Besprechung der jeweiligen Risiken oder Vorteile einer Teilung für die beiden Neustaaten und aus allgemeiner europäischer Perspektive wird auch diskutiert, wie sich die spanische Presse mit dem Teilungsprozess der Tschechoslowakei in Hinblick auf den innenpolitischen Separatismus in Spanien beschäftigte. In diesem Sinne hat die Auflösung der Tschechoslowakei in der spanischen Presse eine gewisse Auseinandersetzung mit den politischen Angelegenheiten der regionalen Minderheiten im Baskenland und in Katalonien bewirkt.

Eher bemerkenswert ist auch die Tatsache, dass sich selbst die tschechische und die slowakische Historiographie mit diesem Thema bislang eher am Rande auseinandergesetzt haben. Dabei werden vor allem zwei grundsätzliche Werke der zeitgenössischen Geschichtsschreibung konsultiert: die umfang- und detailreiche Studie *Rozpad Československa: Česko-slovenské vzťahy 1989-1992*

(Auflösung der Tschechoslowakei: Tschecho-Slowakische Beziehungen 1989-1992) des tschechischen Historikers Jan Rychlík und die auch auf Slowakisch verfasste Diplomarbeit(!) *Rozdělení Československa: Nejvyšší představitelé HZDS a ODS v procesu rozdělování ČSFR: Česko-slovenské soužití v letech 1989-1993* von Vladimír Srb und Tomáš Veselý, die u.a. nützliche und interessante Einsichten über die Haltung der Hauptprotagonisten des Aufteilungsprozesses inkludiert und von tschechischen und slowakischen Historikern positiv anerkannt wurde.

In weiteren Kapiteln werden die politischen Hauptfiguren des Aufteilungsprozesses Václav Havel, Vladimír Mečiar und Václav Klaus und derer Rezeption in der spanischen Presse dargestellt. Dieser personalisierte Rahmen ist von Gewicht, da der Aufteilungsprozess normalerweise – und auch in der spanischen Presse – als Wechselbad von teilweise antagonistischen und teilweise kompromissorientierten Bemühungen seiner Hauptprotagonisten angesehen wird. Die eigentlichen Wünsche der Bevölkerung werden von diesem „Dreieck“ nicht hinterfragt, wie das Fehlen eines Referendums über die Auflösung des gemeinsamen Staates zeigt.

Von der spanischen Presse werden besonders zwei weitere Faktoren von internationaler Bedeutung angesprochen: die Lage der ungarischen Minderheit in der Slowakei und die Auswirkungen des Krieges im ehemaligen Jugoslawien. Es verwundert nicht wirklich, dass die spanische Presse die Lage der ungarischen Minderheit im Zusammenhang mit der spanischen Politik gegenüber dem baskischen bzw. katalanischen Nationalismus sah. Die von der spanischen Presse oft zitierten und grundsätzlich missverstandenen „Schreckensvisionen“ bezüglich eines „jugoslawischen Weges“, also eines möglichen kriegerischen Konfliktes zwischen Tschechen und Slowaken, wurden letztendlich abgelöst von der Anerkennung der kampflösen und unblutigen „samtenen Scheidung“ der ehemaligen Tschechoslowakei.



## ***CURRICULUM VITAE***

***Name:*** Mgr. Evelína M ä s i a r o v á

***Date of Birth:*** April 1, 1977

***Place of Birth:*** Bratislava , SLOVAKIA

### ***Current***

***Occupation:*** A Chief State Counselor, Government Office of the Slovak Republic

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***Education:*** **10/1999 – 11/2008** - Major in History Studies

10/1999 – 01/2004 – Minor in English Language and Literature

**10/1997 – 02/2002** Master's Degree in Modern Philology (English language and Literature) at St. Cyril and Method University, Faculty of Arts, Trnava, Slovakia

**05/1996** – school examination (Matura)

**09/1991 – 06/1996** Student of Evangelical Lyceum, state examination in the English language

**09/1983 – 06/1991** Elementary school in Bratislava specialized in English language

**Study Main Interests: Modern Era History, Contemporary History, English Literature,**

**Studies abroad:**      **10/2003 – 7/2004** Erasmus Student in Alcalá de Henares (Spain)

**06/1999 – 9/1999** Awarded governmental scholarship to study for 3 months a Greek language at University of Patras, Greece

**09/1996 – 6/1997** Student of Academy of Trade in Baden bei Wien, Austria

**Work Experience:**    **\* 2006 – 2007** A lobbyist for Amnesty International, EU Team

**\* 2006 – 2003** Editor of the following books:  
Derek Walcott, *Selected poems/ Výchber básni*  
(Petrus, 2006)  
William Shakespeare, *Sonnets/ Sonety*  
(Petrus, 2004)  
Tibor Papp, *Read me/ Číta* (Petrus, 2003)

**\* 2005**                Translator, Ian Hancock: *We are the Romani People/ My Romský Narod* (Petrus, 2005)

**\* 2005**    Compuanswer Iberica, S.L.  
Real Estate Agent in Bratislava

- \* **2005 – 2004 Lexika Agency** translations: business agenda
- \* **2002 Platinum Resorts International**  
Human Resources and Real Estate Manager
- \* **2001 BETKE Advertising Company in Vienna, Austria** Office work
- \* **2000 - 2001 Greek Embassy in Bratislava**
- \* **1996 - 2000** private teacher of English

**Certificates:** State exam certificate in Natural Sciences  
Certificate of International guide

**Certificate of Proficiency in Greek language**  
Certificate of Proficiency in Spanish language

***Language Skills:*** English: excellent  
German: excellent  
Spanish: intermediate  
Czech: excellent  
Latin : academic level ( studied at the University)  
French: fair  
Greek: fair  
Working level in all Slavic languages