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Slovak Nationalism and the Break-up of Czechoslovakia

PAAL SIGURD HILDE

THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL and the subsequent collapse of the communist regimes in Eastern Europe led to a wave of optimism that swept the world.¹ Freed from the Damocles' Sword of the Cold War, world leaders held out the hope for a peaceful 'New World Order'. Soon, however, this hope was shattered. Within a year and a half, from the summer of 1991 to January 1993, all three former socialist federations in Europe collapsed. In the Soviet Union and particularly in Yugoslavia, the collapse was spectacular and violent. After one of the longest eras of peace in its history, war returned to Europe. Nationalism was again rearing its ugly head.

The break-up of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic (CSFR) took place in the shadow of the war in the former Yugoslavia and the crumbling of the Soviet Empire. With no shots fired and no lives lost, news from the CSFR seldom reached front pages in Western Europe and North America. In the years following, too, with scores of academic and more popular books written about the break-up of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, the Czech-Slovak split has received comparatively little attention.² At the time, the lack of information about the Czech-Slovak dispute led some Western journalists to see it simply in the context of what was interpreted as the general resurgence of secessionist nationalism in post-communist Europe.³ While this view of the so-called Velvet Divorce has generally been corrected in later writing, the background of the split is still generally less known than those behind the break-up of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.

Explaining the break-up

The Velvet Divorce came as a result of the failure of the new democratic regime to deal simultaneously with the two main tasks it faced after the collapse of communism. The problem of finding a new model for the common Czech and Slovak state, while at the same time reforming not only the economy but the whole of society away from the socialist model, proved to be too heavy a burden. After the second post-communist elections in June 1992 the struggle over the preferred way forward came to a head. Led by Václav Klaus of the Civic Democratic Party (ODS), the election winners in the Czech Lands presented an ultimatum to their counterparts in Bratislava: either a Czech-Slovak state with a strong central government and radical economic reforms, or no state at all. Unwilling to accept the Czech terms, Vladimír Mečiar and his populist, Slovak-patriotic and reform-sceptical Movement for a

Democratic Slovakia (HZDS) chose the latter. Successfully blocking all demands for the referendum called for by President Václav Havel, the two political leaders and their partners were able to force through a break-up. On 25 November 1992, after having rejected the bill three times, the Federal Parliament finally accepted the Law on the Dissolution of the Federation. After 68 years, the Czech and Slovak coexistence was to end on 1 January 1993.

In trying to understand why the political conflict in the CSFR led to the break-up of the state, scholars have stressed many different factors. Authors focusing on the economic issue point to the fact that the structures of the Czech and Slovak economies were very different.⁴ Owing to the greater preponderance in Slovakia of heavy industries built in the socialist era, the post-communist economic reforms hit the Slovak economy more severely than the Czech. The resulting political opposition to radical reforms in Slovakia, in contrast to the widespread support for the reforms in the Czech Lands, was crucial in the conflict that led to the break-up.

Sociological studies of the Velvet Divorce stress the different world-views of the average Czech and Slovak.⁵ Particular reference is paid to the impact of the last 20 years of communism—the so-called Normalisation era. This period formed the most immediate experience by which the Czechs and Slovaks could evaluate the post-communist changes. Samples of the diverging attitudes found in the two regions are presented in studies based on public opinion surveys.⁶ The average Slovak and Czech held clearly different views of the post-communist situation, the costs and benefits of the Federation, and of the preferable way forward. These diverging opinions were reflected in the political preferences of the two peoples, and thus crucial in creating the difficult political situation after the 1992 elections.

In addition to stressing the role of élites, political science and legal approaches to the Velvet Divorce emphasise the importance of the constitutional set-up of the CSFR.⁷ In the 1968 Law on the Federation a minority veto was established in the Federal Parliament. Intended to protect the Slovaks from being ruled by the Czech majority, the law held that constitutional and other important laws had to be passed by special majorities. This created a situation where 38 of the 300 MPs could block important legislation, and as few as 31 deputies from either of the two constituent republics could stop constitutional amendments. Given the many difficult problems in the post-communist period and particularly the task of drafting three new constitutions, this veto was crucial in determining the fate of the Federation.

Regardless of what factor the various studies hold out as the most salient, many of them use the term 'Slovak nationalism' in their explanation of why the Velvet Divorce took place.⁸ Slovak nationalism is generally presented as a kind of 'glue' that binds all other factors to the break-up. Without nationalism the economic issue, the different social preferences of the two peoples and the minority veto in the Federal Assembly would not have resulted in the division of the state. However, very few authors attempt to define what this Slovak nationalism really was and explain more specifically what role it played in the split. The purpose of this article is to address this lack of clarity. It will do so by analysing Slovak nationalism and presenting an interpretation of the Czech-Slovak split based on the impact this nationalism had in the post-communist period. First, an analysis will be made of what kind of demands Slovak nationalists put forward. The call for a separate Slovak state, it will be

concluded, was decisive neither politically nor popularly. The demands for a revision of the terms of the common Czech and Slovak state, on the other hand, had strong support in Slovakia. Many Slovaks were of the opinion that the existing state was dominated by the Czech part, and that Slovakia was entitled not only to a more equal and visible position but also to more political self-rule.

As secessionism was not a decisive political force in Slovakia, the break-up of the CSFR was not the result of a Slovak struggle for independence: it was not a Slovak secession. This fact distinguishes the events in the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic from the break-up of Yugoslavia and partly also the Soviet Union.⁹ In the two latter cases the leaders of minorities managed with great efforts to break away from a state dominated by a different group. In the CSFR it was the rejection of the common state by the political leaders of the Czech majority that was the direct cause of the break-up. An assessment of the contribution of Slovak nationalism to the split must therefore be made on the basis of the degree to which it helped trigger such a rejection in the Czech Lands.

The vision of a reconstructed state prevailing in Slovak politics was not shared by many Czechs. Increasingly, the insistence on enhancing Slovakia's status and autonomy came in Czech political circles to be seen as an obstacle to the stabilisation of the domestic situation and the success of the economic reforms. Putting the value of a 'return to Europe' over that of preserving the Federation, the Czech political right ultimately abandoned its traditional support for the common state. After the June 1992 elections the Czech right became the driving force behind the Velvet Divorce.

Slovak nationalism

Nationalism is one of the concepts social scientists have found hardest to define in a satisfactory way. It is beyond both the scope and aim of this article to enter into an extensive discussion of the various theoretical approaches to this problem. For the purpose of this study, a very simple yet sufficient definition will be adopted. Nationalism is a set of demands made on behalf of a group of people characterised most often by a separate culture (and language in particular). The political programme that called for the establishment of an independent Slovak state will be referred to as 'secessionist nationalism'. Slovak 'autonomy nationalism' is the term used to describe the demand for a revision of the terms of the continued Czech and Slovak coexistence. As can be seen, these definitions do not include, for instance, the quite frequent manifestations of anti-Hungarian feeling in post-communist Slovakia. Xenophobia was promoted by more radically nationalist organisations, but was relevant to the break-up only in that it created a negative picture of Slovak nationalism in the Czech Lands and the outside world.

The widespread popular support in Slovakia for a revision of the Federation indicates that most Slovaks saw themselves as separate from the Czechs not only in cultural but also in political terms. To understand the so-called 'Slovak Question', the conflict over the position of Slovakia within the common state with the Czechs, it is crucial to examine this division in political identity. During the First Czechoslovak Republic (1918–1938) state-wide political parties generally garnered more support than their ethnic and regional counterparts.¹⁰ Most Slovaks did not seek specific

Slovak solutions to the problems of the day. In 1946, however, in the only free elections after World War II, this had changed. For the first time only regional parties were successful. Furthermore, almost all Slovak politicians now demanded increased Slovak autonomy. Disillusionment with the inter-war regime's failure to solve Slovakia's problems and the impact of the partly positive wartime experience of separate statehood are generally seen to be the main factors behind this shift. As Jan Rychlík writes: 'The existence of the independent Slovak state (1939–45) ... meant the clear formation of two separate political nations [within Czechoslovakia]'.¹¹

The post-war division in political identity was not erased in the communist era (1948–1989). The institutional asymmetry¹² between the Czech Lands and Slovakia symbolised the political separateness of the Slovaks. Furthermore, the communist leadership's emphasis on the promotion of Slovak culture and the celebration of events such as the Slovak National Uprising continually reminded the Slovaks of their different history and identity. The Communist Party's symbolic coalition partners in the National Front, the marionette parties that were allowed to survive after 1948, were also separate in the Czech Lands and Slovakia. While nationality was not stated in the Czechoslovak passport, as was the case in the Soviet Union, it was in almost all official documents. It is clear, as Brubaker showed in the Soviet case, that this compulsory identification according to national belonging made nationality not only a '*statistical category* ... but also, and more distinctively, ... an *obligatory ascribed status*'.¹³

On 1 January 1969 the creation of the Czechoslovak Federation further institutionalised the division in political identity. Albeit de facto power remained in the hands of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, the new constitution outlined a relatively decentralised state. Most significant was the fact that parliamentary elections, though undemocratic, were now conducted for both republican and federal parliaments. This not only strengthened the feeling of political separateness but also created the political structures that were carried on into the post-communist era.

After the collapse of the socialist regime, the political framework created by the institutionalised national identification and the federal constitution gained an importance it had not previously had. With the domination of the Communist Party gone, the multi-level system of political participation and the minority veto provisions set out in the 1968 federal constitution were no longer just symbolic. The pattern of self-identification along national rather than social lines ingrained during socialism combined with the two-tier election system to de facto divide the CSFR into two political systems. Both in the elections for the republican and the federal assemblies, Czechs voted mainly for Czech parties, Slovaks for Slovak ones, Hungarian-Slovaks for their parties etc. Even the traditionally unorganised Romany community formed their own political movement.¹⁴ Attempts to establish state-wide parties were not successful. With the exception of the Communist Party, which quickly disintegrated along republican lines, not one single party held parliamentary seats in both the Czech Lands and Slovakia prior to the dissolution of the Federation. Clearly, given the many difficult problems of the post-communist era, this political fragmentation combined with a far-reaching minority veto was bound to cause political problems.

Added to this structural division between the two republics was a lack of exchange of views and information. This was partly a long-term phenomenon, as seen in the

falling level of inter-republican migration.¹⁵ However, of more immediate consequence was the mounting barrier in the mass media. Albeit a majority of both Czechs and Slovaks followed federal radio and television daily, the low cross-republican flow of newspapers and other publications created an information barrier.¹⁶ After the Velvet Revolution, the lack of resources for the printed press led to a situation where Czech and Slovak newspapers and journals became nearly impossible to obtain even in more peripheral parts of the home republic. As Slovak Prime Minister Mečiar¹⁷ noted in his report to the Slovak National Council on 27 August 1990:

A system of isolation between Czechs and Slovaks has been created [so] that we in fact do not know each other. [...] Slovak newspapers do not reach the Czech lands, at least only in small numbers, and even parliamentary deputies get them in small numbers two days late.¹⁸

This partial isolation, what Jack Snyder would call a 'segmented marketplace of ideas',¹⁹ was clearly conducive to the mobilisation of regional interest. Combined with the structural division in the political sphere, this information barrier between the two groups created an ideal setting for the propagation of nationalist ideas.

Secessionist nationalism

There is almost no history of secessionist nationalism in Slovakia. During the First Republic no influential political party or interest groups fought for Slovak independence. The establishment of the independent Slovak Republic in March 1939 was a result of external pressures and not the success of a secessionist programme. Under socialism, neither circles within the Slovak Communist Party (KSS) nor any extra-party dissident groups promoted secession. Only some exile movements, led mostly by personalities connected to the wartime Slovak Republic, propagated the re-establishment of a Slovak state.

In the post-communist period, popular support for an independent Slovakia never reached a majority of the population. Opinion polls conducted between 1990 and 1992 consistently showed that only 10–20% of Slovak respondents were in favour of independence (see Table 1). Even in March 1993 (i.e. after the split had taken place) a survey showed that only 29% of respondents would have voted for the dissolution of the state had there been a referendum the previous autumn; 50% said that they would have voted against.²⁰

Just as the call for independence lacked substantial support in the population, very few political parties promoted the demand for a separate Slovak state. Of the parties represented in the Slovak National Council and the Federal Parliament between June 1990 and June 1992, the Slovak National Party (SNS) was the only one that consistently favoured Slovak independence.²¹ The SNS was also the only separatist party successful in the 1992 elections, receiving about 10% of the votes in Slovakia. The election winner in 1992, the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia, did not run on a platform of independence. Albeit its policy on the constitutional issue was very vague, Mečiar clearly stated that 'an independent Slovak state is not the goal of the HZDS'.²² This statement is supported by other sources.²³ Only after the elections, under pressure from Klaus and the Czech right, did the HZDS reluctantly call for

TABLE 1
PREFERRED STATE FORM

	October 1990		November 1991		January 1992		July 1992	
	Cz.	Sl.	Cz.	Sl.	Cz.	Sl.	Cz.	Sl.
Present federation	34.1	21.4	39	20	38	17	38	14
'Authentic' federation	47.7	53.8	30	26	32	33	19	27
Confederation	6.7	9.7	20	6	15	5	18	8
Independent states	5.3	9.6	4	27	4	30	3	30
Don't know	6.2	5.5	5	14	5	12	16	16
			2	7	6	3	6	5

*Bohemia-Moravia-Slovakia.

Sources: Centrum pre výskum spoločenských problémov, *Aktuálne problémy Česko-Slovenska, október 1990* (Bratislava, 1990); Sharon Wolchik, 'The Politics of Ethnicity in Post-Communist Czechoslovakia', *East European Politics and Society*, 8, 1, 1994, p. 180.

independence. Moreover, the Slovaks supporting the HZDS did not vote for the creation of an independent Slovakia. In a January 1992 survey, only 15% of the HZDS supporters polled considered Slovak independence a final objective.²⁴ Notably, as few as 42% of SNS supporters in the survey stated that they wanted an independent Slovakia.²⁵

Despite this lack of support for secessionism, several influential groups campaigned for the creation of an independent Slovak state. In addition to the SNS, the most important of these were *Matica slovenská* (the Slovak Heritage Foundation), groups within the Slovak Catholic Church, and exile groups such as the Slovak World Congress and the Slovak League in America. The secessionist nationalism these and many other, smaller organisations promoted had an important impact on Slovak politics. In the 1990 elections the SNS gained 13% of the votes and became the third largest party in Slovakia. With its entry into both the Federal and Slovak parliaments, the issue of secession was forced onto the political scene. More importantly, the electoral success of the national issue inspired other parties and politicians to mimic the SNS nationalist appeal. The Christian Democratic Movement (KDH), which was seen to have lost votes owing to its lack of a clear national platform, was initially the most successful party in this sense.²⁶ Its leader, Slovak Deputy Prime Minister Ján Čarnogurský, shocked both Czech and Slovak politicians in early 1991 when he demanded that the CSFR should become a confederation rather than a federation. Touching even the issue of independence, Čarnogurský presented a vision of a future Slovakia with its own chair and own star in the European Union. These demands set the stage for the further radicalisation of the national issue that followed.

Autonomy nationalism

Many observers have described the Slovak demands for a revision of the Czechoslovak Federation as little more than instruments used by Slovak politicians to mobilise support.²⁷ While secessionist nationalism can be dismissed with some justification as mere 'hubbub' made by 'careerists or idiots or schemers',²⁸ the same is not the case with Slovak demands for autonomy. Unlike secessionist nationalism, autonomy nationalism had widespread support both among Slovak politicians and in the population at large. In the first democratic elections in June 1990 all Slovak political parties called for a revision of the federal system. As Václav Žák observed: 'It is clear that even the "most pro-federalist" Slovak political party did not see the federal republic as *its* state'.²⁹ The instrumental use of nationalism to mobilise political support was merely one of three identifiable aspects of the Slovak federal revisionism. A second feature was the desire to enhance the position of Slovakia both within the CSFR and in the world. This drive to achieve 'equality and visibility' was mostly symbolic, and a result of the popular perception that the Federation was Czech-dominated. Thirdly, there was a demand for an increase in the powers of the Slovak political bodies. The motivations behind this were the desire to abolish the centralised system of the communist era, the belief that regional and local administration would be better placed to deal with many local problems, and, most importantly, the concern over the effect of federal policies in Slovakia.

Equality and visibility

There was in Slovakia a widely held perception that the Czechs were dominating the Federation. In an October 1990 survey, for example, 62% of respondents in Slovakia claimed that the Czechs did not consider the Slovaks equal partners.³⁰ Similarly, 43% answered that they thought the Slovaks were 'paying for the Czechs', and 95% rejected the view that the opposite was true. Prime Minister Mečiar articulated a commonly held concern when he complained in August 1990 that out of 230 km of new motorways and 1000 km of new railway tracks planned, only 18 km and 186 km were to be built in Slovakia.³¹ Other issues, such as the disproportionately low number of Slovak employees in federal administrative bodies, were interpreted by many Slovaks as parts of a general pattern of discrimination.

The most important facet of the demands for equality and visibility was not, however, the distribution of the material benefits of the common state, but rather its symbolic values. The issue that best demonstrated the symbolic content of the Slovak Question was the 'hyphen war' in the spring of 1990. With the collapse of the socialist system, the name of the Federation, the Czechoslovak Socialist Republic, had to be changed to reflect the new political circumstances. Slovak members of the Federal Parliament protested against Havel's first suggestion to merely omit the word 'Socialist'. Instead, they supported the name the Czecho-Slovak Republic: a name that would underline the equal status of the two constituent republics.³² Czecho-Slovak was unacceptable to many Czechs, however, as the hyphenated name had been the name of post-Munich Czechoslovakia (the 1938–39 Second Republic). A temporary solution, with the name written without a hyphen in Czech and with one but without a capital 's' in Slovak (thus the Czecho-slovak Federal Republic), only inflamed popular passions in both republics. The dispute was solved only after a two-month long and bitter struggle with the adoption of a new compromise name: The Czech and Slovak Federal Republic.

'All of us know that this "hyphen", which seems ridiculous, superfluous and ugly to all Czechs, is more than just a hyphen. It in fact symbolises decades, perhaps even centuries, of Slovak history', President Havel wrote in a letter to the Federal Parliament in February 1990.³³ Clearly, the struggle over the hyphen was an expression of the desire of many Slovaks to be equal with the Czechs and visible to the world. Just as Scotsmen and Welshmen resent being called English, many Slovaks objected to the way Czech was used both in the Czech Lands and internationally as an abbreviation for Czechoslovak. As the programme of the political movement Public Against Violence (VPN), *A Chance for Slovakia*, put it: 'In the interest of both partners it is important to make sure that "Czech" is not identified with "Czecho-Slovak", but that like "Slovak" in "Czecho-Slovak" it only makes up a part'.³⁴

Another example of the perception that Slovakia did not get its fair amount of attention was the much-criticised establishment of a Slovak Ministry of International Relations in the autumn of 1990. Both the VPN and the KDH held in their political programmes that this would enable Slovakia to market itself better abroad, rather than only through the Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry in Prague.³⁵

Beginning in February 1991, the demands for equality and visibility made by Slovak political parties came to shape the debate on the future of the common

Czech-Slovak state. The 1968 Law on the Federation held that both constituent republics were to have their own constitution. Neither of them had drafted such a constitution during socialism. Consequently, after the collapse of communism federal and republican politicians faced the task of reaching a consensus on a total of three new constitutions. The main conflict in the talks was centred on the hierarchy of the constitutions, and whether a pre-constitutional treaty was to be signed as a basis for a new federation. The federal and Czech side saw the Federation as the bearer of sovereignty, and thus called for the federal constitution to be passed first. The Slovak government insisted that primary sovereignty lay with the republics, and that their constitutions had to be signed first. To make the hierarchy of republics first and federation second absolutely clear, Slovak Prime Minister Černoguský demanded that a state treaty between the two republics should be signed. The leader of the KDH had the support of most Slovak political leaders when he insisted that the state treaty had to have a status at least equal to that of the federal constitution.³⁶ Although Slovak politicians were unable to formulate a joint programme for the constitutional talks, they did agree on one point: Slovakia had to achieve equality and visibility.

Devolution of power

The second aspect of the Slovak drive for autonomy, the drive to increase the political power of the Slovak republican bodies, was also a demand that had widespread political and popular support. On 12 December 1989 the Public Against Violence Co-ordination Committee had stated that it 'expected maximum expansion of the independence and action ability of the Slovak government vis-à-vis the Federal Government'.³⁷ This demand for increased Slovak autonomy was not only a reaction to over-centralisation during communism but also a result of the perception that the central administration in Prague did not understand, nor pay enough attention to, the specific problems of Slovakia. As the Chairman of the Slovak National Council František Mikloško put it in November 1991: 'The Slovak Republic feels that the central bodies are too far away and that the bureaucratic apparatus does not represent its interests'.³⁸

In August 1990 an agreement was reached on a new decentralised system of decision making. With the implementation of this hard-fought compromise on 1 January 1991 the issue of devolution faded into the background of the constitutional talks. However, as the impact of the federal economic reforms rapidly worsened in Slovakia, the issue of control over economic policy gained importance. The Slovak economy was for historical reasons more heavily biased towards heavy industry and arms production in particular. Slovak industry was consequently more vulnerable to the cut in state subsidies that followed the introduction of 'shock therapy' on 1 January 1991. This vulnerability was most visible in the rapid growth of unemployment in Slovakia, while it remained low in the Czech Lands.

Throughout 1991 both the Slovak government and the Slovak National Council became increasingly opposed to the policies of the Federal Ministry of Finance. Notably, the replacement of Slovak Premier Mečiar with the vocally more pro-reform Černogurský in April entailed few actual changes in the approach to economic

policy.³⁹ Slovak industry was clearly suffering from not only the federal economic programme but also from other policies promoted by the federal government. The most obvious example of the latter was the decision to cut Czechoslovak arms exports to the Third World, including much-criticised sales to Syria. Applauded in the West, this move was not welcome in Slovakia, where about 70 000 people had jobs related to the production of arms. The federal policy of redirecting trade towards the West was another example. In Slovakia this did not have equally obvious benefits, as even lighter industries such as the Slovak textile industry had their main markets in the East. Finally, the fact that Bohemia alone received 80–90% of total foreign direct investment in 1991 was seen by many Slovak economists and politicians as a result of the failure of the federal government to encourage investment in Slovakia.⁴⁰

Opposition to economic reforms was strong not only in political circles but also among the population at large. While 72% of Czech respondents in a January 1992 survey believed that the economic reforms would bring prosperity, only 48% of Slovak respondents agreed.⁴¹ Similarly, while 66% of Czech respondents felt that the speed of economic reform was right or not fast enough, only 45% of Slovak respondents were of this opinion. Actually, the visible fact that the economic reforms did not have such a harsh impact in the Czech Lands made many Slovaks interpret the reforms as another result of the Czech domination of the state. In the January 1992 poll 53% of respondents in Slovakia anticipated that the Czech economy would grow at the expense of the Slovak.⁴²

The generally more widespread popular discontent in Slovakia was not, however, only a result of the relatively greater social hardship. The negative experience of the post-communist period was magnified by a more positive view of the communist past. For Slovakia, the socialist era had brought industrialisation, urbanisation and an improvement in the standard of living. Particularly in the period after 1968, as the Czech economy stagnated and Czech society became thoroughly disillusioned, Slovakia enjoyed a period of relative economic prosperity and freedom.⁴³ After the collapse of communism, the more favourable experience of the Normalisation period had visible consequences. The 'lustration' (purging) of former communists from important positions, for instance, was not considered as important politically in Slovakia as in the Czech Lands. More importantly, economic reform was not deemed quite as urgent or even necessary. In comparison with Czech respondents, Slovaks participating in various opinion polls were more opposed to large-scale privatisation and more convinced of the need for state participation in securing employment.⁴⁴ These preferences were expressed in the greater support for parties on the political left in Slovakia.

In the context of the break-up, the most important aspect of the Slovak opposition to economic reforms was that it combined with the national issue. Given the refusal of the federal authorities to make provisions for Slovakia's more difficult situation, pressure grew on the Slovak government to take control over economic policy. Opposition to the federal reform programme thus found a natural ally in the struggle for an improved status for Slovakia in the Federation. This link was spelled out by the influential group Independent Economists of Slovakia (NEZES) in September 1991: 'We will not overcome our poverty as long as the economic policy of the Slovak Republic, including reform policy, is being determined by the Federation'.⁴⁵

Leading Slovak politicians agreed: 'Slovakia simply wants to tackle its economic problems by making its own decisions', Prime Minister Čarnogurský said on 29 May 1991.⁴⁶ Similarly, the HZDS in its 1992 election programme called for 'the *abandonment of the unitary approach of the economic reforms*, which does not take into account the more difficult starting point of the Slovak economy ...'.⁴⁷ Like the demand for equality and visibility, the persistent demand by most Slovak politicians that Slovakia be given a greater say in policies that affected it had the support of a majority of the Slovak population.

Populist nationalism

As we have seen, many Slovaks demanded a revision of the Czech and Slovak Federation both in symbolic and in more material terms. Almost all Slovak political parties called in their political programmes for a radical reorganisation of the common state. Most of the demands put forward were clearly intended to address real imbalances existing in the state. Gradually, however, many politicians in Slovakia started stressing the national question, more owing to the fact that it inflamed public passions than to the actual issues involved. While it is difficult to determine where 'well-founded concerns' end and what one might call populist nationalism starts, on 28 October 1990 Prime Minister Mečiar clearly indicated that such populism existed:

The creation of the Slovak statehood is currently the subject of an intensive political struggle. This is not because of the statehood as such and benefits for the people but because it is one of the fundamental problems on which one can dictate popularity.⁴⁸

An important period in the growth of populist nationalism was the months of March and April 1991. A split in the Public Against Violence led to the creation of the Movement for a Democratic Slovakia and later the ousting of Mečiar as Prime Minister. In opposition, Mečiar adopted a nationalist discourse for the very purpose he had criticised the previous autumn. As Žák writes: 'with the confidence of 80% of the public—[he] quickly became involved in a game of "Wait, I'll show you who is a better Slovak"'.⁴⁹ Soon after leaving office, Mečiar switched from a federalist position to supporting a vague confederate solution. On several occasions the HZDS joined forces with more radically nationalist, extra-parliamentary parties in organising public protests against the Slovak and federal governments. Combined with the HZDS opposition to the economic reforms and Mečiar's charisma, the populist stance on the national issue sealed the movement's support.

While the HZDS was perhaps the most radical of the big political parties in Slovakia in its use of populist nationalism, it was not alone. Both other opposition parties such as the Party of the Democratic Left (SDL') and parties in the government let tactical considerations influence their stand on the national question. As noted above, the KDH toughened its stance in the wake of the success of the SNS in the June 1990 elections. Čarnogurský's call for a confederation was, however, soon dropped in favour of a demand for a new federation based on a state treaty. In late 1991 it became increasingly clear that a continued struggle over the constitutional issue was benefiting the HZDS-led opposition more than the KDH-led Slovak government. Consequently, the government's insistence on a pre-constitutional status

for the state treaty was also dropped.⁵⁰ An agreement with the Czech side was reached in Mílovy in February 1992. By this stage, however, the issue of Slovakia's position in the Federation had become so radicalised in Slovak politics that the agreement was not accepted by the Presidium of the Slovak National Council.

The result of the radicalisation of the national issue was that the stance of many Slovak political parties became increasingly unrealistic. While continuing to call for a common state with the Czechs, parties such as the HZDS called for an international legal status for Slovakia, a separate Slovak seat in the UN, a separate Slovak central bank with currency issuing rights, a separate Slovak home guard, the superiority of Slovak laws over Czechoslovak ones and even a separate Slovak President. Clearly, some of these demands were hardly compatible even with a confederation. However, the public believed the parties' claim that their demands were in accord with a continued common state. Partly, this was due to the high degree of confusion surrounding the various alternatives. A public opinion survey showed, for instance, that 20% of the Slovak respondents who supported a unitary state answered that Slovakia could have its own army. Conversely, 19% of supporters of independence did not agree with the creation of a separate Slovak army.⁵¹ Political leaders could thus use radical national demands for political mobilisation without alienating the popular majority in favour of some kind of union with the Czechs.

Slovak nationalism—concluding remarks

The demands for a revision of the federal system had strong support in Slovakia. Many Slovaks did believe that the existing Federation was to their disadvantage, and gave their votes to political parties that promised to address the Slovak grievances. In the first chaotic and difficult years of the new democratic regime, the Slovak Question provided a popular and easily understandable issue with which parties could rally political support. The channelling of popular discontent into the national issue was the easy solution to many difficult questions. Increasing political populism caused a radicalisation of the question of the future state: the tougher political competition over the issue became, the more radical the solutions. Ultimately, given the Slovak veto in the Federal Assembly, this radicalisation became the main obstacle to the conclusion of the constitutional talks.

Yet, as we have said, this autonomy nationalism was not a call for an independent Slovak state. It can therefore not directly explain the break-up of the CSFR. It was a rejection of the Slovak version of common statehood by the Czech political right that was the immediate cause of the Velvet Divorce. To assess the role of Slovak nationalism in the split, it is therefore necessary to examine in what way it helped cause this rejection.

The Czech reaction

As in Slovakia, the question of the future set-up of the CSFR was an important political issue in the Czech Lands. In particular this was true in Moravia, which, compared with Bohemia, faced problems similar to those of Slovakia. The Moravian autonomy movement, with quite considerable local support in the region, called in its

most radical expression for the creation of a three-part federation consisting of Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia. Yet most Czechs, including most Moravians, were not very receptive to the Slovak demands for a radical revision of the common state. A majority of Czech politicians and their compatriots, former Czech Prime Minister Petr Pithart claimed, 'identified more with the federation than did the Slovaks. In reality they identified with it like an extension of the Czech state, even if no one ever said so openly'.⁵²

While most Slovaks had not only a cultural but also a political identity separate from a Czechoslovak one, this was not true of most Czechs. In the Czech Lands opposition to the policies of the Federal Government did not entail a demand for the devolution of powers to the Czech government. Tellingly, while a majority of the most popular Slovak politicians were active in the Slovak National Council and the Slovak government, most leading Czech politicians operated on the federal level. Only after the June 1992 elections were the general identification of Czech political interest with federal ones and the preferred political base of Czech politicians reversed.

The symbolic issues

Czech opposition to Slovak nationalism included both its symbolic and 'material' aspects. While most Czechs did support a reassessment of their union with the Slovaks (see Table 1), the Slovak demands were considered by many an unnecessary complication. Some demands were strongly rejected. Most importantly, this included the Slovak insistence that the state treaty between the two republics was to be an agreement between two sovereign states. To allow such an agreement to be signed, the Federation would have to be at least symbolically dissolved before being reconstructed. The need to break up the state to fulfil Slovak demands for equality was rejected by many Czechs as nonsense. As the Chairman of Civic Democratic Alliance (ODA), Jan Kalvoda, stated in the autumn of 1991: 'Unlike some of my Slovak colleagues, I am convinced that we have no time to fool around with nationalist emotions'.⁵³

While many Slovaks resented what they saw as the Czech domination of the common state, many Czechs were angered by what they considered Slovak ingratitude. From a Czech point of view, Slovakia was ungrateful for all the help the Czechs had rendered it through the century. Furthermore, in 1938 and 1968 the Slovaks had in Czech eyes carelessly exploited difficult times for Czechoslovakia to further their petty nationalist ambitions. Already during communism there had been resistance in the Czech Republic against the economic transfers to Slovakia. In January 1990 the Czech (Republic) Finance Minister called for the Czech subsidisation of Slovakia to be cut.⁵⁴ Yet, despite the agreement on a new 'each republic on its own' budget principle reached in Lnaře in April 1990, the so-called '*penězovod*' (money pipeline) from the Czech Lands to Slovakia was not shut.⁵⁵ With increasing pressure for independence in Slovakia, the demand to stop 'paying for the Slovaks' strengthened in the Czech Republic. Čarnogurský's vision that Slovakia should join the EU as an independent state (while staying within a union with the Czech Lands), was rejected by many Czechs as an attempt at gaining 'Slovak independence with a Czech insurance policy'.⁵⁶

Ludvík Vaculík, the author of the famous *Two Thousand Words* during the 1968 Prague Spring, was perhaps the first to express what gradually became a common Czech view of Slovak nationalism. Writing in May 1990, Vaculík claimed that the Czechs had helped Slovakia build its industry and educate its intelligentsia.⁵⁷ Instead of thanking them, however, Slovaks only complained about the quality of these Czech gifts. In fact, the Slovaks were blaming the Czechs for all their own failures. Vaculík rejected Slovak dissident Milan Šimečka's claim that the Slovak little brother had grown up and now wanted his own bed: 'The way we know this little brother, he will want his bed by the window in summer and in winter by the oven. No bed for you, my brother, have your own house!'⁵⁸ Vaculík's message was: if the Slovaks wanted more independence, then let them have their own state.

Devolution of power and economic reforms

Most Czech politicians did not see the need for an extensive devolution of powers beyond that agreed in the autumn of 1990. In particular, they opposed devolution in fields such as economic policy and foreign affairs. With most Slovak parties calling for a slowdown of reforms, or at least the introduction of special considerations for Slovakia, devolution was bound to complicate the economic reform process. Not surprisingly, the strongest opposition to such Slovak demands came from the most pro-reform parties in the Czech Lands. As Pithart observed: 'For the strategists of the radical economic reforms the devolution of competence away from the centre to the republics was a completely irrational complication'.⁵⁹ This was particularly true of the demands that were not easily associated with a functioning central government. Creating a Slovak National Bank with the right to issue currency, for example, was deemed completely unacceptable, as it was incompatible with a unified economic policy. The then vice-chairman of the ODS, Miroslav Macek, later described Slovak demands as 'a confederation, at the base of which was one currency, but two [central] banks, a unified army, just two armies, a dual foreign policy—that's not even a confederation, but a bastard of the coarsest kind'.⁶⁰

Unlike in Slovakia, where the split in the post-communist movement VPN strengthened the left and nationalist opposition, the break-up of the Czech Civic Forum strengthened the pro-reform camp on the political right. Czech parties such as the ODS and the Civic Democratic Alliance clearly expressed the popular rejection of the communist past, the desire for economic reform and a 'return to Europe'. As noted above, the popularity of the tough economic reforms in the Czech Lands was based on the relatively limited socio-economic hardship and, in particular, the continued low unemployment. Furthermore, contrary to the situation in Slovakia, the appeal of the political and economic changes was reinforced by the very negative view of the socialist era. For the majority of Czechs the post-1968 Normalisation regime left a bitter taste for everything socialist.

Rejecting the common state

The internal Slovak political squabble and other manifestations of instability clearly strengthened the view in the Czech Lands that Slovakia was becoming a political and

economic liability. Events such as the physical attack by Slovak nationalists on President Havel's entourage in Bratislava in the spring of 1991 were presented as clear signs of the political immaturity of the Slovaks. Given the ability of the Slovak political parties to block important decisions in the Federal Assembly with the minority veto, the volatile situation in Slovakia, in Czech eyes, threatened the whole Federation.

The view of Slovakia as a burden was strengthened for many Czechs by the increasingly negative image of events in Slovakia presented in the international press. Anti-Semitic manifestations in particular received unfavourable attention in the West. Important also was the heated dispute between Bratislava and Budapest over the rights of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia and the construction of the Gabčíkovo-Nagymaros dams on the Danube. In pro-reform circles in the Czech Lands the concern that the negative international attention was discouraging foreign investment convinced many that a split was preferable to a continued impasse. Ironically, international pressure on the federal authorities to avoid an uncontrolled collapse of the CSFR strengthened the view that the Czechs would be better off without Slovakia.⁶¹ One month before the June 1992 elections Klaus stated that if a 'functioning federation' was not possible after the elections, the ODS was 'prepared to create mechanisms for the quick, civilised (*kultúrne*) and problem-free division of the state'.⁶²

The growing resistance to a continued Czech and Slovak coexistence was not limited to the political right. Spurred by the tougher stance on the Slovak Question promoted by politicians such as Kalvoda, popular unease with the situation increased as well.⁶³ The Czech media furiously attacked Slovak politicians, and Mečiar in particular, for using populist nationalism to further their own personal ambitions. Little differentiation was generally made between the extremes of Slovak separatism and what was perceived in Slovakia as legitimate self-assertion. Calls for a radical solution to the problem of Slovakia grew. In the June 1992 election issue of the highly regarded weekly *Respekt*,⁶⁴ Peter Schutz wrote:

To save at least the Czech Lands, Klaus should not and cannot give in on the principle of a functional federation and the continuation of the successfully developing reforms The shameful result of these elections in Slovakia created only one alternative [*sic*]—either the HZDS breaks up, or the CSFR.⁶⁵

On 13 June 1992 a group called the Czech Initiative launched a petition calling for the establishment of an independent Czech state.⁶⁶ Its appeal stated that if it was not possible to create a 'functioning federation, there is no need to look for an alternative form of coexistence, but it is necessary to give one's vote to prosperity and freedom for the Czechs'.⁶⁷ In four days, about 50 000 people signed the petition at its stand by St Wenceslas statue in Prague.

Despite a rapid increase in support for independence in the spring of 1992, only a small minority of Czechs supported a break-up of the common state (see Table 1). The Czech right claimed, however, that it did not see any alternative solution. Giving in to or even compromising with the Slovak demands would not only deform the Federation beyond what was claimed to be in the interest of the Czechs but also stall the economic reforms. Owing to the very negative view of Slovak politics in the

Czech Lands, Klaus and the Czech right could easily blame the break-up on the Slovaks. Helpful to Klaus' efforts was the declaration of Slovak sovereignty by the Slovak National Council on 17 July. 'Through this adoption of a new constitution by the Slovak National Council', Deputy Chairman of the Czech National Council Jan Kasal stated, 'the Slovak Republic withdrew from the Federation'.⁶⁸ On the same day President Havel resigned, after having failed to win re-election by the Federal Assembly. Very many Czechs held the HZDS, and Mečiar personally, responsible for the loss of their much-admired President.

The ODS had, however, a further interest in ending the Czech and Slovak coexistence as soon as possible. It feared that the Slovak left and nationalist parties could find common ground with the Czech left opposition. This fear was proved right when the Federal Assembly rejected the proposed law on the dissolution of the Federation on 1 October 1992. Instead, with the support of the HZDS and the Czech Social Democratic Party (ČSSD) it passed a resolution calling for talks on a possible Czech-Slovak Union.⁶⁹ Proposed by Miloš Zeman of the ČSSD, the resolution showed the greater willingness of the Czech left to compromise with the HZDS. The ODS managed, however, to effectively block all attempts at finding solutions other than a strong federation or separation. It forced the HZDS into accepting that the Federation should be dissolved, as no compromise was possible on continued coexistence.⁷⁰ Czech politicians supporting a deal with the Slovaks came under massive pressure to abandon their plans not only from the Czech right but also the Czech press. By October even Havel had dropped his calls for a referendum, which everyone knew would say no to a dissolution, and called for a quick and painless break-up.⁷¹ With promises of seats in the republican parliaments, or in the proposed Senate in the Czech case, the federal MPs were slowly convinced that no other solution than a break-up was possible. On 25 November 1992 the Parliament finally agreed to ignore the calls for a referendum and pass the law legalising the dissolution. The days of the Federation were numbered.

Conclusion

The analysis above has shown that while secessionism was not a strong political force, autonomy nationalism played a leading political role in post-communist Slovakia. Widely held concerns over the perceived Czech domination of the Federation and the effects of especially the economic policies of the Federal Government convinced a majority of Slovaks that fundamental change (but not a split) was necessary. While differing sharply over many issues, almost all political parties in Slovakia agreed with the demand that the existing Federation had to be changed. A majority of Slovak politicians were also in unison when they called upon the Federal Government to take Slovakia's special conditions into consideration in the economic reform process.

Widespread support for economic reforms among Czechs combined with opposition to Slovak nationalism to poison the relationship with their Slovak counterparts. The Czech political right was particularly critical in its assessment of the benefits of the common state. The political situation in Slovakia was perceived to be obstructive to the fulfilment of Czech political goals. Subsequent to the 1992 elections, the

inability of the Federal Assembly to perform its basic political functions, owing to its minority veto provisions, ended the Czech political right's interest in preserving a common state. Widespread resentment of the Slovak political leadership and the manifestation of Slovak nationalism provided Klaus and the Czech right with the opportunity to blame Slovak politicians for the dissolution of the Federation.

The break-up of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic was not, however, a result of Slovak secession. It was the political views represented by the Czech right that put the value of continued economic reform, stability and rapid 'reintegration' into Europe above that of preserving the common state. The break-up of the Czech and Slovak Federal Republic was a result of the promotion of what the political right saw as Czech national interests, over those of the Federation. Interpreted like this, the key to the break-up of the CSFR lies in Czech rather than in Slovak nationalism.

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¹ The author would like to thank Professor Pål Kolstø at the University of Oslo for his comments on the final draft of this article.

² Readers with access to the WWW will find a typical reading list for a nationalism course at Jack Snyder's homepage at the University of Columbia. Note the lack of works on the CSFR. See <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/polisci/f95/g8844x51.html>.

³ Leff, for example, notes the 'tendency of Western journalists to describe the disintegration of the state as a "Slovak secession"'. Carol Skalník Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republics: Nation Versus State* (Boulder, 1997), p. 131.

⁴ See e.g. Oldřich Dědek (ed.), *The Break-Up of Czechoslovakia: An In-Depth Economic Analysis* (Aldershot, 1996).

⁵ See for example Miroslav Krejčí & Pavel Machonin, *Czechoslovakia 1918–92: A Laboratory for Social Change* (London, 1996).

⁶ See e.g. Sharon L. Wolchik, 'The Politics of Ethnicity in Post-Communist Czechoslovakia', *East European Politics and Society*, 8, 1, Winter 1994, pp. 153–188.

⁷ See for example Eric Stein, *Czechoslovakia: Ethnic CONFLICT, Constitutional FISSURE, Negotiated BREAKUP* (Ann Arbor, 1997).

⁸ This is the case in both general works such as Leslie Holmes, *Post-Communism: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 1997) (see p. 288) and specialist studies such Soňa Szomolanyi, 'Was The Dissolution of Czechoslovakia Inevitable?', *Scottish Affairs*, 1994, 8, Summer, p. 35.

⁹ In the Soviet case, as Professor Pål Kolstø pointed out to me, the Central Asian republics and Belarus were far from eager to see the disintegration of the union.

¹⁰ The exception was the 1925 elections. Carol Skalník Leff, *National Conflict in Czechoslovakia* (Princeton, 1987), p. 71.

¹¹ Jan Rychlík, 'National Consciousness and the Common State (A Historical-Ethnological Analysis)', in Jiří Musil (ed.), *The End of Czechoslovakia* (Budapest, 1995), p. 103.

¹² Slovakia had a separate National Council and other regional institutions, whereas the Czech Lands had none until 1969. There was also a separate Slovak Communist Party (KSS) within the KSČ, but never a Czech equivalent.

¹³ Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: nationhood and the national question in the New Europe* (Cambridge, 1996), p. 18. Italics in original.

¹⁴ See Eva Davidová, *Cesty Romů* (Olomouc, 1995), pp. 219–222.

¹⁵ Milan Kučera & Zdeněk Pavlík, 'Czech and Slovak Demography', in Musil (ed.), *The End of Czechoslovakia*, p. 38.

¹⁶ See Jan Jiráček & Otakar Šoltys, 'Zobrazení Česko-slovenských vztahů v tisku v období 17.11.1989 až 31.12.1991—státoprávní uspořádání', in Fedor Gál (ed.), *Dnešní krize česko-slovenských vztahů* (Prague, 1992), p. 46.

¹⁷ Vladimír Mečiar was Prime Minister in Slovakia from June 1990 to April 1991 and again after the June 1992 elections. From April 1991 to June 1992 the Prime Minister was Ján Čarnogurský.

¹⁸ *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*, EE/0858 B/10 (hereafter *SWB*).

¹⁹ Jack Snyder & Karen Ballentine, 'Nationalism and the Marketplace of Ideas', *International Security*, 21, 2, Autumn 1996, pp. 5–40.

²⁰ Center for Social Analysis, *Current problems of Slovakia after the split of the CSFR*, March 1993 (Bratislava, 1993), p. 2.

²¹ The SNS only came out unequivocally in favour of independence in the autumn of 1990. In early 1992 a pro-independence group broke out from the Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) parliamentary caucus and formed the short-lived Slovak Christian Democratic Movement (SKDH).

²² Quoted in Marián Leško, *Mečiar a mečiarizmus* (Bratislava, 1997), p. 82. All translations from Czech and Slovak sources in this article are the author's.

²³ See the interview with Milan Kňažko in *SWB*, EE/1406 B/2. See e.g. also Leff, *The Czech and Slovak Republic*, p. 131 and Martin Bútorá & Zora Bútorová, 'Slovakia After the Split', *Journal of Democracy*, 4, 2, April 1993, p. 79. For a questioning of Mečiar's personal commitment to the Federation see Karol Wolf, *Podruhé a naposled: aneb mírove dělení Československa* (Prague, 1998), particularly p. 65. Wolf does not deny that the HZDS in the autumn of 1992 only reluctantly accepted the plan to dissolve the Federation (see pp. 93–94).

²⁴ Centrum pre sociálnu analýzu, *Aktuálne problémy Česko-Slovenska, január 1992* (Bratislava, 1992), p. 31. Hereafter *Január 1992*.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

²⁶ See Jan Obrman, 'Civic Forum Surges to Impressive Victory in Elections', *Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Report*, 22 June 1990, p. 14. Hereafter *RFE/RL*.

²⁷ Otto Ulř, for example, presents such a view in his article 'Czechoslovakia's Velvet Divorce', *East European Quarterly*, 30, September 1996. See especially pp. 339–343.

²⁸ Ludvík Vaculík, 'Naše slovenská otázka', reprint from *Literární noviny*, 1990, 5, in *Nové slovo*, 1990, 21, p. 4.

²⁹ Václav Žák, 'The Velvet Divorce—Institutional Foundations', in Musil (ed.), *The End of Czechoslovakia*, p. 247.

³⁰ Centrum pre výskum spoločenských problémov, *Aktuálne problémy Česko-Slovenska, október 1990* (Bratislava, 1990), p. 25. By January 1992 this figure had risen to 71%. *Január 1992*, data section p. 20.

³¹ *SWB*, EE/0903 B/6.

³² Peter Martin, 'The Hyphen Controversy', *RFE/RL*, 20 April 1990, p. 14. Czecho-Slovakia was the name used in the Paris Peace Treaties. Even the original French version of the Czechoslovak constitution drawn up in Paris in 1919 had the hyphen. In the Czech translation it was left out.

³³ Havel, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 15.

³⁴ Koordinačné centrum hnutia Verejnosti' proti násilu, *Šanca pre Slovensko* (Bratislava, 1990), p. 6.

³⁵ See *ibid.*, p. 7 and Krest'anskodemokratického hnutia, *Volebný program* (Bratislava, 1990), pp. 11–12.

³⁶ For an excellent analysis of the question of the treaty see Stein, *Czechoslovakia*, pp. 105–138. Mečiar was probably the first to suggest such a treaty. *Ibid.*, p. 105.

³⁷ *SWB*, EE/0642 B/4.

³⁸ *SWB*, EE/1229 B/3.

³⁹ Peter Martin, 'Economic Reform and Slovakia', *RFE-RL*, 5 July 1991, pp. 7–8.

⁴⁰ Ben Slay (ed.), 'Czechoslovakia: The Economy in Transition', *RFE/RL*, 20 March 1992, p. 29.

⁴¹ *Január 1992*, data section p. 28.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 29.

⁴³ For an assessment of the role of the legacy of the Normalisation era see Ladislav Kováč, 'Zločin a trest: husáková normalizácia a osud Československa', *Mosty*, 1994, 23, p. 3.

⁴⁴ See *Január 1992*, pp. 56–73 and Jiří Pehe, 'Opinion Polls on Economic Reform', *RFE/RL*, 25 January 1991, pp. 4–6.

⁴⁵ *SWB*, EE/1180 B/3.

⁴⁶ *SWB*, EE/1088 B/3.

⁴⁷ 'Tězy volebného programu HZDS', *Národní obroda*, 29 April 1992, supplement p. B. Emphasis in original (bold type).

⁴⁸ *SWB*, EE/0909 B/2.

⁴⁹ Žák, 'The Velvet Divorce ...', p. 259.

⁵⁰ Jiří Pehe, 'Slovak Nationalism Splits Christian Democratic Ranks', *RFE/RL*, 27 March 1992, p. 14.

⁵¹ *Január 1992*, pp. 84–85.

⁵² Petr Pithart, 'Křižovatky na cestě od Československa k Česku a Slovensku (listopad 1989—červen 1992)', in Michal Horský (ed.), *Podiel posttotalitných elit na vývoj Česko-Slovenska* (Trnava, 1993), p. 14.

⁵³ Quoted in Jan Obrman, 'Further Discussions on the Future of the Federation', *RFE/RL*, 20 September 1991, p. 9.

⁵⁴ Žák, 'The Velvet Divorce', p. 251.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ Miroslav Macek, quoted in Wolf, *Podruhé a naposled*, p. 71.

⁵⁷ Vaculík, 'Naše slovenska otázka'.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ Pithart, 'Křížovatky ...', p. 13.

⁶⁰ *Sme*, 1 January 1998, p. 13.

⁶¹ Left, *The Czech and Slovak Republics*, p. 137.

⁶² Leško, *Mečiar a mečiarizmus*, p. 78.

⁶³ Kalvoda found it beneficial politically to 'appear as a shining knight riding against the ungrateful Slovaks in defence of the federation—and of Czech interests'. Stein, *Czech/Slovakia*, p. 135.

⁶⁴ *Respekt* won the Magazine of the Year award in the American journal *World Press Review* in 1991.

⁶⁵ Peter Schutz, 'Slovensko sa prihlásilo k národnému socializmu: Posledné zvonenie pre federáciu', *Respekt*, 8 June 1992, p. 2.

⁶⁶ *SWB*, EE/1406 B/5.

⁶⁷ *SWB*, EE/1412 B/5, 20 June 1992.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Ulč, 'Czechoslovakia's Velvet Divorce', p. 344.

⁶⁹ Leško, *Mečiar a mečiarizmus*, p. 85.

⁷⁰ Wolf, *Podruhé a naposled*, p. 94.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*