Split Of Scfr Essay, Research Paper

What do you think was the main cause in the split in the CSFR? Could the split have been avoided?

CSFR was divided into two separate independent countries: The Czech Republic and Slovak Republic on 1.1.1993. This split was caused because of three reasons: historical, political and economical. Below I will try to discuss all of those reasons.

We should first say what federation is: it’s a common state which consists of two or more equal nations. And word equal is most important for Czechoslovakia and its problems.

Firstly, we should think about historical reasons. In history of Czechs and Slovaks we could see that those two countries were never actually together in one state. Under the Austria-Hungary, Czechs were more under Austrians and Slovaks under Hungarians. But we should start from the beginning. During the tenth century there was the Great Moravia, which included Slovakia and Moravia. Later they conquered Czech, too, but only for 100 years. Then the Great Moravia under the pressure of Hungarians and Franks diminished. After then the Czech state emerged and in 11th century Moravia joined.

After this time Czechs and Slovaks never had their own state until establishment of CSR in 1918. Even under the Austria-Hungary, Czech state was more advanced then Slovakia. Czech had about 75% of all industrial output of Austria-Hungary and Slovakia was mostly agricultural. That was one of the most important aspects in the future of CS(S)R. During the revolution in 1848-9, Czech political representation called upon rearrangement of Austria-Hungary into a liberal-constitutional state, which would ensure free development to all nations including Slavs. But the revolution was a failure and soon after new pressure on Czechs and Slovaks emerged. The Czech and Slovak political representatives estimated that a new ruler of Austria-Hungary will be more generous to Slavic nations. But year 1914 changed everything. The throne successor Frantisek Ferdinand was shot in Sarajevo. In the beginning of war Czech and Slovak bourgeoisie (not people) supported it, because they feared the militaristic Austria-Hungary. But in year 1917 when it was clear that Austria-Hungary can’t win, the idea of breaking Austria-Hungary and creating their own state was more and more common in Czech and Slovakia.

On 28.10.1918, CSR was founded by Czech representatives and on 30.10.1918 by Slovakian representatives. But from the very beginning, Slovaks (people) always thought that Slovakia is not equal to Czech. Which was partly true, because Czech was more advanced and had more inhabitants. In 1919 Czechs had even to declare exceptional condition in Slovakia. Then national government had to make a constitutional deed, which was supposed to tighten the Czechoslovak unity in the common state. So, we can see from the facts above, that establishment of Czechoslovakia wasn’t so friendly as we were told by communist officials later on.

During communism era, national conflicts were repressed by the central Russian government and no divisions were allowed. But even during those times, Czechoslovakia was a very rare type of a country. There was no official mention about Slovaks as a sovereign nation. Communists tried to compensate this fact by founding for example KSS which actually was part of KSČ. They also gave important federal functions to Slovaks. Communists though that this will compensate the fact that Slovaks didn’t actually have their own nation, Slovakia. But it didn’t help at all and it even deepened this problem.

We should look closer at the Czechoslovakia during communism. Actually it was not a true federation, because all central government was in Czech, all important functions of the state were in Czech and Slovaks actually were not equal nation (state). During year 1967 Slovakian officials critiqued asymmetrical assortment of power in Czechoslovakia. Because of this critique, government passed new laws which adjusted relations between CSR and SSR. CSR and SSR joined together as national state formations into the higher federational state – CSSR.

Those should be the historical reasons of split. Same importance in this act had economical situation of Czech and Slovakia during the whole period of our common state. From the very beginning Czech always had more industry. The industrial revolution took over in Czech in the times of Austria-Hungary and Czech was one of the most industrialised countries in the whole world. On the other hand, industrial revolution hadn’t touched Slovakia at all. It was mostly agricultural state with almost none industry.

After the foundation of Czechoslovakia those differences became more visible. On one side, Czech was industrialised state with high level of education, culture etc. On the other Slovakia didn’t have almost anything. They didn’t even have good schools. So Czech started to build Slovakia. They sent engineers, teachers, politicians and all needed people to Slovakia to help them rebuild their state. In those years it was great impulse for Czechoslovak economy which sooner became in the top ten in the world. Until 1948 when communist took over Czechoslovakia.

After then, they started to rebuild Slovakia as an industrial country with huge steel manufacturing companies. During those years Czech economy in comparison with the rest of world went down, but industry in Slovakia was rebuilt from the roots. Because of that, Slovakian economy was pretty much at a same level as Czech in 1980’s. And that was one of the reasons why Slovakia could become a sovereign country.

This should be all about economical background of split. However the most important time of change were years 1990-1992. Because after the accession of democracy, original federation from the communism had to be rethought.

In the year 1990 Vaclav Havel visited lots of foreign countries and after he was elected as a president, the Velvet revolution came to its finish. His popularity was higher and higher. Representatives of OF and VPN took over most important power branches of government. And Czechoslovakia was preparing for free elections, first after 40 years. First divisions were visible during Vaclav Havel’s address to people when he was elected as a president. He pointed out that Milan Knazko, main representative of the Slovakian revolution, was his advisor. Slovaks were angry because they thought that one of the most important person in Slovakian revolution was only president’s advisor and not something more.

Other problem emerged when Havel was asked to come to Bratislava day after he was elected president, but he didn’t think it was necessary. And he visited some other countries first. But it was a big mistake that Havel didn’t realise. He came to Bratislava five months after his election and Slovaks thought that they are less important for him than other nations.

And soon after even bigger problem turned up. It was the change of CSSR’s name. Havel and most of the Czech politicians thought that it will be an easy part, but they didn’t understand Slovakian feeling about this problem at all. This change of name was soon after called “the dash war”. Slovaks wanted the dash between Czech and Slovak Federative Republic (Cesko-slovenska federativni republika). But Czech politicians didn’t want it because they though that it means that we (Czechs and Slovaks) are not together. Discussion among them finished when Czechs said: “OK, you can have that dash, but we won’t use it anyway”. This was so arrogant to Slovaks, that they didn’t even believed it.

After this incident Slovakian public was shocked by the amateur way of dealing with such an important issue. Czechs didn’t understand them at all. We can’t be surprised that there were more and more nationalistic tenses in Slovakian public.

There were two branches of Slovak attitude towards federation. One was represented by Jan Carnogursky and second by Vladimir Meciar. The first one wanted to split and to have Slovakia as a sovereign country, second wanted to have some kind of federation, but confederation sounded better to them.

After elections on 8-9. July 1990 in Slovakia, Meciar was chosen as a prime minister of Slovakian government. In Czech, Valtr Komarek was chosen as a prime minister. So Meciar started to negotiate with Czechs. Czech representation led by Komarek strongly refused any kind of confederation. But Komarek was not as much a politician as Meciar was, so he wasn’t prepared for such a negotiation with him. On 8-9. August 1990, Meciar started negotiations in Trencanske Teplice. He told to Czech representation, that he has a mandate of VPN and Slovakian government, but it wasn’t truth. Prime ministers of national governments were dissatisfied with the position of national governments. Calfa, prime minister of federation government refused to negotiate with them after couple of days and left. They chose a perfect time for such a negotiation, because federal government and president had vacation, so they were actually negotiating without any legitimate mandate.

After this negotiation, Meciar said that it is not possible for Czech representation to negotiate about confederation, and so is for Slovaks. And even impossible is to negotiate about Slovakian sovereign state. Then on 12. December 1990, competent law was passed by federal government. It moved lots of responsibilities of federal government to local Czech and Slovak republics.

Than OF and VPN dissolved. From OF emerged ODS led by Vaclav Klaus and OH led by Diensbier. VPN didn’t like Meciar’s politics, so they wanted from him to talk good about them in his speeches, including his 10min television relations. But Meciar didn’t agree and he sent Milan Knazko to make a speech to people on television instead of him. In that relation, Knazko attacked Czech, because he said, that they blame Meciar too much.

On 9th March, Meciar split from VPN and founded his own political party called VPN for Democracy. Soon after, Slovak national counsel repealed Vladimir Meciar from the function of Slovakian prime minister. And then it appointed Jan Carnogursky to that function.

Then on 28.10.1991, Vaclav Havel came to Slovakia. But his stay soon showed Slovakian nationalism and Czech quandary to deal with it. During Vaclav Havel’s speech he wanted to stay silent for two minutes to revere memory of those who died for Czechoslovakia. But some Slovaks instead shouted “Long live Slovakia” or “There was enough of Havel”. Havel immediately left meeting and was surprised by Slovakian attitude.

After this incident Havel felt that he is loosing his political power, so he wanted to have authority to dismiss federal parliament and to make presidential decrees. He didn’t succeed and it wasn’t passed.

Then series of negotiations about Czechoslovak federation started. It was a complete failure. Then Czech and Slovakian representatives started to negotiate about the Czechoslovakian treaty. Finally they finished it, even when there was a statement, Czech representatives didn’t agree on. It was the part which said that each republic can have its own foreign policy. Then Slovakian national counsel didn’t pass this treaty. It was a complete failure of the two year Czecho-Slovak negotiations.

Second free elections were won by ODS and HZDS. Vaclav Klaus was not accepting idea about split, but Meciar had such an unreal demands on federation, that it soon wasn’t possible for Klaus to still have such an attitude.

HZDS clearly wanted split of CSFR and there was no space for Klaus to negotiate about federation. Meciar wanted what he clearly couldn’t get and he knew it. At this point it was clear that federation couldn’t be hold. Then Slovakian national counsel declared sovereignty of Slovak republic.

Soon after Havel resigned on post of Czechoslovak president. Slovak representatives soon after his resign said that a chance of re-election of Havel is none. He resigned because he felt that he lost allowance of most Slovak politicians.

Then it was announced by Meciar and Klaus that on 1.1.1993 federation should end. Then it was passed in all three governments that Czechs and Slovaks will have their own countries. Czech Republic and Slovak Republic.

So could the split have been avoided? I think that in the very beginning in year 1990 it could have been. If Havel came to Slovakia right after his election and had a professional speech where he would tell Slovaks that they are tight to Czechs. But instead he came to Bratislava five months later and had an amateur speech. The problem was that he didn’t understand Slovakian problem at all. He and whole Czech representation were not prepared to face such a complicated issue. Their amateur negotiations gave space to Slovakian nationalistic parties and individuals. In 1992 it was clear that federation can’t be hold. I think that lots of people blame Klaus for split of federation, but that’s not true at all. Klaus from the beginning was against split, but in 1992 he saw, there was no way for federation to stay. So in the very end he was radical and didn’t allow any changes in agreement with Meciar about split. Because he knew more and more problems would occasionally follow.

I think that it was right to split in 1992, because there was probably no other way of dealing with that problem during those times. Most people argue, that there was no referendum about split. That’s right, but if referendum was issued and people probably wouldn’t agree with split, there still would be political situation which would be unhealthy for our state. Yes, I think that split was right and even the way it was done.

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