

HISTORICAL MILESTONES OF THE FIRST CZECHOSLOVAK REPUBLIC

Martina JAKUBČINOVÁ¹ Karol KRAJČO^{2*}

¹ Martina Jakubčinová, A.Dubček University of Trenčín, Faculty of social and economic relations, Študentská 3, Trenčín

² Karol Krajčo, A.Dubček University of Trenčín, Faculty of social and economic relations, Študentská 3, Trenčín

*E-mail address: martina.jakubcinova@tnuni.sk

Abstract

The past of an individual, nation, or state can not be changed, influenced or reversed. It is a solid part of our being, so it is extremely important not to forget. This can be achieved by creating a space for remembering these historical acts and by trying to understand and learn from it. This is many times the privilege to Slovak citizens. In the mid-2018s, several significant historical milestones are revealed. Among the most significant are the 100th anniversary of the Czechoslovak Republic and the adoption of the Martin Declaration, the 50th anniversary of the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Treaty troops, or the 25th anniversary of the independent, sovereign, democratic and legal state - the Slovak Republic. It is necessary to draw the attention towards these facts. However, due to the limitations, the aim of the article presented by the above mentioned authors becomes the understanding of the dimension of the Czechoslovak state, which is historically determined as a social phenomenon, closely tied to the past. This goal can be achieved by looking at selected historical milestones and pointing to their link. For this reason, the authors allow not only to present a brief overview of the most important events affecting the history of the First Republic but also a brief overview of their impact on the character of the state apparatus to the reader of this article. The authors used a number of scientific-research methods, drawing on a study of professional scientific work that enriched their own observations and findings.

Keywords: Czechoslovak Republic, nation, independence, Slovak Republic, state.

1 Introduction

The Slovak Republic is a picture of several historical and geopolitical acts that need to be considered. It is very difficult to determine a milestone from which it could be reflected in the research of the roots of the Slovak and Czech nations [1]. The roots of our state can be dated back to the period of Sam's empire, the period of the first state formation of the Slavs in the Central Danube. This state form allowed us to break out of the avaric domination and resist the attempt of the French Empire to subjugate Slavic tribes. The efforts of the Nitra prince on the state-building unification of the Slavs, which were multiplied during the Great Moravian period. Through internal distractions and external pressures, Great Moravia has lost everything it has ever built. Therefore, for a long period of time (until 1918), Slovakia became part of the multinational state - Hungary. This event was finally unleashed by the joint struggle of the two nations, strongly aided by the outbreak of the First World War, the activity of foreign resistance, the declaration of Czechoslovak independence - the Washington Agreement and the disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The birth of the Czechoslovak Republic (28 November 1918) is the end of the struggle for independence and the common state of the Czechs and Slovaks. For this reason, we have focused our attention on the key facts that can be considered decisive in the struggle for independence. We want to recall historical milestones, culminating in a sovereign, democratic and legal state - the Slovak Republic for the reader. We base them on the works of authors Vodička 2003; Schelle, 2007; Kučera 2008; Svitáková, 2010; Kútik, Jakubčinová, Králiková, 2018 and acts from this period.

2 Description of the approach, work methodology and materials for research

The interest in grasping the issues of historical development of the state and its apparatus led the authors to scientific research in this field. The collection and examination of historical sources and professional literature, its deeper knowledge, multiple verifying, or drawing conclusions have been part of the activities leading to more results, from which the authors choose those that relate to the subject of the present article. From the methods that have contributed significantly to the work we have chosen a method of comparison, analysis, scientific abstraction, but especially a method of historical knowledge. The resources used for the purposes of this article are listed at the end of this article in the section of the literature.

3 The way to independence - The first Czechoslovak Republic

The desire for self-reliance has been a strong motive for the leadership of many representatives. It is this year that we commemorate the centennial anniversary of the fulfillment of these aspirations that the nation of Czech and the Slovaks transformed into a common, sovereign state - the Czechoslovak Republic.

The general lability of the post-war Europe [2] has been a significant factor in this process, so we can consider 1918 as significant in terms of the efforts to reorganize the states of Europe [3].

On November 28, 1918, however, the Czechoslovak Republic has proudly embarked upon its first path to modern democracy. But it has succeeded not only in gaining its place on the map of Europe, but also gaining international recognition and respect. It would be wrong to omit the facts that preceded this great act.

The Czechoslovak Republic, as a result of the solution of the question of the Czechs and Slovaks, was formed on the ruins of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy. Autonomy, which was the culmination of the efforts of these nations was a clear response to the need for self-determination and the departure from their method of governance existed previously [4]. However, it would be naive to believe that this activity was blessed right from the start. In the first years of the outbreak of World War I, it was utterly unrealistic. The foreign resistance, which intensively fought for Czech and Slovak common state, can be considered as the first institution activating on requests for self-rule. Also, the Czechoslovak National Council (Paris, 1916), as the highest authoritarian body of Czechoslovak foreign emigration, was the main activist of persuasion of representatives of the negotiating powers (Great Britain, France, Russia, Serbia, Belgium, Italy, Romania, Greece, Japan and China) [5]. It highlighted the necessity of the breakup of Austria - Hungary and the need to create an independent Czechoslovak state. However, this was also not accepted with understanding, but at the turn of 1917 and 1918, the Austro-Hungarian crisis is deepening, which manifests itself not only in the internal environment of politics but also in the struggle. This is a challenge that is caught by the political elite of the future Czechoslovakia. Our Czech and Slovak politicians have been able to lean and attract ever greater sympathy, thus causing considerable problems for the slowly decaying Austro-Hungarian Empire.

In the last year of the war, negotiations on a common state were therefore confirmed by the Pittsburgh Agreement (May 1918). The democratic and progressive nature of the new republic was also confirmed by the Washington Declaration and the Declaration of Independence of the Czechoslovak Nation by its Czechoslovak Temporary Government (October 1918) in relation to the allied partners [6]. It is the Washington Declaration that explains why the Czech and Slovak nations are not interested in living in Austria-Hungary and why these nations are seeking an independent state-republic. The document also addresses the issue of respect for human and civil rights, protection of national minorities and equal rights of men and women. At the same time, this declaration deals with the abolition of aristocratic privileges and titles as well as with the economic transformation of the state. Which it wants to address in the framework of land reform.

These acts are unlikely to be of great importance unless the issue of post-war Europe has been addressed. The US has addressed this issue through the concept of an international organization of the world, 14 points of President Wilson [7]. It strictly required an autonomy intended for all peoples of the monarchy from Austria to Hungary, and thus the fate of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Monarchy was not preserved either by the manifestation of the last Austrian-Hungarian emperor Karol I.

3.1 The origin and operation of the Czechoslovak Republic

On October 28, 1918, a declaration of Czechoslovak independence took place in Prague [8]. Five-member National Committee of the National Assembly, responsible for this act, in co-operation with the Czechoslovak National Council. For the provisional government of the new state has already announced 24 oktobra 1918. In Morava there was a declaration of independence on October 29, 1918 and in Slovakia this information was received on October 30, 1918 due to an information embargo. This, however, did not change the fact that on the same day the Martin Declaration was adopted, where the Slovaks signed up for the self-proclaiming right of the Czechoslovak nation, expressing the demand for the creation of a common state. At the same time, the Slovaks denied any authority of the Hungarian government in Slovakia. Sub-Carpathian Russia became part of the Czechoslovak Republic after the negotiations, as confirmed by the St Germaine Peace Treaty [4].

A problem that has been quite shaken by the cards has become the issue of the Czechoslovak Parliament. Since the elections were not realistically considered, it was necessary to build on the results of the 1911 elections, the results of the elections to the Austro-Hungarian Parliament. On November 14, 1918, the president of the state was elected, Tomáš Garrigue Masaryk was elected president [9]. The executive government in the Czechoslovak Republic was the government, whose first chairman was Karel Kramář. Ministerial positions held 16 ministers (Table 1).

The existence of an independent state was definitely confirmed at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919.

Another important step in the stabilization of the state was the adoption of the Constitution of the Czechoslovak Republic (29 February 1920). It has taken over a number of modern constitutional principles from foreign constitutions [10]. The foundation of this constitution was based on the Constitution of France dating back to 1875, and it also brought some elements of the US Constitution of 1787 and the Swiss of 1848. The Czechoslovak Republic annexed this constitution to republics with parliamentary democracy and system. which divided power into executive, legislative and judicial. Parliament was already composed of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies during this period, which is still valid in the Czech Republic. The Parliament had both executive and

legislative power, but it was just too powerful to pass on to the government and the president. Slovak Milan Hodža became chairman of the Czechoslovak government in 1935.

Table 1 List of Karel Kramář's Government Members [11]

Prime minister			
Karel Kramář			
Government Members			
Foreign Minister	Edvard Beneš	Minister of Trade	Adolf Stránský
Ministry of Interior	Antonín Švehla	Minister of Railways	Isidor Zahradník
Minister of Finance	Alois Rašín	Minister of Agriculture	Karel Prášek
Minister of Education and Culture	Gustav Habrman	Minister of Social Welfare	Lev Winter
Minister of National Defense	Václav Klofáč	Minister of Post and Telegraph	Jiří Stříbrný
Minister of Justice	František Soukup	Minister of Administration of Slovakia	Vavro Šrobár
Minister of Health	Vavro Šrobár	Minister of Nutrition of the Population	Bohuslav Vrbenský
Minister of Defense	Milan Rastislav Štefánik	Minister without a department	Mořic Hruban

3.2 Establishment and operation of public administration in Czechoslovakia

In the context of looking at the social reality, which is just public administration, we have similar findings. As with the formation of the state, even within this issue, it is necessary to know historical contexts and realations.

Within the first Czechoslovak Republic, this system can be divided into three basic periods [4]:

■ 1st period - 1918 – 1922 (Austria - Hungarian system)

National Committee by Act No. 11/1918 The collections of laws and regulations require that all laws and institutes (local government, state and county offices, state, provincial, district and general constituencies) to be maintained in force on a temporary basis [12]. The original administrative districts from the times of the monarchy remained in force in the first years of existence of the Czechoslovak Republic.

The landscape system (Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia) has been preserved in Bohemia.

In Slovakia, the county establishment system remained (Figure 1).

The meeting on the implementation of the reform of the internal administration takes place at the meeting of the National Assembly on February 27, 1920. The public administration takes on a new form, the role of which is the elimination of the incoherence.



Figure 1 Counties in Slovakia in the years 1867-1922 [13]

■ 2nd period 1923 - 1928 - county system

The county establishment, whose foundations of the whole of Czechoslovakia were legally enshrined in early 1920 (Act No. 126/1920 Coll., On the Establishment of a Unified State Administration in the Czechoslovak Republic), was not implemented in practice [14]. To the real state, the form of a new county system was re-established only in the territory of Slovakia [15]. For this part of the republic, this meant the transition to large counties (Figure 2).

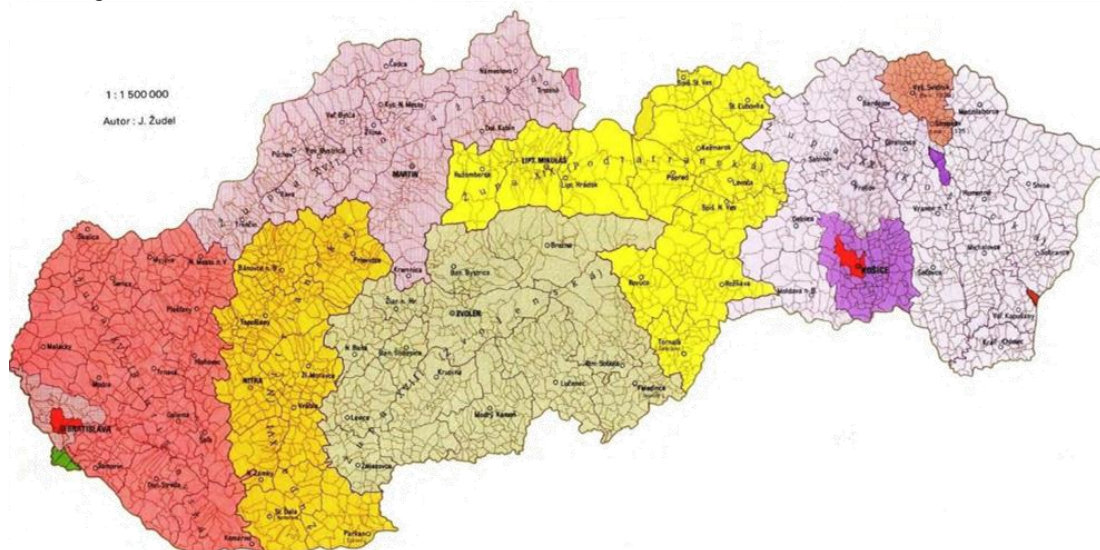


Figure 2 Large counties in Slovak Republic in 1923 – 1928 [16]

■ 3rd period 1928 - 1939 – rural district system

System of rural districts according to the Organizational Act no. 125/1927 is carried out by the Ministry of the Interior and its subordinate political offices (Figure 3). The chief is the high representative of the district authority, he was appointed by the President of the Czechoslovak Republic [17]. The President of the District Council was the District President as elected representative. In this period, Slovakia was divided into 77 districts, to which three more were added in 1929. The districts were subordinated to the district authority and the municipality of the district office.



Figure 3 Rural district system in the years 1928-1939 [18]

4 Conclusion

The Czechoslovak Republic and the nations living in it have gone through a search and finding process. They succeeded in gaining independence, building liberty or respecting the powers of the world. They can overcome even the biggest obstacles or moderate strong opponents by their toughness, courage and purposeful activity. The first Czechoslovak Republic was a state with a perspective. Well the fate of Czechoslovakia turned his back, the more he undermined and subsequently broke. This fateful blow was not just the economic crisis with which it had to fight but, in particular, the Munich Agreement and the Vienna Arbitration, which had concluded one of the chapters of its existence. Nevertheless, it is important to highlight the commitment that domestic and foreign politicians have shown to make a significant contribution to building our own history while creating the hope that everything is possible and nothing is impossible.

The aim of this article was to highlight the key events that led to the construction of an independent state and to point out their impacts. We believe that this goal has been fulfilled and the reader had the opportunity for a while to get back into the distant past. Polemise about how Czechoslovakia would have happened if it did not happen and that happened or it was not in place. It is important to take lessons from what has been and avoid the mistakes that have been made in the past.

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